



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
Res. 3129, Estimates: CW on Supply - referred,	
Hon. R. Delorey	7799
Mr. T. Houston.....	7811
Adjourned	7817
SPEAKER'S RULING:	
Re: Resolution No. 3128 respecting the appointment of two Deputy Speakers is out of order (Pt. of order by Hon. C. d'Entremont [Hansard p. 7740, Apr. 15/16]).....	7817
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Additional Appropriations - Order in Council 2016-94 (04/19/16), Hon. R. Delorey	7818

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 3167, Educ. Wk. (04/17 - 04/23/16): Teachers - Recognize, Hon. K. Casey	7819
Vote - Affirmative.....	7819
Res. 3168, Lamb, James Bernard: Death of - Tribute, Hon. K. Colwell	7819
Vote - Affirmative.....	7820
Res. 3169, Natl. Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Wk. (04/18 - 04/23/16) - Recognize, Hon. L. Glavine	7820
Vote - Affirmative.....	7821

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 155, On-shore Petroleum Resource Development Clarity Act, Mr. T. Houston.....	7821
--	------

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

U-14 Bantam Express Basketball Team - Championship, Mr. B. Maguire	7821
Peach, Melvin - French National Order of the Legion of Honour, Hon. A. MacLeod	7822
Law Reform Commn. - Cuts, Ms. M. Mancini.....	7822
McCulley, Paul - W. Hants Mun. Dist. Prov. Vol. Award, Mr. C. Porter	7823
Boyles, Fraser - Knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honour, Hon. P. Dunn.....	7823
Brown, Jeanette - Birthday (107 th), Ms. L. Zann.....	7823
Marchand, Chase - Hockey Accomplishments, Mr. B. Jessome.....	7824
O'Hearn, Sadie - Prov. Vol. Award, Ms. K. MacFarlane	7824
Roseway Hosp. - ER Closures, Hon. S. Belliveau	7825
Women: Political Engagement - Celebration, Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	7825
Journey of the Cross: N. Sydney Churches - Participation Thank, Mr. E. Orrell.....	7826
Daughters of the Vote: Young Women - Apply, Ms. L. Zann.....	7826
Cabot Educ. Ctr. Senior Boys Trailblazers Basketball Team - NSSAF Championship, Ms. P. Eyking.....	7826
S. Col. Academy - Good Deeds Shop, Mr. L. Harrison	7827

Roseway Hosp. - ER Closures, Hon. S. Belliveau	7827
Horton HS Interac Club: Refugee Support - Recognize, Mr. K. Irving	7827
Horne, Donald: Charity Contributions - Thank, Mr. T. Houston.....	7828
EECD: Tuition Increases - Stop, Hon. David Wilson	7828
Millwood HS Lockdown: RCMP Response - Thank, Mr. S. Gough.....	7829
MacKinnon, Mitchell: Port Morien - Vol. Efforts, Hon. A. MacLeod	7829
McKay, Melissa: Commun. Spirit - Commend, Ms. J. Treen.....	7829
Shea, Stephen: Stellar Serv. - Thank, Mr. E. Orrell.....	7830
Rofe, Libby: Fundraising - Recognize, Ms. P. Arab	7830
MacLean, Scott: Volunteering - Thank, Hon. P. Dunn.....	7830
Lamb, Jimmie: Death of - Tribute, Hon. L. Glavine.....	7831
Van Doninck, Dr. Helene/Messer, Murdo - Wildlife Rehabilitation, Mr. L. Harrison	7832
Bridgewater HS Senior Boys Basketball Team - NSSAF Prov. Banner, Hon. M. Furey.....	7832
Heron, Reta - Prov. Vol. Award Ceremony (Pictou Co.), Ms. K. MacFarlane	7832
Larsen, Jonah: Mining ROCKS! Contest - Congrats., Hon. L. Kousoulis	7833
Veinot, Doris: Order of the Eastern Star (Evangeline Chapter) - Pin (70 Yr.), Mr. J. Lohr.....	7833
Cole Hbr. Boys & Girls Club - Cystic Fibrosis Fundraising, Hon. T. Ince	7834
Polley, Peter/Polycorp: Long Lake Prov. Park Trail - Opening, Hon. L. Diab	7834
Valley Search & Rescue Team: N. Kentville Church of Christ - Building Donation, Mr. J. Lohr	7835
East. Commun. Youth Assoc.: Youth Ctr. - Opening, Hon. L. Hines	7835
Withrows Farm Market & Rocky Knoll Farm - Success Wish, Hon. M. Miller	7836

LeDuc, Michael: Big Cove YMCA Camp - Retirement, Mr. J. Stroink	7836
MacLennan, Sarah: Good Day Café - Opening, Mr. B. Horne	7836
Strickland, Wallace & Pearl - Anniv. (65 th), Hon. Z. Churchill	7837
Schultz, Bernie & Nancy - Fam. Vols. of Yr. (2016), Hon. J. Bernard	7837
Muir, Wayne: C.B. Sports Hall of Fame - Induction, Mr. D. Wilton.....	7838
Norris, Allie - Hockey Achievements, Mr. I. Rankin.....	7838
Woodberry, Andrew John - Boxing Success, Mr. D. Mombourquette	7839
Electric City: Weymouth Hist. Soc./Weymouth Waterfront Dev. Commn. - Preservation Efforts, Mr. Gordon Wilson	7839
Smith, Bette - Windsor Prov. Vol. Award, Mr. C. Porter	7840
Spryfield & Dist. Commun. Market - Opening (05/15/16), Mr. B. Maguire	7840
Greater Hammonds Plains-Lucasville Memorial Comm.: Monument - Congrats., Mr. B. Jessome.....	7840
Inside Out Cleaning Serv. - Lg. Bus. Award Recipient (2015), Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	7841
Gould, Lyric - N.S. Heritage Day Flag Design, Ms. P. Eyking.....	7841
Devour! The Food Film Fest: Co-directors - Thank, Mr. K. Irving.....	7842
Sackville-Beaver Bank - Open House/Town Hall Meetings, Mr. S. Gough.....	7842
Hunter, Amanda - Couponing/Donations, Ms. J. Treen.....	7842
Stubbard, George - Port Hawkesbury, Hon. M. Samson	7843
Keefe, Janice - Progress Women of Excellence Award (2015), Ms. P. Arab	7843
Alzheimer's Research Breakfast: Alzheimer's Soc. - Thank, Hon. M. Furey.....	7844
MacDonald, Duncan & June - Anniv. (50 th), Hon. T. Ince	7844

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:

No. 2062, Prem.: Budget Windfall - Trustworthiness, Hon. J. Baillie	7845
No. 2063, Prem.: Budget - Electoral Politics, Ms. M. Mancini.....	7846
No. 2064, Prem.: Budget Windfall - Details, Hon. J. Baillie	7848
No. 2065, Health & Wellness: Spending Freeze - Justify, Hon. David Wilson	7849
No. 2066, Prem.: Budget - Income Tax Projections, Hon. J. Baillie	7849
No. 2067, Prem.: Budget Assumptions - Trustworthiness, Hon. J. Baillie	7851
No. 2068, Gaming: VLT Machines - Tax Increase, Mr. T. Houston.....	7852
No. 2069, Fin. & Treasury Bd.: Personal Income Tax - Estimates, Hon. A. Younger.....	7853
No. 2070, Health & Wellness: Prescription Drug Monitoring Prog. - AG Recommendations, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	7854
No. 2071, Health & Wellness: Pictou Co. Health Serv. - Reallocation Confirm, Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	7855
No. 2072, Com. Serv.: Child, Youth & Fam. Support Prog. - FTE Cuts, Ms. M. Mancini.....	7856
No. 2073, EECD: C.B. Sch. Closures - Soc./Econ. Impact, Mr. E. Orrell.....	7857
No. 2074, Nat. Res.: Mining Ind. - Fuel Tax Rebate, Hon. P. Dunn.....	7857
No. 2075, Bus. - Film Ind.: Application Process - Simplify, Ms. L. Zann.....	7858
No. 2076, TIR: Yar. Ferry - Federal Funding, Hon. A. MacLeod	7859
No. 2077, Justice: Boots on the Street Prog. - Cuts Confirm, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	7861
No. 2078, Environ.: Alton Gas Proj. - First Nations Appeals, Ms. L. Zann.....	7862
No. 2079, TIR - Yar. Ferry: Truck Ban - Reasons, Hon. A. MacLeod	7863

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:

Res. 3128, Clare-Digby/Kings South MLAs - Deputy Chairmen of
Committees/Deputy Speakers

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	7864
Amendment moved.....	7865
Mr. J. Lohr	7865
Hon. J. Baillie	7866
Mr. E. Orrell.....	7867
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	7868
Hon. P. Dunn.....	7870
Ms. K. MacFarlane	7870
Mr. L. Harrison	7871
Hon. S. Belliveau	7872
Mr. T. Houston.....	7872
Vote - Negative.....	7877
Hon. David Wilson	7877
Mr. J. Lohr	7879
Vote - Affirmative.....	7881

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Apr. 20th at 1:00 p.m.7882

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 3170, Chesnutt, Tracy: World Wildlife Fund - Fundraising, Hon. A. Younger.....	7883
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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. Gordon Wilson

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. As with the tradition on Budget Day in this House, with the consent of the House, we will commence with the motion for Resolution No. 3129, respecting the estimates under Orders of the Day. This means that the daily routine will be delayed until after the response to the Budget Speech is adjourned and Question Period will begin one hour after the start of the daily routine.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[ORDERS OF THE DAY]

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

[GOVERNMENT MOTIONS]

[Res. No. 3129, re Estimates - CW on Supply: Referred - notice given April 14/16
- (Hon. Randy Delorey)]

MR. SPEAKER: With that consent, I will now recognize the honourable minister.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, before moving the motion, may I make some introductions?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. DELOREY: In the east gallery I have some family members: my parents Mary and Charlie Delorey, my wife Michelle, and my girls Claire and Ruby. (Applause)

I also have a friend of mine and former colleague from St. F.X., and indeed, one of the individuals who encouraged me to consider putting my name on the ballot, Dr. Mark Fuller, professor at St. F.X. University. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Antigonish and Finance and Treasury Board Minister, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the last Antigonish MLA who stood as Finance Minister, the late Dr. Bill Gillis. His son, Dr. John Gillis, is here with us as well. (Applause)

We also have a couple of invited guests: Tom Minshull and John Leahy from the company immediaC in the audience, if they want to rise and be acknowledged. (Applause)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there are some members from the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. I'll ask that they each rise together and we'll recognize them as a collective: Lilani, Laurie, George. I believe Byron Rafuse, Geoff Gatien, Thomas Storning and Paul Davies may not be here but certainly they are all are members of the department, as well as all staff in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board who worked so hard in the months leading up to today, as well as throughout the entire year, to make sure we get an appropriate budget and stay on track, as a government. I'd like to acknowledge them for their hard work as well. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to notice of motion given by me on April 14, 2016 and the Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, I have the honour, by command, to present a message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Nova Scotia, relating to the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, which is:

"I hereby transmit Estimates of Sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending March 31, 2017, and in accordance with the Constitution Act of 1867, recommend them, together with the Budget Address of my Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and any resolutions or bills necessary or advisable to approve the Estimates and implement the budget measures to the House of Assembly.

Signed,

J.J. Grant

Lieutenant Governor”

Mr. Speaker, at this time I wish to:

- (1) table the message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of the province transmitting the Estimates for the consideration of this House;
- (2) table the Estimate Books;
- (3) table the Government Business Plan;
- (4) table the Crown Corporation Business Plans;
- (5) table the Estimate and Crown Corporation Business Plans resolutions;
- (6) deliver my Budget Speech; and
- (7) move that the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, being Supply to be granted to Her Majesty and the Crown Corporation Business Plans be referred to the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The Estimates are tabled.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour every opportunity I have to take my seat in this historic Legislature representing the constituents of Antigonish and, in my role as Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, all Nova Scotians.

Today, I am happy to say our economy is growing. We are one of only a few jurisdictions in Canada with a budgeted surplus. Our small business confidence is the highest in Canada. We are working together to make Nova Scotia stronger, and it's working.

It's working because we didn't seek out short-term solutions to long-standing problems. We managed our spending and invested to create a strong foundation for long-term economic growth. It is working because, with the support of Nova Scotians, we have stuck to this plan. I know we will continue to stay on track because I know the people of this province are as committed to the vision of a stronger Nova Scotia as our government is.

I know we can stay on track because Nova Scotians are strong people. Those who came before us worked to sustain their families, their communities, and their connection to this province. They worked hard, they sacrificed, and they persevered to ensure the generations coming after them would have something better. They were committed to giving their children a better future, a stronger Nova Scotia. Challenge is nothing new to Nova Scotia. Nova Scotians have shown perseverance and resilience. Now is our time to do the same.

When we came to office, we received advice from the One Nova Scotia Commission. They told us we needed to change, that we needed to do economic development differently. Nova Scotians told us that the choice was now or never. Now, the only way forward is by working together to create a stronger Nova Scotia. We need to work together because success is not certain.

No government alone can guarantee economic growth. No government can protect against all economic shocks. The government and all Nova Scotians have worked hard and have sacrificed to restore our financial health. Because of that work, that commitment, and that perseverance, we have a surplus of \$127.4 million. But, Mr. Speaker, one shock could knock us off course.

Mr. Speaker, I want to note the surplus includes a one-time revenue bump of \$110.3 million because of federal and municipal contributions for the convention centre. This is not part of normal revenues. Therefore, to ensure our program spending doesn't exceed our ability to pay, we will use the surplus towards our debt. Excluding this one-time revenue bump, our net position is \$17.1 million.

We know economic ups and downs will continue. We know we are not immune to global slowdowns and shocks. But we also know we are not powerless. We can grow our surplus so we can become a source of stability in this region. We are working to have sound public finances so we can weather whatever economic storm comes our way. Our net position - \$17.1 million - will help protect our financial health and create a stronger Nova Scotia.

The bottom line is positive, which means we are on the right track. But make no mistake - now is not the time for us to claim "mission accomplished." We must continue working together to ensure we maintain course, that we continue to balance our needs for fiscal sustainability while investing in the programs and services Nova Scotians need and deserve.

We are building a stronger Nova Scotia. We see reasons for optimism. We are optimistic because we have listened to our business community, and last year created the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to focus on red tape reduction and regulatory excellence. Under the leadership of our Premier, Nova Scotia is working

together with New Brunswick and PEI on an initiative for regional harmonization where appropriate.

We have, under the leadership of the Minister of Immigration, created new immigration streams and negotiated with the federal government to double our cap for provincial nominees. Under the leadership of the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, we have implemented the Graduate to Opportunity program to support employers hiring recent graduates, while the Minister of the Public Service Commission led a youth hiring initiative to bring more recent graduates and young Nova Scotians into the civil service to start their careers in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, this budget shows our commitment to working with Nova Scotians to create a stronger Nova Scotia. Our work doesn't end today. Today is yet another step on the path to long-term growth and sustainable finances.

Opportunities for Growth

Our province's economy has languished under successive governments. Our economy continued to struggle while governments spent more tax dollars, ran more deficits, and increased our debt. Despite all of this spending, Nova Scotia had the slowest growth in real GDP of any province in Canada between 1990 and 2013. Clearly, growing our spending and growing our debt did not lead to growing our economy.

We need to focus on making business owners confident enough so they spend their money to hire Nova Scotians. On that front, the news is good. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Nova Scotia has the highest small business confidence in the country. We are working with businesses to find more opportunities for growth instead of working against businesses to put up obstacles to growth.

Our government has made red tape reduction a priority. That's why we created the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. It is there to cut red tape and remove regulatory burden. It works with other departments to develop policies that create the environment for growth, and it works to change the culture of government.

These changes help small business owners like Adam Bower, who owns the Grand Banker Bar and Grill. Adam started bussing tables at the restaurant when he was 18. He left and studied tourism management, then returned to his hometown of Lunenburg to buy the business. Adam needed multiple permits, managed by different organizations and arms of government.

Our restaurant bundle made life easier for him. It lets him see when licences are due, it helps him stay on top of payments. It makes it easier for him to do business with the government. That lets him focus on hiring more Nova Scotians. The important work of the office - work that creates lean, responsive, and effective government - will continue.

We also commit to keeping politics out of economic development. Under previous governments, what began as the Industrial Expansion Fund evolved into the Jobs Fund. Both Cabinet-controlled funds failed to grow our economy. Both failed to create jobs for Nova Scotians. We closed the Jobs Fund because it added to the province's debt and it failed to create jobs. Worse still, the commitments made by both of those funds continue to impact our province's finances.

This year alone, past commitments from the Industrial Expansion Fund and the Jobs Fund cost \$35.2 million. That's the echo of some bad deals, which cost taxpayers dearly. That's the legacy of political decisions sold as economic development. That's \$35.2 million we don't have to spend on public education, health care, or skills and jobs training. Not only did we close the Jobs Fund, we put in place new reporting requirements. Now, whenever we spend money on economic development, we must provide regular updates on our investments.

The other fundamental flaw of the old approach to economic development was that politicians picked one entrepreneur over another. Government should not give one business an unfair advantage over another. Government exists to improve the playing field for all Nova Scotia businesses. Our government's vision includes making sector-wide investments. These investments benefit all businesses in strategic sectors. These investments make it easier to capitalize on opportunities for growth.

Opportunity for Growth: Vineyards and Wineries

That's why this budget is investing \$3.5 million in our vineyards and wineries. It will pay for more research and development, and it will help our wine producers find new business in new markets. This investment in innovation means new products, new businesses, and more opportunity in Nova Scotia.

Opportunity for Growth: Aquaculture

Thanks to the hard work of our Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, we are investing \$2.8 million in the Aquaculture Growth Strategy. This money will help support research and development in our important ocean tech sector. Our seafood exports grew by 33 per cent in 2015, and our investments in aquaculture will help those exports continue to grow. Aquaculture is an opportunity for job growth, and that means more opportunities for youth to stay in Nova Scotia.

Opportunity for Growth: Tech

Nova Scotia's start-up community is impressive and it is growing. That's why our government committed to bringing coding to our classrooms faster than planned. Coding builds on the basic skills in the math curriculum, and we will work closely with our teachers as coding is phased in over the next few years. Making this investment today will help

prepare our children for the opportunities of tomorrow. This year, we will invest \$1 million to expand coding activities in our schools. That will support teachers and students.

It will empower teachers like Andrew Stickings. His Grade 6 students at École Rockingham Elementary School in Halifax are learning in a way he could not have imagined. His students get access to little round, plastic robots made by Sphero, the creator of BB-8, the loveable rolling droid from Star Wars: The Force Awakens. His students use these robots to make magical things happen. His students aren't just having fun. They're working away on the STEM curriculum, which is built around the notion of studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in an interwoven, applied manner.

It's why we are investing in incubators and sandboxes across the province. They are places where Nova Scotians from different backgrounds can come together, where we can foster their creativity and ingenuity, and where tomorrow's innovators can become inspired.

All that is part of government's vision for economic growth. And, Mr. Speaker, that's not all.

