



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2016

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2016

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 3416

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

Whereas Nova Scotians come together every year on April 28th to mark the National Day of Mourning, a day to pause and pay tribute to those who lost their lives or who have been seriously injured on the job; and

Whereas 27 Nova Scotians were killed on the job or from work-related illnesses last year, leaving a wake of heartbreak in homes and communities across the province; and

Whereas today is a day to remember these individuals, to honour their families and loved ones, and to reaffirm our shared commitment to continue our efforts not just to reduce workplace fatalities, but to eliminate them completely;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House stand united in recognition of this day, that we continue to raise awareness of the importance of workplace safety, and that we commend the tireless efforts of Nova Scotians to better protect workers across the province.

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.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, if I could have your permission for an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, in the gallery today we have Allison Bodnar, Chief Executive Officer of the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia, and if everyone would give her a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 3417

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

Whereas pharmacists are valued and trusted health care providers in communities across the province; and

Whereas pharmacists are able to give flu shots, prescribe medication for minor ailments or refills for regular medications, review medications, and provide valuable health information to patients; and

Whereas pharmacists work in hospital settings, in community pharmacies, and with other regulated health care providers to improve the health of Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank pharmacists and the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia for the good work they do every day on behalf of Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services on an introduction.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, if people would turn their attention to the east gallery, I'd like to introduce today my constituency assistant, who very rarely comes to this House because she's very busy in the constituency. She does amazing work. She works very diligently with people who walk through our doors and are looking for the services of government and community. Patti Tabor, if you could stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**NOTICES OF MOTION**

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

BROWN, MEAGAN: MINING ROCKS! CONTEST - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: I would like to extend congratulations to Meagan Brown of Charles P. Allen High School, who is the winner of Mining ROCKS!, a video contest put on through the Mining Association of Nova Scotia. Meagan's video, entitled "Why Should I Care?", took first place and a \$1,000 prize for her efforts.

The video highlighted the historical contribution of the mining sector to the Nova Scotian economy and the continued importance of Nova Scotia's modern firms on the creation of everything from trail stones to playground pebbles to major infrastructure and road-building projects made possible by Nova Scotian mines, quarries, and employees.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Meagan for her hard work and creativity while encouraging her to continue her filmmaking, and also extend congratulations to the Mining Association of Nova Scotia for offering the province's youth an opportunity to be rewarded for showing their production and creativity skills.

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

DEVILLER, ALDERIC: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: On April 28th, in Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada and other nations around the world, we pause to remember those who have lost their lives, been injured, or suffered illness on the job due to a work-related tragedy.

On April 21, 2016, three Wedgeport men aboard the *Dwayne Allen* left for a day of lobster fishing, but only two men returned. Fifty-year-old Alderic Deviller died after helping to save another crew member who was being pulled into the water by a tangled trap. By all accounts, that day Alderic Deviller died a hero by trying to save a fellow crew member.

On April 28th, we pause to remember the life of this man, who throughout his life was a hero to his family and friends and left this life as one as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

NATL. DAY OF MOURNING (04/28/16) - WORKERS HONOUR

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: April 28th is a day of mourning. It is a day when we honour with heavy hearts the workers who have been killed, injured, or suffered illness on the job.

Nova Scotia workers should be able to come home at the end of the day safely and in good health. In 2015, there were 27 work-related deaths in Nova Scotia. This is far, far too many.

Today provides a reminder of the importance of the right to refuse unsafe work and the duty to report unsafe conditions. Today provides a caution about the need for stronger occupational health and safety regulations and a national ban on asbestos. Today provides an opportunity to mourn for the dead and fight for the living.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

CARVER, CARLA - LUN. MUN. DIST. VOL. OF YR.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Today I'd like to take the time to recognize Carla Carver, who was recently recognized by the province at the Nova Scotia Provincial Volunteer Awards as the Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.

Carla has long had a reputation for helping those who need it. In the past, among other things, she has been a secretary of the New Germany Canada Day committee and treasurer of Trinity Lutheran Church. Currently, she is head of fundraising of the Pinehurst Community Hall and treasurer of the New Germany & Area Lions Club. She has had an affinity for running fundraisers and is currently working to help a community member raise funds to travel for a double lung transplant.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Carla Carver on being one of Nova Scotia's Provincial Volunteer Award recipients for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.

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

VIRICK, DR. MOHAN - DOCTORS N.S. PATIENT'S CHOICE AWARD

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: I rise today to congratulate Dr. Mohan Virick of Coxheath, who is the winner of the inaugural Doctors Nova Scotia Patient's Choice Award as a doctor who routinely gives and goes the extra mile to provide patient care.

In giving Dr. Virick the award, Doctors Nova Scotia noted that he has practised almost exclusively for the Mi'kmaq people of Cape Breton, and that his influence has extended into the community through work on issues of alcoholism, diabetes, and obesity.

In addition to the award, Doctors Nova Scotia will make a \$5,000 donation to the charities of Dr. Virick's choice: Loaves and Fishes in Sydney and the Kids' Help Line.

I am pleased to congratulate Dr. Virick for receiving this award, and thank him for his many years of dedicated service.

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

MCFADGEN, NAN: CUPE PRES. - ELECTION CONGRATS.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Nan McFadgen on her election as president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Nova Scotia, at the union's 53rd Annual Convention in Yarmouth.

Ms. McFadgen is a licensed practical nurse from Pictou County and the former president of CUPE Local 2330. She has been a vocal advocate for workers in this province and has spoken out on long-term care and pay equity.

Congratulations to CUPE NS on electing another strong female labour leader. Our caucus would also like to send our best wishes to outgoing CUPE NS President Dianne Frittenburg, who has been elected vice-president.

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

ENGLISHTOWN E-WALKERS - HEART & STROKE WALKABOUT PRIZE

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Englishtown E-Walkers who recently won a Heart and Stroke Walkabout prize, recognizing them as community leaders for their participation in the month-long Winter Walk Challenge.

Throughout the month of February, a time when physical activity is difficult due to unpleasant weather, this enthusiastic team engaged residents to walk in order to celebrate Heart Month.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating the E-Walkers, and wish them continued success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**N. NOVA EDUC. CTR. GRYPHONS BOYS DIV. 1 PROV. HOCKEY TITLE
- CONGRATS.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the North Nova Education Centre Gryphons won the Boys Division 1 Provincial Hockey Title on Sunday, April 3rd. The Gryphons dominated the weekend tournament - winning all five games, outscoring their opponents 21-6, including a 4-0 shootout over Halifax West High School in the championship game.

Matt Murray's stellar performance between the pipes lead this strong contingent from North Nova. Congratulations to the players and coaches for an outstanding hockey season and their Nova Scotia Boys High School Provincial Hockey title.

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

CCH: FILM TAX CREDIT - ELIMINATION EFFECTS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage was asked a question about the elimination of the Film Tax Credit, because of the linkages between CCH and the film industry.

The minister responded by saying "the conversation is now moot." Well, Mr. Speaker, the conversation is not moot, because 1,600 full-time workers employed by a now decimated industry that generated \$180 million in 2014 do not feel it is moot or over.

It's not moot for the rural communities whose economies were boosted by the film industry's presence in locales all over the province - and, Mr. Speaker, it will not be moot for Nova Scotia's public coffers, which have been deprived of the badly needed tax revenues generated by this once thriving industry.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

COOLE, JESSICA - NEW MINAS PROV. VOL. AWARD (2016)

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Ms. Jessica Coole, a deserving recipient of the 2016 Provincial Volunteer Award.

Ms. Coole was nominated for provincial recognition by her community of New Minas for her significant contributions to community events, as well as her dedication to working with children and citizens with special needs. She has shared her time and talent with many organizations, including the New Minas Brownies, the Alexander Society for Special Needs, and the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia. She is also a dedicated helper at the New Minas and District Lions Club monthly breakfasts.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, I would like to extend our thanks to Jessica Coole for her dedication to improving the lives of Nova Scotians with special needs and to the children of our communities. It is volunteers like Ms. Coole who make our communities supportive and caring places to live.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

A&M SMALL ENGINES - ANNIV. (31st)

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to congratulate A&M's Small Engines for 31 years of business, and for their big move into the former Scotsburn Creamery in Scotsburn.

The new location in Scotsburn will give business owners, Allan and Mary Fraser, at least five times the space they currently have. The new space will allow for a lot larger showroom and an on-site office. Allan and Mary also plan to display their impressive antique collection at the new location.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate Allan and Mary for 31 years of business and for their upcoming expansion. It is also so great to see businesses not only surviving, but thriving in Pictou West.

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

TIR/EECD: SCH. BUSES - CAMERAS INSTALL

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, CBC News reported that so far this year in Nova Scotia there have been 1,100 incidents of vehicles failing to stop for school buses despite the fact that these buses had their red lights flashing and a stop sign deployed.

So far this year, RCMP have issued 28 tickets and 15 warnings. Drivers on a couple of buses requested cameras be installed to allow them to catch this problem on tape. These cameras have caught at least two vehicles in the act and brought awareness to this issue. I hope the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development view this story and consider placing more cameras on school buses. Cameras could deter people from disobeying the law and help RCMP catch whoever does this.

This is not about big brother, this is about keeping our students safe.

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

EMERGENCY SERV. ACHIEVEMENT PROG.: PARTICIPANTS - CONGRATS.

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, Sackville's ESAP, Emergency Services Achievement Program, is a program that has been sponsored by HRM Fire & Emergency Services. This program has been running for 13 years. The criteria for participants are as follows: they must be unemployed; not in school; between the ages of 16 and 30; and have one or more barriers to employment.

Usually, 80 per cent are hired at the end of the program; and 10 per cent return to school. This year, 14 participated in the program; 11 were hired by their placements; two are now registered for community college in September; and one is working part time. The success of the program has contributed to the skills, knowledge, training, and experience they receive while in the program along with the support provided by ESAP coordinator, Bernie Scott.

I would like to congratulate these participants for taking the step toward a brighter future.

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

CUMBERLAND SOUTH MLA - BIRTHDAY (50th)

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today, the member for Cumberland South, the Leader of the Official Opposition, is marking a milestone, his 50th birthday.

Lester B. Pearson was Prime Minister, Robert Stanfield was our Premier, the Righteous Brothers had a number one song on the radio, and Bev and Bob Baillie gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. Fifty birthdays, that is a whole lot of living, mister, enough to establish the character of a man to know who he is. I know him to be principled, good-natured, solid, and hard-working. When I turn 50, I hope I have grace, dignity, and humour that the Leader of the Official Opposition has today.

I ask all members to join me in sending good wishes to the member for Cumberland South on this important day. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Happy birthday officially from the Chair.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

LAE - CBU TUITION CAP

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education about tuition increases at Cape Breton University and Dalhousie

University. The minister responded categorically that tuition increases for this year had been held at 3 per cent. With all due respect, the minister is mistaken on this, and here are the facts.

In 2015, Cape Breton University raised its fees by 20 per cent over four years. In 2016, Dalhousie University raised its fees for engineering students by 6.3 per cent, pharmacy by 7 per cent, and agriculture by 8.8 per cent. Both of these universities attribute their multi-year tuition hikes to the government's decision to provide them with only 1 per cent increases. Despite what the minister said yesterday, the 3 per cent tuition cap was effectively lost with the reset of 2015.

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

HUDAK, SUSANNE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, April 20th, the world lost a very special person. Susanne Hudak died suddenly and much too young. Susanne was a shining star in the community of Eastern Passage and Cow Bay. Her love of giving back made her a great volunteer. She worked at the Dartmouth General front desk for 30-plus years and had just retired in the fall. During her years at the hospital, she spent her lunches visiting patients and brightening their days.

Susanne was a devoted member of her church and loved helping at the Cow Bay teas and many other events that needed her. Susanne will be missed by the entire community but she will not be forgotten.

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

GRAY, GLEN: PUBLICATIONS - CONGRATS.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a good friend and author, Glen Gray. Since high school Glen has always loved to write. He publishes *The Northsider*, a weekly publication. Glen wrote a small book entitled *Da Mudder Tung*, using unique Cape Breton phrases, and it became a Canadian best seller. This led to five more works, some humorous and one looking at extraordinary Cape Bretoners.

Glen's love of writing has produced some quality publications. It's a true honour to have this opportunity to congratulate Glen on his six publications. We are looking forward to number seven in the near future. Don't put the pen down, Glen.

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

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES - ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

MS. LENORE ZANN: Yesterday a report was released that outlined the incredible economic contribution to Nova Scotia by our province's indigenous communities. According to the ATN Report, Nova Scotia's indigenous spending totalled \$835.4 million in 2015. In addition, the median age of our province's indigenous communities is almost 20 years younger than the rest of the population of Nova Scotia.

It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that the key to the province's future and success lies within our First Nation communities. So for these and for so many other reasons, we call on the government to strengthen investments into indigenous business, entrepreneurship and innovation.

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

DEVEAU, SARAH - HFX. PARTNERSHIP "PITCH IT!" VIDEO COMP.

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to acknowledge Sarah Deveau of Fall River who recently won the Halifax Partnership "Pitch It!" Video competition. Sarah, who will graduate with her M.B.A. from Dalhousie, entered the contest put on by the Halifax Partnership Game Changers Program, a private-sector driven initiative to keep young talent in Nova Scotia.

As the first place recipient, Sarah won \$1,000 plus an opportunity to network with top employers in the area. Sarah has secured a position with a Halifax company through our Graduate to Opportunity Program, which provides salary contributions to employers hiring a recent grad and assists graduates in finding career opportunities in Nova Scotia.

I would like to congratulate Sarah on this achievement and wish her every success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT:
WATCH PRESENTATION - RECIPIENTS RECOGNIZE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, one of Canada's oldest military units is the West Nova Scotia Regiment. In World War II, 26 battle honours were earned in the Italian and Northwest European campaigns. Members have served in Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Haiti, the Middle East and Afghanistan. Recently out of Camp Aldershot, Commanding Officer of the West Novas Lieutenant Colonel Todd Harris and John Schofield of Canadian Tire made presentations of a special watch created for the West Nova Scotia regiment. The watches given to commemorate service were presented to Gordon Hansford of Kentville, who

fought in the Second World War; Mike Ricketts of Kentville; and Arnold Burbidge of Centreville, who served in the Korean War.

