



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Third Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016

Sixty-second General Assembly

Third Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine I'd like to recognize the honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today because I'd like to make an apology to the House. I took a picture in here last week that, unfortunately, was shared. I just want to say I'm really sorry about that, and it won't happen again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Apology accepted.

Before we get into the daily routine, I have a Speaker's Statement respecting the Joint Report of Auditors General of the four Atlantic Provinces. Tomorrow, the Auditors General of the four Atlantic Provinces will be releasing a joint report. The customary practice respecting a report by our Auditor General is for the report to be delivered to me, for me to table in this House when it convenes later in the day.

The report is also delivered to the three caucus offices and is given to the media, but embargoed until the report is tabled in the House.

Tomorrow the joint report will become public in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Prince Edward Island at 9:00 a.m., Atlantic time, and at 10:00 a.m. in New Brunswick, rendering the usual embargo in Nova Scotia moot. It is therefore proposed that on this particular occasion, instead of the customary practice the report will be publicly released at 8:30 a.m. tomorrow morning. The Speaker and the three caucus offices will receive the report at that time.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: "We, the undersigned, electors, citizens & residents of the Province of Nova Scotia, ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that a new school be built in East Hants."

There are almost 200 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: With the consent of the House, can we revert to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from a number of people, 230 people from across the province.

The operative phrase includes: "The World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer states that glyphosate is classified as probably

carcinogenic to humans. There is limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans and sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals.” But they also say that, “Spraying glyphosate in our forests prevents natural forest regeneration. Insect populations have been drastically reduced . . . which negatively impacts on birds and small insect-eating mammals. The effects on wildlife from fish to birds and non-target species have been observed at lower doses than the application as suggested. We do not want this sprayed in our lands in Nova Scotia.

There is a widespread public opposition to the spraying of the forest in Nova Scotia. It is time to take back our lands and provide a healthy environment for our children and grandchildren.”

The petition of the undersigned requests that Nova Scotia MLAs enact legislation banning the spraying of glyphosate in the forest management in Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, if I may seek your permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the east gallery where we're joined by Mike Hortie, President of Brightstar Canada. Mr. Hortie has more than three decades of experience in the telecommunications industry. He and his team at Brightstar will be putting their expertise and experience to work in Nova Scotia to help us bring high-speed Internet services to more rural communities. I would like to take this opportunity (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

RESOLUTION NO. 113

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

Whereas quality Internet service is an important part of delivering programs and services that matter most to Nova Scotians including health care, education, and services for our most vulnerable citizens; and

Whereas high-speed Internet is also a key driver of economic growth because it gives our businesses the opportunity to compete and succeed anywhere in the world; and

Whereas Brightstar Canada has both the technical experience and track record of success that we need to help develop a plan to go beyond what we need today to address how Nova Scotians will use the Internet in the future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature wish Brightstar the best of success as the company works to help bring better high-speed Internet connections to more Nova Scotia communities.

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 Business.

RESOLUTION NO. 114

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

Whereas for nine days each year the Celtic Colours International Festival brings Cape Breton alive with music, dance, and culture, all set against the beautiful backdrop of the Island's autumn colours; and

Whereas over the years people and performers from all over the globe have come to Nova Scotia just to experience Cape Breton's finest talent and world-renowned hospitality; and

Whereas this year marked not only another successful event, but also the 20th Anniversary of this important made-in-Nova Scotia experience that contributes greatly to our tourism and creative economics;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature congratulate the staff, volunteers, and sponsors that make Celtic Colours a reality, and resolve to attend and encourage others to attend the 21st edition of Celtic Colours next Fall.

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 member for Kings South on an introduction.

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like all my colleagues here in the House to look in the east gallery where we have four special guests. Wolfville resident Mr. Michael Bawtry - and I would ask each to stand as I mention their name - has brought a friend, Genevieve Lehr.