Opportunity for Growth: Tourism and Culture

We know that tourism is an essential part of our province's economy. People around the world appreciate our culture, our passion, our heritage and our history. We are making investments that will make it easier for people to visit Nova Scotia, and we are making investments that celebrate our culture and our heritage.

That's why we are investing \$10.2 million in the Nova Scotia to Portland ferry so we can bring more tourists to our province. In 2015, we witnessed a 6 per cent increase in overnight tourist visits - the largest one-year increase since 2000.

We also recognize the important role of events in building strong communities and generating economic benefits. We will invest \$500,000 for major events hosting and to celebrate our heritage, we will invest \$2 million to support Canada 150 events throughout our province. Government is also increasing investment for community and cultural organizations requiring assistance to repair and upgrade facilities by making additional funding available for community facility projects.

Despite what you may be hearing, this government supports the film and television industry. We want it to succeed. That's why we are investing \$10 million in the Nova Scotia Film and Television Production Incentive Fund. We are also investing \$2.5 million in the creative economy to support our artists, musicians, and publishers who also contribute to our economy. We need to do more than just make sector-wide investments. We need to ensure that our businesses have better access to capital and digital infrastructure.

Opportunity for Growth: Private Sector Venture Capital Fund

To further improve access to capital, our government is investing \$25 million in a new venture capital fund. This fund will be led and administered by the private sector. It will be designed to pair public money with private money. Most importantly, decisions will be made by people with the experience necessary.

Opportunity for Growth: High-Speed Internet

Lack of access to high-speed Internet is holding too many Nova Scotians back. It hurts small businesses and places an unnecessary burden on potential entrepreneurs. High-speed Internet is the backbone of the new economy. It is essential for business success.

This year, we are investing \$6 million in this essential piece of digital infrastructure. We will work with our partners to develop a solution. We are committed to ensuring more homes and businesses in rural Nova Scotia have access to high-speed Internet, connecting them to opportunities here at home and around the globe.

It won't just benefit business. It will create more connected citizens and consumers. It will mean better access to services and more choice. With more choice and more access people will be more empowered. That's how we build a connected Nova Scotia - a stronger Nova Scotia.

Opportunity for Growth: People

The One Nova Scotia Commission also told us that we need to grow our population if we want to grow our economy. Our government took it to heart. In two years, we doubled the number of immigrants we can receive through the Provincial Nominee program. The way the people of Nova Scotia welcomed refugees with open arms will stand as a testament to our humanity. We welcomed strangers as friends.

We honoured our history. For decades, Nova Scotia welcomed immigrants through Pier 21. It is where Dutch and English immigrants first landed in Canada. We welcomed child evacuees during World War II. We welcomed Holocaust survivors. We welcomed those who wanted to come here. We welcomed those fleeing oppression.

According to Statistics Canada, our population is now at an all-time high thanks, in large part, to immigration. This year we are working to build on that success. We are investing to support the settlement of immigrants and to support our two new immigration streams: the Entrepreneur Stream and the International Graduate Stream.

This year, we are also investing \$100,000 in the Community Refugee Support Initiative. It will provide grants of up to \$1,000 to community and sponsoring groups who are helping refugees settle here. It will ensure many of the refugees who land here continue

to call Nova Scotia home. Our immigration successes mean more people, more entrepreneurship, and more economic growth.

There's more work to be done. Rest assured, we are up to the task. This government, the Premier, and the Immigration Minister have successfully lobbied the federal government on multiple occasions. On immigration, Nova Scotia is setting an example for others to follow on the national stage. We are leaders in our region.

This government understands that we cannot solve our economic problems alone. We need to work together to create a stronger economy - a stronger Nova Scotia. Government is here to create an environment that makes growth possible. Government is here to improve business confidence. Government is here to expand access to capital and access to digital infrastructure. Government is here to work with business to grow our economy.

Investing in Education, Youth, and Jobs Training

We need to invest in our most valuable resource - our people - so they are ready to jump at opportunities when they present themselves. Supporting our people means investing in education, youth, and jobs training. We've spent our first two years making these kinds of investments. And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in these priorities with this budget.

Quality Public Education

That's why we continue to increase the amount we invest to improve the quality of public education. We know the best way to have a strong economy tomorrow is to invest in education today. We know that to capitalize on opportunities for growth, we need to make education a priority. We know that a stronger Nova Scotia can only happen with a well-educated population.

A stronger Nova Scotia is possible when our children's creativity and ingenuity is fostered in our schools. We also know this work needs to start early. So our government is investing to make child care more affordable for those most in need. Our budget is investing \$6.6 million in child care.

This investment will support families in accessing child care by increasing the parent subsidy. It will support child care centres so they can provide programming that prepares our children for school. It also supports the workers in this very important field - the women and men who dedicate themselves to our children. Our investment in child care includes more money to increase the wages paid to trained early childhood educators. This will make it easier for centres to find and keep staff, and it will ensure our children get the start they need - the start they deserve.

Investing in child care is a decision driven by the values of this government and the values of Nova Scotians. It levels the playing field, and it helps give our children a fair start. As our children move into Grade Primary, they will continue to have the support of this government. This budget increases the amount we invest in education by \$21 million. That money will be used to reduce class sizes, help boards hire more teachers, improve literacy and math skills, and ensure our children are ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

We have already made investments to reduce class sizes from Grades Primary to 4. That money stays in place, and our children will continue to see the benefits - they will get more support and more attention from their teachers.

This budget will invest an additional \$6.4 million to reduce class sizes in our schools up to Grade 6. It means more support, more resources, and smaller classes for our children. It means they will be able to get the attention they deserve. It means their odds of success will improve. When our children succeed, we succeed. When our children grow strong, our province grows strong. When our children prosper, our province prospers.

Over the next year, we will invest \$7.5 million to help improve literacy and math skills. The hard work of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and the teachers across the province brought us the Education Action Plan. As part of our Education Action Plan, we are investing \$1.2 million in language arts from Grades Primary to 3 and \$2.5 million to support our province's math strategy. The action plan heard from 19,000 Nova Scotians; it considered reports like *One Nova Scotia's Now or Never*, data from the Early Developmental Index, and student assessment results.

Nova Scotians were clear. We need more focus placed on literacy and math skills. Parents also told us they want to ensure their children are being prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, and we listened. We are accelerating the rate at which we introduce coding into the classroom. It is a \$1 million investment. When our children learn to code, they are learning to create computer programs, they are learning to create software, and they are learning a language that will be essential for success in the digital economy.

We are expanding our SchoolsPlus sites with a \$1.2 million investment. These funds will be used to add four locations and to increase the important supports students can access at these sites, including more mental health clinicians.

Our approach to education is straightforward: more resources and support for students, more teachers to help our children, and smaller class sizes. Investing in education means more opportunities for our children tomorrow, while investing in skills and jobs training means more opportunities for workers today. And when students move on to university, we will continue to provide support.

Opportunities for Youth

We are continuing our investment to help our graduate students continue their research in Nova Scotia. Over the next year we will almost double the funding to our Graduate Scholarship program. We will invest \$3.7 million in graduate scholarships - that's an investment in innovation and creativity today. Today's researchers are tomorrow's entrepreneurs. This increased investment will mean we are able to help 310 students over the next year.

We also know that getting a job depends on having real-world experience. The government is investing \$5.1 million to improve access to co-op and summer jobs. Government is working to hire more young Nova Scotians. We've committed to this. We've set targets to hold ourselves accountable. We've hired 1,239 new workers aged 35 or under since 2013. More than 200 of those have been hired since November 2015.

We are taking steps, but government alone will not solve youth unemployment. This year's budget continues the START program to help unemployed Nova Scotians find work. Because of this program, government and business work together to address unemployment and help more skilled tradespeople find work in Nova Scotia.

Our Graduate to Opportunity program helps recent graduates get their first job. Its first year was a success because we were able to partner with businesses to increase the number of opportunities and jobs for young Nova Scotians.

In 2015, programs like Graduate to Opportunity and START helped more than 1,000 Nova Scotians find work in the province. It saw government partner with companies like immediaC, a Dartmouth-based company that hired recent Dalhousie University graduate Tom Minshull. Tom spent six months looking for work. He thought he would have to leave Nova Scotia to find it. The Graduate to Opportunity program made sure Tom found work here in Nova Scotia.

Graduate to Opportunity will continue in this year's budget. Indeed, the funding will double to \$3.2 million and it will create more opportunities for recent graduates. We are investing in young Nova Scotians. Our commitment to them and their future starts early. These investments make it easier for more Nova Scotians to find work in Nova Scotia. We are also improving services so all unemployed Nova Scotians have more support when looking for work.

Skills and Jobs Training

Nova Scotia's improved small business confidence means more growth and more job opportunities for Nova Scotians. We need to ensure the government supports today's workers so they can take advantage of these opportunities.

This budget continues to support Careers Nova Scotia as it fights unemployment and helps our workers find jobs. This government recognizes more money needs to go into helping unemployed Nova Scotians find work. So we are changing this \$23 million system, by spending less on administration and more on the front lines.

We know that Nova Scotians want to work. Our government is committed to helping them find work. We are investing in education, youth, and job training because that's how we can help grow our economy and create jobs.

Supporting Nova Scotians Who Need it Most

A stronger Nova Scotia also means supporting the Nova Scotians who need it the most. This year's budget has \$11.5 million in programs to support women at risk. This money supports transition houses, women's centres, second stage housing, and other shelters. It is funding the province's first Sexual Violence Strategy. Our government and the Minister of Community Services are committed to ending violence against women, and we are here to support the community groups that are there for women when they need them most.

We are increasing assistance for people with disabilities by \$12.9 million. That includes increasing funding to the Disability Support Program for people in long-term care facilities and expanded community-based options for people with disabilities. We are helping transition clients out of facilities and into communities.

A fair Nova Scotia is an inclusive Nova Scotia. We want every Nova Scotian to live and work to their fullest potential. We want people with disabilities to fully participate in our society. We want to remove barriers to employment. Investments like those in today's budget will tear down barriers and build up opportunities.

We are increasing income assistance rates while overhauling the Department of Community Services so we can do a better job of providing job training to clients so they can find work, provide better services to support women at risk, and provide more effective assistance to people with disabilities.

While the Department of Community Services is working hard to overhaul the system, we are also increasing Employment Support and Income Assistance by \$7.5 million. It is the biggest increase in our province's history. It is a step we can take today to help those on income assistance - those who need it the most. It is a step we can take today because of the hard work over the first two years of this government.

We will increase funding to the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention program by \$3.6 million. This will ensure more young children with autism access a specialized therapy. This funding will provide timely access and support for children and their families.

We need to ensure our children get a fair start. Our investment in early intervention will make that possible.

These investments and programs will help those Nova Scotians who need it most. They will ensure more Nova Scotians have a chance to share in our province's growth. They mean more support for our children who are the most in need. When more people share in our growth, it's easier to sustain that growth. These investments are value-based decisions Nova Scotians support because we are a province that values fairness.

We are ready to capitalize on opportunities for growth; we are investing in education, youth, and jobs training; and we are helping those Nova Scotians who need it most. We also need to ensure our health care system is delivering timely access to the health care we need, when we need it.

Healthy People, Healthy Economy

This year's budget will focus on creating an innovative, well-managed, and connected health care system that meets the needs of Nova Scotians. (Interruption) Sorry, no comments from the gallery. (Laughter)

A slight aside, I believe Minister Morneau, our federal Minister of Finance, also had a child call from the gallery - this one just happens to be my own. (Laughter)

We know the healthier Nova Scotians are, the stronger our communities and our economy will become. Budget 2016-17 will build upon the good work done by the Minister of Health and Wellness and the department over the past two years to unify Nova Scotia's health care system.

We are taking the one-time revenue of \$110.3 million and putting it towards our debt. This will give us the fiscal capacity to make critical investments in a new health care complex that will serve the province and the region. This significant investment will provide the opportunity to change the way health care is delivered in the province. Some of the most complicated, specialized services are delivered at the Centennial and Victoria General buildings, with nearly 16,000 surgeries performed each year. However, those buildings are aging. The problems are well-known.

Health care needs are also changing, and the way in which we deliver that care needs to change as well. To meet the needs of patients today and into the future, over time some services will be moved out of these buildings. We need to construct health infrastructure that meets the demands and the needs of Nova Scotians for decades to come.

While we are investing in infrastructure we are also investing in our ability to complete more surgeries every year. This year, we are adding \$1.9 million to fund more

operations that will help us reduce wait times for orthopaedic surgeries. With this year's additional funding, we are able to perform up to 835 new hip and knee surgeries.

Government continues to make investment in mental health and addictions services a priority. Again this year, we will contribute more than \$271 million in mental health funding. This includes services to those living with mental illness, payments to physicians, and pharmaceuticals.

Over the past two years we have worked to strengthen training for health care providers and supports available to those living with mental illness, and their families. As a result of its redesign, the Department of Health and Wellness will transfer \$5.4 million this year to the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre to support mental health services. The Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK are working to study the needs of communities across the province, and better match mental health services to those needs.

Seniors have worked hard to support their families and contribute to their communities. We need to help seniors stay healthy longer and offer services and support to protect their well-being as they age. Their knowledge, experience, and wisdom are important to building a stronger Nova Scotia. That's why we are adding \$14.4 million for home support and nursing, the caregiver benefit, and wheelchair programs. We know Nova Scotians want to age at home, not in an institution.

These investments are in addition to our improvements to Seniors' Pharmacare. We are making the program more affordable through exempted or reduced premiums for seniors who need it most, saving seniors \$3 million. We are making it a program that is focused on fairness.

We are a government that is committed to seniors and their well-being. We are committed to better access, shorter waits, more doctors, and improved seniors' health and home care. We are investing in those commitments in this budget.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, we know we have opportunities for growth. It is up to us - both the government and the people of Nova Scotia - to seize those opportunities. We know it's a choice. We choose to act because standing still is not an option.

We are laying the groundwork, building the infrastructure, and investing in strategic sectors to foster long-term economic growth. We continue with our investments in education, youth, and jobs training so Nova Scotians can stand shoulder to shoulder with us, because only by standing and working together can we make Nova Scotia stronger.

Of course, today is only one part of our journey. It started two years ago. As a government we made tough choices to restore our province's financial health. As a people, Nova Scotians stood with us. Our civil servants supported us. For their support and hard work we are thankful. Our collective efforts and sacrifice have helped improve our province's financial health, but we must continue to properly manage our finances. Failure will put future investments at risk.

The work of Nova Scotians and the sacrifice in which we all shared made the investments we are announcing today possible. When we control our finances and control our spending, we are making strategic decisions. We are investing in opportunities for growth. We are investing in education, in youth, and in jobs training. We are offering more support to Nova Scotians who need it most. And we are putting money aside to have the capacity to launch a multi-year redevelopment of the QEII Health Sciences Centre that will enhance care for patients across Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada.

These things were made possible because of the support of Nova Scotians. These things were made possible because we, as a province, pulled together. These are not government's achievements - they are Nova Scotians' achievements.

Our future will be shaped by the decisions and successes of today. It will be shaped by investments that empower the next generation and it will be forged by our children's creativity.

We are committed to a better future, and we know Nova Scotians are committed to a better future too. We are working together for a stronger Nova Scotia. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for delivering the budget today, and of course to all of the staff behind the scenes that work so hard to prepare these things. I know a lot goes into it, and we on this side certainly appreciate that effort as well.

Any time you have a \$10 billion budget - \$10 billion of spending - you're going to have some good spending in there, some excellent initiatives. You're also going to have some questionable spending. Then on the other side, when you have \$10 billion of revenue, you're going to have - some of that is fact and some of that is fiction, as we sit here today.

We're going to run through some of that, but when you look at a budget, it's important to keep perspective in mind. A budget is a political document prepared for a political purpose. It's important to keep that in mind as you go through. There's lots of ups and downs and there's a long way, sometimes, between what a budget may estimate, may predict, or may forecast is going to happen and what actually happens. There is a lot of ground between those two things.

You don't have to go too far back for perspective. Many members of this House and many Nova Scotians will remember that not too long ago the NDP Government was in the second half of their mandate, and they also tabled a budget that had a surplus. They tabled a \$16 million surplus. Today we see a very similar \$17 million.

A little bit of history of what happened at that time: it was \$16 million as tabled. One month into that, it had gone up - it was \$18 million - but when you looked at the second quarter, it had dropped. It was no longer a surplus. It was at that time, after two quarters, a \$500 million-plus deficit, and many people will remember how that year ended. That year ended with a deficit of \$670-something million. There's a lot of estimates, there's a lot of hoping that goes into a budget, and we know what happened there.

That's just what happened with that one. I think if we think about a budget in the context of the view of the governing Party and what they hope will happen - that's what it is. They're saying, this is what we hope will happen over the next year.

To consider the subjectivity of a budget, we don't have to go back to the last time the NDP was in government. We could just go back to last year and look at how the year went up and down for some perspective. It was just a year ago when this government tabled a budget that had a deficit of \$97 million. That was the budget that was tabled a year ago. One quarter in, that deficit was up to \$122 million. Not that long ago, just in December, the government did a forecast update and they said, you know that \$97 million deficit we told you about in April, well it's now December and it's now \$241 million. That's how things can change over the year when you look at the perspective and the estimates and the risk involved.

In December that number was a \$241 million deficit, today we've learned a pretty remarkable quarter in Nova Scotia, the deficit from last year is no longer \$241 million, it's right down to \$71 million - a \$170 million pickup in that quarter. I think you have to ask yourself, how did these things happen when you look at these types of swings like that?

Now there's a school of thought that may say that the government in those updates was making it look worse, was suppressing things, as they were negotiating with unions. That's a school of thought - and there's another school of thought that says, wow, didn't it pop up nicely as they go to present this budget.

We're looking today at numbers that are only numbers until they are real. We have to look at them through the lens of are they real, and through the subjective lens of what will happen - look at last year, \$97 million, down to \$122 million, down to \$241 million, up to \$70 million. Is that the stability of a - is that stable? Is that the stable image that they are putting forward? Is it predictable? Is it a steady hand? These are all questions that Nova Scotians will have.

I think if we look at those two examples I gave you there, of the \$16 million surplus that ended up as a \$670 million deficit and what has happened this year - let's think about that as we look at this budget and as we look at the revenue projections of this budget.

Now last year when I looked at the budget I stood in my place and I said revenue projections look a little heavy. I had my doubts as to whether the revenue projections last year would materialize. At the time I said I just didn't know a lot of Nova Scotians who were just feeling that good about their economic prospects that they would pay more tax, that things were going to be better.

At that time the budget had predicted revenue increases last year of \$157 million. It seems a little heavy to me - \$157 million. Well this year this government is projecting revenue increases of \$371 million. Last year's number of \$157 million didn't materialize as of yet, it just hasn't gotten there. Revenues are up a little bit over the year before, but if we look at it, if we look at how much of the \$157 million they achieved, they achieved about 80 per cent of it.

Now if they achieve 80 per cent of the whopping \$371 million this year, we'd be in a pretty significant deficit just on that alone, just on that alone, using that perfect example of last year's unfold. I think that tells you that speaks to the subjective nature of these numbers, and when you look at a razor-thin surplus of \$17 million, it could very easily disappear very quickly.