The watch bears the words West Nova Scotia Regiment below the regimental badge, which includes the historical pieces of the Scottish Cross of St. Andrew, *Bluenose*, the Grand Pre chapel and our provincial flower, the mayflower.

It is an honour to recognize Mr. Hansford, Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Burbidge and thank them for their service.

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

INTL. MARKETPLACES: PRODUCT TRANSPORTATION - YARMOUTH FERRY

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister of Canada made an interesting comment on his role in helping Canadians get their products to international marketplaces. He said, "One of the fundamental responsibilities of any Canadian prime minister - and this goes back centuries, from grain on railroads to fish and fur - is to get Canadian resources to international markets."

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're wondering where the Prime Minister and his government have been on securing a ferry service out of Yarmouth that could help get our commercial goods from Nova Scotia to marketplaces in the northeastern United States. With seafood exports on the rise, it seems the Prime Minister has not fulfilled his fundamental responsibility of helping Nova Scotians get their commercial goods to the international market place of this large trading partner to the south.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

BENEDICT, ANITA/*WEEKLY PRESS* - CHILD CHAMPION CAMPAIGN

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, often we find ourselves focused on the bad news stories of the day. It can be difficult to find the good that really does happen every day. Anita Benedict and the staff of *The Weekly Press* newspaper are making a deliberate effort to highlight some of the good news, and where better to start than with children? They have started a Champion Child campaign, focusing on children, pre-teens, and teenagers, and things they have done to make a difference in the world.

This feature will recognize our young volunteers and encourage their peers to join them in helping their neighbours in their community. Children and youth groups will be nominated by the public and highlighted in the weekly editions of the community newspaper. Mr. Speaker, Champion Child is a great way to recognize and encourage youth

volunteerism. East Hants thanks Anita Benedict and *The Weekly Press* for sharing this good news.

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

NIELSEN, ROD - BROOKFIELD MEN'S CLUB EAGLE AWARD

MR. LARRY HARRISON: The Brookfield Men's Club Eagle Award is presented each year to a citizen who makes the community of Brookfield a great place to dwell. This year's deserving recipient was Brookfield Fire Chief Rod Nielsen. A member of the community since high school, Rod believes in leading by example and donating time to whatever cause needs attention. Whether it is committee meetings, setting up for events in the church, mowing the lawn, plowing snow, or fixing a sump pump in the middle of the night, Mr. Nielsen exemplifies community spirit. As well as being the Brookfield Fire Chief, he is president of the Nova Scotia Fire Service Association and director of both the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association and the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs. I wish to recognize Mr. Nielsen's hard work and dedication to his community, and congratulate him on receiving the Brookfield Men's Club Eagle Award.

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

STANFEST: VOLS. - THANK

HON. LLOYD HINES: The Stan Rogers Folk Festival, informally known as Stanfest, is an annual three-day music festival held in Canso. The festival is unbelievably fun. It's all about amazing music, fantastic food, and good friends from all over the world sharing a summer weekend. The festival has won a number of East Coast Music Awards and attracts over 12,000 music fans each year to Canso and the surrounding communities.

With over 12,000 music fans, one can appreciate the tremendous amount of work that goes into organizing and hosting such a huge festival. More than 600 volunteers contribute thousands of dollars each year to making the event a great success. These volunteers come from as far as Alaska and Australia. A huge thank you to all those who continue to give countless hours to make Stanfest bigger and better every year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

NATL. DAY OF MOURNING - TRIBUTE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Each year on this day, we pay tribute to those who lost their lives or were tragically injured on the job. Many of these accidents are entirely preventable - maybe all of them. We must take this time to renew our commitments to workplace safety and ensure all employers and employees alike are educated to practise

the proper procedures to protect themselves and others from injury. This is an issue that impacts people from one end of the province to the other. We will work together to make the necessary improvements to keep people safe. Families have a right to expect their loved ones will return home from work every day. Our hearts go out to those who have a family member or friend who died in an unnecessary workplace tragedy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

KNOX, JANET: HEALTH CARE SYSTEM - LEADERSHIP THANK

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to speak about the accomplishments of Ms. Janet Knox, a woman whom I recently discovered, I'm happy to say, is a constituent of Halifax Armdale.

Ms. Knox, a registered nurse, was the top official at the Annapolis Valley Health Authority for 10 years and also served in the top role for South Shore Health before being named as president and CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Among her many accomplishments, she has a Master of Nursing from Dalhousie and a Master of Business Administration from Saint Mary's University. She is certified as a health executive with the Canadian College of Health Leaders, serves on the board of governors for the Nova Scotia Community College, and on the 211 board of directors. She has been recognized by the IWK Health Centre for her contributions as an honorary life member.

I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Ms. Knox for leading our health care system by building strong teams and creating partnerships.

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

PORT MORIEN: COMMUN. RINK - VOLS. THANK

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: I'm honoured today to bring attention to the residents of Port Morien and area for having brought back old-fashioned fun to the village, by building the first community rink in 30 years. James Macintosh of Port Caledonia, owner of James R. Macintosh Construction, along with many other volunteers, helped to build the rink and also helped with the maintenance. Each Saturday this winter the rink was filled with skaters from four to 84.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers from Port Morien and surrounding areas for making this rink a reality. Well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FABER, SARAH - MUSIC THERAPY RESEARCH

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge an extraordinary achievement of one of my constituents, Ms. Sarah Faber. Sarah is a former graduate of Cole Harbour District High School. After completing her BA and Master degrees studies in Ontario and Finland, she was then awarded a grant of over £100,000, by the Music Therapy Charity of Great Britain, for her doctoral research in music therapy.

She is currently studying the effects of music on people with dementia and Alzheimer's at Anglia Ruskin University, in England, for her Ph.D. completion. I would like to congratulate Sarah on her exemplary work and commend her on choosing such a worthy area of study, as millions of people stand to benefit from that research. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BURNS, BARB: VOL. EFFORTS - THANK

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians, on average, volunteer 192 hours annually for at least one charity. Barb Burns exceeds the average of 192 hours annually because of her dedication to the Friends of Trenton Park Society, taking the lead on donations and helping with many Family Fun Days.

Barb has volunteered for Trenton Parks and Recreation for more than a decade, and for Pictou Landing First Nations School with her husband Vernon. Barb also volunteers at Ivey's Terrace Nursing Home in Trenton and, in the past, has been a Brownie Leader, and an active member with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County

The Town of Trenton has nominated Barb Burns to be the 2016 Volunteer of the Year. I would ask that members in the House of Assembly thank and congratulate Barb for the tireless work she does on behalf of the Town of Trenton. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

CANTOR, MAURICIO - SPERM WHALE RESEARCH

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Mauricio Cantor on his recent research on sperm whales. Mr. Cantor is a Ph.D. student at Dalhousie University and his marine research has discovered that sperm whales have their own dialect and culture within their species. They can learn to communicate from their peers in much the same way that we as humans do. On top of that, he found that they tend to interact with other sperm whales that sound like them and copy whatever sound is in fashion.

Mr. Cantor's research is fascinating, and I'd like to commend him on the arduous work he has put into this interesting topic. I'm proud to have Mauricio Cantor as a student

at Dalhousie University and I'm interested to see what future findings he'll come up with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MACKENZIE, RODDIE & ELLEN: PUNTA CANA
- SOBEYS CONFERENCE/SCH. REFURBISHMENT**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Roddie MacKenzie, Foodland owner in Sydney Mines. He and his wife Ellen recently attended an annual Sobeys conference in Bavaro, Punta Cana, along with 180 other employees.

This year the group decided to do something for the local residents; they spent over \$10,000 to fix up a local school. Working in shifts they installed new ceiling fans, plumbing projects, fixed holes, and repaired and painted the entire school.

It's a true honour to have this opportunity to thank this group of Maritimers for their efforts in refurbishing this school, and making a big difference in the lives of its students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BEDFORD/BEAVER BANK - PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, many residents of Sackville and the surrounding communities are without a family physician; many families have been looking for a doctor for more than two years, with no success. With the upcoming retirement of a family physician, thousands will be without a family physician in our area.

The recent policy change of the Nova Scotia Health Authority has restricted issuing licences for general practitioners in the central region, Mr. Speaker. The government needs to step in, and the minister needs to step in to change this policy to allow those family practices from Bedford and Beaver Bank, who have applied for additional licences, who have been denied, who know that there's a need in the community for more family physicians.

I hope the minister, and I hope the government recognizes the importance to change this policy so that Nova Scotians can get a family physician.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**GOODE, DAVEY LEE & GILL:
GROOVE FACTORY RECORDING STUDIO - OPENING**

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, Davey Lee Goode and Gill Goode have recently opened a new business in the Town of Amherst. The Groove Factory Recording Studio is located in the old Amherst piano factory, now affectionately known as the Greasy Groove World Headquarters.

The whole studio is wired for recording and includes a vocal isolation booth, a drum room, a live room, and the heart and soul of the studio, the control room. It's decorated wall to wall with guitars, zebra prints, hot rods, juke boxes and all the buttons and flashing lights you'd expect to find on a rocket ship to Mars.

Whether it's orchestral, traditional or digital, the Groove Factory is ready to go. I would like to congratulate Davey Lee Goode and Gill Goode for their contribution and for choosing Amherst as the location for their business, Greasy Groove and their new recording studio, the Groove Factory. I wish them much success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CANNING VILLAGE MEAT MARKET - IWK FUNDRAISING

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, volunteers give freely of themselves and their talents with no expectation of reward. Through their efforts volunteers improve the lives of people in their community. This description accurately describes the staff of the Canning Village Meat Market.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the work they selflessly do to help others. Donna Lyons, Nancy Roscoe-Huntley, Noala Lake, Colton Barkhouse and Beth Huntley held a free-will offering sausage and hot dog barbeque in support of anti-bullying in the IWK Mental Health Unit.

Matching funds from the store were collected and submitted to the IWK program. This activity is certainly another good example of the outstanding volunteerism that takes place in Canning.

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

YMCA CTR. FOR IMMIGRANT PROGRAMS: ROLE - IMPORTANCE

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the staff at YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs and the pivotal role they have played in helping new immigrants, specifically those who need to build professional connections in order to obtain work in Halifax.

The YMCA acts as a connector to help new people fit into networks that match up with their area of expertise. Many immigrants already have skills and training when they arrive in Halifax, however, sometimes they will begin working in a role that does not match with their skills. The YMCA helps professionals transfer their skills and education to their intended areas of expertise and ensures that the entire family becomes successful.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the important role that the YMCA plays in the success of newcomers to Halifax.

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

STEWIACKE AREA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT GROUP - FUNDRAISING

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the humanitarian efforts of a group of Stewiacke citizens who are currently fundraising to bring a Syrian family to the community. In less than four months the group has secured housing, heat, hydro, the services of a doctor and dentist, and some furniture and some household items for the sponsored family, raising approximately \$15,000 in goods and services.

In this brief time frame fundraisers sponsored by the Stewiacke Area Refugee Settlement Group have brought them about one-third of the way toward realizing their goal of bringing a refugee family to the community. I wish STARS continued success in their venture.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MACDONALD, BERNADETTE - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a passionate and dedicated member of our Yarmouth community. Bernadette MacDonald is the executive director of the Tri-County Women's Centre in Yarmouth. She is a tireless advocate for social justice issues that affect women, youth and their families, and an equally tireless activist against violence.

Bernadette is involved in many community projects, including Healthy Relationships for Youth, Youth Truth Matters, RESPECT, CHOICE Housing Committee and the Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team. Bernadette spearheaded the Leahey Wellness Clinic, which has operated out of the Tri-County Women's Centre since January 2014.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to benefit from Bernadette's dedication and vital contributions and I would like to thank her for all that she does to make our society, community and our region a more progressive, fair and compassionate place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

LEVY, RON - MEDAL OF COURAGE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Medal of Courage was awarded to Mr. Ron Levy of Parrsboro at the Nova Scotia Division's Daffodil Breakfast on April 20th. Ron is a volunteer and fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life; in fact, he is a known force of nature. He has been a team captain and active participant for many years. Last year, when he was facing his own struggle with cancer, he told the organizers he would be unable to enter a team. When the relay faced possible cancellation, Ron knew he had to act. Despite his health, he stepped back in with gusto. Every weekend he dedicated his time to yard sales, committee meetings and speaking engagements to rally more teams.

Although Ron's team was the last to register, it raised the most money, had the most spirit, and was the most decorated of the campsites. Mr. Speaker, we are all proud of Ron because of his passion, commitment to making a difference, community leadership, and tenacity.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

CROOKSHANK, ERIC: BENCH BULLYING - CHARITY GALA

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: It was July 31st last year when I had the privilege to first meet former Halifax Rainman Eric Crookshank. What's impressive about Eric? Well, at first glance, you might think it's his superior stature. You might think it's his huge smile or his natural athleticism. Amazingly, these traits pale in comparison to the dedication and passion Eric has for eradicating bullying in Nova Scotia. He shared with me that day his story of both being bullied and becoming a bully himself, and the realization that he needed to act to combat the effects on our children.

Since then, Eric and his Bench Bullying friends have travelled the length and breadth of Nova Scotia, carrying an inspiring message of hope and encouragement to children about the benefits of being kind to your classmates, family, and members of your community.

On Sunday, May 8th, Bench Bullying will be hosting a Mother's Day charity gala featuring live music, comedy, a silent auction, and dinner to assist in raising funds to continue the fine work done by Eric and members of Bench Bullying . . .

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

The honourable member for Pictou West.