Also, two guests, Bobby and Bruce MacEacharn, have travelled here from Devon, England, visiting Nova Scotia and Canada for the very first time, partly in order to research Bruce's great-grandfather, John MacEacharn, who lived in Sydney Mines, Cape Breton, from 1832 to 1839. John MacEacharn enlisted in the militia while here, and was a member of the Nova Scotia Regiment, receiving a commission from Lieutenant Governor Campbell back in those days. So I'd ask all members of the House to please give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 44 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 6 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Maintenance Enforcement Act. (Hon. Diana Whalen)

Bill No. 45 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, Respecting Expenses of Elected Officials (Ms. Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 46 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Community Colleges Act (Hon. Sterling Belliveau)

Bill No. 47 - Entitled an Act to Incorporate the Halifax Rifles Armoury Association. (Mr. Iain Rankin)

Bill No. 48 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, Respecting Disclosure of Municipal Employee Compensation. (Ms. Karla MacFarlane)

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

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the House's attention to the east gallery where I am joined by a good friend who is spending the day in Halifax. Ellie Clarke. I would ask Ellie to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SPRINGHILL GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES VOC. REHAB CTR.: CLIENTS - RECOGNIZE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the clients of Springhill's Golden Opportunities Vocational Rehabilitation Centre who participated in the Nova Scotia Special Olympics this past summer at Acadia University. There were over 850 athletes and coaches at this event, and the GOVRC came home with seven medals. Winners included Chrissy Stonehouse with a silver in bocce bowling; Vance Pyne with a bronze in bocce bowling; Lauren Davis with a silver in shot put; Matthew Porter with a gold in shot put, a bronze in the 50-metre race, and a bronze in the long jump; and Brad Coady who won a gold in the 200-metre race.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate these men and women on a job well done and wish them continued success in their future competitions. Thank you.

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

DARES, JONATHAN: CREATIVITY/INNOVATION - CONGRATS.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a young man from Sable River, Jonathan Dares, a 15-year-old student at Lockeport Regional High School. He won the Spin Master New Toy and Game Competition. Mr. Dares' invention, a stuffed animal with a solar powered nightlight was inspired by the creation for his little sister, Jessica.

Jessica, 10 years old, had found comfort taking solar-powered nightlights to bed as they outlast electricity in the event of a power outage. Jonathan took her love of stuffed animals and matched it to her fondness for solar-powered night lights, and created the perfect toy for his little sister. This national win comes not only with a \$2,500 prize and a trip to Canada's top toy manufacturer in Toronto, but also the opportunity to have his invention considered for marketing and production.

I'd like to applaud Mr. Dare's business sense, innovation, and creativity. I look forward to seeing where Mr. Dare's path takes him and would like to congratulate him on this win.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North on an introduction.

HON. KAREN CASEY: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the members of House's attention to the east gallery, where we have Chris McDougall visiting us here from Truro. Chris, I'd ask you to stand and remain standing while I read my Member's Statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

MCDOUGALL, CHRIS: CHARLIE'S RIDE - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: The devastating loss of his son Charlie at age 14 from bone cancer, and the memories of watching Charlie suffer from the effects of the chemical treatments, and the enduring impact it had on Chris and his family - in 2016, Chris decided to conduct Charlie's Ride in memory of his son, and as a fundraiser and awareness-generator for the Beatrice Hunter Research Institute.

In 1999, the late Beatrice Hunter bequeathed \$12.5 million to the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation for cancer research. In 2009, the institute named in her honour was created to foster a more productive, and capacity-building cancer research effort here in Atlantic Canada. As a board member, Chris is aware of the advances in cancer research and treatment. He wants to help families so they never have to experience what his did.

Cycling from Vancouver to the Terry Fox Monument in Newfoundland, Chris raised \$225,000 - that's one quarter of a million dollars. Over time, he expects to generate more through a trust he is creating, called the Charlie and Dan McDougall Endowment Fund for Cancer Research. His main purpose in undertaking this venture this summer was to raise awareness at all levels of government of the need to fund and support cancer research.