So can we trust the numbers? That's the question for us today. I think over the next few days as we really dig into these and scratch below the surface, we're going to learn a lot more - like we did with Pharmacare.

I remember a Pharmacare announcement made with much fanfare, but then as we just scratched away and really dug in as to what was happening there we realized that it wasn't as rosy as it might have been put out there for us in the beginning. In fact, in this very Chamber, I remember for 20 minutes one day at Public Accounts Committee asking how much more the government was expecting to collect from seniors as a result of the changes. For 20 minutes I asked that question before we finally got an answer the next day that it was \$10 million more they were expecting.

This is what's going to happen with this budget: we will be scratching over the next few days to see what's really there. A particular issue is the convention centre.

Before I speak about the convention centre, I would say that today, all things considered, all in all, when we look at this document, the message the government is sending to us is they would have us believe that we don't need a film industry and we don't need to explore onshore. We don't need any of these things because look, our revenues are just going up anyway. We've got \$371 million more this year.

Wouldn't it be nice if that was the way the world worked, Mr. Speaker? When you look at this, and you look at that revenue increase, ask yourself, where is it coming from? Where is the \$371 million coming from? I think all Nova Scotians should look in the mirror, and they should ask that question, and then they should say the answer, "Me." It's coming from us. In a province with a flat economy, based on the old numbers in here, revenues are skyrocketing. That's because we're all going to pay more. We'll see how that plays out.

It was with great interest that I listened to the minister speaking about the convention centre. He referred to this \$110-million one-time revenue bump. The fact that the minister thinks this is a revenue bump speaks to the whole series of ways this is collected. This little windfall that the government feels is a little bit of jingle in their pocket is not a jingle in their pocket. It's money that we've collected that has already been spent. It's money sent to us by the feds for the convention centre. It's money sent to us by HRM for the convention centre and this province is just holding on to it.

It's not free money. It's not our money. It's money that this government, in today's budget, has spent four times. It's not even their money and they've spent it four times. They've used it to make this year's numbers look better and bump up a surplus. They have to use it for the convention centre. Plus they also said in here they're going to use it to pay down debt. That's three if you're carrying along. The final use they have for it is for a new health centre - four uses for the same pot of money that's not even theirs.

I think Nova Scotians will see through that, Mr. Speaker. Nova Scotians know that you can't spend the same dollar twice, three times, or four times. The point of all this is you have to scratch below the surface with this government. Nothing is as it seems. There's always a little bit of manoeuvring going on.

With that context, let's look at the increasing revenues. How did the revenues get to be so increased? Well, the tax yield is increasing. That's a fancy way of saying that every one of us, whether we make more money or not, we will pay more in taxes. They're going to squeeze a little bit more out of every one of us. That's what that means when we say the tax yield is increasing. The number of Nova Scotians working will stay flat, but the tax number is going up. I don't feel particularly great about that, and I'm sure most Nova Scotians, who are already feeling stretched financially, are also going to feel a little concerned about that. This government wants to reach into your pocket and get a few more dollars out.

It's interesting that this government doesn't even really know who pays what in taxes. We found out last year with the film stuff that they don't even really know who is paying what because a lot of that is done by the federal government. The money is just sent down. So, despite the fact that they don't know who's paying what, they do know that they want more, and that is the theme that we see here - \$146 million more in personal income tax revenue, \$146 million more.

How confident are you that people will make that much more that they pay that much more in taxes? I don't know a lot of those people, I really don't. If you look at the opportunity of tabling a budget and the opportunity to put a stamp on a province, and today I'm thinking about corporate income taxes and the opportunity that was missed here, because we need new businesses. We need big businesses. We need medium-sized businesses. We need small businesses. We need new businesses and there was a chance for this government to restructure corporate taxes.

So, it's not just to hope that companies will pay more, they could have actually restructured it and given them a chance to grow, and that's not what's happening. Instead, what's happening is stick a finger in the air, say revenues are going to go up. We're going to have more money.

I want to speak to the comments that the minister made about the business confidence being up, and I did find that very interesting. In many ways, it's one of the things that bothers me so much about the mood of Nova Scotia. Successive governments and all the talk of our being broke have really lowered their expectations, so, in many ways for many business owners, to say that their confidence is up means they're hoping for a flat year.

We see that with people. Every single day Nova Scotians go in and out of the VG and they go to work. They go to visit people, they go for procedures and they kind of shrug their shoulders. It doesn't take a person from Alberta to come here and say that place needs some work done on it, but that's what happens because Nova Scotians feel so beat down. It's a shame that the bar for our expectations has been lowered so low.

For two years now we've heard the government say we're broke. Today they put down a marker that they intend to collect more from each of us. That's the marker they put down and then, based on that hope - and we've seen on their track record from last year just how much that hope can swing when actuals come involved - based on the hope that they'll collect more, they have spent more; and where have they spent it?

We all know about the Yarmouth to Portland ferry. Now, today, henceforth, according to these documents, it shall be known as the Nova Scotia to Portland ferry. It is no longer the Yarmouth to Portland ferry, I notice in the documents here. It's not the Nova Scotia to Maine, it's the Nova Scotia to Portland.

If you think about that and the minister's comments about keeping the politics out of economic development, I remember that over the last few weeks the minister saying it didn't matter to him how much the ferry would cost; it just didn't matter. It's irresponsible to ask how much it will cost. I think, to us, to Nova Scotians, it matters because they will be looking at this and they will be saying, what roads might not get done? What decisions are being made to finance that? In fact, in this Budget Speech, I didn't see one single word about roads, not one.

We Nova Scotia rural MLAs know how much of a concern that is, so, I think we're starting to see what's important to this government. If we look at the "net position" - it's a new term this year - \$17 million. Let's look at how this ferry situation was accounted for. It's very interesting to me that \$13 million of the Yarmouth ferry expenses are not booked in this year. They're booked in last year. They're booked in last year in the ultimate March madness-madness - \$13.1 million booked in last year. If that were booked in this year, well, your "net position" is gone, so let's not book it in this year. Let's put it in last year. Then in this year we have \$10.2 million booked in.

That's based on a ridership of 60,000. For every 10,000 people that ridership changes, it goes up by \$2 million. That's the rough rule of thumb I was given. So it won't take much - bye-bye, net position. We will have to see. It's very interesting, and there's a bit of a - we've heard of governments doing this kind of year-end accounting-type stuff before, and yet we see it again; \$13 million is pretty shocking to me, to see that happen.

I do want to talk about the health care spending before I wrap up for the day. Health care spending in this budget is pretty much flat. I don't think, if you went back over the last few years, you would find that there haven't been any examples where health care spending is flat. This government would say that they're more efficient - and maybe this is to do with efficiency; we'll see - but there will be many who wonder if it's because of reduced services. I don't have to go very far from my home to see where services have been dramatically reduced, particularly in the mental health area. We will dig into these numbers over the next few days.

I see that mental health spending is in this budget. It's declared as \$271 million again. That implies that's what was spent last year and that's what will be spent this year (Interruption) And \$5.8 million new, the minister says, in addition to that. We will see. We will see with the people that are struggling, looking for services. We will see if there's any hope for them in this budget, in those numbers.

Over the next few days, we will dig into this budget. Where is the money going? Where is the money not going? We'll get some clarity as we scratch through on the surface.

Today we are looking at a political document presented by a governing Party that is past their midway point and they would have you believe that things have changed. Suddenly things have changed. They're much better.

We are left asking ourselves, having been on the ground talking to Nova Scotians, other than being past the midpoint, what has changed? There are many things. There are many things in this budget that, with just a little tweaking one way or the other, could wipe out the numbers we're seeing here today. A few thousand fewer people on the ferry, a slight miss on the dramatic tax revenue, normalized health care cost increases - any one of these things will wipe it out.

This is the day when people are supposed to get a view into how their government sees things unfolding. We know how this government sees things unfolding: we all pay more tax. That's how they see things unfolding, and meanwhile, they spend more. Paying more in a flat economy doesn't go hand-in-hand, so we'll see how that plays out. For now, it leaves all of us and all Nova Scotians in the position of looking carefully at where they're spending money and how they're spending money. It leaves us hoping that their priorities are consistent with ours and we will hope, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, that their priorities are, because that's all we can do today - we will hope that they spend our money wisely.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I would move that we adjourn debate on this topic for today.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on the Budget Address. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We'll now move on with the daily routine.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Re: Resolution No. 3128 respecting the appointment of two Deputy Speakers is out of order. (Pt. of order by Hon. C. d'Entremont [Hansard p. 7740, Apr. 15/16])

Resolution 3128 does not subvert the will of the House.

Just before I get into the daily routine, I'd like to present the Speaker's Ruling on the point of order brought forth on Friday, April 15th, by the honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition who rose on a point of order with respect to Resolution No. 3128, which had been moved by the Government House Leader on April 14th.

There were two aspects to this point of order. The first was that it was out of order to move that there be two Deputy Speakers when the House had elected one. The second was that the resolution could not be dealt with on the day following its introduction because there had not been the two days' notice required under Rule 32. On the second point the Official Opposition House Leader was correct, but the resolution was not called for debate on Friday so the point became moot.

The Government House Leader rose and pointed out that a resolution was required because the Rules provide only for a process for the election of one Deputy Speaker and there was no choice but to proceed but by way of resolution if the House wished to have two Deputy Speakers. He then pointed out that in his 18 years in this House there had been more than one Deputy Speaker on multiple occasions.

The Leader of the Official Opposition also rose on the point of order and took the position that where there were two Deputy Speakers there was a convention that the second one had to be a member from the Opposition side of the House.

The first thing I will say is that the Government House Leader is correct, that there has been more than one Deputy Speaker during a number of General Assemblies to which he has been elected. In each of the 58th, 59th and 61st General Assemblies the House had passed a resolution appointing three Deputy Speakers and splitting the remuneration attached to the position equally among them. In each of those three General Assemblies there was a Deputy Speaker from each of the three caucuses, and the resolutions received waiver of notice and passage without debate by consent of the House.

Resolution No. 3128 did not receive waiver of notice and passage without debate and it is on the order paper for debate. The resolution does not subvert the will of the House expressed in the election of the member for Clare-Digby as Deputy Speaker. It allows the House to decide that, in addition to that member, there would be a second Deputy Speaker. There is no historical convention that if there are two deputy speakers, one of the two would be from the Opposition side of the House, therefore Resolution No. 3128 is not out of order.

We'll now proceed with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a copy of the Order in Council No. 2016-94, dated April 19, 2016, with respect to additional appropriations.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 3167

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

Whereas yesterday at the Education Week Awards ceremony, and on behalf of Premier Stephen McNeil, I had the pleasure to proclaim the week of April 17th to April 23rd to be Education Week; and

Whereas this year's theme - Media Literacy: Empowering Critical Thinking in a Digital Media World - recognizes the important role educators play in guiding students in the area of media literacy; and

Whereas there are more than 9,000 teachers across the province, who work hard each and every day to help students reach their full potential, as well as working with staff at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to bring fundamental changes to the classroom as part of Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education;

Therefore be it resolved that all members in the House of Assembly take a moment this week to recognize teachers for their good work and ongoing commitment to helping all students lead productive lives in our ever-changing world.

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 Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 3168

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

Whereas James Bernard Lamb, known to everybody as Jimmie Lamb, passed away on April 15, 2016, after a life marked by significant contributions to agriculture in Nova

Scotia as a pork producer, hog farmer, community volunteer, and tireless advocate for the development of the hog farming sector; and

Whereas in 1978, Mr. Lamb established Meadowbrook Farm and Meat Market in Berwick, Nova Scotia, and over the course of the next four decades built a strong and successful business that was recognized with numerous awards and was also a pioneer in the buy-local movement that has become so important to the agricultural industry today; and

Whereas Mr. Lamb was an avid volunteer in support of organizations such as the King's Mutual Centre - known as the Apple Dome, the Rotary Club of New Minas Sunrise, 4-H, and Berwick Baptist Church, and was a kind and compassionate man who never missed an opportunity to help a friend or neighbour in need, and took great pleasure in the company of his family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend condolences to Mr. Lamb's wife, Margie, and his family, friends, and employees on his passing and pause to honour his many contributions as a farmer, businessman, community member, Nova Scotian, and most importantly, a family man.

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 Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 3169

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

Whereas nearly half a million Nova Scotians have signed up to be an organ and tissue donor because they know it is the most meaningful gift they can give to others after they are gone; and

Whereas last year 49 Nova Scotians received organ transplants that changed their lives, but there are still 132 people on the waiting list; and

Whereas there are still 132 people in need of organ donations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, April 18th to April 23rd, and urge all Nova Scotians to talk to their families about their desire to be an organ and tissue donor.

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 minister will be happy to know that I personally signed my organ donation card just last week.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 155 - Entitled an Act to Provide Clarity for On-shore Petroleum Resource Development. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

U-14 BANTAM EXPRESS BASKETBALL TEAM - CHAMPIONSHIP

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to speak about the under 14 Bantam Express basketball team. The Express won the Division 7 Basketball Championship on February 14, 2016.

Kevin Clark, the coach of the team, spent the season teaching them the basics of the game. Throughout the season the team only won two games and were near the bottom of their league's standing; however, when the boys came to practice they worked hard and were dedicated. All of their hard work paid off when they participated in the playoffs the weekend of February 13th and February 14th. They won their game against the second-ranked team on Saturday and went on to play the top-ranked team on Sunday. The Express won this game 33 to 32 to take the Division 7 Championship.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Bantam Express basketball team on their championship win and wish them all the best at the provincials. They truly demonstrated how hard work and dedication can pay off as they move from amongst the last-place teams to the first-place team in just one season.

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

**PEACH, MELVIN
- FRENCH NATIONAL ORDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR**

HON. ALIFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to congratulate Mr. Melvin Peach of Donkin, who recently received the French National Order of the Legion of Honour for his participation in the Invasion of Normandy shortly after D-Day during the Second World War.

Melvin Peach is the longest serving member of the Port Morien Royal Canadian Legion, having 59 years of service there. In 1998 he was given a lifetime membership.

Mr. Peach is a true hero, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour to thank him for his sacrifice and years of serving our country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

LAW REFORM COMMN. - CUTS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, the rule of law is an essential element of our democratic society. News that the government is cutting funding for the Law Reform Commission was yet another example of an ill-advised decision by this short-sighted government.

Last week, in defence of this funding cut, the Minister of Justice noted that the Harper Government cut funding to the Law Reform Commission. Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are becoming increasingly aware of the similarities between the Harper Government and the McNeil Government. The Minister of Justice may wish to consider the fate of the Harper Government before following in its footsteps.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MCCULLEY, PAUL - W. HANTS MUN. DIST. PROV. VOL. AWARD

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, volunteers are the heart and soul of any community, including that of Hants West, and we appreciate each and every one of them. I would like to take a moment to recognize Mr. Paul McCulley, who has been volunteering for many years with various organizations, such as the Brooklyn District Elementary School where he helps to design and build props for schools and plays.

Paul has been particularly dedicated to the local fire departments and societies, including the Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department, where as a member of their Truck Committee, he has done research, provided technical support and advice, and worked with successful equipment vendors.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Paul McCulley on receiving the Provincial Volunteer Award for the Municipality of the District of West Hants, and wish him all the best.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**BOYLES, FRASER - KNIGHT OF THE FRENCH NATIONAL ORDER
OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Fraser Boyles of Trenton was recently awarded the rank of Knight by the National Order of the Legion of Honour of France. Boyles was 19 years old in June 1944 when he landed on Juno Beach to liberate France. He served for three years in that country as well as Belgium, Germany, and Holland.

After the war he returned to Pictou County and helped build railcars before he began a career as a barber.

Fraser has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and gratitude people are showing him for his service in the Second World War. It is certainly important for everyone to recognize veterans and their sacrifices and ordeals.

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

BROWN, JEANETTE - BIRTHDAY (107th)

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, on April 7th, Truro resident Jeanette Brown turned 107 - yes, 107. Born in 1909, Jeanette has seen many changes to the world around her over the years, but her love of life, family, and friends remains constant.

Jeanette was married at 16 and had all three of her children before she turned 20. During the Second World War she worked as an ammunition factory worker in Montreal. At 63, she returned to school to complete her diploma. She now gets the rare treatment of getting to know her great-great-great-grandchildren, and her longevity is very inspiring.

I would like to wish her well on behalf of all of us here at Province House.

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

MARCHAND, CHASE - HOCKEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, Chase Marchand of Upper Tantallon has spent his hockey career working hard on and off the ice. He succeeded up the ranks through minor hockey, to Major Midget, to Junior A, and on to the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

Mr. Speaker, after a couple of seasons Chase finds himself in the third round of the playoffs as a starting goaltender for the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies. On April 13th of last week, in game four of their second-round series, Chase set a playoff record for a goaltender, holding the opposing Blainville-Boisbriand Armada off the board for a total of 215 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment and ask all members of the House of Assembly to acknowledge Chase's hard work and dedication both on and off the ice and congratulate him on his induction into the record books for the QMJHL, and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

O'HEARN, SADIE - PROV. VOL. AWARD

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Sadie O'Hearn for being recognized at this year's Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony. Sadie has been a volunteer in Pictou County for 51 years. She has long been involved with the Stella Maris Catholic Women's League and has been on the Parish Hall Restoration Committee.

Sadie has volunteered for the Women's Institute and the congregation of the Notre Dame Associates, the local food bank, and the Star of the Sea Centre. She has helped fundraise for the Pictou Lobster Carnival and helps organize the annual Christmas dinner for Pictou firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Sadie for her recognition, and thank her for her many years of volunteer work in our community.

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

ROSEWAY HOSP. ER CLOSURES

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, as November 2015 passed and along came December, the people of Shelburne were hopeful that the minister's health plan for the ER at Roseway would start working, but the closures remained.

On Friday, December 18th, the ER closed at 3:00 p.m. and reopened on Saturday, December 19th at 8:00 a.m. - a total of 17 hours. Then again two days later, on Monday, December 21st, the ER closed at 8:00 a.m. and reopened on Tuesday, December 22nd at 8:00 a.m. - a full 24 hours. On Christmas Eve, 2015, the ER closed at 6:00 p.m. and would not open until December 26th at 8:00 a.m. - a total of 38 hours.

Mr. Speaker, in one week the Roseway ER was closed for 79 hours - to be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

WOMEN: POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT - CELEBRATION

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, today if you lived in Lunenburg, your mayor, your MLA and your MP would all be women. On International Women's Day, March 8th, Lunenburg Mayor Rachel Bailey, myself, and South Shore-St. Margarets MP Bernadette Jordan had the pleasure of hosting an event that celebrated this fact. We are the only jurisdiction in Nova Scotia that can claim this, and I believe in Canada.

This event recognized the past and present with an eye towards the future of women in politics, acknowledging also that our newly-elected school board chair is also a woman, Jennifer Naugler. It was a well-attended event, hosted with the assistance of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and included women and a few men of all ages. It made me proud to be part of this event and to be an example of what is possible and what can be done if you want it and are willing to put the work into achieving it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House join me in thanking the organizers and participants at this event for celebrating women engaged in politics in Lunenburg County - past, present, and future.