SUTHERLAND HARRIS MEM. HOSP.: WALK-IN CLINIC - CLOSURE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: The people of Pictou West are dependent upon the services of the after-hours walk-in clinic at the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital in Pictou. The Pictou clinic offered working people, single parents, seniors, and those without a doctor an opportunity to have their health care needs met.

With the shocking news of the immediate and permanent closure of this service, constituents are rightly concerned that their health care needs will not be met. The Pictou clinic undoubtedly kept many from seeking more costly medical attention from the emergency department at the Aberdeen Regional Hospital.

The people of Pictou West deserve better from this government. The Minister of Health and Wellness has an obligation to do everything in his power to re-open the Pictou walk-in clinic.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

FLOWERS OF SPRING SHOP - OPENING

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to take a few minutes to tell the House a bit about a new business that opened in the Fall in Bedford. Yidan Li and her husband, Russ Gaudet, opened Flowers of Spring on the Bedford Highway in September.

They introduced the art of making nylon flowers after finding out they weren't common here in Nova Scotia, although they note that Nova Scotians are famous for our own handicrafts like quilts, pewter work, and wooden boats. People can buy flowers already made by Yidan Li or they can take classes to learn how to craft them themselves. Many people get a group together for a social time while they learn a new skill.

The Speaker of the House of Commons and I were delighted to be on hand for the official opening of Flowers of Spring, and we hope their business blooms for many years to come.

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

KENNEDY, SHAUN - EDUC. WK. AWARD

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I rise today to celebrate Nova Scotia teacher Shaun Kennedy from Richmond Education Centre/Academy. As you know, Education Week ran from April 17-23, 2016. Every year it “. . . provides an opportunity for parents/guardians and the general public to celebrate the achievements of students and teachers, and to acknowledge the contributions that many people, in supporting roles, make to our education system.”

This year's Education Week theme was Media Literacy: Empowering Critical Thinking in a Digital Media World. In his technology education classes, Shaun Kennedy uses guided learning initiatives to help enhance the students' digital citizenship skills, especially with regard to being respectful, responsible, and ethical.

Because of the flood of digital information bombarding students today, the skills being taught by Shaun Kennedy are necessary in helping them with their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, which will become even more essential going forward. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Shaun Kennedy on this great honour and in thanking him for his continued hard work for his students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

PHARMACY AWARENESS MO. (03/16) - PHARMACISTS THANK

MR. TIM HOUSTON: March was Pharmacy Awareness Month, an opportunity for Nova Scotia's pharmacists to promote their role to other health care professionals and patients. Pharmacists and pharmacy students can use this time to educate people about the variety of valuable services pharmacists provide.

Pharmacists are valuable health care providers who often are the first point of contact with the system when people are feeling ill. They provide help, education, and peace of mind. It's my pleasure to thank Nova Scotia's pharmacists for the work they do and congratulate them on another successful Pharmacy Awareness Month.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

ELLS, LYZA: STRAIT REG. SCIENCE FAIR - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Today I ask that the members in the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Lyza Ells on placing third overall at the 18th Annual Strait Regional Science Fair, held from April 5-7, 2016. Lyza is a Grade 8 student at St. Andrew Junior School, and her project, La Guerre Froide, was one of the grand-prize winners. All of the winners will attend the Nova Scotia Science Fair Showcase in Halifax from May 5th to May 7th, as well as the Canada Wide Science Fair being held at McGill University in Montreal from May 18th to May 20th.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the Strait Regional School Board in thanking all members of the 2016 Science Fair Planning Committee as well as the parents, guardians, staff, ward sponsors, and local businesses for their ongoing support. I also want to wish Lyza the best of luck at the upcoming science fairs. I hope she enjoys the rest of her school year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

THIESEN, PETER - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Peter Thiesen, a 21-year-old student and business owner from Valley, Colchester North, is an excellent example of a successful young entrepreneur. Peter established the groundwork for his business at the age of 10 when he began mowing his neighbours' lawns.

He started his business in 2012 as a way to pay for his education. He handles property management, landscaping, lawn care, and snow removal with the help of four part-time workers. His brother Tim also helps out when he is needed.

Peter manages to juggle his business, P.T. Property Care, with full-time studies at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, where he will finish his Bachelor of Science with a major in agricultural business. He was a recent winner of the regional competition for the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards and will travel to Toronto to compete with others. Peter is an excellent representative of the Maritime entrepreneurial spirit, and he does a fine job with my lawn.

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

FASHAN, SHELLEY - CREATIVE EXPRESSION: SUPPORT - THANK

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and congratulate Shelley Fashan of Lake Echo, who has been a cultural activist for 30 years and an advocate for youth and emerging artists. Shelley was the first African Nova Scotian board representative for the East Coast Music Association, the Nova Scotia Arts Council, and the Lieutenant Governor's Masterworks Awards. She is a founding member of the Nova Scotia Mass Choir and the African Nova Scotian Music Association.

Shelley currently sits on the African Nova Scotian Music Association Board, the Charles Taylor Theatre, and the Media Arts Association. Please join me in congratulating and commending Shelley on her tremendous support for creative expression in Nova Scotia and wish her every success in the future.

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

EVOY, LT. TERRI LYNN - SEA CADET MOVEMENT

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize a young woman for her dedication to youth and their involvement in the Sea Cadet movement. Lieutenant Terri Lynn Evoy has recently returned from Australia, where she was an escort officer for a cadet taking part in a training exchange program with the Royal Australia Navy. She was chosen for this role due to her role as commanding officer with the RCSCC 70 New Waterford, as well as being a coach escort for both the Biathlon

Nationals and the Marksmanship Nationals. Terri Lynn is also a cadet youth counsellor for the youth cadets attending summer training.

Please join me in congratulating Lieutenant Terri Lynn Evoy on her commitment to youth both professionally and through her volunteer commitments.

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

HFX. EXHIBITION CTR.: NEW OWNERS - CONGRATS.

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the new owners of Halifax Exhibition Centre. Last year, it was discovered that the Exhibition Park on Prospect Road was in desperate need of costly repairs and renovations, and residents were worried that it would close its doors. Exhibition Park, located on the outskirts of the city, has long been a popular venue for thousands of unique experiences for people of all ages.

Fortunately, the property was bought by private developers who, on January 28, 2016, reopened the newly-named Halifax Exhibition Centre and welcomed visitors to get a glimpse of the new decor and building upgrades. Since it officially reopened with the RV Show earlier this year, thousands have passed through the doors of the Halifax Exhibition Centre, and thousands more will follow as many old favourite events and some new ones attract vendors and visitors to this fabulous facility.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in wishing the owners and managers of the Halifax Exhibition Centre great success as they grow their business into the future.

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

CALABRESE, ROB: C.B. PROMOTION - THANK

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Rob Calabrese from Sydney, who helped thrust Cape Breton Island into the international spotlight after his creation of the cbiftrumpwins.com website.

This website has caught the attention of millions of people around the world by showcasing Cape Breton's beauty, cultural diversity, and rich history. It has generated hundreds of thousands of serious inquiries about visiting, working, and living in Cape Breton. Rob Calabrese's creativity, ingenuity, and out-of-the-box thinking have resulted in millions of dollars in valued exposure and potential tourism spinoffs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to thank Rob Calabrese for his significant efforts in promoting not only Cape Breton, but our province and our country.

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

ENRIGHT, KAREN: DIGBY AREA BD. OF TRADE - PRES. APPT.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Karen Enright for being named the president of the Digby Area Board of Trade. Ms. Enright, a lawyer and businesswoman, replaced Peter MacLellan as head of the board of trade at the association's annual general meeting.

Ms. Enright brings to the position years of experience in a number of businesses, as well as being active in the board of trade. Most recently she was one of the vice-presidents. Her business background includes serving as legal and insurance advisor for Enright Business Consulting, as well as running a bed and breakfast and a winery in the Bear River area.

I would like to think that Lucille Ball's comment, "If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it," is very apparent for her. The board of trade follows this reasoning as shortly before assuming the presidency of the board of trade, Ms. Enright and two partners founded the Seafood Culinary Institute of Nova Scotia.

Congratulations, Karen, on all your endeavours and good luck in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West on an introduction.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, if I can have everyone's attention to the west gallery. Pictou County is well-represented here today with the Warden of Pictou County, Ron Baillie; the Mayor of Pictou, Joe Hawes; and the Mayor of New Glasgow, Barrie MacMillan. If we could give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DOW, TRACY - HEROISM

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 2016, Tracy Dow was enjoying a dinner at the Steak and Stein with her friends when she noticed a gentleman choking at the next table. Without hesitation, Tracy jumped up and began performing the Heimlich manoeuvre and managed to dislodge the food that he was choking on.

It had been many years since Tracy had taken a first-aid course but when she was faced with the situation at the restaurant, it all came back to her. Thankfully she acted quickly and remembered what needed to be done. The gentleman was lucky that Tracy was at that restaurant that evening and that she was able to keep a cool head as she performed the manoeuvre.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Tracy for her heroic actions on that evening of January 26th. Her immediate response to the emergency situation helped save a life and prevented a potentially tragic situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

DUNHAM, FRANK - BRIDGEWATER VOL. OF YR. (2015-16)

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, volunteers are the core of any community, especially in rural areas. Volunteers don't look for recognition, they see a need, an opportunity to help, and they make impossibles become realities.

One such community member who steps up time and time again for various groups and organizations is Frank Dunham. Frank is a 2015-16 Bridgewater Volunteer of the Year and the Bridgewater nominee for the Provincial Volunteer Award, and has been actively volunteering for more than 50 years.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Frank and thank him for the many hours he has given to various organizations over the past 50 years. I ask this House to please join me in congratulating Frank Dunham on his award and sending him our best wishes for health and happiness.

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

**N.S. MINOR HOCKEY RECORD (LONGEST GAME):
TASA PEEWEE AA/PICTOU CO. SELECTS - CONGRATS.**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, history was made on March 26th when what is believed to be the longest game in Nova Scotia minor hockey history was played out to a 1-1 tie after 10 periods. The TASA Peewee AA girls were declared provincial co-champions after concerns for players' safety brought their game against the Pictou County Selects to a halt after five hours of gruelling play.

The girls played to their physical and psychological limits in seven periods of overtime. There being no precedent on how to conclude the game, it was decided to award the title of co-champions to both teams in recognition of the hard work and determination showed by all participants on both sides - not to mention the officials who put in seven extra periods.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to formally congratulate both teams for their contribution to the Nova Scotia hockey lore and their shared accomplishment, and both coaches for coming up with the creative co-champion solution that stays true to the spirit of minor hockey while acknowledging the hard work and success of all involved.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank everybody for those very thoughtful and warm members' statements. As we get ready for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers, we will take a second to wish the Leader of the Official Opposition a Happy 50th Birthday, on the record.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: BOOTS ON THE STREET PROG. - CUTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for sharing that with all the people who are here today.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Nova Scotians were surprised to learn last week that the government is cutting more than \$500,000 from a very important public safety program called Boots on the Street. They are perplexed because this comes at a time when, really, residents all over the province are worried about safety here in their capital city.

So, I'd like to ask the Premier, why is your government cutting this important safety program, Boots on the Street, at a time when we need to deal with violent crime in the capital of Halifax?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to thank all those men and women in uniform who are working across our province to keep our communities safe.

Our government has continued to invest over \$6 million in that program (Interruption) \$16 million - sorry, Mr. Speaker. We have continued to work with law enforcement agencies across the province. That program is having review and that in no way means that it's disappearing. That is something that would be normal, for government to assess programs, the ways that we can make them different or the ways that we can enhance them.

Perhaps we need to have more, but I can tell you one of the things that has been very clear not only in this province, but across the country - if you want to deal with crime you have to deal with the root causes of crime. Dealing with poverty is why we've invested in low-income Nova Scotians. Mr. Speaker, it's about making sure people have affordable housing, that's why we are going to continue to work with the Minister of Community Services and provide options for low-income Nova Scotians when it comes to a safe

environment. We're going to continue to attack the root causes of crime, as we keep our streets safe.

MR. BAILLIE: Cutting the number of sworn officers on our streets is not attacking the root causes of crime. We'd be the first ones to say great, if that was happening.

Here we go again, Mr. Speaker, they cut first and they're going to review that afterwards. We saw that with the film industry, we saw it with Pharmacare, and now the officers on our streets, the men and women who keep us safe - they have a cut and they'll review later.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain to the House how it makes sense to cut such an important safety program and then review it after the cut has happened?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It is my understanding there has been no loss of employment when it comes to law enforcement officers across the province. We've continued to work with our partners, they continue to work with community organizations to keep our streets safe. They are continuing to reach out, to work with community organizations and government departments across the entire government, to ensure we attack the root causes of crime.

We're going to continue to make sure that we keep our streets safe; we are also going to do the right thing and continue to make sure we invest in Nova Scotians so that they can have the skills required to continue to provide themselves with the same optimistic future that every Nova Scotian should have to look forward to.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this program supports very important public safety initiatives, including mental health training for police officers, something that is urgently needed on the streets not just in Halifax, but across the province. It supports criminal investigations, it supports IDENT and communications between police forces. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is cutting it. Here in Halifax people are very worried about the recent reports of horrible crimes.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us for sure how many officers are going to be taken off the streets in Halifax because of his cuts to Boots on the Street?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we spent \$16.2 million on this program. We're going to continue to invest in law enforcement across this province, but we cannot continue to be short-sighted when it comes to dealing with crime in this province. We need to be aggressively attacking the root causes of crime.

This government, our government, is going to continue to work with non-profit organizations across this province and with law enforcement agencies to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we deal with the root causes of what we're seeing on our streets across this

province, so we can get a long-term sustainable solution to give every Nova Scotian an opportunity at a positive optimistic future.

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

PREM.: HOUSING STRATEGY - UNDERSPENDING

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, I note that the Premier has stated on a few occasions that he's attempting to address the root causes of crime, but I note that affordable housing does not appear to be on the Premier's radar.