Please join me in extending congratulations to Chris McDougall for undertaking, and succeeding, in the completion of that difficult bike ride, for allowing members of this Legislature to join him in celebrating Charlie's life and honouring his memory, for the monetary donation his personal fundraiser has made to cancer research, for reminding us of the need for continued support for such research, and for the ongoing legacy in Charlie's honour. (Applause)

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

**LOCKE, REV. FRANK & HAZEL:
NAZARENE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES - DEDICATION**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: This year concluded a two-year project that a local couple from my constituency funded. Searching for a project they could be involved in, Reverend Frank and Hazel Locke of Brookfield were connected to the Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. A small village in Bangladesh already had plans drawn up for a school needed in the small village, but there was no funding available to construct the school.

Frank and Hazel were delighted to step in to fund this project, which has been completed and opened this past April. Their son, David Locke, attended the dedication of the school building on behalf of his parents. Not stopping there, the Lockes have since made donations to help have a school built in a northern Kenya village.

I'd like to commend Reverend Frank and Hazel Locke on their dedication to education and community-mindedness on the world scale.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

SOVIE, VICKY/SOULS HBR.: VOLS. - THANK

HON. MARK FUREY: People helping people is what community is all about. This summer, Souls Harbour RESCUE Mission opened its doors in Bridgewater, offering residents a hot meal four days a week. Headed by Vicky Sovie, the Souls Harbour group of volunteers are doing much more than preparing meals a few days a week. Souls Harbour creates a sense of family for some, may lift another's spirits, and fills a need that many

didn't know existed. Thank you to Vicky Sovie for her vision and caring, as well as all the volunteers who gathered to support their community.

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

BARRA MACNEILS - ANNIV. (30th)

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to congratulate the Barra MacNeils of Sydney Mines, who celebrated 30 years of music this summer. Seventeen best-selling albums, two DVDs, numerous awards, television appearances, and concerts around the world speak to the quality and popularity of this talented family. Each of the group's members sings and plays a variety of instruments.

The Barras are presently on tour and working on a new CD. These hometown heroes have brought their music to fans around the world, and I hope they will continue to do so for another 30 years.

We wish Kyle, Lucy, Sheumas, Stewart, and Boyd all the best as they continue their stellar careers.

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

COBEQUID ARTS COUN. AWARDS: RECIPIENTS - CONGRATS.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the first Cobequid Arts Council Awards were held on October 21st in Truro at the Marigold Cultural Centre, celebrating its 10th Anniversary. Recipients were given a lifetime achievement award during the ceremony for their contribution to the arts in our community. They are the following: Charlotte MacQuarrie, Audrey Hanrahan, and The Lincolns, led by soulful vocalist Frank MacKay.

The Lincolns were formed as a rock band in Truro in 1961 and over the years became one of the most popular bands in the Maritimes. To this day the Lincoln reunion gigs are constantly sold out and the band members honoured were Frank MacKay, Layne Francis, Roddie Norrie, Donnie Muir, Glenn Irving, Jack Lilly, John Gray, Bubs Brown, Barry Ryan, Charlie Gray, and Dick Snook.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to be one of the first acts on the stage of the Marigold 10 years ago when they brought me home to do The Marilyn Tapes.

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

**PICKARD, MAGGIE - HFX. WEST STUDENT GOV'T.:
CO-PRESIDENT - CONGRATS.**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Maggie Pickard for being elected as the 2016-2017 co-president of the Halifax West student government.

Sixteen-year-old Maggie has worked extremely hard to obtain the respect of all her peers. In 2014 she was elected Grade 10 representative, in 2015 she was elected Grade 11 representative, and co-president seemed like a natural next step for this young, aspiring student politician. She and her other co-president, Mr. Jack Murtha, will be the head organizers for all of Halifax West's events that are based on student inclusion and raising money for local charities.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Maggie Pickard on achieving this position, and wish her success on all the events she will be coordinating this year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PICTOU LODGE BEACH RESORT:
TOP 10 WEDDING VENUES - CONGRATS.**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Pictou Lodge Beach Resort for placing Number Two on the Food Network's top 10 wedding venues in Canada. The Pictou Lodge, under the leadership of Mr. Wes Surret, was noted for its stunning ocean views, fresh local lobster and seafood, and testimonials from brides, grooms, and guests.