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

**JOURNEY OF THE CROSS: N. SYDNEY CHURCHES
- PARTICIPATION THANK**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the churches that took part in the Journey of the Cross on Good Friday in North Sydney. The re-enactment of the route Jesus took carrying the cross reminds people of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection as they take turns carrying the cross.

Typically the Northside churches work together, sharing when they can, to unify the Christian community. It's a true honour to have this opportunity to say thank you to those churches for building a stronger Christian community through this Journey of the Cross.

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

DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE: YOUNG WOMEN - APPLY

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Daughters of the Vote, a new national initiative of Equal Voice. This initiative recognizes a significant event in Canadian history: the 100th Anniversary of the first voting rights for a select number of Canadian women, granted in 1916. Equal Voice is inviting young women ages 18 to 23 to apply to participate in a national initiative in which 338 women, one from each federal riding, will be selected to take their seat in Parliament.

Who will lead the country into its next century? Daughters of the Vote is an initiative to identify and encourage young women who will answer that call. I encourage the many accomplished young women we have here in Nova Scotia to apply online at www.daughtersofthevote.ca, and good luck to all.

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

**CABOT EDUC. CTR. SENIOR BOYS TRAILBLAZERS BASKETBALL TEAM
- NSSAF CHAMPIONSHIP**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Cabot Education Centre Senior Boys Trailblazers basketball team, who capped off their season by winning the NSSAF Division 4 Championship for the first time in school history.

The Trailblazers travelled to Pugwash for the provincial championship tournament and defeated their host - four-time consecutive champions, the Pugwash Panthers - 89 to 85 in a thrilling championship game. I ask you to join me in congratulating all the Trailblazers players and coaches in their fine performance and wish them the best of luck in the future.

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

S. COL. ACADEMY - GOOD DEEDS SHOP

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House of an initiative of South Colchester Academy under the guidance of teacher Caroline Shea.

The Good Deeds Shop, set up at the school with the help of students, makes donated clothing, footwear, and accessories available to any student for the price of a positive act for another person or organization in their community. As a result of the program, students may donate goods they can no longer wear, learn life skills related to preparation of available items, boost their own wardrobes, and give time to community service.

This is a win-win-win-win situation that we could perhaps all use as a model for living.

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

ROSEWAY HOSP. - ER CLOSURES

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the ER closures at Roseway Hospital continued after Christmas into the new year. On Monday, December 28, 2015, the ER closed at 8:00 a.m. and reopened on the 29th at 8:00 a.m. - a total of 24 hours.

On Thursday, December 31, 2015, just a couple of days later, the ER closed at 8:00 a.m. and would not open until January 1st at 8:00 a.m. - a total of 24 hours.

Later that same day, January 1st, the ER closed at 6:00 p.m. and reopened January 2nd at 8:00 a.m. On that same day, the ER closed at 6:00 p.m. and would not open until Monday, January 4th, at 8:00 a.m. - a total of 28 hours.

The Roseway ER was closed for 52 hours this week. To be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HORTON HS INTERAC CLUB: REFUGEE SUPPORT - RECOGNIZE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia can be proud of its efforts to welcome hundreds of refugees to new homes here in our province. Countless community groups and volunteers have come together to support newcomers to our communities.

I rise today to recognize the stellar efforts of Horton High School's Interac Club, a club of about 30 students between Grades 9 and 12. Knowing that their arrival in winter would mark many refugee families' first meeting with snow, the students collected over

100 bags of winter clothing and categorized it all in a database so people could choose what they needed to keep their families warm.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to recognize the impressive team effort of the Horton High Interac Club in supporting and welcoming new families to our province and encourage them in their desire to help others from far and near.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HORNE, DONALD: CHARITY CONTRIBUTIONS - THANK

MR. TIM HOUSTON: As Donald Horne approached his 90th birthday he decided that, following a lifetime of generosity, he would ramp up support for a number of organizations, and he made some particularly impressive financial contributions. It was important to him that he do it now while he could place a cheque in their hands, see their smiles, and see the impact that his contributions were having on those organizations.

Today, at 92 years old, the list of donations he has made is truly breathtaking, including the Aberdeen Hospital, Shriners, Dalhousie, IWK, and the QEII. His gifts are endless, and it always warms my heart to see his smile and supportive laugh when he opens the door and sees me standing there.

Thank you, Donald, for being you.

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

EECD: TUITION INCREASES - STOP

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, and welcome to the Chair. (Applause)

A year ago this government presented a budget that allowed universities to make a one-time market adjustment to tuition. Today, the Dalhousie University Board of Governors is voting to implement tuition increases. Students will be rallying in the Henry Hicks quad at 2:30 p.m., asking the university to stop the fee hikes.

Mr. Speaker, this government has allowed tuition increases of up to 37 per cent, making it more and more difficult for young people to afford post-secondary education. Education should not be a debt sentence.

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

MILLWOOD HS LOCKDOWN: RCMP RESPONSE - THANK

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: I'd like to give a special thank you to the RCMP for their swift response during the Millwood High School incident and lockdown on April 5th. Years of training in quick thinking ensured staff and students remained safe. The timeliness of the response helped to avert what could have been possibly a very tragic outcome.

I would also like to congratulate staff and students at Millwood High School for reacting appropriately during what must have been a terrifying experience. All involved used amazing forethought to contain a situation that could have ended in a most devastating way.

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

MACKINNON, MITCHELL: PORT MORIEN - VOL. EFFORTS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to honour Mitchell MacKinnon of Homeville for the many volunteer hours he gives to the community of Port Morien. Mitchell is a Grade 11 student at Glace Bay High.

He is always available at the Legion whenever they need another pair of hands; he also helps his community collecting for charities such as the Canadian Cancer Society. Mitchell is a role model and an inspiration to all of us.

I am proud to be able to thank and congratulate him for all that he does for Branch 55 Legion in Port Morien and all the many other acts of volunteering that he continues to enjoy doing.

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

MCKAY, MELISSA: COMMUN. SPIRIT - COMMEND

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Today I would like to talk about a young mother of two who volunteers countless hours in my constituency.

Melissa McKay makes a weekly trip down to Quigley's Corner to change the community info sign, usually with her two young children, Bradley and Katie, in tow, and they make this a fun family outing.

Melissa also is the only contact for the sign, which results in many community groups and businesses emailing her with their requests to advertise. She then has to organize the dates for when each of the ads will appear on the sign. Melissa was also one of the first people to volunteer last Christmas to help decorate Quigley's Corner for the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we commend Melissa on her community spirit and willingness to lend a helping hand.

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

SHEA, STEPHEN: STELLAR SERV. - THANK

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, and welcome to the Chair.

I rise today to salute Commissionaire Stephen Shea at Marine Atlantic, who was awarded the CEO commendation for his professional and non-threatening approach when dealing with a distraught individual at Marine Atlantic. Using his former military police experience, he prevented an individual from hurting himself and others, and maintained the safety and security of the Marine Atlantic site.

It's a true honour to have this opportunity to thank Stephen and the commissionaires for their stellar service.

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

ROFE, LIBBY: FUNDRAISING - RECOGNIZE

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Libby Rofe, a six-year-old young woman who gave up getting birthday gifts so that instead she could raise money for Bryony House. This young philanthropist raised \$200 and purchased seven double movie passes with snacks for anyone who needed to enjoy a special day.

Word of Libby's generosity soon spread and Libby's family would arrive home to discover women and children's clothing and Easter gifts for donation to Bryony House. As a result, two carloads of donations were given to Bryony House, contributions Libby and her mum and dad, Heidi and Kris, were very proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Libby Rofe for her kindness and generosity to those less fortunate than her in our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACLEAN, SCOTT: VOLUNTEERING - THANK

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, genuine people are more or less the same on the inside as their behaviour is on the outside. Scott MacLean, a New Glasgow resident, belongs to this rare breed; he treats others kindly and with respect. This is a positive quality

exhibited by Scott every day. Scott and his wife have spent their lives supporting and bringing up their family.

The MacLeans have encouraged their children to be productive members of their community; now they are doing the same with their grandchildren. Helping others is simply second nature to Scott. He is often found driving a neighbour or friend to the grocery store, the bank, a medical appointment or to a church meeting. Scott's faith and his involvement in his church are a very important part of who he is. Volunteering has been a way of life for him and he wouldn't have it any other way. Doing good and being generous to others has been his trademark.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

LAMB, JIMMIE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my entire riding was saddened when a pillar of our community passed away peacefully on April 15th. I felt it was not possible to let the life of James Lamb, who everyone knew as Jimmie, not to be recognized in this House.

Jimmie was a prominent pork producer in our province. He took the lead to move beyond farming and began Meadowbrook Meat Market, a retail presence that grew from a single location in Berwick to being a steady presence at local markets in Halifax and Dartmouth. His supply of local products became a hit with those who sought to buy local and wanted to know that they could trust in the source of their food.

Trust wasn't just something that Jimmy provided those who were concerned about where their food came from but his home community knew that Jimmy was someone who they could rely on. He was a volunteer with important local organizations. He was there when volunteers were needed as the town rallied around the planning and construction of the Apple Dome, later to be renamed the Kings Mutual Century Centre. He also volunteered with the local Rotary Club, the 4-H Club and the Berwick Baptist Church. He loved being able to help others. Brigadoon was one of the recent organizations that benefited from his generosity. He was a compassionate man who will long be remembered by all who knew him.

Jimmie Lamb was also an avid hockey player, having played for years with the Berwick Bruins hockey club. I had the chance to play hockey with and against Jimmie. He played goal with the same intensity as he lived life. A consummate hockey fan, he loved to play and loved to watch. He loved to take his grandchildren on rides on the tractor, loved talking to everyone who he came in contact with. He cherished his family and friends and loved to be surrounded by them, making it fitting that when James Lamb passed last week, he was surrounded by his family who loved him.

I lost a friend last week when Jimmie Lamb passed but Kings West lost an icon.

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

**VAN DONINCK, DR. HELENE/MESSER, MURDO
- WILDLIFE REHABILITATION**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Dr. Helene Van Doninck and her husband Murdo Messer for efforts to rehabilitate injured wildlife and educate the public about wildlife concerns. At the Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre located on their property, they provide an environment replicating the wild habitat, helping to ensure survival upon release. Most notable is the Bald Eagle Flight Recovery Centre, which is the first of its kind in Canada.

Their awareness campaigns have persuaded many hunters to switch to non-lead ammunition, saving the lives of birds and potentially of humans who consume wild meat.

I wish also to offer congratulations to Dr. Van Doninck and Mr. Messer for the recent donation of \$14,000 to this centre from the 100 Women Who Care program.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BRIDGEWATER HS SENIOR BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM
- NSSAF PROV. BANNER**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to congratulate the Bridgewater High School Senior Boys basketball team, as they won the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Division 3 Provincial Banner on March 5th.

Played on their home court, the gold medal game kept fans on the edge of their seat as the Bridgewater Vikings traded the lead back and forth with the Forest Heights Falcons. It took overtime for Bridgewater to win the game.

It takes a dedicated group of volunteers to host a provincial tournament, made up of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Thank you to all who took time out of their busy schedules to make this tournament a success. Congratulations to all the teams who advanced to the provincial tournament. Well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HERON, RETA - PROV. VOL. AWARD CEREMONY (PICTOU CO.)

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and congratulate Reta Heron on being recognized at the 42nd Provincial Volunteer Award Ceremony on April 4, 2016.

Reta has been a dedicated volunteer in Pictou County for more than 50 years. She primarily devotes her time to the palliative care wing at the Aberdeen Hospital. Reta has been an active volunteer with the Pictou County Helpline and the Tearmann House. She volunteers for the Veterans Unit in Pictou, is a trustee at the Durham Community Hall, and is a long-time canvasser for both the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Kidney Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Reta on a well-deserved recognition. Thank you.

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

LARSEN, JONAH: MINING ROCKS! CONTEST - CONGRATS.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, congratulations - you look great up there in your new Chair.

I'd like to congratulate a Citadel High student who recently submitted a video to the Mining ROCKS! contest. The Mining Association of Nova Scotia opens this contest to all junior high and high school students across our province. Jonah Larsen is a student at Citadel and was runner-up for the People's Choice Award in this contest.

The Mining ROCKS! contest is a fun way to teach our younger generation about the mining industry's vital place in our provincial history. Students are asked to explore the topic from an economic, environmental, and beneficial standpoint, and anything else that piques their interest. It also encourages their innovation and creativity when designing their videos to be submitted.

I want to congratulate Jonah Larsen and all the other participants across Nova Scotia who took part in this contest. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**VEINOT, DORIS: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
(EVANGELINE CHAPTER) - PIN (70 YR.)**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Order of the Eastern Star, Evangeline Chapter No. 15 in Kentville presented Doris Veinot, one of their faithful members, with a 70-year pin. Doris has been a very supportive member of the chapter and served in many offices within the organization, including Worthy Matron. Doris is an inspiration to her co-members and continues to attend meetings regularly. The Order of the Eastern Star's charitable foundation activities include support for Alzheimer's disease research and juvenile diabetes and asthma research and providing bursaries to students of religious studies.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Doris on her very lengthy dedication and the work she has done for the Order of the Eastern Star. Thank you.

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

COLE HBR. BOYS & GIRLS CLUB - CYSTIC FIBROSIS FUNDRAISING

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take some time today to thank the Boys and Girls Club of Cole Harbour for their visit to my office on April 4, 2016. The youth came in to visit and announce their involvement in a cystic fibrosis fundraiser they were working on. It was quite a sight to see 12 or 15 youngsters get off their bus right in front of my office to come parading in to say hello. I was touched by their friendly gesture and moved by their enthusiasm and willingness to get involved in a worthwhile cause. The smiles and questions were very bright as well.

The Boys and Girls Club of Cole Harbour provides our young people with excellent opportunities and helps them with developing the building blocks for a promising future and for engagement in our community. I would like to also acknowledge the good work of all those involved in the Boys and Girls Club - in particular Ryan Rutledge, Program Lead for the Cole Harbour site, for his excellent leadership and work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

POLLEY, PETER/POLYCORP: LONG LAKE PROV. PARK TRAIL - OPENING

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a constituent, Peter Polley, and his company Polycorp for working tirelessly to help open a new five-kilometre trail in Long Lake Provincial Park in the riding of Halifax Armdale. The provincial park has long been a favourite place to visit for locals and many people for its natural and beautiful scenery and activities ranging from hiking to kayaking.

However, access to the park had always been difficult. Two developers, Polycorp and Atlantic Developments, are spending about \$500,000 to build a parking lot and a trail system. The trail will connect Northwest Arm Drive, Old Sambro Road and Peter Saulnier Drive to the existing trail system. They have collaborated with the Long Lake Provincial Park Association and the provincial government to make this a reality, thereby making Armdale and surrounding areas a better place to live, work and play.

I am pleased to be joining the Premier and all the community on Earth Day this Friday, April 22nd in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**VALLEY SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM: N. KENTVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST
- BUILDING DONATION**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, an event took place recently that had a huge impact on the non-profit group Valley Search and Rescue Team. Its president, Ashley Perry, accepted the keys to a new home for the organization. This is in part thanks to the sizeable donation of the North Kentville Church of Christ building and land by congregation members and minister Ray Fisher.

The Valley Search and Rescue team now have a space to meet, train and build their much-needed vehicle garage. To top it off the congregation signed a lease agreement with Valley Search and Rescue to remain meeting in that place they had gone to worship for the last 30 years.

I ask members to join with me to congratulate these two groups for their wise sense of community fellowship, visionary consideration, and recognize the successful win-win situation for both these organizations.

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

EAST. COMMUN. YOUTH ASSOC.: YOUTH CTR. - OPENING

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, the Eastern Community Youth Association has been providing their community with a vital service since 1999. They are a registered charity serving youth ages five to 18 in Canso and neighbouring communities, through recreational educational programming in partnership with other local, non-profit organizations, governmental and non-governmental agencies.

After months of fundraising, including a very successful Chase the Ace and preparations, the ECYA youth centre hosted an open house in their new space on April 10, 2016. This was a great way to learn about the programs, including programs in canoeing, kayaking, shelter-making and camping in the Canso area.

A large thank you to Marie Lumsden, manager of the ECYA, the board of directors and all the volunteers and participants who make these programs possible. I am proud of the positive impact they are creating every day for the youth of this area, our future leaders.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**WITHROWS FARM MARKET & ROCKY KNOLL FARM
- SUCCESS WISH**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Spring marks the beginning of a wonderful time in our province. Soon our farmers will deliver a bounty of fresh local products to tempt the foodie in all of us. Fruits, berries, produce, meats, artisan cheese will all be on full display. The hard-working producers deserve our full support.

I rise today to recognize Withrows Farm Market and Rocky Knoll Farm. The Withrow family has been part of Hants East for generations with their home farm found in Rawdon. In the 1970s and the 1980s the family opened three farm markets, in Rawdon, Belnan and Mount Uniacke. Not only does the successful family business sell their own naturally-raised pork, beef and poultry, alongside East Hants produce, but they are committed to sharing all that Nova Scotia has to offer. They are proud of the products they offer and their fellow Nova Scotian farmers and artisans who produce them.

As the Withrows farm markets reopen this month, we wish them continued success and thank them for helping Hants East eat local.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

LEDUC, MICHAEL: BIG COVE YMCA CAMP - RETIREMENT

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about Michael LeDuc, general manager of the Big Cove YMCA camp for 30 years. He began as a camper from 1986 to 1992, followed by being a program staff from 1993 to 2000 and from 2001 to 2008 spent time at other YMCAs, as well as earning his teaching degree and teaching in Hong Kong and in Canada.

Michael has impacted the lives of over 300 staff, 4,000 summer campers and 10,000 outdoor centre participants; increased the number of campers each summer, from 551 to 765; and introduced Little Big Cove, a three-night program for young, first-time campers, in 2013, which increased attendance each year by 69 campers.

We would like to thank Mr. LeDuc for his many years of service on the job, and wish him all the best in his retirement and away from a summer without going to camp.

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

MACLENNAN, SARAH: GOOD DAY CAFÉ - OPENING

MR. BILL HORNE: Thank you, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, and congratulations to yourself. I'm very pleased today to rise and congratulate Sarah MacLennan on the opening of her new business in Fall River.

A welcome addition to the community, the Good Day Café is a small, friendly café featuring homemade sandwiches, soups, and sweets. Sarah sources local produce, meat, and ingredients to provide a simple and delicious menu. Sarah is from Australia and includes family recipes that she grew up on. The café opened its doors in early March and has been very successful over the last month.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish her the very best of success with her new business and a promising future ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

STRICKLAND, WALLACE & PEARL - ANNIV. (65th)

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize two constituents of mine, who have marked a very special milestone together.

On April 17th, Wallace and Pearl Strickland celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Strickland are held in the highest esteem by all those who know them. They have long been dedicated contributors to their community, church, and to their loving family. Mr. Strickland is a former long-serving councillor for the Town of Yarmouth and is still happy and eager to assist anyone who reaches out to him.