For the past two years the Premier has considerably underspent on the province's housing strategy. Two years ago they underspent \$2.4 million and last year it was underspent by \$1.1 million, so over two years this totals \$3.5 million not spent on the housing strategy.

Can the Premier justify underspending on our province's housing strategy?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She raises a very serious issue, one that, Mr. Speaker, our government takes seriously. It is why very early on in our mandate, we invested heavily in rent supplements for low-income Nova Scotians. At the same time we're reducing the wait-list for those looking for affordable housing in this province, we're going to continue to work with our partners across this province so that we can find long-term, sustainable solutions to the challenges facing Nova Scotia families.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely unbelievable. Not only has our Premier decided not to spend millions on the housing strategy but he has underspent in the area of social housing subsidies. Last year the Premier did not spend a total of \$3.5 million on social housing subsidies, despite a waiting list of close to 5,000 people, and I will table that.

These subsidies are given to our province's most vulnerable so they don't have to choose between food and shelter. My question to the Premier is, given that our public housing wait-list is close to 5,000 people, what possible excuse does the Premier have to justify underspending on social housing subsidies by \$3.5 million?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We continue to work with our partners across this province to deal with the issue of affordable housing. We've continued to invest in affordable housing, whether it's in rent subsidies - we're working with our housing authorities all across our province to deal with the challenges they face. At the same time we're seeing the wait-list go down.

Yet when I listen to the member opposite, she has not met a problem that she doesn't believe throwing money at it will solve. We're going to find a long-term solution, working with our partners, Mr. Speaker, in a sustainable way so that every low-income Nova Scotian can find themselves in a safe, secure place to live. We're going to do that so we can be sustainable in the long run.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe but there is yet another area in the affordable housing that the Premier has decided not to spend all the money he allocated for last year. The Premier underspent in the area of housing renovation and affordable housing by \$1.5 million - I will table that.

These funds are used to keep seniors and persons with disabilities safe and comfortable in their homes. In total, last year the Premier decided not to spend over \$6 million on affordable housing, despite the need of thousands of Nova Scotians.

I ask the Premier, can he explain any of this to those who are in desperate need of affordable housing?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to again thank our partners across this province who have been working with landlords who have been working with us, with community members across this province, taking advantage of the rent supplement opportunities that are there. We're continuing to make sure that the wait-list goes down. We're working with our housing authorities from one end of the province to the other to ensure that we have affordable housing in communities across Nova Scotia.

We're going to continue to do the work, Mr. Speaker, that I believe is the responsibility of government, looking after the most vulnerable citizens in our province. I want to tell the honourable member it has been only two and a half years - it's very difficult to make up for four years of damage in two and a half years.

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

**BUS. - CREDIT UNION SMALL BUS. LOAN GUARANTEE PROG.:
PREVIOUS REVIEW - CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Business. Yesterday I asked that minister about the Credit Union Small Business Loan Guarantee Program. Since his department or he issued a release that listed all the benefits of this program, including that it has helped 2,000 small businesses across the province to create jobs but yet they are reviewing the program anyway, despite its obvious success.

The minister defended that action of review, saying they were going to be prudent to use taxpayers' money to review a program whether it was successful or not. It turns out that his department spent over \$100,000 to hire Deloitte to do just such a review in 2015.

I'd like to ask the minister, can he confirm that his department already did a review, at a cost of \$100,000 of the credit union program by Deloitte last year?

HON. MARK FUREY: Yes, I can confirm that the department expended money to do a review on the delivery of the program. The review we're talking about is a review of the finances of the program. We believe that Nova Scotia taxpayers would expect that to be due diligence and appropriate work on the part of government.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in this House yesterday the Minister of Business said, and I quote directly from Hansard, "It's what governments should be doing when we're expending taxpayers' dollars - 13 years, 13 years without a review. It's appropriate."

Now it turns out there was a review done just a year ago. The government saw the success of the program, and they doubled its funding at the time, something we supported. We assumed correctly, even though the minister didn't disclose it yesterday, that they had done a review. Now, less than a year later, they're going to do a second review. How is doing two reviews of a program that we all supposedly agree is a good one, at a cost of at least \$100,000, a good use of taxpayers' dollars?

MR. FUREY: My learned colleague is the accountant. He would know the difference between a review of the delivery of the program and a review of the finances of the program.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS STRATEGY - PLANS

HON. DAVID WILSON: The Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions Strategy is approaching the end of the five-year plan. The strategy was started under the previous NDP Government and has been praised by the current minister and the government on a number of occasions. Despite this praise, we've heard very little from the minister on what the next steps are for the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In a recent media scrum, the minister stated that he's planning on conducting some type of review but provided no real details. I'd like to ask the minister, what is the minister's plan for the review of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm pleased to say that the review is now under way, looking at the 33 recommendations, as to the extent that they have been implemented and also what kind of outcomes and impacts they have been able to make. Over the next number

of months we'll have both the department and also the NSHA providing feedback on the current strategy.

MR. DAVID WILSON: What I didn't hear was more wide consultation, which is needed. The creation of the province's first Mental Health and Addictions Strategy did just that. There needs to be consultation with the mental health advisory committee or even broader within the province. Our concern is that there may be a gap. We know that it takes some time to implement and gather a new strategy. So can the minister assure us today that there will be no gaps between the current Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and whatever the government decides to bring forward in the future?

MR. GLAVINE: I thank the member opposite, a former Health Minister, for a very important point that he has made here today, that there should be no delay, no gaps whatsoever in pointing to the wonderful benefits that have been created through the strategy but also, more importantly, where do we go for the next five years? I want to assure the member and all Nova Scotians that we will have an announcement within the next few weeks about how the review will be conducted and also how we'll lay out the plans for the next five years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

PREM.: FIXED ELECTIONS BILL - SUPPORT CONFIRM

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, when are we going to have an election? Unfortunately, the only person who can answer that question is the Premier. The power is in his hands because only he can call it. That runs counter to the recommendation from Elections Nova Scotia, and even runs counter to Bill No. 74, which the Premier introduced back in 2007 right here in this Legislature. Maybe we could introduce that legislation again word for word. (Interruption) The member for Cape Breton-Richmond is talking about another bill that was actually introduced by us first in 2011, but that's another story.

Would the Premier support a bill written word for word like his 2007 bill to introduce fixed election dates?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member. I'll do better than that. I'll take advice from him. If he wants to pick a date, I'll be more than happy to entertain it.

MR. MACMASTER: That's a lot of power to give me, Mr. Speaker. I would settle for the Fall. We can have it any Fall; I'm ready any time.

I don't see how anybody could go against this because we know that members in the House, particularly on the government side, even campaigned for fixed election dates. Nova Scotia's Chief Electoral Officer Richard Temporale, has said that the province could

save up to \$500,000 in administrative costs, if we had fixed election dates. Why the change of heart? Does the Premier feel he has an advantage he does not want to give up even if it costs the taxpayers in the province half a million dollars?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The only people who have raised fixed election dates have been the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia. As we go across the province Nova Scotians continue to remind us they want to work with us to drive economic growth. Small business confidence highest in the country; youth employment up; population growing; and today we announced an Asia strategy, doubling exports into Asia last year.

Mr. Speaker, all I hear from Nova Scotians is continue to work with us so we can move forward and forget about the pessimistic speeches coming across from the other side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:
SUTHERLAND HARRIS MEM. HOSP. CLINIC - CLOSURE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday Pictou County residents learned that the outpatient clinic at the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital will abruptly close tomorrow. This most unacceptable situation places greater burden on the ER at the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow.

My question is simple, how did this happen?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, there is a reality that we all face in Nova Scotia and that is, doctors are private business people and this was a private clinic at the Sutherland Hospital. What the people of Pictou know is that just a very short ways away is a very, very strong collaborative practice that is handling the needs of patients in that area.

MS. MACFARLANE: Well, Mr. Speaker, that answer is unacceptable because I will tell you right now, there's too many people in Pictou West who can't afford the \$50 transportation that it costs to get there. You know, this was a clinic that definitely served 20 people or more in the evenings, and people are struggling.

I would like the minister to stand in his place and commit to the good people of Pictou West that he will help find locums to serve this outpatient clinic until we find a longer-term solution for this problem. We need doctors.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say first of all, in a general statement, that 90 per cent of Nova Scotians have a family physician and we know (Interruptions) we know (Interruptions) we know that . . .

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

MR. GLAVINE: In fact we know that this is one of the highest in the country. There are, from time to time, areas that may be without a family doctor. This area has an outstanding collaborative practice. The emergency department at the Aberdeen serves the population very, very well. It is being refurbished and able to in fact increase capacity. Those are the strengths taking place in that area of the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LIBERAL HEALTH CARE PLANS - CLOSURES

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness can stand here every day and say things are better in health care for Nova Scotians and his colleagues can clap, but the fact of the matter is they're not. This year the government has said that it will hold the health care budget to a 1 per cent increase and people have been wondering how. It goes up 2 per cent a year just on inflation - how will they hold it at 1 per cent?

Well, folks, we're starting to see how. We'll close mental health units, we'll close walk-in clinics, and we'll have less doctors. People need doctors, people need access to health care. My question for the minister, are these closures and increased waiting lists symptoms of the Liberal health care plan?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to say how the health care system across Nova Scotia, all the clinicians, and teams in fact are working just a little bit differently. Just to point out a couple of examples: we've done 500 to 600 additional hips and knees with roughly the same amount of money; we all know at the Aberdeen we have one of the strongest orthopaedic teams in the province; and we also have had a 12 per cent reduction in wait times for MRIs. We're doing things differently and with better results.

MR. HOUSTON: Oh, things are certainly being done differently. The wait-lists are getting longer, doctors are working longer, they're working harder, they're working more hours, they're exhausted and they're burning out.

So, my question is - my question (Interruption) The Premier says he thought we didn't have any. He's absolutely right. We, sir, do not have enough doctors, we need more.

My question for the minister is, what's the plan to attract and retain doctors? That's what people want to know. You are failing the province. What are you going to do to change it?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we all know that any of us can rise here, like the member opposite and have some rhetoric. We have (Interruptions)

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

MR. GLAVINE: We are fortunate in this province to have the most doctors per capita of any province in Canada and that is just (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. We can close Question Period, period, and move on to the next item of business here. We'll let the honourable Minister of Health and Wellness answer the question, please.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know that so far in 2016 we've had very, very strong recruitment. Since February about 48 additional doctors in the Central Zone. We have six under contract with more committed to Cape Breton this year. We had some difficulties recruiting for Baddeck, two new doctors have started in Baddeck. For the first time in years we've recruited a doctor to Shelburne. The reality is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**TIR - BIOMEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL TENDER:
N.S. FACILITY - ELIMINATION**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm thinking everybody forgot their yoga last night. My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. We learned from reports that a tender issued by his department for the disposal of biomedical waste has been changed to eliminate the requirement for a facility to be operated in Nova Scotia.

I'm wondering why was the tender changed to eliminate the requirement to invest in Nova Scotia and was it changed at the request of a Nova Scotia company or an out-of-province company?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, to the member's question, I have no idea of anything about that tender. I've never seen anything about it. I know nothing of that issue, so I can do some research and get back to the member on that.

MR. YOUNGER: That's fair, I look forward to him getting back to me - maybe by the same token he can look into the second part of the question.

Aside from the fact that it seems to go against the principle that this government has had over the past couple of years, when waste is to be treated in the province in which it has originated - and obviously legislation was introduced in that respect around fracking waste - more important than that principle is the fact that the tender is now worded that there is no longer a requirement that Nova Scotia taxpayer dollars have the effect of creating investment and employment in Nova Scotia.

I'm interested to know why that change was allowed. I know he is going to have to look into it, based on his previous response.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again to the member's question, I don't have any background whatsoever on that. I can check into that. Obviously there are procurement rules, based on how we do a number of these things under Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, but I will endeavour to get that information on that specific question and get back to the House.

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

EECD: AUDITOR GENERAL HOME-SCHOOLING RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION

MS. LENORE ZANN: This week the Auditor General provided a progress report on recommendations from a 2012 performance audit. Among other things, the audit concluded that education rights of children enrolled in the provincial home-schooling program need to be protected by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

At that time the response from the department was that they would take action and develop a strategy in response to the report and to his concerns. However, now the department says they have no intention of implementing these recommendations.

My question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: could she please explain why she has decided to ignore the advice of the Auditor General?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to speak to the issue of the question, the Auditor General did bring down a report in 2012, perhaps in haste. The minister of the day and the deputy of the day said yes - as somebody said, they nodded and said yes, failing to look at what the Education Act said about the rights of parents for home-schooling.

MS. ZANN: Thank you for that answer. Mr. Speaker, parents who home-school are deeply committed to their children's education. However, in school classrooms there are ongoing assessments to make sure that children are learning the skills that they need to succeed in post-secondary education and in the workforce.

Could the minister please explain why her department is refusing to take steps to make sure that home-schooled children are actually making the same type of educational progress?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the member may not know that when parents have the right to enroll their children in a home-schooling program, they also have the right to choose the curriculum and the program that they follow. There are over a thousand kids in home-schooling. That means, or could mean, over a thousand different programs. That's the decision and the right of the parent, and we respect it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: SUTHERLAND HARRIS MEM. HOSP. CLINIC
- MIN. ACTIONS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we heard this afternoon that there are lots of doctors in Nova Scotia - plenty of doctors in Nova Scotia. We also heard that the people who had their clinic closed should just go down the road to where there are doctors that are open. And then we said, no more rhetoric.

So I'm going to ask a straight-up question for the minister. What's the minister doing to make sure that this clinic stays open? Is he doing anything, or is he happy to see it closed?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is important to point out that this was a private clinic set up, yes, to meet needs of patients in the afterhours. These doctors now have decided, for whatever reason, that they will no longer hold the clinic. They moved from seven days to four days. They all work in a collaborative practice.

The Nova Scotia Health Authority is taking a look at what the needs are in that area. Dr. Lowe has been onto this issue now for the past couple of weeks, and I think we'll see results from that that are appropriate for the area.