In recent years Pictou Lodge has had an increase in wedding bookings and wedding-related events held at this fabulous resort. On special note, recent bookings have been made by people without ties to the immediate area, solidifying Pictou Lodge as a go-to wedding destination.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to congratulate Mr. Surret and his staff, as this recognition would not have been possible without their keen attention to detail and great service.

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

SHOREHAM VILLAGE - BUDGET CUTS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Shoreham Village is a non-profit long-term care facility in Chester. Beyond that, it is an important part of the community, offering a secure environment for residents when needed, as well as a

palliative care room for end-of-life care. There is also a room available to provide short-term respite for community members.

I am disappointed and angered by this government's decision to cut funding to Shoreham. This year its budget was cut by more than \$33,000. This cut is especially painful given the Liberal's campaign promise to rebuild Shoreham in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, while the Premier continues to say that long-term care is a priority of his government, his actions speak louder than his words.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

BURTON, CHERYL: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Cheryl Burton on retirement after 34 years as secretary to Windsor Forks District School. Cheryl volunteered her time at the school in 1981, before accepting the position of receptionist.

During a special celebration on June 13, 2016, Cheryl enjoyed seeing dozens of former and current colleagues, as well as former and current students who came out to celebrate her retirement. Cheryl has seen many children come through the doors in her 35 years at the school and always brought a smile to people's faces. She has been such a big part of the school for so many years and will certainly be missed in her position.

I ask that the Legislature please join me in thanking her for her long and dedicated service to the school and her community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GILLIS, CMDR. SHELDON: PROMOTION - CONGRATS.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Sheldon Gillis, son of Mary and Donald R. Gillis of Judique, has recently been promoted to the position of commanding officer of the navy frigate HMCS *St. John's*. Serving in the Armed Forces since 1999, Commander Gillis has taken charge of a warship that not only protects Canada's sovereignty in the Atlantic Ocean but has seen action in the Persian Gulf. At 440 feet, she is a tad larger than the fishing vessels Sheldon would have seen at Baxters Cove when he was going down to the beach for a swim as a young fellow.

Congratulations to Commander Gillis and his wife Beth, along with their two children, Ella and Rory, who can be very proud of their dad. We here in the Nova Scotia Legislature wish him safe passage and thank him for his service to our country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. SENIORS SERV. CTR. - ANNIV. (40th)

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, next month the Dartmouth Seniors Service Centre will celebrate 40 years of service to the community. Beginning on Windmill Road as the New Horizons Fellowship Club, the Dartmouth Seniors Service Centre has experienced huge growth and has established itself as a pillar in the community.

It is located on Ochterloney Street in Nantucket Place, which officially opened 30 years ago. The Dartmouth Seniors Service Centre is a hub of activity, offering lunches, painting, and woodworking classes and hosting book clubs and fundraising events. As my office is right next door, Mr. Speaker, I can say that they are truly wonderful neighbours.

On November 3rd they will host a gala to celebrate the anniversary and to celebrate their accomplishments, of which there are many, and their role in the City of Dartmouth, which is a substantial one. I want to thank and congratulate the staff and volunteers for all of their continued work in provided a welcoming, active space for Dartmouth seniors.

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

NOURISH YOUR ROOTS - HRSB: INIT. - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, healthy eating is an important issue in the lives of all families. This year the Halifax Regional School Board started an initiative called Nourish Your Roots. Madeline Symonds Middle School was one of the schools that participated in this year's fundraiser in support of healthy food programs and activities in their school. The program was offered at different schools and many communities throughout the province.

Nourish Your Roots increased awareness of healthy local food choices for children, families, and the community. It supported local farmers and helped children in each community raise money through local, healthy, and sustainable options. The program has also provided an opportunity for families to eat quality, delicious, healthy food fresh from the farm, and 100 per cent of the purchase price from each of these sales stayed in Nova Scotia, supporting schools, local farmers, and Nourish Your Roots.