I'm happy and proud to call Mr. and Mrs. Strickland my friends, and I'm fortunate to have grown up with them in our neighbourhood on Grand Street.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Wallace - or Wally - and Pearl Strickland on 65 happy, meaningful, and inspiring years together.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SCHULTZ, BERNIE & NANCY - FAM. VOLS. OF YR. (2016)

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Life has not always been a bowl of cherry cheesecake for Bernie Schultz. Anybody who knows Bernie knows that creating amazing desserts is just one of his many talents.

Bernie has made no secret of the fact that he has come through great personal trials - both homelessness and substance abuse. The triumph over those obstacles is a testament to his determination, and with a little help he can light the path for many more to follow. Travelling that path with Bernie is his amazing wife of 15 years, Nancy Schultz.

Bernie and Nancy co-founded the Last House on the Block Society in 2012. Their non-profit acts as a community outreach to people in recovery from addiction and abuse, and to the homeless.

Their efforts have grown and this past Christmas, Santa Under the Bridge, their largest project, delivered 190 gift packs through 15 different community organizations to those in need. The packs contained hand-knit scarves - including those knit by Bernie, Nancy, and yours truly - and other items of comfort to clients and residents of Laing House, Freedom Foundation, Direction 180, and the Brunswick Street Mission, to name a few.

It was this amazing body of work, Mr. Speaker, which earned Bernie and Nancy Schultz the distinction of being named the 2016 Family Volunteers of the Year.

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

MUIR, WAYNE: C.B. SPORTS HALL OF FAME - INDUCTION

MR. DAVID WILTON: I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize Wayne Muir on his induction into the Cape Breton Sports Hall of Fame. Unlike many retired hockey players, Wayne was able to retire in a winning year.

In an impressive career that spanned almost two decades, Wayne started his hockey career as a member of the Cape Breton Colonels Major Midget team. He was a member of the Team Atlantic that competed in the Esso Cup International Hockey Tournament at the age of 16, and was a member of the Cape Breton Oilers in the 1990-91 season.

Although he played for many other different teams, he decided to hang up his skates in 2008 while playing as a left-winger for the Brantford Blast. It just so happens that that was the year his team, the Brantford Blast, won the national senior hockey title at the 100th Anniversary of the Allan Cup.

Please join me in congratulating Wayne Muir on his induction into the Cape Breton Sports Hall of Fame.

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

NORRIS, ALLIE - HOCKEY ACHIEVEMENTS

MR. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize Allie Norris from Hatchet Lake. Allie has played high-level hockey for many years and has been on teams that have won provincials, travelling all over the U.S. and Canada. This summer, Allie has been selected to play on a female hockey team travelling to Montreal and Toronto, for 10 days of hockey training and a tournament. In 2015, Allie went with a female baseball team to represent Canada for the Canada-Cuba Goodwill Tour. While there they donated thousands of dollars' worth of school supplies, baseball gear and toiletries and helped develop girls baseball in Cuba.

Allie played for the Team Nova Scotia Provincial U-16 female baseball team as a 13-year-old last summer. In the Fall of 2015, she also played on an U-14 baseball team and travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador to play in the Atlantic Tournament where they finished in first place.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Allie on her sporting achievements, and wish her well this summer when she will be representing Nova Scotia again on the U-16 female provincial baseball team in Ontario at Nationals.

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

WOODBERRY, ANDREW JOHN - BOXING SUCCESS

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Andrew John Woodberry, a 12-year-old boxer from Membertou who entered his first tournament this past year in Brampton, Ontario. In his first tournament, with 370 boxers from around the world participating, Andrew took home the gold in the pinweight division making his parents George and Delores very proud. Andrew is trained by Greg and Daniel Martin of the Membertou Box Club and will continue with his boxing dream later this month in Membertou.

I ask the House to please join me in congratulating Andrew on his success now and to the future. We are very proud of you, Andrew.

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

ELECTRIC CITY: WEYMOUTH HIST. SOC./ WEYMOUTH WATERFRONT DEV. COMM. - PRESERVATION EFFORTS

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in many of our communities, there are parts of our history that continue to capture our imagination. One of ours is la Nouvelle-France, a town built around a lumber operation. In 1892, Jean Jacques Stehelin moved his family there from France. Soon it had a wooden railroad built nearby to Weymouth and its own source of electricity. The community did thrive until the end of World War I but would not be able to survive the post-war slump in lumber prices.

Years later, the remains of the foundations of these buildings and stories of their descendants and families and workers have been remembered. Last Fall, Paul Stehelin relayed his family's stories to a packed house in the Weymouth Historical Society. At this meeting the Weymouth Waterfront Development Committee presented its plans to preserve this history. This includes explaining some of the settlement's artifacts and eventually offering guided tours of the site.

I commend both organizations for their work to preserve this unique gem of our history and their efforts to make it a present day destination possible. So many people continue to be curious about the place that was once known as the Electric City.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

SMITH, BETTE - WINDSOR PROV. VOL. AWARD

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Bette Smith who, after 43 years as a registered nurse and instructor, is concerned with the number of people she saw who could not afford food and prescriptions and opened the House of Hospitality at the Windsor United Baptist Church where she and her friends personally fund and prepare a hot meal every Thursday for up to 40 people.

At 80 years young, Bette continues to volunteer her time in the hospital gift shop, is a member of the hospital auxiliary and serves as a board secretary and Chair of the Board Development Committee with the Windsor Elms Village. I'd like to congratulate Bette Smith on receiving the Provincial Volunteer Award for the town of Windsor and wish her all the very best.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

SPRYFIELD & DIST. COMMUN. MARKET - OPENING (05/15/16)

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to invite all members of the Legislature and everyone in HRM and Halifax Atlantic (Interruption), including the member for Argyle-Barrington, to the new Spryfield and District Community Market opening Sunday, May 15th at the Spryfield rink.

What started out as a student project with myself and the Dalhousie School of Sustainability two years ago has become a reality thanks to the hard work of people like Marian Munro and Julia Kemp and the entire committee. I invite all of you to attend. Enjoy.

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

**GREATER HAMMONDS PLAINS-LUCASVILLE MEMORIAL COMM.:
MONUMENT - CONGRATS.**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the work of the Greater Hammonds Plains-Lucasville Memorial Committee led by Lieutenant-Commander Todd Brayman. In the past couple of months, they have come to the end of their road in erecting a monument that stands proudly in Uplands Park, just off of the Hammonds Plains Road.

Together with the assistance of all levels of government, First Nations, and the surrounding community members, they have put together what is really a fantastic project. It is certainly a prime indication of the support that Hammonds Plains-Lucasville has for veterans, for our cadets, and for our service men and women.

I really want to express to everybody in this House and to the people abroad that we are very thankful for the work they have done. It is important for people to continue to acknowledge the service men and women in our country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

INSIDE OUT CLEANING SERV. - LG. BUS. AWARD RECIPIENT (2015)

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, recently I had the pleasure of attending the Lunenburg-Queens Business Excellence Awards. It is here in the neighbouring counties of Lunenburg and Queens that we recognize the businesses that form the backbones of their respective communities. I am proud to stand here and recognize Inside Out Cleaning Services for being named as the 2015 Large Business Award recipient. Inside Out is a family business that has a stellar reputation for customer service and, of course, for cleaning. In fact it's the business that cleans my office.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members join me in congratulating Inside Out for receiving the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Large Business Award, and to wish them continued success in business.

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

GOULD, LYRIC - N.S. HERITAGE DAY FLAG DESIGN

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lyric Gould from Eskasoni on her winning submission to the Nova Scotia Heritage Day Flag Design contest.

A panel, chosen by Arts Nova Scotia, chose five illustrations from 240 that were submitted. Lyric was one of the five students whose illustrations inspired the final flag design. The new flag is a lasting symbol of the holiday that honours the people, places, and events that have contributed to this province's history and culture.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Lyric, and wish her success in her future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

DEVOUR! THE FOOD FILM FEST: CO-DIRECTORS - THANK

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, the fifth edition of Devour! The Food Film Fest, in Wolfville, was a stunning success. Co-directors Michael Howell and Lia Rinaldo pulled off an impressive event, bringing thousands of visitors to Wolfville and fuelling interest in our burgeoning local food market - 2,500 people attended the Food Truck Rally alone.

The opening gala featured Hollywood actor Bill Pullman, who thoroughly enjoyed his visit and professed a new love for Honeycrisp apples. All told, there were 30 chefs, 20 workshops, 15 tasting tours, more than a dozen dinners, parties and events, and more than 75 new food and wine films screened from around the world. Devour! is now the largest food and film festival in the world.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to extend thanks and congratulations to Mr. Howell and Ms. Rinaldo on their vision and hard work and on the impressive success of Devour! 5.

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

SACKVILLE-BEAVER BANK - OPEN HOUSE/TOWN HALL MEETINGS

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Sackville-Beaver Bank for attending our central Open House on March 17th. This provided a venue for open discussions and feedback concerning Sackville-Beaver Bank. There were many positive discussions and a great opportunity to get better acquainted with each other.

Additionally, two town hall meetings took place on April 12th and April 13th at opposite ends of my constituency, both of which were very successful and resulted in clear identification of local issues that are being followed up on. My aim is to foster open and ongoing communication with the constituents of Sackville-Beaver Bank.

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

HUNTER, AMANDA - COUPONING/DONATIONS

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, there is a wonderful community member who has decided to give back. Amanda Hunter uses her pastime of couponing to be able to purchase items to donate to those in need. Recently Amanda contacted our office in search of families who could use a helping hand. Within an hour of that phone call she was dropping off several boxes and bags of items that could go, in turn, right back out the door to help two families who were in desperate need.

I was overwhelmed by the generosity of this young lady who has since remained in contact with our office and offered to help to do more in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in thanking Amanda for being so selfless and wanting to give back. Her generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

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

STUBBARD, GEORGE - PORT HAWKESBURY

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to further celebrate George Stubbard of Port Hawkesbury on receiving the 2016 Provincial Volunteer Award on April 4th.

George has been a tireless and dedicated volunteer for the Strait Pirates Junior B Hockey team for many years. George freely gives of his time to assist the team and make sure that their equipment is in good repair, their jerseys and socks are clean and ready, and their skates are sharpened perfectly. George is something of a jack of all trades, a one-man support system for the team. He's even provided medical support, and acted as a trainer beginning in the 2015 season.

George's dedication to his job and willingness to do what needs to be done is reflected in the many successful teams he's been part of. His hard work is respected and very much appreciated by every Strait Pirates Junior B player, coach, and executive as well as parents, alumni, and local fans of the team.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating George Stubbard as the Town of Port Hawkesbury Volunteer of the Year.

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

KEEFE, JANICE - PROGRESS WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE AWARD (2015)

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Janice Keefe, recipient of a 2015 Progress Women of Excellence Award. The annual Progress Women of Excellence Awards honour 19 inspirational women who play an important role in our community. Women like Janice Keefe, who are at the pinnacle of their professions, are recognized and honoured at this annual event.

Janice Keefe is a professor of Family Studies and Gerontology at Mount St. Vincent University, the Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology, and Director of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging. Dr. Keefe's research areas are caregiving policy and practice, continuing

care policy, and projecting the needs of older Canadians. She volunteers on provincial, national, and international advisory committees, as well as with many community groups.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Janice Keefe and congratulate her on this prestigious award. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH BREAKFAST: ALZHEIMER'S SOC. - THANK

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Alzheimer's Research Breakfast that took place at the Bridgewater Baptist Church Hall on January 9th. With over 300 guests in attendance, we were treated to remarks from Teepa Snow, a dementia and Alzheimer's expert whose words further enhanced my understanding of this devastating diagnosis. The crowd was fully engaged in what Ms. Snow had to say, and I heard many positive comments in the days and weeks after this event.

I'd like to acknowledge the time and effort the Alzheimer's Society puts into making this event the tremendous success it was. I would like to also take this opportunity to wish Joan Parks-Hubley, the coordinator for the South Shore Chapter of the Alzheimer's Society, a happy retirement.

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

MACDONALD, DUNCAN & JUNE - ANNIV. (50th)

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend best wishes to my constituents Duncan MacDonald and June MacDonald, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on April 9th. This couple lived in various communities across Canada, from Vancouver to Toronto, then decided to land and take up residence here in Colby Village in 1984. They are an exceptional couple and living legacies in our community, and it was an honour to deliver a congratulatory certificate to this vibrant couple in person and say hello.

I'd like to offer them congratulations on their long marriage and many wishes for the future.

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: BUDGET WINDFALL - TRUSTWORTHINESS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, how gullible do they think we are? How gullible do they think Nova Scotians are? For two years everything was dark and stormy. Things had to be cut and people had to sacrifice, but all of a sudden today we're supposed to believe that the heavens have opened and the sun is shining and money is going to rain down on the government in the months ahead. That's what we're being told today.

Where have we heard that before? We heard it from the NDP, and the Liberal caucus was the first one to criticize them for inflating their revenue estimates by hundreds of millions of dollars by proposing a health budget with no new money - completely unrealistic. And now we have a new trick, \$110 million, one-time, coming from another government.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is pretty direct. How can Nova Scotians trust a budget that has such rosy scenarios in a one-time other-government windfall?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all Nova Scotians for the tremendous work they've been doing with our government over the last two years. We've been able to move ourselves back to fiscal health. We know the job is not done. There is more work to be done. There's no one on this side of the House saying the money is here and popping the champagne corks. There's a lot of work still ahead of us.

We were very transparent with Nova Scotians. When the \$110 million arrived from two other governments - from the federal government and the municipal government - we did what we believe Nova Scotians would want any reasonable government to do, which is pay down the debt that's associated with that.

At the same time, the hard work that Nova Scotians have been doing to bring us back to fiscal health - we heard from Nova Scotians. They wanted us to invest in their children. They wanted us to make sure child care was more affordable. They wanted to make sure that classrooms were being funded properly. They wanted to make sure that people with disabilities in this province were treated with the respect they deserve.

I want to thank all Nova Scotians for continuing to work with us over the last number of years. I want to thank them for continuing to work with us as we go forward to provide good government for the people of Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: It is no thanks to the people of Nova Scotia to present them with a budget that's based on such ridiculous false information as we saw here today, Mr. Speaker. They know better. They've been down this road before. They were prepared to trust this

government when they came in when they said that they would be good financial managers. They threw that away today.

Let's talk about \$110 million that's supposed to be for the World Trade Centre. Today, suddenly it has a new name. It's called a contribution to fiscal capacity for a provincial health care complex. But it's for the World Trade Centre; it's so our kids don't have to pay for that building over the next 25 years.

I'll ask the Premier, how can Nova Scotians trust a budget when it deliberately misdirects the money that was meant for the Trade Centre?

THE PREMIER: I want to tell all Nova Scotians that the fact of the matter is this government borrowed money for the Trade Centre in partnership with two other levels of government. The federal government and municipal government contributed back to us \$110 million. We did what I believe every Nova Scotian would expect us to do: we took that money and we paid down the debt associated with that. That allows us to have capacity in our debt management to be able to invest in the new health complex in our province. Unlike other governments when they were given the choice to take that money and spend it or to do the right thing and pay down the debt, we did the right thing and paid down the debt so we can invest in the things Nova Scotians want us to invest in.

MR. BAILLIE: Nova Scotians count on this government to be honest about what it is doing. That should be rule number 1. They're spending that \$110 million four times - not once but four. It came from some other government.

In one day, we're told it's going to make this year look better. Oh, no, it's not; it's going to pay down debt. Oh, no it's not; it's for the trade centre. Oh, no, it's not; it's for a new VG. Well, which is it? You can't spend the same money four times.

So I'll ask the Premier, how can Nova Scotians trust a budget that accounts for the same money four different ways?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you and tell all Nova Scotians that that money is accounted for once. The only thing that member said that I understood this week is that his accounting rules are rusty.

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

PREM.: BUDGET - ELECTORAL POLITICS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, in December, the government presented a doom-and-gloom budget forecast update prior to introducing Bill No. 148. Now, just a

few short months later, the government is presenting a paper surplus as we move closer to an election.

My question for the Premier is, why does he continue to play short-term electoral politics despite pleas from Nova Scotians to act differently?

THE PREMIER: That government had a choice when they were in power, and they saddled up to the union bosses in this province to buy favour. We made a decision to do what Nova Scotians wanted us to do, Mr. Speaker, which was to shore up services, invest in health care and home care, make sure the child care workers in this province are being remunerated properly, and make sure people with disabilities are being respected in this province. We made choices. Governing is about choices. We're standing with the people of Nova Scotia, not the big union bosses.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, this budget suggests that the province is not in the dire financial situation the Premier has been suggesting for the last two and a half years. This raises questions about the need for the government's meagre wage pattern offered to public sector workers.

My question for the Premier is, given this updated fiscal outlook, will his government commit to negotiating a wage pattern with our public sector workers at the bargaining table?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I think if she had been paying attention to what happened across this process, there wasn't a single person in the union across this province who disagreed with the wage pattern. If you listen to the media scrums, if you listen to what they say across this province, what they were looking for was continuing the conversation.

They say we didn't negotiate long enough. They were okay with the wage pattern, Mr. Speaker, we're okay with it, too. We're going to invest in those Nova Scotians who were forgotten about by that government.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, we learned today that much of the projected surplus will be used to increase the province's fiscal capacity. However, the government is leading us to believe that this money is set aside for a new health complex. My question for the Premier is, what guarantee do Nova Scotians have that this money will be spent on the Nova Scotia health complex?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I said, that money that came from two other levels of government, the municipality and the federal government, was to go against the convention centre debt that this province had borrowed. We had taken that money, did the right thing. We're paying

down that debt, which gives us capacity to borrow money to do the much-needed health complex that Nova Scotians are telling us they want us to focus on.

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

PREM.: BUDGET WINDFALL - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only thing getting rusty today is the Premier's credibility and it's going downhill fast. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is not an accounting policy. Taking money that was to relieve our kids of the burden of the trade centre and using it this year to fund a new VG, which we'll see some day what that is, that is rusty credibility to say the least.

I'll ask the Premier very directly, why not just honestly tell Nova Scotians that that \$110 million is actually for the trade centre and get on with the real plan for the VG?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I put my credibility against that member's in the last election and I'm prepared to do it in the next one.

MR. BAILLIE: Well that's quite an answer, Mr. Speaker. The people of Nova Scotia trusted this government when it came in that they were serious, but that has gone now. When a government brings in a budget like this, based on such rosy scenarios that they know aren't going to happen, that takes \$110 million that is supposed to be for one thing and uses it for something else, that is not credible, it is not trustworthy, but that is what is happening today.

I'd like to ask the Premier, why doesn't he do the right thing and bring us a VG that isn't paid for with somebody else's money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure the honourable member that we are doing absolutely the right thing by taking the money that was associated with the trade centre, paying down the debt, which provides us an opportunity to have debt capacity to invest in the health complex that Nova Scotia expects us to do.

Every other Nova Scotian understands the fact, Mr. Speaker, to pay down your credit card. Don't set aside a bunch of money with low interest. Paying down the debt will give us capacity to be able to invest in the very things they won't.