It is important to point out that in New Glasgow we have one of the best models of collaborative practice. It's been copied by many from across the province. We have a collaborative practice in Pictou as well, and it is serving the needs of that population.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the people of the area will take little comfort in the minister's words. The last time the minister came to Pictou County, he was closing the mental health unit for three months - three months - while they sorted out the staffing issues.

Well, sir, many, many more than three months have passed, and now he says, well, it didn't work to begin with. So now we stand here today and we hear him say there are

lots of doctors. The Health Authority clearly would've known, should've known, for months and months that there were doctors ready to retire and that the service being provided was at risk.

Did they sit on their hands? Did they do nothing? What is the message? Happy with the closure, minister?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the first question, the member opposite knows very well - he's been well-informed about the mental health clinic, which was not a short-term psychiatric unit meeting the standards of this province and across the country. He'll see over the next number of months that mental health support in that area. We've always moved patients across the province to get the appropriate care.

In terms of primary care, building collaborative practices and the capacity in those areas is what the Health Authority is well underway with, and we'll see those kind of results.

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

GAMING - CHASE THE ACE JACKPOTS CAP: PREM. UPDATE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Part II of the Gaming Control Act.

Yesterday I asked the Minister responsible for the Gaming Control Act whether he plans to cap Chase the Ace jackpots. On both occasions the minister refused to rule out capping Chase the Ace jackpots. In the media scrum after Question Period, the Premier said that, to his knowledge, there was no plan to cap the jackpots.

Nova Scotians have seen this before, Mr. Speaker. This Premier has said stuff before and said he doesn't deal directly with his departments. So my question to the minister is, since yesterday, has the minister updated the Premier on discussions of whether he will be capping Chase the Ace jackpots or not?

HON. MARK FUREY: What I was explaining to my colleague yesterday is the work that has gone on between those who are running the lottery, the Chase the Ace at the Ashby Legion in Sydney, and those in the department - I spoke about circumstances in the Inverness Chase the Ace. What I've said is there's ongoing work to ensure the sustainability of the game and the integrity of the game, as well as public safety. We see that by the work that many volunteers are doing and the engagement of security personnel and police.

What I will tell my colleague is, as the Premier has said, there's no cap being considered for Chase the Ace.

MR. ORRELL: I appreciate that answer, and I know the people who are organizing Chase the Ace lotteries all over the province will appreciate that answer as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

TIR - GRAVEL ROADS: MAGNESIUM CHLORIDE - FUNDING

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. I have a large number of gravel dirt roads in Pictou West. My office receives numerous calls from people who can't go outside, hang their clothes out, or even open their windows due to large amounts of dust that arise from the traffic. In fact, I receive more calls about dust control than I do about snow removal.

Given the relatively modest winter with snow plowing, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal must have seen some decrease in costs. Therefore, does the minister have a plan to use any of the excess funds to purchase more magnesium chloride for dust control than usual?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member opposite for the question. We're still looking at some of the areas of maintenance for the gravel roads. The member had been in estimates and of course during QP for the many questions that we've received from all sides of the House with respect to gravel. There are a number of things we're looking at in the very short term here. We're certainly getting the message that we need to put together some additional maintenance and some form of support to bolster up the gravel roads, as there certainly is a problem.

Each and every Spring thaw we see issues with gravel roads, but there's really a new level of concern here for all districts of the province. We are working on some of the issues. Dust control is one of those, obviously, brush cutting, ditching, culverts, and of course the road surface itself. It is a concern for us, and we're looking very seriously at some of the changes we can make in the short term.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer. We all know that we're not paving any more roads in rural Nova Scotia. There are a lot of dirt roads in this province and it's not uncommon to witness where there was once pavement, it is now dirt. The current guidelines for applying dust control to our dirt roads, once per year, simply is not enough. Rural taxpayers deserve to enjoy their properties like everyone else, and in most cases, in the wintertime, they are the last to be plowed out. Will the minister please tell the good people of Pictou West when a plan may be tabled so they can ensure that they can enjoy their properties like anyone else on a paved road?

MR. MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. I do appreciate the concerns that come from all parts of the province and certainly with what she's hearing in Pictou West.

Again, decisions on the operational and the capital side are made at a very local level. The representatives of TIR in her riding, and in all regions across the province, look at each individual case. Clearly, there are factors and elements in the equation such as dust control, such as significant breaks in the paving that have to be addressed immediately. Then of course, there's the long-term capital plan.

That's why when we're talking about things like gravel roads and low-volume roads, we look at innovative ways to get that attention that they certainly do need. We are listening loud and clear, and we're working on those solutions. We'll put that together as soon as we possibly can.

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

NAT. RES.: FSC CERTIFICATION - MIN. OPINION

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. In an interview with CBC Radio last March, the former Minister of Natural Resources, the member for Yarmouth, called FSC certification the gold standard for forestry operation, and I can table that. Fast forward to this year and the announcement by the current minister that this certification will be dropped from a large tract of land in western Nova Scotia because of duplication, and I will table that.

My question for the minister is, why does he share a different opinion on forestry certification than the member for Yarmouth?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, our government is a strong supporter for certification and the internationally recognized sustainable forest initiative certification remains in place across Nova Scotia, and where the FSC was in place on lands only owned by the province, that does not affect private landowners to keep FSC certification, which is being done, and the work that is being done on the Medway lands will steward to the FSC certification.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, regional services provided by the Department of Natural Resources include conservation programs and forest fire prevention. This year, the regional service budget for each of the central, eastern, and western zones has been cut by \$2 million.

Can the minister explain why this budget for regional services in each of these zones has been cut?

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. There have been significant changes in responsibility within the department which has resulted in the transfer of personnel to other departments of government, and that is what he is seeing in the reduction.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

COM. SERV.: NSCC STUDENTS (PICTOU CAMPUS) - FINANCIAL SUPPORT

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. During the past many months, a number of visitors to my office expressed frustration with the following issue - they were all students attending Nova Scotia Community College Pictou Campus, in Stellarton, and either their EI ran out or they were short in funds to complete their studies.

We find ourselves reaching out to the Salvation Army and church groups, trying to help them with the funding in order to complete their studies. A visit to the Department of Community Services seeking some measure of financial support, and the answer is no.

My question to the minister is, is there any program available to assist these students so they are able to complete their program?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the member for his question. Unfortunately, unless you are a client of the Department of Community Services and have worked through an employment services case plan with your caseworker, you have to be on income assistance for six months in order to go through the post-secondary slate of programs that we have.

We do have excellent student services and student assistance programs in Nova Scotia, but there is nothing that is available for students who want to come to the Department of Community Services as a last resort.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the most recent visitor - a 32-year-old single mother of a 4-year-old daughter - will graduate after she completes her five-week work experience program. Her EI benefits have expired. The Department of Community Services told this mother because she was in school she was not eligible for any funding; however, if they were to return to the Department of Community Services the next day and inform them that she left school and she is not returning, there would be funding available.

My question to the minister is, why is the department closing doors to students who want to improve their chances of gaining permanent employment, thereby removing themselves from further, or any Department of Community Services assistance?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question which, quite clearly, highlights the need for transformation in the Department of Community Services.

The goal of any government department should be to assist people so that they can reach full potential. I am happy to report those conversations are very much going on in the department, and that will all be part of the transformation rolled out in the coming months.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - VIOLENCE GLORIFICATION: ALTERNATIVES - PROVISION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: The three recent homicides in HRM remind us that violence is used as a tool in a world where money is made on illegal drugs and human sex trafficking. Mr. Speaker, guns were used in these crimes, but they were not the cause. It starts when kids do not see opportunities for prosperity. In some cases, they see drug dealers as people who have status and can afford to buy nice things. The seeds are planted early and watered with a culture of glorified violence.

Can the minister tell us what the government is doing to show these young Nova Scotians that there are other opportunities?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the member opposite that this is a very sombre issue, a very deep-seated issue that we need to deal with.

The question he asks is perhaps not best placed with Justice, although I can speak to Justice having crime prevention programs working in communities across the province. There's a program that funds 21 different community groups in after-school programs. I visited the one at J.L. Ilsley, which is very much art-based and has funding as well federally from the Michaëlle Jean Foundation.

So we have programs. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a lot of special programs around hub schools and SchoolsPlus, which are not in every school in the province but are widely spread around the province, to target those kinds of needs. Really it's a multi-disciplinary, multi-departmental response.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the Minister of Justice but if she wishes to redirect it, that would be fine by me. Families need help and communities need help. They need to be empowered to fix these problems. The kind of violent behaviour that we've been seeing does not happen overnight. What makes young people choose a life that brings such misery?

What has the minister heard from the families who have recently experienced the violence we have seen? Have they been asked what has gone wrong? Have they been asked what could have stopped this before it started?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, just to begin with, I haven't heard directly from the families but as the members of the House know, we have got a program, Victim Services, which is available for all the victims of crime and their families. It's to help them cope and to help them when charges are laid, to help them with the court system, and also to provide counselling so that they can have some opportunity to get help that way as well, because we know it's extremely traumatizing.

Mr. Speaker, the important message for all of us is that there is no easy answer and I think the public should be well aware that there is no single thing that we do, not one thing alone. The answer does lie in working with our communities right around the province, wherever there's an outbreak of crime or a particular problem in the community that is criminal.

We are working closely with CeaseFire, with Stop the Violence. Six members - I think maybe seven members - of the Legislature were there at the march on Sunday to listen to the public, to stand with them and to see what we can learn and do together.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - N.S. HEALTH AUTH.:
PHYSICIAN LICENSING POLICY - REMOVE**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it is cold comfort to the thousands of Nova Scotians who don't have a family physician to hear the minister stand in his place and recite the percentage of physicians to residents we have in this province. In the last election the Premier and the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia promised every Nova Scotian a doctor. If they shredded that document, I'll provide one for them.

The Nova Scotia Health Authority is limiting and not allowing physicians to open up and practice here in Nova Scotia. When will the Minister of Health and Wellness step in and instruct the Nova Scotia Health Authority to remove that policy so that physicians can open practices here in Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm please to say that just this morning we had a meeting at the department with Dr. Harrigan, Dr. Gass and others to take a look at a more robust provincial plan. We've made strides in communities that were looking for months and even years for a family doctor, to be able to procure one . . .

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Who's in Shelburne?

MR. GLAVINE: I can assure the member for Queens-Shelburne that we'll have an opportunity to personally greet a new doctor this summer.

MR. DAVID WILSON: The minister is missing the point. Nova Scotians need doctors now (Interruption) I'll tell the member opposite, they need doctors now in his community and in communities all across Nova Scotia. (Applause)

This government promised they would have action and all they've done is amalgamate the district health authorities. Physicians want to play a role in increasing the number of physicians here. They've created a mess for them to gain access to the licenses that they need to expand their practice. Why is the government blocking the ability for physicians and physicians' offices to expand their practices?

There are physicians in Bedford, in Beaver Bank who have been denied. They know there's an issue and there needs to be more physicians in Nova Scotia. When will the minister step up and become the Minister of Health and Wellness and instruct the Health Authority to remove that policy?

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

MR. GLAVINE: What I can tell the member opposite and all Nova Scotians and the residents of the central region here in Capital, is we've had a very strong recruitment period since February - 48 doctors. But one of the areas that has been problematic and not sustainable is clinics going out and doing their own recruitment. We have actually streamlined the process now of being able to get doctors into clinics and into practice here in metro and across Nova Scotia, and I know we will continue to provide communities with physicians, but more importantly, changing the model of practice is also equally important.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - C.B. PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: My question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday in the House I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about the doctor shortage on Cape Breton Island. A few moments ago he said we had the highest per-capita rate of doctors in the country. Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they must be all in Halifax because they certainly aren't around (Interruptions) To my point they're not.

Yesterday we talked about the orphan clinic, 1,000 patients and they couldn't take any more. They had to close their doors. We talked about the fact that there are 10 vacancies, and the minister's response was, oh, we've got six coming. Residents, they're not going to stay.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Health and Wellness know that Cape Breton Island is a part of the Province of Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded by my Cape Breton colleagues every day how important Cape Breton is to the province, and the many contributions they make.

Look, we know that the community of Baddeck, for example, I met two of the doctors - one 70-something years of age, the other approaching 80 - wanting to retire; we've provided two doctors to that community. Neils Harbour crying for a doctor - again, with Dr. Ken, 70-something years of age - we will be meeting the needs of Cape Breton and the doctors they require.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in the platform that the government ran on, they said a doctor for every Nova Scotian. That's what they promised - 1,000 people in a waiting room, trying to find service from a doctor, and you believe that that is okay?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to members opposite directly, to direct your questions through the Chair.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you very much for that correction, Mr. Speaker, my mistake. But the very fact is, this government believes that it's okay to have an orphan clinic that can't service the needs of the people of the Province Nova Scotia.

The minister is fond of saying that health care is in transition - well, the transition is into quicksand, Mr. Speaker. When is this minister going to realize that there is a definite shortage of doctors in Cape Breton Island, and we have to do more than say, oh, we've got the highest percentage in Canada?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his passionate delivery of that question, because it is a central and very important question to the people of Cape Breton, and whatever parts of the province where there aren't enough primary care clinicians.

We know that Cape Breton is an area that is now being heavily recruited for. (Interruptions) We also know that it takes time to get the number . . .

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

MR. GLAVINE: We've increased the number of physicians at Dalhousie Medical School, and we know this summer that new doctors will be coming to Cape Breton - we'll

have new doctors in Cape Breton this summer. The residency program that the member opposite is referencing, in fact, is delivering strong results, and doctors in the residency program are also staying to practise in Cape Breton.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has mercifully 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, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply unto Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: It is my privilege to begin to speak on Supply on the budget that we've just had tabled in the House here.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The members can exit the Chamber quietly, if they can.

The honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are some pretty serious issues with this budget. I just want to drill down into a couple of them.