At this time I'd like to thank Nourish Nova Scotia and the HRSB for this initiative. I would like to congratulate Madeline Symonds Middle School and all of the many schools who participated in this program.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACINNIS, SHANNON - TRENTON MAYOR: ELECTION - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: I rise in my place today to congratulate the newly-elected mayor of Trenton, Shannon MacInnis. Shannon, a well-known resident of Trenton, is married and a proud father of three children. He is also a business owner in the community.

Shannon served as Trenton's mayor previously, from 2005-2008. Mr. MacInnis also held positions as chairman of the Pictou County District Planning Commission and a board member of the Pictou Regional Development Committee, to mention just a few of his roles in the community. Shannon is also well known in the sports community, serving as a coach every year since 1989 with at least one team in basketball, baseball, or hockey.

I would ask that all members of this Legislature join me in wishing Mr. MacInnis the best of luck and much success in his role as Trenton's mayor.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: TEACHING TIME - PROMISES

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I spent Sunday afternoon listening to teachers in Halifax Needham. I was grateful to hear their first-hand experiences in the classroom, and they were grateful to be listened to.

Mr. Speaker, the government should be listening. If they did, they might hear that September is a time to build relationships and ensure that children feel safe and secure in new classrooms, but instead, Grade 2 teachers did assessments of little children who have never written a test before; that in the case of split classes, and there are many, Grade 3 or Grade 1 students had to colour or do other busy work for a week; teachers are spending so much time reporting on what they do in the classroom through clunky software that they don't know their students as well as they used to; and that they think this government wants a surplus more than it wants to help children.

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development promised teachers more time to teach. They're still waiting.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

HIGH LINER FOODS: REPUTATION - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: High Liner Foods is a name synonymous with seafood in Canada. The company's flagship plant is just outside Lunenburg and is a proud part of the community. The company was recently named one of the Top 50 Most Reputable Companies in Canada by the Reputation Institute. In fact, High Liner was one of just six Canadian companies named, making the list at Number 33. The company is one

of the largest employers in the Lunenburg area and has always been a good corporate citizen. I wish to congratulate the people of High Liner Foods for working hard to become one of the most reputable companies in Canada.

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

DOCTOR SHORTAGE: RELIEF - TIME FRAME

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: The Premier promised a family doctor for every Nova Scotian during the 2013 election campaign. However, last week, the member for Clare-Digby announced that the goal has been pushed down the road, possibly until 2026. This trial balloon, or should I say lead balloon, is not going over well with Nova Scotians. Mr. Speaker, 90,000 residents are without a family doctor. Perhaps the Premier or the Minister of Health and Wellness may wish to clarify the statement made by the member for Clare-Digby. If not, this must result in a new Liberal slogan, because 2026 is too long for 90,000 Nova Scotians to wait for a family doctor.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MORSE, KEN: ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT - CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. G. Kenneth Morse bought his first truck, a two-ton Chev, at the age of 20, put a dump body on the back, and started hauling gravel for various road projects on the go in rural Nova Scotia in the 1950s. In 1956, G.K. Morse Trucking was born. Ken was joined by two sons, Robert and Rick, in the 1980s, when they began to share dispatching and operation duties at Centreville Nova Scotia Terminal. In 1999, G.K. Morse Trucking expanded its business to include a construction division, operating in the Annapolis Valley. Today, at 74, Ken is still in the office every day answering phones, and overseeing the business. The company now operates 45 tractors and 70 trailers running in all parts of North America, hauling commodities of all natures. I congratulate Mr. Morse for his entrepreneurial spirit, and his raw determination to create a successful locally-owned and -operated business in the Annapolis Valley for 60 years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: REPT. CARDS - TRACKING/ACCOUNTABILITY

MS. LISA ROBERTS: One teacher I met with on Sunday estimates that she will spend 40 hours preparing report cards in November, an additional 40 hours in April, and another 40 hours in June - all this effort and time to produce report cards that parents struggle to comprehend, that say next to nothing about what makes our children special, and that are as soulless as an operating manual. My mother saved my report cards; I did very well. I can't imagine anyone cherishing the current report cards produced in Nova Scotia. This is one example of the increase in tracking and "accountability" in the education

system in Nova Scotia that is sadly counterbalanced by a decrease in actual support and caring for our children.