The honourable member wants us to set aside money for a car a year in advance, before we get it, while we are being drowned by our own mortgage, Mr. Speaker. We decided to pay down our mortgage to make sure we can make that investment.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SPENDING FREEZE - JUSTIFY

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row the Minister of Health and Wellness has frozen our provincial health spending. Across our province ER closures are rampant, home care wait times are skyrocketing, mental health services are harder to access, and families can't find a family doctor.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, given these health care realities, how can the minister justify freezing spending for the second year in a row in the Department of Health and Wellness?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite looked closely, he would see that there was quite a movement of monies from Health and Wellness into Communities, Culture and Heritage, money also moved into the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and if he had looked really closely he would have seen that we've invested an additional \$38 million in the Health and Wellness budget.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, if the minister would keep speaking about what he has done in the Health and Wellness budget, this year's budget the minister cut \$3.1 million for our province's nursing homes.

We know the wait-list has grown in Nova Scotia. There are seniors today waiting for placement for long-term care. So how can the minister justify cutting \$3 million from nursing homes, given our province's health needs, especially our seniors looking for long-term care placement?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we can address many of those details during the Budget Estimates. We made a commitment to move to a much stronger home care capacity, and a \$14 million investment will go a long way to reduce those wait-lists.

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

PREM.: BUDGET - INCOME TAX PROJECTIONS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Premier should be thanking Nova Scotians for today is the amazing amount of new income tax he plans to collect from them if this budget is to be believed. Their own projections, which are so ridiculous, say they're going to get \$140 million more out of income tax from the people of Nova Scotia. There's no hard work being done by the Liberals; it's the people of Nova Scotia they're calling on through more taxes this year.

Of course, it's not going to happen, there aren't more people, they aren't making more in wages. This is a ridiculous projection. So how can Nova Scotians trust a budget that is based on the assumption they're going to pay \$140 million more in income tax?

THE PREMIER: One of the things that the honourable member and I can agree on is that we all should thank Nova Scotians for the tremendous work they've been doing in helping our government get back to fiscal health, and we have more work to do - telling us the things they want us to invest in like child care, and classrooms across this province, investing in making sure that people with disabilities are treated with the respect they deserve, and working with small-business owners to create more job opportunities, Mr. Speaker, as you would have heard in the Budget Speech.

Youth employment is up in this province, business confidence is at an all-time high compared to Canada, our population is at an all-time high - those are all positive signs. We're looking forward with employers to go out and hire those hard-working Nova Scotians and continue to build on our economy and to keep our confidence high.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, at this rate the people of Nova Scotia, the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, can't afford to have this Premier keep thanking them by taking more of their tax dollars, \$140 million; the workforce is actually shrinking, that's what he seems to be missing. Wages are not going up by that much. They were the first ones, the Liberal caucus, to criticize the NDP for making up these numbers. Now this government is doing the same thing.

So I'll ask the Premier, why did he choose a higher tax bill for Nova Scotians when they already pay so much in income tax?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question - that is not at all what we did. Tax rates are not changing in this province. We are continuing to make sure that - Nova Scotians told us they wanted us to shore up public services. We're going to continue to shore up those public services, investing in Nova Scotians who require those investments.

You know, we have great examples across our region of when governments decide they're going to follow the path of that particular Leader by cutting and slashing taxes. New Brunswick is battling that very thing which happened under a former government. Newfoundland and Labrador introduced a budget, Mr. Speaker, \$2 billion in debt after they slashed taxes building their future on resource revenue. Nova Scotians want us to do the right thing: ensure that we invest in stable public services while at the same time provide a competitive environment for investment, for job growth, and allow the public sector to drive that opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS - TRUSTWORTHINESS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it turns out we do agree on something, because I absolutely would like to see some real tax relief for the families of Nova Scotia, who pay the highest tax in the country - the highest income taxes, the highest sales taxes, and in many cases the highest property taxes. But for every year into the future that this government looks forward in this budget, they're going to be stuck with the highest tax in the country. No wonder the economy is stuck; it's not a coincidence. On sales tax, we are supposed to believe that Nova Scotians, the same number of them. With the same income, are going to magically pay \$45 million more in HST. That dwarfs the tiny pretend surplus that the government is trying put over on us.

How can Nova Scotians trust a budget that is based on them paying so much more in HST?

THE PREMIER: Because Nova Scotians are much more optimistic and confident than the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

MR. BAILLIE: They're also not suckers, Mr. Speaker. They've seen this movie before. They saw it with the NDP.

A government says there's no money for two years, and then all of a sudden everything's better. They use these tax projections to make it look that way. You and I know, Mr. Speaker - or maybe not you, but I think any reasonable person would know that that's not what's going to happen. (Interruptions) It's not what's going to happen. This is not right.

Every Nova Scotian watching today knows exactly what's going on here: that a government that told them one thing for two years now is trying to get them to believe that everything is fine, that they're going to suddenly have another \$40 million in HST to pay and another \$100 million in income tax to pay to make the government look good. It's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

How can Nova Scotians trust the budget when it is based on such faulty assumptions?

THE PREMIER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think you're a reasonable guy.

Nova Scotians have worked with this government over the last number of years to make very difficult choices. All those Nova Scotians are sharing in the pain that it has taken us to get back to fiscal health.

No one on this side of the House said the job is done. We will require those Nova Scotians to continue to help us get back to greater fiscal balance so that we can invest in

the things that Nova Scotians told us are important to them: making sure child care is affordable, investing in classrooms across this province, providing people with disabilities the respect they deserve in this province, and working with private sector entrepreneurs to drive job opportunities and graduate opportunities programs. All of those things are positive.

I want to assure the honourable member that every member on this side of the House does not believe the job is done. We're going to continue to work with those optimistic Nova Scotians and continue to prove him wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

GAMING: VLT MACHINES - TAX INCREASE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Today's budget revealed that the Liberals plan to take another \$27 million from Nova Scotians using VLT machines. It's wrong that the Liberals are targeting vulnerable Nova Scotians. In Opposition, the now Minister of Health and Wellness said balancing the books on the backs of Nova Scotia's problem gamblers is not an economic strategy.

My question to the Minister responsible for Part I of the Gaming Control Act is, does this minister believe that balancing the budget on the backs of problem gamblers is an economic strategy?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: As the member would know, the decision was made to cancel the My-Play System, which was clearly not working at addressing the issue of problem gambling. As a result of that, we have seen recreational gamblers return to playing the VLTs, which has brought the revenue up. I should point out to the member that if he goes back and looks historically, even with the revenues today, they are still less than what was actually coming in as revenue prior to the My-Play System.

MR. HOUSTON: I think if you cancel the My-Play System without a plan to help problem gamblers, which this government did in 2014, and then see revenues go up, it's probably not a surprise to anyone what might have been happening there. Since the cancellation of the My-Play System, gambling revenues from VLTs have increased \$38 million, and this government is banking on that to pick up another \$27 million this year on top of that. If you make no change in investing in helping people gamble responsibly, then you should expect revenue to go up.

My question is, why is the minister okay with taking millions more from vulnerable Nova Scotians but not providing support for problem gamblers?

MR. SAMSON: As Nova Scotians would be aware, the VLTs that are in place now have a number of mechanisms on them to remind users of how long they've been playing

and how much they have inserted, safety mechanisms that didn't exist in the past. Those are there. Again, the My-Play System was not working. There currently is no other software within Canada that has shown to have been able to address issues of problem gambling. Once the My-Play System was removed, there was an expectation that there would be an increase in revenue, but I should point out again that the revenue today is still far less than what was being received prior to the My-Play System being implemented.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: PERSONAL INCOME TAX - ESTIMATES

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. In the budget the personal income tax is estimated to increase by 4.1 per cent. Now, to put that into context, quick math shows you that would mean 20,000 new jobs in Nova Scotia, or some pretty substantial pay increases, which obviously we all hope happen, yet according to Statistics Canada their latest data shows the province's labour force has dropped in every year, including last year, since 2012.

On what basis is the personal income tax estimated to increase when Statistics Canada says the labour force is declining and continues to do so?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Thank you to the member for the question. The process by which we build our estimates and the forecasts that go into the budget process, especially with respect to income tax projections, relies on the information provided by the federal government.

The federal government manages and administers the taxes, the income taxes, both personal and corporate. They provided the updated information to us. We have an obligation to use the most recent data provided by them. We use the data we had in place by late January to influence the forecast and the modelling we used in this budget.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer, and of course the data comes from elsewhere, but it's this minister's responsibility to ensure that it matches other data they have. The data that the Department of Finance and Treasury Board links to from Statistics Canada shows that although the unemployment rate has gone down, the actual labour participation in this province has decreased in every single year since 2012, which means there are less people working - and if you actually look at the average salaries, average salaries in the province have gone down, so the math doesn't work, that you could then have more income tax revenue next year and certainly not by the amount indicated.

As I said, some quick math shows that it would take about 20,000 new jobs to make up the difference between the estimate from last year and the estimate from this year. Mr. Speaker, what allowance is made in the budget if that number is incorrect?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as with every budget, it's a forward-looking document based on the best information we have available at the time those documents are prepared. We bring our estimates and our assumption both for economic variables to experts from the private sector, as well as academics, to assess the reasonableness of the assumptions we make. The Auditor General reviews our assumptions and our estimates so the provisions and the work that was done by the public servants who do the analysis on behalf of government was done and has passed the reasonableness test with, again, private sector academic as well as the Auditor General. So we stand by the numbers that we have in our budget.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROG.
- AG RECOMMENDATIONS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. There were 17 recommendations to address gaps in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program identified by the Auditor General in 2013, and only 13 of them have been followed. Four years later the AG has stated that he is not happy with the program's result - and I will table that. Noting the failure to implement the remaining recommendations, the Auditor General said that it wasn't done and we didn't think that was reasonable.

So my question to the minister is, in light of recent cases that have shown lapses in the prescription monitoring program, will the minister explain why all the recommendations proposed back in 2012 were not accepted?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, all the recommendations were accepted. If we take a look at those that have not been fully implemented to date, we'll see that three of those are directly related to IT. The last contract is out and that work will be completed in June.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it's critically important that the access to prescription drugs is properly controlled and monitored. We know a recent case raised concerns almost six years ago. The minister has indicated that we're heading for stronger legislation associated with this program.

So my question to the minister is, will he table the legislation in this session to finally address the gaping holes in the system and help keep prescription drugs off the street?

MR. GLAVINE: I thank the member opposite, a former Minister of Health, for a very timely and important question as we now look at the PMP, I am pleased to say we'll

be having an external review. That request has already gone out, and we need that review before we put together the legislation. The goal is to have legislation for the Fall sitting.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: PICTOU CO. HEALTH SERV.
- REALLOCATION CONFIRM**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. As the minister stated last week in Question Period, myself and fellow colleagues from Pictou Centre and Pictou East met with representatives from the Nova Scotia Health Authority. We were told that funds originally designated for the now non-existent mental health unit at the Aberdeen Regional Hospital have been reallocated to the Colchester East Hants Health Centre to increase their mental health beds from 10 to 14.

Will the minister stand in his place and confirm that money which was originally designated for mental health services in Pictou County has indeed been reallocated to the Colchester East Hants Health Centre?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the member should understand from the information provided by Dr. Courey, we know that there has been an increase in community capacity in Pictou. We know that it was an uncertified unit that was at the Aberdeen; it was not a true mental health unit. We have the expertise at Colchester to provide the very best treatment for trauma and acute mental health conditions for an area.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, since we know that that money was originally designated for Pictou County residents, can the minister confirm that the four extra beds being paid for by Pictou County residents and resources that should be going to their hospital will be used to service Pictou County residents in the event of their mental health crisis?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the practice of having a resident go to another part of the province for the best of mental health services is nothing new. This has been a practice for many, many years. It is a matter of placement that will be best suited for the patient at that particular time.

What I do know is that there will be two new beds funded by the Nova Scotia Health Authority when the emergency room is complete. There will be two mental health trauma observation beds in place.

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

COM. SERV.: CHILD, YOUTH & FAM. SUPPORT PROG. - FTE CUTS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Community Services has been making changes to the Child, Youth and Family Support program. Today, we see in the budget that at least 17 FTEs, or full-time equivalents, have been eliminated from that same program. Can the minister explain how eliminating at least 17 FTEs will enhance services for children and their families?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Over the past year, the Department of Community Services, and in fact the Government of Nova Scotia, has made extraordinary strides in strengthening families all across this province.

We have invested over \$1.2 million in Stronger Families Nova Scotia. We have increased Parenting Journey from 12 to 27 sites across the province. We have piloted two new programs that have never been in Nova Scotia. The investments that we've made are there to strengthen families that are struggling in Nova Scotia with child welfare. Also, the investment that we've made in income assistance - the highest one-time increase in the history of the program - will assist struggling families in Nova Scotia.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the minister to check out her budget and look at Page 6.5 and also Page 6.4. Not only has the minister eliminated at least 17 FTEs from Child, Youth and Family Support but she has also cut \$1.4 million from front-line child welfare caseworkers. Fewer workers on the front lines means less services for our province's most vulnerable. Can the minister justify cutting \$1.4 million from front-line child welfare cases?

MS. BERNARD: Perhaps the member can do her homework. A lot of the transferring out of my department went into IT and to other areas in the Nova Scotia Government.

Let me just say that when you are strengthening families with the investments that we've made both legislatively through the changes that we made in the Children and Family Services Act, which had not been touched in 25 years, and the investments that we've made in communities across this province to strengthen families, those are the investments that are going to help families.

Those are the investments that are going to prevent children from coming into care in the first place, which should be the goal for every government in this province.

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

EECD: C.B. SCH. CLOSURES - SOC./ECON. IMPACT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. With the recent announcement of closures of schools in Cape Breton, it has recommended the closure of several schools in the Northside, especially Thompson Middle School and Sydney Mines Middle School.

Has the government considered the social and economic impact of these closures on the people and the businesses of North Sydney and Sydney Mines?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member for the question. As I said last week, I commend the communities in Cape Breton and the families there who work with their school board to make some very difficult decisions about the future of buildings in that board, recognizing - and the member would know - that the decisions about school closures are made at the school board level and the minister cannot reverse those decisions. I do recognize the importance of communities working with their elected board members.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, a new middle school has been proposed to replace the two aged schools. Can the minister tell me what the status of that proposal is and will serious consideration be given to where it will be constructed to ease some of the economic impact on the Northside?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I think sometimes people get confused with the two processes. One process about school review is a process that is fully conducted within the communities and the decision that is made regarding those outcomes are decisions that are made by the elected school board members.

What the member is talking about now is new capital construction projects. The process for that is for boards to submit to the minister a list of new projects they would like to have considered and we will give serious consideration to all those proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

NAT. RES.: MINING IND. - FUEL TAX REBATE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Many Nova Scotians who work in the mining industry will be dismayed to hear that the Liberal Government has once again failed to deliver on its promise to introduce a fuel tax rebate for the mining industry. Government promised to phase-in their rebates, starting in 2015.

My question to the minister, why isn't the minister committed to finally honouring his government's promise to the mining industry by introducing this fuel rebate?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member for the question. This government and my department are totally committed to the mining industry in Nova Scotia and we currently have in front of the House a new Mineral Resources Act, which is going to overhaul the antiquated process that has been in place in this province for a long time.

With regard to the fuel tax rebate, Mr. Speaker, we have told the House and the people of Nova Scotia that it is under consideration. When the time and our fiscal capacity is there that we can do this, we will do it. Remember, check the price of diesel in this province. There is a very considerable bonus to fuel tax in the province - not that it's anything that this government has done but it is a reality - in excess of 40 per cent that is providing interim relief until we get to the point where we are physically able to give that rebate.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia continues to rank last in Canada for attractiveness and for investment in mining. The request for this rebate from the industry is very reasonable, as similar rebates exist for other industries that do not make significant use of public roads. There is much more we can do beyond modernizing the MRA to help increase the attractiveness for investment in our mining industry.

My question to the minister, why does the minister believe the industry should not have this important measure to grow and create jobs for Nova Scotians?

MR. HINES: As I said, not to repeat myself, we're very aware of this very important industry to our province. We are looking forward to the Law Amendments Committee, Mr. Speaker, to get this new legislation through, which will help the industry. We fully intend to give the request from the industry with regard to fuel tax our full consideration.

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

BUS. - FILM IND.: APPLICATION PROCESS - SIMPLIFY

MS. LENORE ZANN: My question today is for the Minister of Business. The recent economic report by PricewaterhouseCoopers provides clear evidence that the Film Tax Credit created great economic benefit to the province in 2014: \$180 million in GDP and 3,200 jobs. However, this government chose to kill the tax credit and replace it with an incentive fund that has proved unworkable, partly due to the \$10-million cap.

My question for the minister, since today's budget confirms that this has not changed, does he plan on simplifying the application process for the industry, and how soon does he think changes could be made?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. One of the discussions that we continue to have with the film industry is the application process itself.

There have been challenges with that process. We believe that the administrators, through NSBI, now have a method where they can see a turnaround in two to three weeks. That's the objective. We're looking for that level of service from NSBI. I know NSBI is committed to meeting that mark.

MS. ZANN: I really do appreciate that answer from the minister. My second question is for the Premier. This government has provided a steady stream of hefty payroll rebates to major corporations and banks such as the RBC, TD, and Butterfield, an offshore bank in Bermuda, while disrupting investments to the filmmaking industry, despite its contribution to the province's prosperity at a return rate of 7 to 1.

My question is, can the Premier explain why funds are freely provided to banks and other wealthy corporations such as Michelin and Clearwater, for instance, while the incentive fund for the filmmaking industry is mired in red tape and has this \$10-million cap, which is almost impossible to use, so the whole industry is now on life support?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with the honourable member and the premise of her question. We have made available to the industry a \$10-million fund that is accessible. It is there for them to use and I encourage them to use it. We're very proud of the investments we have made in the rebate program that every government has used. It's about nine cents on the dollar and provides a positive return on taxation.

It's related to the taxes we collect, unlike the former Film Tax Credit, which was a 65-cent grant subsidy out the door. There's a big gap between 65 and 9, Mr. Speaker. I understand now why the finances were in the shape they were when we came to government.

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

TIR: YAR. FERRY - FEDERAL FUNDING

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Back in August the Premier made it clear that the Liberal Government was seeking federal money to help fund the ferry services between Yarmouth and Maine. The Premier said, "This is an international link. This is Canada's link to the eastern seaboard. We want the federal government to be part of that, helping us ensure that service is there for the long run."

Mr. Speaker, I'll table that quote. With the new government in Ottawa and the passing of the new federal budget, it's clear that the provincial government failed to secure federal funds. My question to the minister is, given the Premier's apparent commitment to securing federal funding, would the minister please explain to the House why his government was unsuccessful in getting funding for the ferry?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member opposite for the question. The federal government has been very much engaged in the conversations around the Yarmouth ferry.

The member is absolutely right, it is a long-term commitment. We've made a 10-year commitment that we will have that service in place. We'll have a relationship with Bay Ferries, who also, by the way, have a very strong connection with the federal government. We're going to need support. We've had specific discussions on the terminal down in Yarmouth for the Nova Scotia ferry. We've also had conversations about the long term, what the vessel, what the model, what the entire system will look like.