I know that most Nova Scotians, just looking from the outside, might think that this is a good news budget. We have a surplus in the budget. It's very reminiscent of the surplus that happened in the last year of the NDP Government. I believe we had a \$14 million or \$15 million surplus. This year, we have approximately the same amount. Counting out the Nova Centre costs and the reimbursement of that, there's a similar-sized surplus. But the question is, is there really a surplus?

There have been some issues raised with some of the assumptions made in the budget. One assumption that I would like to drill down into just briefly is the assumption that there will be a \$108 million increase in personal tax revenue. If you look at the estimate

for last year and the actual for last year, I believe the actual came in as a smaller amount. The estimate was for a slightly larger amount than we actually received last year. If we look at last year's actual to this year's estimate, the government is budgeting a whopping increase of \$108 million.

If we just start looking at that number, if we do just a little bit of math on the \$108 million increase on \$2.5 billion personal income tax - we know that there are slightly less than 500,000 full- and part-time workers in the province. If we just take that amount of money and divide it by the amount of personal income tax, it shows us that the average worker in the province paid in to Nova Scotia approximately \$5,200 personal income tax. If we again take that number and put that to the increase, that shows a 20,000-person increase in part- and full-time workers in the province - just raw numbers, 20,000 people.

I think that's a wonderful assumption to make, if there was any evidence that there was any possibility that was happening. I wish I could say that I could see it in the budget - that yes, there's going to be 20,000 new jobs in the budget, and that type of information. But it isn't really in particular, as far as I can see, a job-creation budget, either.

The other side of that is it could be fairly argued that maybe wages will go up. Certainly, what we've seen is a lot of people in the province are working for government, and I know that one of the platforms of this Liberal Government has been wage restraint, so for the people who are working for the provincial government, it doesn't seem likely that there's going to be a substantial increase in wages there. It's hard to say what the federal government will do, but in the private sector, there's no evidence that there's a substantial increase in wages there, either.

In fact, we're living in a time of very low inflation. Some of us remember times, back in earlier days, when we had very high inflation. But with the decline in the price of oil, which hasn't really been totally reflected at the pumps - but our heating fuel costs have gone down significantly and so on, and it has a ripple effect right through the industry. So we see ourselves in a slightly declining cost regime, which means wages likely are not going to go up substantially due to inflation anyway.

Is it a fair thing to say that we're going to have a \$108 million increase in personal tax revenue? Given the trend and given what has happened in the province, and barring any sort of argument to the contrary that the government could make of some big development happening in the province or some particular thing - and I wish I could say, yeah, I can see that; we've got this or that. But barring those things, all things being equal, it seems to me that \$108 million is a very, very rosy estimate to make for increase in personal tax revenue and it's a very significant number to the budget, given that we're only budgeting a low-teens to mid-teens surplus. We only have to be off by a few percentage points on that \$108 million estimate of increased revenue and there's no surplus at all.

I would say there doesn't appear to be any real strong likelihood that that \$108 million will be achieved at all, barring an economic miracle in the province, and I would say for one that I wish I could say I hope that will happen, but it doesn't seem highly likely and the trend doesn't seem likely.

When the minister was asked in this House, where did he get that rosy projection, he said those were Ottawa's numbers. I would challenge him to show us those numbers and let us know where that number came from. Give us those Ottawa numbers.

A second major issue in the budget is the timing of expenses. We know there were a certain number of expenses related to the Yarmouth ferry that were booked on March 31st. It's interesting how this - and I understand why this happens and I believe that in fact it's not that uncommon to book expenses early; there's something called GAAP, which is Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and in GAAP, from what I understand - not being an accountant, being a farmer - the point of it is that you have to pick. You can't pick and choose when to apply rules. If you are going to be booking things early, you've got to do it consistently. You can't just choose in one department to use the rule of booking one way and in another department to use it the other way.

What we see is there was approximately \$13 million, I understand, that was booked on March 31st. I know the minister has said there was a \$6.4 million U.S. payment to the United States that was actually made, so that would be about \$9 million of that number. There's approximately another \$3 million or \$4 million of that number that was booked March 31st but won't be spent until this year, presumably. That also eats into your \$16 million - \$17 million surplus that's going to be spent this coming year.

The reason I refer to the GAAP issue - the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles - is that the Department of Business is doing the opposite. They had about \$3 million worth of commitments made in this past year, and rather than book them in the past year, which would have been consistent with what the Department of TIR was doing, they've rolled them ahead into a future year. There are two examples of two departments interpreting an accounting law two different ways.

I would suggest to you - I know that every year that we've done our books on the farm, it's quite important; if you're going to be audited you want to be able to say well, we handled that issue the same way last year, the year before, the year before. You can't just pick and choose these accounting rules for whichever way it looks better, is more favourable at the moment. That's going to get you in trouble with auditors if you happen to be audited in a small business. I would suggest that it's a very doubtful thing, accounting practice for a government to be using. These things have to be treated consistently and it is quite an important principle in accounting.

The relevance of the Department of Business issue with the \$3 million is that's the money that is in the new film creation fund. That's the money that was committed this year

in this new Film and Television Production Incentive Fund. Obviously the film industry gets an agreement for funding, but there's a lag in time for when they finish the project, it takes time. It's understandable that that money won't be spent until a future year, when the project is actually completed.

The issue is, on April 1st there was going to be an announcement but there really wasn't much of an announcement. Some have speculated the announcement was that the remaining \$7 million in that \$10 million fund would be rolled forward. That didn't happen. If you actually go and look at the books this year for Nova Scotia Business Inc., you'll see there's no expense listed - in this current year that passed there was zero, so there was no \$3 million expense listed as commitments made; in fact, that has been rolled forward. So the effect of that is that the \$10 million budget for this year's Film and Creative Industry's fund is actually being reduced by, in theory, \$3.5 million committed to, I think 13 or 14, a certain number approximately, that many different films.

This year's Film and Creative Industry's fund is actually reduced already by the number of projects that have been committed to in past years. So the question is - and we've asked the minister and haven't really gotten a clear answer, although in fairness he said that when we get to that point, we'll look at it - is there \$6.5 million in the fund this year, or is there \$10 million in the fund this year? And how does last year simply cease to exist, if on the one hand TIR is booking in things last year that were committed for this year, but they're showing it in the books for last year, but the Department of Business is doing the opposite?

If I was in the film industry, I'd be a little bit upset about that accounting, this accounting flip-flop. I think that it sheds a poor light on the budget and maybe in the overall scheme of a \$10 million budget, maybe even talking about \$3 or \$4 million here and there. Maybe that's not material but I think it is, I think it's an important principle and we see a government that is willing to use - one department wants to use these tax rules or these accounting principles one way and another department wants to use the other.

These are not minor issues, these are not something that doesn't concern a lot of Nova Scotians. On the one hand we're talking about the Yarmouth ferry; on the other hand we're talking about the Film and Creative Industry's fund. Both of these funds, both of these issues have been highly significant to the debate in the province. There has been a lot said about them and I think that there should have been consistency applied to the bookkeeping of the province, in the way that these two matters were dealt with. I mean, it does affect the ultimate, as I said, we're going down into is there really a budget surplus? I would suggest to you that I will be very, very surprised if at the end of this year there is actually a budget surplus. It's accounting issues like this which cast it into doubt.

Obviously, both of these were handled in the way that they were handled for political reasons. I think that it's just very unfortunate that this is being done, and I would contend it doesn't follow with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, the way that the

government is dealing with these things. I'm sure that the Auditor General is probably not listening, but I'm sure at some point, he'll be looking at this and make some sort of recommendation that these accounting principles be applied across the board and not one way for one department and one way for another department.

I'm sure also that the legitimacy of \$108 million increase in personal income tax, is that really going to happen? Do we expect that to happen? I think that is a very, very questionable assumption, given the trend, given the fact that last year's estimate to last year's actual was an actual decline, and now we're going up on a much steeper jump in estimate and the minister has already been asked about this, and maybe the minister - other than saying simply I got the number from Ottawa - can provide a little bit more basis to that decision, because I have to believe that simply getting a number from Ottawa would not simply be the end of the discussion. That the department would put a lot more effort into that estimate than simply saying, oh where's Ottawa's number? Okay, put that in. There has to be some rationale for that type of decision.

Those numbers just don't really come quite out of thin air like that, or from Ottawa. Certainly I would suggest that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has a better idea of what's happening in Nova Scotia, the trends in Nova Scotia, than Ottawa does, and would have a better knowledge having been in, and maybe if this was the first year, you could say okay, but I believe this is the third budget that they've presented.

The past budgets have been wildly out of whack in some cases in some of these estimates. There's a lot more that I could say about those issues. I will say, and I realize I only have 34 seconds left to drill down into other issues. I want to say that in estimates, and again going back, we see there are other areas where we have to really wonder about the accounting principles, and I will just drill briefly into one which I know that very shortly we will jump back into in estimates, and that is in the Department of Business.

On the first line, there is a line Senior Management, and I am just pulling the numbers out of my head, but there is about \$3.2 million last year estimate, \$2.6 million last year actual . . .

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

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure and it is an honour to stand to address the budget that was released a couple of weeks ago.

Interesting fact - when I was going through some of the work to be prepared for the budget I turned to one of the areas in my office, at the caucus office, to look back at trying to retrieve one of the former budgets, and I realized that I have a lot of budget books in my

office, and this is the 13th budget that I have been here in the Legislature to go through as an Opposition member, as a government member, a backbencher in the government, and actually as a Minister of Health and Wellness. It is an extremely important process, and ensuring that Nova Scotians understand what is in the budget is a responsibility of all of us here, on all sides of the House. The government has a responsibility to educate Nova Scotians on what is in the budget and what things are going to change and, for the most part, how things are going to improve.

When you spend billions of dollars like we do with the provincial budget, there are good things in that budget. There are things that will, I think, improve the lives of Nova Scotians, but one of the responsibilities as an Opposition member is to maybe enlighten Nova Scotians and educate them on the things that government forgot to tell them maybe, did not discuss about what the ramifications of the current budget will have on services in Nova Scotia and on their lives.

Spending the majority of the 13 years, almost 13 years, that I have been here in the capacity of dealing with health care as Health Critic for our caucus for a number of years, we are looking at probably six years now, seven years almost, as caucus Health Critic, and spending some time as Minister of Health, a lot of my energy is spent on Health and Wellness estimates and the ramifications of the budget that is being tabled and introduced on the services here in Nova Scotia.

I think we all want to see improvements in services. Health care really is the number-one concern for Nova Scotians. When you ask them when you poll them during elections, health care is always at the top. Yes, there are certain issues that are top of mind when things are happening in communities or to themselves, in their lives, if it is a school closure or if it is a reduction of a program or something along that line. But, health affects everybody in this province. I have to say I am disappointed and I am concerned with the budget that was tabled a couple of weeks ago, especially with the Health and Wellness estimates and the path forward in the Department of Health and Wellness.

We see now for the second year in a row, I call it a freeze but really it is a cut. There may be a 1 per cent and I cannot even find the 1 per cent increase in the budget, but when you tie in inflation of 2 per cent or more in this province, then a 1 per cent increase does not cut it. It is a cut; it is a reduction. We are not going to be able to meet the needs of the programs that were there last year if we do not see at least a 2 per cent or an inflation increase in the Health and Wellness Department's budget.

There was not much discussion on the speech from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board around the wonderful things that are going to happen in Health and Wellness over the next year because of this budget. Hopefully, later this week, and maybe actually it will be later next week, I will have an opportunity to question the Minister of Health and Wellness, and question the government on what the ramifications of this budget are and what will happen to services in Nova Scotia.

I have lived and breathed this, as I said, not only in my political career over the last 13 years, but as a former paramedic who worked on the front line of health. So I know how important the dollars are that go into the budget and go into front-line health care services.

When you see a cut, a freeze, not even an increase of the inflation rate, services are going to be affected in our province. You can just look at the estimates and the line items here, Mr. Speaker: emergency departments, there's a reduction this year of over \$0.5 million - \$495,000, I believe, but let's say \$0.5 million, in emergency departments. I've heard from people from one end of this province to the other about the issues of emergency departments all across Nova Scotia. Why would we see a reduction of almost \$0.5 million in that?

We know - and I asked the minister today in Question Period - about the shortage of doctors in this province. The minister stood up and talked and quoted statistics that are provided to every province across the country that indicate that we do have a high percentage of physicians per capita for the number of residents we have.

Mr. Speaker, those numbers don't tell the true story of what's going on in communities across this province. For many years, I have to say, the doctor shortage issue was driven more from the rural communities of our province. In Opposition I heard more from people in remote and rural communities about the lack of physicians they have and the access to a family doctor.

Over the last six months I'm amazed and concerned about the sheer number of people calling my office, people in Sackville, in Hammonds Plains, in Fall River, in Bedford and all around Halifax, really - calling my office, saying we don't have a doctor. I know in my community two clinics, two family practices closed up recently. Unfortunately the illness of one physician and the unfortunate death of that physician, and another one closed. There is one pending retirement coming up in June where there's no physician to take over that practice yet. Thousands of patients in HRM have no doctor.

I know they sympathize with what people in rural communities have been dealing with for years, and it has been a challenge, I know that. One thing that I think is contributing to the issue here in the central region of the new health authority is that the government, the Minister of Health and Wellness is trying to stand in his place and say it's not his decision; those responsibilities are off now to the mega board, they are with the new health authority.

That is not how it's supposed to work, Mr. Speaker. The minister, the Premier, the current government are ultimately responsible for ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to health care here in our province, especially a family physician. In the Fall I brought it to the floor of this Chamber, that the health authority in the central region was changing a policy that would restrict and eliminate issuing licences for family physicians in the central region.

The argument for doing that is if a physician wants to practise in Nova Scotia, we'll force them to take a practice in an under-serviced area in the rural communities. I understand that, but in every jurisdiction across Canada that has attempted to try to fix the issue of rural recruitment of physicians, this type of move has failed miserably. You cannot force people to go to areas they don't want to go to. You need to work with those communities to ensure that they have a good recruitment and retention program, that the community as a whole works together - businesses, people concerned about access to care and care of a physician, and make that community appealing to a physician, ensuring that there is a state-of-the-art practice that somebody could walk into, like a turnkey practice, with electronic patient records ready to go.

I know the new crop of physicians that are joining the profession now want that. They don't want to work in the manner that so many physicians are still working in, and that's working seven days a week, 24 hours a day, with no real break and no real life other than providing care for their residents and their neighbours. That is not how we need to move forward.

Those jurisdictions have all kind of shied away from eliminating and not issuing licences in the more central area. That's the issue we see now. We're seeing doctors who have a thriving clinic now, who know that if they brought in another physician, they could meet some of the needs in the central region, being denied the ability to do that. In the past, they would go to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia and ask for accreditation so that they could bring another doctor in. They'll do all the work for the government; they'll go to their colleagues and to their associations and try to get a physician to come work in that practice. They're being blocked now and denied that possibility and that avenue.

There was a recent physician from Bedford who was on some of the news outlets saying how frustrating it is. Not only do they have to deal with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia to get the accreditation, but now they have to go to the new mega-board, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, to get permission to do that. That's not the system we've had in this province for decades.

Physicians feel that there is now more red tape in front of them than there ever has been and that the government should instruct the health authority to get rid of that policy. I had a physician in my office who did the same thing: he wrote to the health authority saying that he knew there was a shortage of doctors in the Sackville area, that he wanted to go out and try to get a colleague of his to support him and work in a family practice that could grow to meet the needs and the demands of residents in the area. He was denied.

I cannot understand why the government hasn't acted on this. Physicians are asking the government to tear down that type of roadblock that's in front of them. There's a big enough issue trying to deal with recruitment and retention of physicians in rural Nova

Scotia; now they're creating one in HRM. Where is the leadership from the government? Where is the support for physicians?

Physician services under the budget is reduced by about \$800,000. How is that going to address getting a doctor in a rural community? How is that going to address getting a doctor in the central region here? It's not, and services are going to get worse. More and more people are going to be calling the MLAs - if they're not already calling their local MLA - and saying, what do I do?

There are a lot of walk-in clinics in the province, especially in Halifax. I have a number of them in my community. They fill a need. Even my own family uses it when we can't get in to our family doctor. But when I'm speaking with residents who have chronic diseases, who have illnesses that need continuity of a trained health care provider - physician, nurse practitioner - to make sure that they're addressing their needs in health care with their chronic disease or their illness. More and more, people in the central region are dependent on those walk-in clinics.

I have a very close friend who has three boys. Her clinic closed up over two, two and a half years ago, and she hasn't been able to find a doctor. Her kids are healthy, thank heavens. Her husband's in the military. He gets access to the physicians at Stadacona - which is another issue I'll be taking up with the federal government. If we want to take care of our military personnel, and we cover their health care costs, maybe we should cover the family's health care costs too. Many, many service personnel are transferred to move to Nova Scotia, and I'm hearing from them now that when they come to Halifax, it's okay for that woman or man who's in the service, they get the health care immediately, because the doctors are there, but their families aren't able to find doctors.

That's just touching the tip of the iceberg in the estimates that I've seen and the budget for Health and Wellness. I know I'll have an opportunity, in the coming days after my colleagues have a chance to respond to the budget, to stand in my place and point out some of the areas like special drug programs that have seen a reduction in their budget. Long-term care facility based care budget reduced, Mr. Speaker. Nova Scotians are going to be concerned with this budget and how it's going to, I think, not improve health care services, but make it worse for Nova Scotians to gain access to health care services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today to speak to the motion, on I think one of the important good news stories in Nova Scotia, and that is our response to the refugee crisis. I was motivated to speak today, having worked in my community on this project, but also motivated by the 20 or so refugees who came to this House and were welcomed with a standing ovation by all members of this House. It paused me to reflect on the many, many stories that were probably in that gallery, but throughout

the province with over 1, 000 refugees that have chosen to come to Canada, and by chance for many, arrived in Nova Scotia.

I think it's an opportune time to reflect on what has been happening in communities across our province. There are many, many tragic stories that have accompanied these families as they have fled their homeland, but there are also many positive stories around this province, as they are settling in to Nova Scotia.

As you know, immigration is a priority for this government. Referring back to the budgets that are before this House, the Immigration budget is being increased by \$1 million or \$942,000. I have explained to us the importance of the demographic challenge and how immigration can play an important part in us addressing that challenge. My feeling is that we are so, so fortunate to have a Minister of Immigration who is so dedicated to this initiative of the settlement of the refugees; the recent announcement of \$100,000 for community groups to access to help our Syrian refugee families settle, and it warmed my heart, on Wednesday I believe it was, when those refugees were here and our minister spoke in Arabic. (Interruption) That was Tuesday, I've been corrected - spoke in Arabic, to welcome those families to our Legislature.

There are many wonderful stories out there and I expect all of us in our communities have heard some of those stories. The family in Antigonish, the Syrian family that has arrived there - they are chocolatiers and had their chocolate factory bombed in Syria. Within months of landing in Antigonish, they have started up a business and are selling chocolates to a lineup at the farmer's market and they're selling out every weekend. It's a wonderful story and really an example of how these refugee families want to get to work, want to be integrated in our community and be productive citizens of our country.

The challenges are many and they're extremely diverse. There's a family in the Valley that have arrived from Eritrea; there are sixteen dialects in Eritrea. The community group hosting them found translators for 14 of those dialects and lo and behold the family arrived and it was one of the two dialect that they had not been able to source translators. That group is working with a translator now out of Ottawa by telephone, to help those families settle, as that family learns to use money for the first time, learns to use light switches for the first time. Quite remarkable stories to reflect on the challenges facing those families and the work going on by individuals and community groups throughout this province, to help them settle.

This primarily is a humanitarian effort and Nova Scotians have been touched by the stories of the war in Syria and other countries that are so, so different from what we experience here, and Nova Scotians have reached out in that humanitarian way, but we also have an opportunity here to help them settle and become members of our communities here in Nova Scotia, and that is the work that is underway.

Another story I wanted to share with you is about a gentleman by the name of Joe Rafih, who is a businessman in Wolfville and he has been helping in the settlement of our family here, a family in Wolfville, but he found himself in Halifax through some contact, visiting some government-sponsored families in an apartment building and they did not have furniture or had not made the choices yet to purchase furniture, and Joe immediately turned around, drove back to Wolfville, rented a cube van, piled tables and chairs from his restaurant that were no longer being used, and drove them back to Halifax that same day to share with the families that had so little here in the city.

I thought I would talk a little about what has been going on in the Valley. I have had the privilege to bring together now eight different community groups in Kings County just for information exchange, and I think it is worth noting and remarking on how, in rural Nova Scotia, community groups are cropping up from the tiniest corners of this province. In the Valley we have the Wolfville Area Inner Church Council that is sponsoring two families; we have the Port Williams Task Force that are expecting a family from Sudan in May; the New Minas Baptist Church is awaiting a large family from Syria; Centreville and Aldershot have a group; the Valley Catholic Churches have gotten together and have received a group from Syria; Kentville Rotary is underway now fundraising for a family; and the Kentville Canaan Baptist Churches as well as the Kings Presbyterian have formed a group and are sponsoring a family from Eritrea; and, most recently, Berwick and district has begun work on fundraising to bring in families.

I wanted to perhaps just put a face to the families, because I think that is what is so compelling about the work that we are doing here in Nova Scotia as individuals, as community groups, as communities, and Judith Tod who has led our group in Wolfville - just a remarkable woman who has put countless hours in organizing over 60 volunteers who have come together to help settle the Tahina family, and work is underway now to receive our second family, the Ali family, that we hope to receive in a number of days.

The Tahinas - Hussam and Ishah with their children Mahmoud, Mayar, Islam, and Molhem - arrived in February, and they really for me put a face to the tragedies of war and the challenges of fleeing your homeland. In a welcoming ceremony with the community they spoke about how they were a happy, middle-class family living in a city in Syria with a large house and a garden, and both had jobs and they were quietly and happily living their lives and then suddenly the bombs began. Their house was destroyed; their city has been destroyed; they fled under the cover of darkness across the border.

Just imagine that experience for young children - Molhem must have been probably about six at the time - and, apparently, they were darting between the spotlights to cross the border into Jordan three and a half, four years ago. Now, here they are in Nova Scotia; and I just have to remark on that family and the other families and the bravery that they have to pick up and leave behind everything that they've known to come to a strange country with a strange language, and to leave behind family members - some of those

family members tragically in graves, others dispersed in various other countries and in their homeland. I think it takes great courage to pick up and make that voyage.

They had no idea where they would be landing in Canada if they made the choice to come to Canada, and by chance have found themselves in the Annapolis Valley. They're working hard. They want desperately to fit in, and they want to become productive citizens. I've heard that from a number of groups, as per the Antigonish group. I think it's a testament to how they will be great Canadian citizens and hopefully great Nova Scotians for a long time to come.

What have we learned from this? I think it's important to note that we've really learned about the generosity of our communities. I know I've learned and grown to know so many other people in my community who I didn't know before getting involved with that community. I think through their experience and their eyes, we can see something that we maybe don't realize: how beautiful a place we have, how safe a country and a province we have. We should not take that for granted. We have such great opportunities here in Nova Scotia, such great education and great health care. Our friends from Syria and other countries beyond have helped us realize and perhaps shine a light on something that sometimes we take for granted.

I want to conclude by saying there's really nothing that can ease the pain of the destruction of war and the pain that has been caused. But there are kernels of hope, stories that we can reflect on and be proud of, and good things that are happening out of these tragedies.

I want to thank all Nova Scotians for their tireless work in assisting the refugee families, and I want to thank all the refugees for choosing Canada. I wish them all the best for their future in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[3:33 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Keith Irving in the Chair.]

[7:51 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and made considerable progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 165.

Bill No. 165 - Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: I move that Bill No. 165, entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 1996, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, be now read a second time.

I'd like to take some time today to talk about changes the Department of Labour and Advanced Education is making to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, changes that will further protect our workers. Keeping Nova Scotians safe at work is a priority for this government, and as we observed today the Day of Mourning, at Province House, we're reminded of the heartbreaking reality that sometimes people don't come home from work. We want to do everything we can to spare families from hearing the news that a loved one has had a serious or fatal accident at their workplace.

Most employers operate safe workplaces, but there are some companies and individuals who repeatedly break safety laws, putting people at great risk. Our existing legislation does not do enough to hold these employers and employees accountable. They found ways to get around our existing legislation, Mr. Speaker, and we want to close those loopholes.

The proposed amendments will give government additional tools and authority to enforce safety requirements for those who violate safety regulations and laws over and over again. I want to be very clear - our key area of concern is repeat and serious violators whose actions could result in serious injury or death. There are four changes that we introduced; three will give government new safety enforcement tools.

The first will authorize courts to grant an injunction to prohibit an employer from carrying on work in an industry if the employer has repeatedly failed to comply with the Act or safety work orders of a serious nature. Right now there is limited ability to prevent

someone who has repeatedly violated OSH legislation in a way that poses a risk of serious injury or death from carrying on their work. This change would allow the courts to require the person to comply with the law and/or limit their ability to work in their particular industry. This limitation would be for a set period of time or until they could demonstrate they can do the work safely.

The second change will require an employer with repeat violations to advise the department of future work locations. Current legislation doesn't allow the OSH director to order a repeat and serious violator to report where they're going to be working, to allow for monitoring of those sites. Mr. Speaker, the amendment would give the OSH director the power to order this person to provide details of their future work activities, including locations and the nature of the work.

The last new enforcement tool will allow stop-work orders to be issued at more than one work site operated by the same employer where the same risks are believed to be present. Currently, a stop-work order can only be issued for a single work site because of dangerous conditions, even if the danger isn't limited to that single work site. So under this amendment, with the OSH director's approval, an OSH officer could issue a stop-work order to more than one work site operated by a serious repeat violator.

The fourth and final amendment clarifies the requirements for reporting workplace injuries. Employers are currently required to report injuries that occur at the work site; however, the Act doesn't clearly identify which types of injuries should be reported or how they can be reported. This has been clarified. A specific list of reportable injuries has been developed, and email or phone reporting will be allowed to improve efficiency.

We've also ensured that there are clear definitions and appropriate checks and balances in this bill. We've provided clear definitions for "serious injury" and "repeatedly." "Serious injury" is defined as "an injury that endangers life or causes permanent injury," and "repeatedly" is defined as "occurring more than once within the preceding three year period." In terms of checks and balances, these new enforcement tools require the OSH director's authorization, and in some cases, a judgment made by the court.

We met and talked with stakeholders about these changes, Mr. Speaker. The feedback they provided was very helpful. It has helped us better describe the intent of the amendment and ensure that the changes were well defined. Furthermore, the changes in the Act will be by proclamation and will not take effect right away. This will allow time for policy development, communication, and education about the changes. We'll continue to work closely with industry as we do this.

At the end of the day, these amendments are one part of government's overall effort to improve workplace safety. We're entering into our third year of the Workplace Safety Strategy and we're seeing more and more people care about occupational health and safety. To promote this awareness, we often work with stakeholders to plan campaigns,

workshops, and conferences. Those two things - conferences and workshops - bring together safety stakeholders from all across the province and provide a venue for sharing best practices and renewing the commitment to safe workplaces in Nova Scotia. In fact, just last week we collaborated with safety partners to host the Nova Scotia Safety Services conference.

Next week is North American Occupational Health and Safety Week. This will be an opportunity to celebrate safety in the workplace with the presentation of the Mainstay Awards. We're also enhancing education and outreach efforts and conducting more targeted inspections, Mr. Speaker. As well, we hired a dedicated occupational health and safety prosecutor over a year ago, and that has helped with our investigations and court proceedings.