Without question, we've had tremendous conversations with Ministers Brison, Garneau, and Sohi on the Yarmouth ferry, and those conversations will continue, and we look to have them as a long-term partner as we make sure that the Nova Scotia ferry succeeds here in the province for all the people to enjoy.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on another occasion the Premier said: "This is an international link" McNeil said. "With Canada's largest trading partner, this is the East Coast connection to that, and we believe that the federal government should be there helping us."

Now, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians know now that the Liberal Government not only failed to secure federal funding for the service, but gave a blank cheque to Bay Ferries and negotiated away our ability to trade through trucking.

So, the question is quite simple, does the minister and the Premier no longer believe that it is important to provide further opportunities for trade with our largest business partner just to satisfy the city council in Portland?

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to the Premier with his proper name.

MR. MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for correcting the member opposite on his mistake there.

Mr. Speaker, look, it is an important link. Obviously the Premier and I, our government and all on this side of the House certainly support that all-too-important international link with Portland, with the State of Maine, for the province and the people of Nova Scotia. The reality is, with respect to the trucking, Digby-St. John has been that run, they've provided that opportunity for local exports to get out of that region.

Mr. Speaker, if there are issues with capacity, again that's a conversation I've had directly with Minister Garneau. It is a long-term investment; it's a long-term link. We're proud of that relationship - it's important not only for our economy, but specifically for

tourism. We're standing behind the region, we're standing behind Nova Scotians - it's a great investment and our federal partners will be there when we need them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: BOOTS ON THE STREET PROG. - CUTS CONFIRM

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Justice. Boots on the Street, a program that was announced first in 2007 put an additional 150 police officers to work in our communities to reduce crime and improve public safety. Now, I happen to notice in the Finance and Treasury Board Minister's Budget Address today that there was no mention of this program.

Mr. Speaker, it was obviously not something the government wanted to highlight. Will the Minister of Justice confirm that more than half a million dollars has been cut from this program?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think the first point for the House to recognize is that the budget item for that is \$16.2 million, which is a significant commitment to that program in Nova Scotia.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, I should've had my earpiece in during the minister's comment, so I didn't quite hear what she said. Perhaps she is confirming that there has not been a cut? But, I will proceed since I didn't hear.

The Boots on the Street program, Mr. Speaker, is an effective program that was applauded by many groups, community groups that work with a mandate of public safety, and we know many communities where it has helped and provided of peace of mind for many Nova Scotians.

Will the minister tell the House, here today, how many police officers will be taken off our streets with today's budget?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, just because you missed the first answer - I said we have \$16.2 million in the budget for this additional police program, so it is still a significant contribution, a large amount.

The amount has gone down. So, to give you a more fulsome answer, it is down by about \$500,000 and what we're doing is reviewing the program after 10 years of its operating, to see how we can make it sustainable, make it perhaps more robust, make it more effective for the policing in the province.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that when it was introduced ten years ago it was actually at a time when we had the highest violent crime in

the country in our cities, we now are at the national average. We were also below the national average in the amount of police per capita at that time - now we are now above the national average. So the situation is different 10 years later and it's time for a review.

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

ENVIRON.: ALTON GAS PROJ. - FIRST NATIONS APPEALS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, on April 18th, just days after a lively protest on the steps of the Legislature, the Minister of Environment chose to dismiss four of six appeals to the approval she gave to the Alton gas project.

Mr. Speaker, there are very real concerns by our First Nations people, and many others, about pumping billions of litres of brine into the Shubenacadie River and that this could cause irreparable harm to the river, the fish, including the striped bass, which is an endangered species, and the fish habitat.

I'm very curious, Mr. Speaker. When making her decision to dismiss these appeals, has the minister applied the precautionary principle, as required by the Environment Act, to this issue?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Thank you to the member opposite. As she informed the House on Monday, I ruled on four appeals on the Alton Gas industrial approval and all of those appeals had different grounds and a different basis. All the information was gathered and presented to me to look over and to make an assessment on that.

I felt I was very well equipped. I had a lot of scientific information about the brine going in the river and the risk to the fish population there. I also had a lot of information about the consultation process and what had happened and I was very happy with the information that I had that I could rule and turn down the appeals.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I don't think she exactly answered my question about whether she used the precautionary principle. One thing we do know is that this has never been done before by this company in any country, including Canada. They've never put the brine into the river so we don't know what the outcome will be.

The appeals that were submitted on Alton Gas also addressed this lack of consultation with the communities on the ground in close proximity so they are very concerned. They've held community meetings, organized peaceful protests, submitted petitions and written letters on the issue.

My second question is, would the minister engage in meaningful consultation with the nearby communities of Sipekne'katik and Millbrook First Nations, as well as non-Aboriginal residents, who are directly affected by this project, with me in the near future?

MS. MILLER: Thank you to the member opposite. The Sipekne'katik Band is from Shubenacadie and certainly I've been familiar with the band - I'm the MLA also for Hants East and am their MLA. I still have two more appeals to rule on. That will be done next Monday or sooner - the deadline date is next Monday. After that time I would be happy to meet with both bands involved, the Sipekne'katik Band and Millbrook at any time. Certainly I'd be able to do that.

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

TIR - YAR. FERRY: TRUCK BAN - REASONS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will also be to the Minister of TIR. In his last answer the minister said the trucking industry could use the Digby-Saint John ferry. Recently I had an opportunity to be in Pubnico and I met with some trucking companies there. At that time the people who operate the trucking outfits said that the ferry in Digby-Saint John was not conducive to what they needed to do. As a matter of fact, he said the ship area was not developed for Canadian trucking standards - it was more for a European standard.

I would like the minister to respond to the question as to why it is that we are not allowed to send trucks through Yarmouth to Portland.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the City of Portland - it's two-fold: there's a significant amount of investment that would be required for U.S. customs in a very large number to have that facility there to intake trucks. Also, there are issues of congestion and related challenges in the City of Portland with the trucks.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 3128.

Res. No. 3129, re Estimates – CW on Supply: Referred – notice given April 14/16 – (Hon. R. Delorey)

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand and talk to this resolution, not so much for what it does but what it does not do. As we all know, the position of Deputy Speaker is crucial to the smooth running of this House of Assembly. As members know and as you do too, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Speaker takes the Chair when the Speaker is absent and performs all the duties of that Speaker.

As such, it is a position that commands great respect in this House. When you put those robes on and sit in that Chair, you have all the rights and privileges of every other Speaker who sat before you.

In my mind, in our caucus's mind, selecting a Deputy Speaker should not be taken lightly. The selection process should be as open and transparent and inclusive as possible. That's how it was up to a few weeks ago. In recent memory when more than one Deputy Speaker was elected, a motion was put forward that nominated members from more than one Party. We didn't elect one person and then slide in another through a resolution.

On September 4, 2003, on that day three Deputy Speakers were elected, one from each of the caucuses: from the Liberal caucus, from the PC caucus, and from the NDP caucus. It was done by a motion; it was not a sham election. Everyone knew what they were getting when they voted. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it was done with an air of fairness for all members sitting in this House of Assembly.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, not all of our electors voted one or the other. You know what I mean? We had a whole bunch of people vote Liberal; they made government, and that's great. We had a whole bunch that voted PC; they made them Official Opposition. A whole bunch voted NDP and made them the Third Party. We all have people in our constituencies across Nova Scotia who voted, one way or another, depending on their wishes.

We think that a position as important as the Deputy Speaker would be treated the same way. We didn't have that the first time around, and I thank the member for being a good Deputy Speaker, but again it was one person from the government side. It was not shared amongst the three caucuses, as it had been done many times before.

On October 13, 2005, two Deputy Speakers were introduced to the House, one from the Official Opposition and one from the Third Party. They joined the Deputy Speaker

from the government caucus who was already in place. In January 2011 there were also three Deputy Speakers, one from each Party.

Mr. Speaker, I don't even remember the election of Deputy Speaker being a contentious issue, because there were discussions that happened prior and a consensus was already done before it was ever brought to the floor of this Legislature. They were typically decisions made in a spirit of fairness and collegiality.

Mr. Speaker, as you have ruled, this resolution meets the letter of the law, but I feel where it falls short is meeting the spirit of fairness and collegiality that we used to value in this House of Assembly. I will act now to try to restore some fairness, goodwill and transparency that is missing in this resolution.

I move that Resolution 3128 be amended by:

(1) adding "the honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg" immediately after "Clare-Digby" in clause (a); and

(2) striking out "two" in clause (c) and substituting "three."

That is an amendment and I so put it on the floor for debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: I would like to speak to this amendment. It's well known that, as my colleague said, in the past the convention of this House was that the Deputy Speakers were shared between the Opposition Parties and the government.

Now we have, at this moment in time, a motion that would have all three Deputy Speakers from the government side, and we have an amendment to put our member from Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg as the second Deputy Speaker. Clearly, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg has been a Speaker in the past and is well qualified to serve in this role and, I might suggest, although I recognize the capabilities of the other individuals, possibly more qualified than the other individual.

In the past this House has had a convention of sharing this role of Deputy Speaker between Opposition Parties and government, and one of the things that is clear about the Legislature is that conventions and traditions are extraordinarily important, probably more so than we would have in our ordinary lives. The importance of convention and tradition in this Legislature is somewhat new to all of us.

I would like to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the reason that convention and tradition are so important probably roots back to the traditions of British parliamentary history and how Legislatures were set up. The rules of the Legislature and the conventions

and traditions being trampled by a majority simply because it can be done, I think, is going against the spirit and tradition of parliamentary history.

I am sure that if we look back at the Liberal platform, one of the items in the platform wasn't "three Deputy Speakers from our side". I know that it wasn't there at all; in fact, I'm quite certain. Our Party didn't have in its platform anything about the Rules of the House or traditions of the House. It's not something in our platforms, yet it forms the basis of how we operate and function here. I think that it should not be casually tossed aside, the history of the convention of how this is done.

I am disappointed that we are at this juncture. I know that it wasn't the intention of the government. I know I remember hearing things said by the ruling Party when we started this sitting of the House that this was going to be a more open and transparent and fair government. I'm sure that in the beginning that was the intent of the Liberal Government. I don't believe that us debating this issue right now is really in the spirit of that original intent. So, with those few words, I'll take my seat.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can't believe we're here debating this actually. It seems so obvious, just in terms of common sense or fair play, that if we're going to have two Deputy Speakers in this case, that one of them should come from the Opposition side. That was a convention of this House. It's actually a convention of many parliaments around the country and around the world and if we are truly going to take the one Deputy Speaker position and share it among two people, common sense would tell us that it ought to be the two people who were nominated for the Deputy Speaker position in the first place.

We would all be supportive of that if that were happening, and it just so happens that the second nominee for Deputy Speaker, the person who finished second, happens to be an experienced Speaker of this Legislature. It happens to be my colleague, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, who is probably one of the best-equipped members of this House to fulfill your role, sir, when you're not in the Chair. He is known universally as fair-minded, as knowledgeable of the rules, has experience in the job. He's probably turning bright red right now, but it's all true.

In fact, shouldn't we look to how the second Deputy Speaker is chosen and who would best do the job? I would argue that a resolution that ignores the will of some of the members of the House to actually put forward a name for the second position or to ignore the person that received the second to most amount of support for the job of Deputy Speaker actually offends all the rules of fair play. In fact, I would say that in the old-fashioned language, the privileges of all of members are inhibited when we are denied the opportunity to have our say in who the second Deputy Speaker should be, just as if we were denied our say on who the Speaker should be.

I know resolutions have been brought forward to resolve this issue before, but those resolutions passed with the consent of all members of the House. It was a form of voting. There was unanimous consent. That's how we express our views and the views of our constituents just as much as if we had the formal vote on a division, but that has been denied in this case. You've ruled that the resolution is in order and I respect that, but I really think we ought to look at whether it offends the privileges of members who have the ability to vote in their place for who the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, or multiple Deputy Speakers are.

This whole place is served better when the democratic will of the House is reflected in the decision it makes. That would mean selecting the person finishing second in the actual balloting - that is not happening - and it would mean actually canvassing the members of the House to see who, in their view, has the best ability to do the second Deputy Speaker's job.

When we have three people in the Speaker's Chair, either as Speaker or two Deputies, Mr. Speaker, I think everyday Nova Scotians would say take the Speaker from the government side, take at least one of the two deputies from the Opposition side. That's why that convention arose; it's a matter of fairness.

I am in favour of the amendment because it does place the most capable member of this Chamber in the role of Deputy Speaker and he would be the only choice that truly reflects the will of the House as was expressed in the original balloting. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: It's a privilege to stand and just say a few words here this afternoon. The role of Deputy Speaker is crucial to the smooth operation of this Chamber. Any time you can't sit in that Chair or have to leave the Chair to go into Committee of the Whole, having a good, qualified Deputy Speaker, a second good, qualified Deputy Speaker - not to say that the first is not because I believe that to be the case that he would be . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Almost did, though.

MR. ORRELL: I almost did; yes I did.

But, Mr. Speaker, having someone with some experience already I think would be very beneficial to all members of this House, especially the government side of this House, so that things run smoothly in different committees of this Legislature.

When I was first elected we had two Deputy Speakers, one from each side and, in my opinion, it ran fairly smoothly. It allowed for everybody to have an opinion, it allowed for people to learn how committees operate, and how people in charge of those committees let those committees run smoothly.

I heard from this government when they were elected, we were going to operate with transparency, with fairness. Many times in this Legislature we hear during some of the debates how vile this can get, that we wanted to make sure co-operation existed. I believe that if we're going to co-operate in the Legislature, having a person from one of the Opposition sides of the Legislature as a Deputy Speaker is just one way we can show that. It's another way we can show that the government wants to work with the Opposition members to make sure that the province runs smoothly and that the legislation we pass is good quality legislation.

We like to see some of our legislation get introduced here and get passed in the Legislature. We don't see that very often. (Laughter) I think the Minister of Immigration thinks that's funny, that we don't get some of our legislation passed. Mr. Speaker, I think some of the legislation that comes from this side of the bench, just because it's not a Liberal piece of legislation - it is good legislation. We bring that legislation forward on behalf of our citizens, the people we represent who have a concern with how the province is run. To think that's funny - I think that's embarrassing to the people in this province, especially the people we represent.

I know when I worked at the hospital we had an application for a job, if two people applied for the job and there were two applications, two people got it. If the first person who didn't take the job or took the job and didn't like it, it always reverted to the second person. We voted for the Deputy Speaker, we had two people on the ballot. It would just be logical that the second person would be the person that's on that ballot in the first place, and to have a good quality person who has been in the job before, who knows the job, who doesn't have to do any ramping up in their training, I think it would be beneficial for people in the Legislature, plus the people in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see that happen, I'd like to see the government live up to its ask of being fair, co-operative and open, to see this Legislature run smoothly so we can adopt legislation in this province that is fair and open to everybody, from all sides of the government. And with that, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in this debate. I think this is a great opportunity for the government to show graciousness. The government, as we know, has a majority in this House at this time, and certainly while we have the opportunity to debate issues, we all know oftentimes government comes into this Chamber with a decision made and with a goal to pass legislation, to pass a budget like the one introduced this afternoon.

So they don't really need to listen to the Opposition but, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that governments, no matter what their stripe is, there is value in listening to others, and we also have to remember that members here don't just represent themselves, they

represent Nova Scotians. They represent viewpoints, we represent viewpoints that we're hearing in our own constituencies and around the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, he is someone that I go to often for advice. He has been a Speaker in this Chamber, he is respected not just by colleagues here in this Legislature from all sides, but he's also respected in areas around this country, because I know he has attended meetings representing our Legislature and he has friends and contacts right around this country.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg in my mind, would be an excellent choice for a Deputy Speaker. I don't know if it's appropriate or not but I will have to share with you all this afternoon that I cast a vote for him, with all due respect to my colleague to my right, who I believe as well is a good man, and I look forward to seeing him in action also as a Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, this is more than just a perk to be awarded at the pleasure of government. The Deputy Speaker of this House plays a very important role in this institution, and the quality of debate here in this Chamber often depends on the goodwill shared by members from all sides.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of one item in this budget which I've just come across moments ago, something where the government members and we in the Official Opposition here can actually say we agree on, is a tax credit for farmers. While I've not been able to examine the details because they've not yet been provided, at least in what I've been able to see, this was a bill that I introduced based on the recommendation of the chairman of the Port Hawkesbury Food Bank years ago. The idea was to give farmers a tax credit for donating to food banks.

The idea has been put into action in Ontario, it has worked very successfully. I spoke with the director of the food bank in Sudbury, Ontario, and he was telling me how well it's working for them. That was an idea that has been introduced by the Progressive Conservative caucus. I first introduced it in 2011, the current Minister of Health and Wellness introduced it while he was in Opposition. We introduced it again, I introduced it for a third time in the last sitting, last Fall and today, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that it's actually a line item in the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the government never listened - and in this case the current government never listened to the Opposition when we were putting this bill forward in 2011 - perhaps they never would have heard of the idea and perhaps it would not be being implemented today. So I do think this is an opportunity for the government to show some graciousness here in this House, they have the power.

This is an opportunity to show goodwill. There has been some practice in the past of allowing members of the Opposition to put forward a Deputy Speaker. I think it fosters

confidence in the independence and the importance of the independence of the position of the Chairman of the Legislature and, Mr. Speaker, with that I am going to sit down, but I do hope the members have listened and I hope they've heard the value in the comments that we're making this afternoon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members that have already spoken about this particular resolution. Again, it was mentioned that we probably should not be debating this particular resolution right now. If we look at convention and tradition, it seems to be very disappointing that we're at this stage where we're debating the pros and cons of having a Deputy Speaker from the Official Opposition. We basically are looking for a fair process - a process that's open, a process that's transparent.

Everyone is aware that there should be a Deputy Speaker from the Opposition side. Again, if the government wants to be open, if you want to be transparent, if you want to be fair and have a fair process, it's obvious that we should have one from the Official Opposition. Following the democratic will of the House, I'm certainly in favour of the amendment; it's a very important position.

Do we have someone in the Opposition who's qualified for it? Well, all I have to do is look to my right, to the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg. He's not only qualified, but a few years ago, when I was on the government side, he was the Speaker of the House. I can honestly say that he did a great job, Mr. Speaker, a job that would probably equal yours. He's certainly qualified to be a Deputy Speaker. During his tenure as Speaker of the House, he performed, I would think, a very quality performance during his time in that Chair.

I think this is a wonderful opportunity for the government to do one thing, and that is to do the right thing, to give the Official Opposition someone from their group as one of the Deputy Speakers. Again, I think most people would agree with that. The government has the opportunity to do this - to do the right thing - and we're looking forward to them doing that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I'm pleased to rise and speak briefly to Resolution No. 3128. Often I think about the debates that I get involved in, but certainly this one is an easy one for me to stand in my place and speak about. My colleague, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, who I have great respect for - and as well, I have been able to travel often with him and see the amount of respect that is given to him around the whole province. I think that speaks volumes.

My confusion comes from the fact that this has always been protocol in this Chamber. Up until 2011, we always had a Speaker and two Deputy Speakers. I think we have to stand back for a moment and look at wanting to have some equal representation as well within the province.