All of these efforts are having an impact. We're seeing positive changes, but there is still more work to do, and this legislation is one more important step forward. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 165, the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It's timely to be speaking to this bill on the Day of Mourning. There's nothing more important than knowing your loved one is going to come home safe at the end of every day and your workplace is safe for those loved ones to go to.

Every Nova Scotian deserves a safe workplace that keeps workers safe from injury or worse. The vast majority of employers value their employees and take every opportunity to make sure the workplace is safe for all its workers. We know that this legislation should not impact the many thousands of Nova Scotian employers who follow the rules without major violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

I am pleased to see that this legislation appears to be able to tighten the rules around repeat violators of the Act and will take into consideration different workplace sites. If there are serious problems with the application of the rules in a specific workplace, it's only right that the work is stopped and procedures are sorted out accordingly. Again, as with all OHS provisions, it is always important to ensure the rules are clear, reasonable, and easy to follow for employers. Meeting these criteria helps employers understand the rules and keeps their employees safe.

As always, we want to ensure that we only penalize people who break the rules, and it appears this legislation aims to do so. That is why adequate consultation is so important whenever government considers changing occupational health and safety rules. After all, it's employers like themselves who implement these rules. Outcomes can only be

improved through meaningful consultation with employers and workers. It's my hope that the meaningful consultation and outreach will occur before the bill is proclaimed.

I look forward to hearing any questions, concerns or insights that might come from presentations at the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to see a piece of legislation coming from the minister that will help and protect Nova Scotia workers. As today marks the Day of Mourning, the timing of debate on this bill is very important. Ensuring the safety of Nova Scotia workers cannot be understated and this is the responsibility that falls on the shoulders of government. Unfortunately far too often we hear of serious injuries and, unfortunately, deaths of workers across Nova Scotia who are trying to contribute to our economy and provide for their families. Nova Scotians should feel confident that they are safe while they are at work.

We hope these amendments will strengthen the role of government in ensuring that workplaces in Nova Scotia are safe. This bill will also strengthen the roles of enforcement officers, which I believe, and we believe, is extremely important. The enforcement officers will now have the ability to shut down multiple worksites, as opposed to just one, which will ensure safety, I believe, for all workers, if a concern is found or an issue is located or indicated.

We look forward to hearing from stakeholders at Law Amendments Committee and further debate on this bill, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak on this bill today, Bill No. 165. Having been in business for a number of years and seeing lots of accidents, it's definitely a positive approach, going in the right direction, and it will help save lives in the future. It will allow the department to issue stop work orders in more than one workplace operation by the same employer. In the past you might see where an operator has two or three businesses operating in different locations, one is operating unsafely and then in another one somebody gets hurt, so it's very important that the department is able to go in and shut down all three departments and locations so that they can assess what's going on in all locations.

It will authorize the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia to grant an injunction prohibiting an employer, who has repeatedly violated an Act or failed to comply with an order, from operating in an industry in an extended or indefinite period of time. It will provide the OHS director an additional authority to require an employer who has

committed previous violations to advise the director of future workplace locations for a period of time, to enhance compliance monitoring.

It will shorten the reporting requirements and create more realistic time frames for preserving accident scenes, and support more timely investigations of serious incidents and fatalities. The amendments will also define the meaning of a serious injury, which will clarify these reporting requirements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my honourable colleagues for the remarks they made about the bill and about the importance of workplace safety, which I do appreciate, especially today on the Day of Mourning.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we close debate on Bill No. 165.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 165. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 168, the Labour Standards Code.

Bill No. 168 - Labour Standards Code.

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 168, entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, be now read a second time.

I would like to take some time today to talk about changes that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education is making to the Labour Standards Code, changes that will help businesses that operate in more than one Maritime Province. But before I tell you about the changes we are making, Mr. Speaker, I want to set the stage.

Last year Nova Scotia established the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. It is now a joint office with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The goal of the office is an important one - to make business growth and expansion easier by getting rid of unnecessary barriers and differences between our provinces. That is a tall order, but the work is well underway.

In November of last year, all three Premiers agreed on a plan of action for regional regulatory reform and committed to making it easier to do business in the Maritimes. They adopted a Premiers' Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation which essentially sets out their shared vision to cut red tape, remove regulatory burden, and create the environment for growth. One of the first actions they agreed to tackle was reducing the burden on businesses that operate in more than one province, by aligning the types of employment records that employers are required to keep.

Mr. Speaker, that's what brings us here today. We are committed to getting rid of unnecessary rules, requirements, and processes, to help improve our regions' competitiveness - and we are.

The changes we are proposing are to the kinds of records that employers need to keep. Businesses operate - sorry, I think we have a little bit of a repetition there.

Businesses operating in more than one Maritime Province should not have to waste time figuring out which records need to be kept in which province; they should be the same. So, today, while the regulations are similar, the requirements are similar in all three provinces, they are not the same. These differences can lead to confusion and an additional workload for employers. Some requirements are vague and have led to frustration and issues for both employers and employees. Aligning record-keeping requirements across the Maritimes will remove burdensome differences and save employers time and money. It just makes sense.

The specific changes we are making will align record-keeping requirements among the three Maritime Provinces, clarify language around record-keeping requirements, and eliminate unnecessary record-keeping requirements. We have not added any new requirements or provisions except for language that gives employers the option of providing electronic pay statements.

I would point out that good record keeping helps protect employers and employees in the case of employment disputes and ensures compliance with the Labour Standards Code. These changes may sound small, but this is an area the business community has highlighted as overly difficult and complex; in fact, CFIB rated it as one of their top two issues.

We know there is more work to be done to make things easier for business, but we want people to know that we are listening and, Mr. Speaker, we are acting.

Our colleagues in P.E.I. and New Brunswick have already introduced changes in their respective Legislatures this Spring. To provide time for employers, the changes will take effect on January 1, 2017, in all three provinces.

In closing, I want to reaffirm our commitment to cutting red tape and making it easier for businesses to grow and prosper in Nova Scotia and in the region. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the opportunity to make a few brief remarks about this bill. Any time there are ways to reduce red tape in the form of unnecessary paperwork, it is worthwhile. I understand that this bill will look to make streamlined and standardized record keeping across the Maritime Provinces. This is one measure that should reduce paperwork for businesses that operate in multiple provinces and, hopefully, should contribute to more businesses being willing to expand into Nova Scotia. With New Brunswick and P.E.I. also in the process of making this move, it is my hope that this should help businesses sooner, rather than later.

We also know that there is much more that can be done to make Nova Scotia attractive to come and do business. This is one small regulatory change that will help, but I hope there are many more forthcoming. Too often government has sent the message to the private sector that Nova Scotia is closed for business. Just this past week, the Mining Association said that the lack of action on a fuel rebate for the mining industry will hurt Nova Scotia's reputation. We absolutely need to make the regulatory changes that make sense and reduce red tape, but we can't stop there. I look forward to hearing presentations on this bill at Law Amendments Committee.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: It's always important to reduce red tape so that businesses can operate efficiently and effectively in Nova Scotia. These proposed amendments will harmonize the Labour Standards Codes of New Brunswick, P.E.I., and of course here in Nova Scotia.

We do wish that more amendments were being introduced to the Labour Standards Code to enhance the security of workers here in Nova Scotia. There are many more improvements that could be made to the Labour Standards Code, and we wonder why the minister and government have stopped at just these that the minister talked about today.

We look forward to hearing from stakeholders at Law Amendments Committee and potentially looking at improvements to labour standards through Committee of the Whole on Bills.

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

MR. IAIN RANKIN: It's a pleasure to rise to speak just a few words on the bill. I always like to support bills that go towards regional co-operation and Maritime co-operation. (Interruption) If the member for Halifax Atlantic wants to get up, too, he can say a few words over there. (Applause)

Like I said, anything that goes towards Maritime co-operation I think is a positive step. At the very least, we need to achieve an economic union in our region, providing uniform regulations, uniform taxes, and uniform services - any way we can reduce duplication as well. I would implore all ministers and everyone in government to continue to keep our eye on the ball to look towards anything we can do to harmonize ourselves within the region.

This has been going on for a long time, but I think our government is going forward with some of these initiatives a little bit faster than some in the past. We do have some good examples to look at, like the 811 number; the IWK; which is really a regional hospital; and the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

We can look to other entities like the Liquor Corporation, even the registries - that was in the news lately. We can look to some of these and how we can deliver services more effectively and provide more capacity to deliver services better from government. An environment that promotes regional growth while delivering government services more effectively is really the goal, and I think all members would agree with that.

I think you really notice it when you live in another jurisdiction, which I have in multiple jurisdictions in Canada. One that sticks out is in Ottawa-Orléans, where there are roughly 120,000 people who live there, with one MLA, with one MP. Then you look at a province like P.E.I., which has roughly the same population, and I think they have close to 1,000 different politicians when you add up all the different levels there. We are over-governed in our province, and we're over-governed in our region. We need to look at how we can harmonize some of that.

This bill recognizes, along with future changes that will be made, the economic reality and present demographics that are here. The announcement that the Premiers released - the Plan of Action for Regional Regulatory Reform - cites a number of near-term or short-term changes to reduce red tape and enhance interprovincial business. This included employment standards reporting requirements for business, which this bill speaks to. The Premiers all recognize that they are unnecessarily different in each province, so all Premiers committed to bringing this forth in the Spring sessions, which it has been said that the other provinces did. So I'm glad that we're joining them there.

This bill will align the business record-keeping requirements in Nova Scotia with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island's. I won't go over all the benefits specific to this piece, which the minister spoke to, but I will say that if you look at all three provinces, we're facing the same challenges, we're facing the same issues. It's not unique to Nova

Scotia. If you look at the Ivany report, you could use that report for virtually the whole region. If you look at the main goals - improving tourism targets, improving immigration targets, and enhancing exports - those are all things that we should be looking to work together on.

Perhaps more important is the leadership from the private sector. We need to get out of the way of the private sector not only in this province but the region. When I was thinking about this and the whole issue of the attitudinal shift that needs to take place, I think that's so important. I think all Parties recognize that. I heard former Premier Dexter actually lamenting the outrage when people saw jobs going from - I think it was Truro to Moncton. I think we need to get out of that small-minded thought pattern paradigm that if New Brunswick or P.E.I. gets something that Nova Scotia doesn't get, then we are up in arms.

I think we need to recognize ourselves as a region; we're small as a region. There are only two million people when you combine all our three provinces. If you look out West, they've had the New West Partnership there for many years, so even B.C. and Alberta get it and look at the size of them.

This is something that was a long time coming. I look forward to future bills that are going to put us forward and progress us in that direction because what is good for New Brunswick and P.E.I. is good for Nova Scotia and our Maritime Region. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 168.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 168. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. We will meet again tomorrow, Friday, April 29th, from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, we will return to estimates and, if time permits, third reading of Bill Nos. 152, 156, 157.

I should also advise the House that the Law Amendments Committee will be meeting on Monday, May 2nd, at 12:00 noon, at which time the bills under consideration will be Bill Nos. 149, 154, 158, 160, 161, 162, 165 and 168. Hopefully that gives everyone a chance to prepare for that time. Any issues with any of those bills can certainly be presented during that meeting.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, April 29th, at 9:00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to sit tomorrow Friday, April 29th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, April 29th, at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 8:19 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 3418**

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Benevolent Society is in its 25th year of existence; and

Whereas Mary Ellen Myers has been with the society since its start and is a dedicated part of the team; and

Whereas over the past 25 years the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Benevolent Society has raised \$100,000 to help residents of the community with unexpected medical bills;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Mary Ellen Myers and the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Benevolent Society on their service to the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3419

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Team Nova Scotia competed in the Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championships; and

Whereas Team Hubley-Bolivar from Lakeshore Club in Lower Sackville represented Nova Scotia in Regina; and

Whereas on April 10th they won bronze after stealing the winning point in a 5-4 extra end battle with the Alberta team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Team Nova Scotia on their bronze medal at the Canadian Championships.

RESOLUTION NO. 3420

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas in the Fall of 2012, a number of parents living on Walton, Rockwood, and Rosemount in the riding of Halifax Armdale organized the Springvale Walking School Bus to combat the multitude of parents all driving their children to school and rushing off to work daily; and

Whereas the initiative had the aim of giving children a more traditional experience of being able to walk to school and to help eliminate bumper-to-bumper vehicle congestion; and

Whereas participants include parents Joanna and Scott Flemming, Natasha and Bill MacAvoy, Gina and Trevor McFetridge, Amy and Casey Walsh, Kim and Phil Reardon, Heidi and Patrick Cullinan, Shauna and Derrick Fury, and Shannon and Jason Brown;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate these parents and their families for continuing with this great tradition for the last four years that creates an exceptional sense of community, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and reduces traffic congestion, and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3421

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Donna Sutton of Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre granted the Halifax Syrian newcomers' wish and organized on their behalf an amazing celebration at the St. Andrews Community Centre on April 16th, 2016; and

Whereas the purpose of the event was for the Syrian newcomers to thank Canada and Nova Scotia, and to express their heartfelt appreciation to local politicians, community volunteers, and all Canadians for welcoming them; and

Whereas the event was marked by the beauty of the Canadian spirit of gratitude for the blessings we have in this great land that has compelled the Syrian newcomers to start giving back to the community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank Ms. Sutton and the over 40 Syrian families, most notably Mr. Harb, and wish them every success in their new home.

RESOLUTION NO. 3422

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas I hosted a Town Hall with the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors called “Newcomers’ Guide to Home Buying” on April 11th, 2016, at the Best Western Chocolate Lake Hotel; and

Whereas Suzanne Kapsalis, a real estate agent for over 20 years living in Halifax Armdale, was instrumental in organizing the event and was also one of the presenters; and

Whereas Suzanne is an experienced realtor and specializes in the areas of residential, commercial, and investment; a current board member for a condo corporation; volunteers on NSAR’s Provincial/Municipal Affairs Committee; and is a past volunteer director for the Downtown Business Commission;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly commend Suzanne Kapsalis for her commitment to working with Nova Scotia newcomers, and wish her continued success.