You certainly couldn't find anyone who is more fair. A comment that I picked up: the member often says that 50 per cent of my friends are for it, 50 per cent of my friends are against it, and I'm with my friends. When we look at an individual who has to represent us, there's no doubt that we would all be equally represented by this individual.

I think as well, we have to have good faith and goodwill in the process that has always been in this House. I know that it could run smoother.

The position definitely commands great respect. Selecting a Deputy Speaker should not be taken lightly. That's why I'm standing in my place today in support of your consideration to review everything that's being said here by my colleagues and to give this resolution much consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to stand, but I think I will just for a couple of minutes.

I am one of the rookies in this Legislature obviously. I know when I came to this Legislature I had a few things in mind that I would like to see. I have seen some of those, others have not quite seen; but two of the things that I have seen in this Legislature is that it has a number of individuals, practically all, they're smart, they're caring, extremely intelligent people, and for that I am very grateful. I mean, I know that our province is in good hands if we can get something else straight.

The one thing I'm disappointed in I guess is the amount of politics with respect to Parties. I think it interferes with a lot of the legislation that we could pass in this House. I know one of the things that the Ivany report had in mind was to have all three Parties work together to get in good legislation for the province.

I think that this one resolution can just be one tiny step into allowing that to happen. I know my colleague from Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, I love him, I know he has capabilities, I don't have to push that; but, just for the principle of collegiality, of fairness, of whatever name you want to put on it, I just think that we need to share the role of Deputy Speaker because it's a very easy thing to do and I think it's a good thing to do for this Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for those few moments.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the debate regarding Resolution No. 3128 very intently, and I notice the resolution dealing with Deputy Speaker, and I think that they made all these points about having especially from the Official Opposition. This is something that has been recognized in the past and I want to stand and to say that with deep respect for the member that has been presented and the amendments trying to address that, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

I have deep respect for that individual, but I notice with all the presentations that nobody recognized the member's former occupation and, to me, this is the given, that the member was a shepherd and, to me, when you started in that seat, you were there to watch over a flock of elected representatives, and I think that's one of the difficult things to do. I am going to tell you that it is not easy, and I respect the individuals who stand in that position, and I think that it shows to all Nova Scotians that there has to be a fair process. For the Liberal Government to basically stamp that out is going in the wrong direction. I think we all should have an opportunity to have a fair debate, and I really do endorse this amendment of having a previous shepherd to watch over the flock.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and speak to this important resolution. We all know the importance of the position of Speaker and - in your absence, Mr. Speaker - Deputy Speaker. I do want to congratulate the member for Clare-Digby on his election as the Deputy Speaker, but before this House we now have two Deputy Speakers: one elected, one not. I think when you think about that in that context it's like the House of democracy is not interested in democracy, because what we had in the election is two members nominated and both received considerable support - one received more considerable support, but both received considerable support. My friend and colleague, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg received support in this House for his nomination as Deputy Speaker - rightfully so.

Rightfully so, because when your colleagues and friends support you, and even somebody who is not from our caucus or from an Opposition caucus supported this member as well - and that I think we know from the vote counts that there was somebody over there who supported this member and I think that speaks to the type of person that he is. He's a good member, a fair member, a good representative of the people he represents and I agree that in the spirit of openness, and fairness, and equal representation, it only makes sense that if there are going to be two Deputy Speakers, that they be the two that are nominated, and I think it's a disservice to the member for Kings South that he didn't have the opportunity to be duly elected. I think it's absolutely unfair to him that he wasn't afforded that privilege as well.

I think what we should be doing in this House, if you're going to have one person in that position elected and one not, think of the message that that sends. Maybe what we should do is we should elect one MLA in the province and let them just nominate and drop

other MLAs in there. It's not the way our system works. It's certainly not the way this House should work.

I think that when you have an election and the results are tallied up and the winner wins, and then to parachute somebody else in there of equal stature, to someone who was duly elected, it's not consistent. I think one message this House should be sending to Nova Scotians is the message of fairness, the message of open-mindedness, and the message of consistency, because anytime you have one set of rules for one group and a different set of rules for another group - which is what happened here, we have an elected Deputy Speaker and an unelected Deputy Speaker - anytime you make the distinction between positions in that manner, it's a really, really slippery slope.

I do congratulate the member for Clare-Digby, as I said, but I think that there are a number of possible things - the government had a choice. They could have then had another election. We could have had a runoff election for the member for Kings South and the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, or anyone else who was duly nominated at that time. That could have happened. We have a super majority in this House, and if they wanted to do things fairly they could absolutely do them in that manner; there is no question about that.

So what I would say is I would appeal to the members of this House to think about the message that we're sending to Nova Scotians. Is it a message of working together? Is it a message of humility? Or is it a message of aggression? Because that's what you see when you say well, this person is elected and this person - we're not going to have an election, we're just going to put them in there because we can. That's not the way that it's supposed to work.

Often on this side of the House, we don't always get the results that we want. We were close on a couple votes I think, but for the most time, with the way the numbers are in this House, at this time, we don't often get the results we want, but we do respect that there's a process.

When we think about a piece of legislation, we do expect that it will go through first reading, it will go through second reading, it will go through committees, and it will go through third reading. We know the ground rules. The ground rules are that we can speak to those bills at those appropriate stages and raise our concerns on behalf of our constituents about the other side, the other perspective. That's our job in Opposition, and we know that that is the process that is available to us.

To have a situation like this where we have an election, duly elect a member, and then say we're going to put another member in there, but no need for an election - it just doesn't sit right.

I certainly don't mean that to be a reflection of the member for Kings South, who was nominated in by his caucus. I certainly don't mean it as any reflection of my colleague, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg. I know both of these men to be fine men, and both deserve the opportunity to be elected or not elected.

There are numerous considerations that the government would have run through and reached their own conclusions on. They would have said, do we want to have Deputy Speakers from the various caucuses? They would have asked that question amongst themselves. They probably would have had a small discussion that says, in the past, this has been the case. Do we want to do that? And they would have made a decision - no, we don't want to do that. We don't want to do that; we want all Deputy Speakers to be from our caucus.

They could have had a discussion internally: do we want regional representation? They could have said, do we want regional representation and have a member from Cape Breton in the Deputy Speaker's Chair? They could have done that. They made their own decisions on that. There were any number of decisions about gender or whatever the case may be. They could have thought about what we want to do with this position. They made those decisions.

The sad reality is they could have come to the floor of this House and put those before an election, and they could have used their majority and won. But to cut that step out of the process and say we're not even going to bother exercising our majority and win an election because we don't have to, we're just going to put a resolution through and circumvent that process - that sticks in my craw, Mr. Speaker.

I hope the government members will reconsider. Maybe they'll say, look, we're going to get what we want here, but let's do it properly. Let's do it fairly. Let's do it that way. They could do that. That's the option that sits before them.

If they wanted to take our little green books that we are all armed with and like to read, they could look at Rule 6B. They could follow Rule 6B. We might not all like the outcome - I feel like the outcome probably wouldn't change - but it would be a fair outcome.

That's all we're asking for. What we're asking for is democracy in the House of democracy.

When we go back and speak to Nova Scotians and they ask about different things that happen - people know what having a majority government means. They understand that when you are in a situation with a majority government, the majority will get their will, they will get their wishes. In many ways, that's good. They'll have a chance to fulfill their mandate. They'll have a chance to fulfill the promises that they made.

It just so happens that this government's choosing to do things other than the promises they made, but that's the majority government that they have, and they can use it.

But it doesn't mean that you should just put tradition and rules to the side and say, those are not for us; on this day, those rules are not for us. Today, this is what we're going to do. When I go to speak to people in the constituency, they know that the government can pass the bills it wants. When I talk about intricacies like this, of what's happening in the House, it speaks to the mindset of the government, which is not that we are interested in what the Opposition members say, it's that we are just doing what we want. (Interruption) Or what they are told, my colleague has corrected me.

I can't remember the statistics but it's like when you get a majority government like this and you look at the amount of seats they have percentage-wise in this House versus the percentage of the common vote that they got, there's a real disparity there. You can get a majority government without having a majority of the votes, obviously, right?

It's always interesting for the members here because if one of us stands up, we're one person. We're one person when we stand in our place but I'm actually representing 13,000 people and my colleague is representing 15,000. You might not care what we have to say but you should at least listen and evaluate.

You can say, you know what, I hear what you are saying and I don't agree with you, or I hear what you're saying and I understand and I agree with you but I don't care. You can do one of those things; that's always a possible outcome in a discussion. But in this House, for this resolution, for this government to say we're going to elect one person and then we're going to start appointing people - where does that fall into democracy? Where does that make sense? At what point does somebody say, we don't need to take it to the floor?

We all know about whipped votes. I was listening intently last week to the Premier on the Rick Howe show talking about the vote that is coming before the Portland Council - this is the Premier talking about the vote coming before the Portland City Council. He said it's a fait accompli, just a formality was basically what he said - it has been worked out, it just has to have the vote.

If the Premier feels like he can whip the votes in the Portland City Council, surely he could whip them up in here. We could have a vote on a second Deputy Speaker, why don't we have it? Why wouldn't we vote and have two duly elected people who could both feel good about themselves and about winning an election in this House from their equal members?

If there's a change of heart and a decision over there that democracy matters and my colleague from Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg stands again, I can assure you that I

will be supporting him because he would be an excellent Deputy Speaker and he's a good person and he deserves that opportunity as much as the next person, particularly somebody who has not even been elected and has only been nominated.

In my last few words I would urge the members opposite to consider the precedent they are setting, to consider the message they are sending to Nova Scotians about what election matter or may not matter. With those few words I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring more speakers, the motion is that Resolution No. 3128 be amended by (1) adding "honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg" immediately after "Clare-Digby" in Clause (a); and (2) striking out "two" in Clause (c) and substituting "three".

There has been a call for a recorded vote. We'll ring the bells for 15 minutes, until the Whips are satisfied.

[5:00 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Are the Whips satisfied for the recorded vote on Resolution No. 3128?

The Clerks will now proceed with taking the recorded vote. I'll remind all members to remain silent in their seats until your name is spoken, at which time you'll stand up and state a yea or a nay.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[5:17 p.m.]

YEAS

Mr. MacLeod
Mr. Dunn
Mr. Baillie
Mr. d'Entremont
Mr. David Wilson
Ms. Mancini
Mr. Belliveau
Mr. Orrell
Ms. MacFarlane
Mr. Houston
Mr. MacMaster
Mr. Harrison

NAYS

Mr. Churchill
Ms. Bernard
Ms. Regan
Mr. Samson
Mr. McNeil
Ms. Whalen
Mr. Glavine
Mr. Delorey
Ms. Casey
Mr. MacLellan
Mr. Colwell
Mr. Horne

Mr. Lohr

Mr. Stroink
Ms. Miller
Mr. Hines
Ms. Diab
Mr. Ince
Mr. Kousoulis
Mr. Furey
Mr. Farrell
Ms. Arab
Mr. Maguire
Mr. Porter
Mr. Jessome
Ms. Lohnes-Croft
Ms. Eyking
Mr. Irving
Mr. Gough
Ms. Treen
Mr. Wilton
Mr. Rankin
Mr. Gordon Wilson
Mr. Mombourquette

THE CLERK: For, 13. Against, 33.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment is defeated.

The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: I'll be brief on this resolution. Since coming to this Legislature almost 13 years ago, I've had the honour and privilege to work with many great MLAs, and I've seen and witnessed the work done on behalf of 10 Deputy Speakers over those 13 years - of course, with the new elected deputy just recently, that would make 11.

Throughout those years, in the first couple of years, even under the Progressive Conservative Government (Interruption) Well don't cheer yet - they only elected one Deputy Speaker, and that was Jim DeWolfe from Pictou East at the time. But I think they've seen the light, Mr. Speaker, and they recognize the importance of trying to follow some kind of tradition that we've had in the House, and realize the importance of having Deputy Speakers from across the aisle in the Legislature, from the different caucuses.

It wasn't too much after that, in 2005, when the member for Clayton Park West and the member for Pictou West, former MLA Charlie Parker, were given the task to be Deputy Speakers. We've seen since then consecutive governments follow that tradition.

I thought it brought some balance to the debate in the House. To be quite honest, having a Deputy Speaker in the Chair from your own caucus when you're in Opposition, I think, allows you and requires you to be more cordial and have more fulsome debates and respectful debates in the House. I would have hoped that that would have continued on.

We've seen a number of members who are current Liberal members across the way who have benefited from that type of position being offered to Opposition Parties. I know the member for Preston-Dartmouth was Deputy Speaker between, I think, February 2006 to May 2006; the member for Clayton Park West was a Deputy Speaker for some time in 2005 also, Mr. Speaker; and the member for Clare at the time, Wayne Gaudet, a former member from the Clare area, was a member of the Liberal caucus who was a Deputy Speaker under the Progressive Conservative Government at the time.

As the NDP took over in 2009, we continued that tradition. We had the member from Whitney Pier, for example, my colleague and friend Gordie Gosse. But along with him, we had the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg who was Deputy Speaker along with that member. Also the member for Kings West, the Minister of Health and Wellness, spent some time in the Chair, I think, bringing what Nova Scotians would want to that position, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, we saw that stop in 2013 with the election of the Liberal Government. There hasn't been really any good reason given to not only the members of this House but to the public on why that tradition would stop. I believe all members here respect your position, Mr. Speaker, as Speaker of this House and the Rules that we follow. I would think that any member, especially in Opposition, who was given the privilege to be Deputy Speaker would follow those rules and follow the tradition of this House.

It's unfortunate. Here's an opportunity, more than halfway through their mandate, where the Liberal Government could offer and show Nova Scotians that they are willing to look at what the tradition of the House has been for a number of years, sharing the responsibility of Deputy Speaker around to other members of the House and really looking at ensuring that we have representation, I believe in a regional way. We have no Speaker now, or Deputy Speaker from Cape Breton, for example. Here's an opportunity to show the people of Cape Breton that no matter what Party they support or MLA they have, that those positions that Nova Scotians regard such as yours, Mr. Speaker - there could be an opportunity for their MLA to hopefully hold that position one day.

So, here we are, over halfway through, and I would've thought this would be a great opportunity. It's not too late. The Premier is here, the Government House Leader is here to say, yeah okay, let's do that, let's have a fair, open, free election on who people think might bring that respect that is needed as Deputy Speaker of our House, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the government recognizes that tradition of the House is important and I would think, after having 10 Deputy Speakers representing all caucuses in the Legislature, that maybe they'll

change their mind and do the right thing and elect a Deputy Speaker from the Opposition bench. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I know that as a rookie in the House, I can't recite the history of this as well as my colleague in the NDP. However, it wasn't that long ago we had the Ivany report come in, and one section in that was about a new politics on working together. I know in the overall scheme of things that this is just a very small issue, but this was a tradition of the House that this was shared, and I think that small things do make a difference.

I realize that this debate is probably never going to get to any kind of level of general public awareness about what we're talking about, and maybe this is what some people call inside politics that the general public doesn't get this, but the Ivany commission did say a new politics was called for, a new level of co-operation, and to have that kind of new level of co-operation takes, I think, a respect for the Rules of the House and even small things matter. I believe that this is a relatively small matter in the overall scheme of all the things that face our province, but I do believe that small matters do make a difference.

I just think that this is a mistake on the part of the government to do this. I realize that it's within their capacity to do it. I don't disagree with the idea of democracy and I think it's important that government has the capacity in a House like this to do as they wish. I think the people of Nova Scotia elected a majority government. I respect that. I think that's actually healthy for democracy and the current Liberal Government has a powerful majority and they can do as they wish. In this case though, I think that the conventions of the House are important too, and I think they should be respected, despite the fact that there is a majority government on the other side.

I feel disappointed that this is going this way, and as I said, I think that small things do matter and even though this is a small point, I believe this is a wrong decision on the part of the government to push this through in this manner.

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

There's been a call for a recorded vote.

Are the Whips satisfied?

The Clerks will now take the recorded vote on Resolution No. 3128, which is the effect of suspending a Rule of the House respecting the election of a Deputy Speaker and will require at least two-thirds of the members present to vote for it for it to pass.

The Clerks will now proceed with the vote. I remind all members to remain in their seat, only to rise when your name is called, with a simple Yea or Nay.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[8:30 p.m.]

YEAS

Mr. Churchill
Ms. Bernard
Ms. Regan
Mr. Samson
Mr. McNeil
Ms. Whalen
Mr. Glavine
Mr. Delorey
Ms. Casey
Mr. MacLellan
Mr. Colwell
Mr. Horne
Mr. Stroink
Ms. Miller
Mr. Hines
Ms. Diab
Mr. Ince
Mr. Kousoulis
Mr. Furey
Mr. Farrell
Ms. Arab
Mr. Maguire
Mr. Porter
Mr. Jessome
Ms. Lohnes-Croft
Ms. Eyking
Mr. Irving
Mr. Gough
Ms. Treen
Mr. Wilton
Mr. Rankin
Mr. Gordon Wilson
Mr. Mombourquette

NAYS

Mr. MacLeod
Mr. Dunn
Mr. Baillie
Mr. d'Entremont
Mr. David Wilson
Ms. Mancini
Mr. Belliveau
Mr. Orrell
Ms. MacFarlane
Mr. Houston
Mr. MacMaster
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Lohr

THE CLERK: Mr. Speaker, in favour of Resolution No. 3128, 33; against, 13 - meeting the two-thirds threshold.

MR. SPEAKER: The resolution is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House, I want to congratulate the member for Kings South as being one of the Deputy Speakers during this session of the House, during which I am sure he will carry out his duties with great dignity. (Applause)

That concludes the government's business for today, Mr. Speaker. The House will meet again tomorrow on Wednesday, April 20th. The House hours tomorrow will be from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Starting at 1:00 p.m. will be Opposition Day. We will have the daily routine, followed by Question Period and then there will be Opposition Business.

At the conclusion of Opposition Business we will have the resumption of the reply to the budget by the member for Pictou East, followed by a member of the New Democratic Party.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House Leader of the New Democratic Party advise the House of what business will be called tomorrow.

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

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we'll be calling Bill No. 43, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, and Bill No. 151, the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act.

I now ask that the House rise and meet again at 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we have the motion to adjourn, I'll take a second to introduce a couple of folks in the Speaker's Gallery. My sister, Kim Murphy, is with us. She is in her 28th year of serving the country of Canada through the RCMP. (Applause)

As well, we have two fine Eastern Shore constituents with her, Sheryl-Lynn Forward and Lauren Veinot. Please give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

I have to give them a refund on their tickets. They just got here and now we're going.

The motion is for adjournment and for the House to meet again tomorrow, April 20th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 20th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 5:37 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)

RESOLUTION NO. 3170

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the World Wildlife Fund hosted the Climb for Nature, inviting participants to climb all 1,776 steps in the CN Tower; and

Whereas Halifax resident Tracy Chesnutt finished the climb in 24 minutes, 50 seconds on April 16, 2016; and

Whereas in supporting the climb, Tracy expanded on her commitment to a better community, something already demonstrated through her involvement in local organizations such as Girls Gone Gazelle;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Tracy Chesnutt on conquering the CN Tower in support of the World Wildlife Fund.