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

DEVEAUX, COREY: INGONISH TRIATHLON - CONGRATS.

MS. PAM EYKING: I rise today to congratulate Corey Deveaux for winning the Olympic distance race for the third year in a row at the Ingonish triathlon in June. Mr. Deveaux won the Olympic distance - which consists of a 1,500-metre swim, a 44-kilometre bike ride, and a 10-kilometre run - with a time of two hours, eight minutes, and thirty seconds. I would ask the House to join me in congratulating Mr. Deveaux for his fine performance, and wish him success and the best of luck in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

BERNARD, LIAM & SHANE: BRAVERY - ACKNOWLEDGE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: We are often amazed at the bravery of Nova Scotians who put the well-being of others before their very own safety. Liam Bernard and his best friend, Shane Bernard, of Waycobah, were on their way to Halifax when they took action to help people involved in a two-car accident at Melford. One of the vehicles was burning, but that did not stop them from approaching to see what they could do to help. They were able to get one of the men out, but the second man's leg was trapped under the dash, and they couldn't free him.

It was at that point that Liam Bernard asked people to hold him by the pants as he put his body into the car and ripped the dash apart. He asked them not to let go of him and asked them to pull him out when he had the victim. The victim was bleeding, and Liam was able to pull him out, Mr. Speaker. If you can believe this, the truck blew up as soon as they got out of the way. It's truly a brave act, and I want to congratulate both of these men. Let us acknowledge them with proud applause. (Applause)

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

NATL. TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMN. - JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's third recommendation calls on all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle. All Members of the Legislature should learn the story of Jordan River Anderson. Jordan was a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba, with serious medical needs. He tragically passed on at the age of five, after spending two

years in hospital waiting for at-home care, while the federal and provincial governments were arguing in court about which level of government should cover his treatment costs.

Jordan's Principle calls on governments to be compassionate, to pay for these children's services and figure out the financials later. We all must do our part, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that First Nations children in this province access the same quality and breadth of public services as other Nova Scotian children, from health and social services, to education and recreation.

I once again look forward to hearing how this government intends to meet this specific call to action.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**KOLB, MARCEL/ANNA. VALLEY SHOOTING SPORTS CLUB:
COMP. - CONGRATS.**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate rifle chairman Marcel Kolb and his team from the Annapolis Valley Shooting Sports Club of Canaan, Kings County, for their accomplishments at the National Smallbore Rifle Competition.

Mr. Kolb and his team, which included Kings County residents Bill Gilles and Jeff Jenkins, took gold in the open match rifle competition. The AVSSC team also earned gold in the Open F-Class team event. Individually, Mr. Kolb won two gold medals, scoring 598 out of a possible 600 points in Open Iron Sight, and 599 of a possible 600 points in Open Any Sight.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to congratulate Marcel Kolb, Bill Gilles, and Jeff Jenkins, and the Annapolis Valley Shooting Sports Club, on their accomplishments and wish them well in their future competitions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ROGERS, ROB: LIFE INSURANCE ENDOWMENT - THANK

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank Robert Rogers for a generous and selfless deed. Bob has donated his life insurance to enhance health care in Pictou County. His gift to the Aberdeen Health Foundation's Medical Equipment Endowment was practically as simple as changing the beneficiary on his policy but the meaning runs much deeper. We are a very appreciative community for Bob's deed.

Because of donors like Bob, the Aberdeen Health Foundation is marking 30 years of enhancing health care in Pictou County, and more than \$20 million to bring advanced equipment and care to our region. How do you give thanks when words just don't seem to

be enough? For Bob, this gift was the perfect choice. I am proud to call Bob a friend, and I ask members of this House to add their thanks to this extraordinary gentleman.

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

LEARNING DISABILITIES MO. (10/16) - SUPPORT

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. It is a time when people pay particular attention to children and adults with learning disabilities. It is estimated that one in 10 Canadians has some kind of learning disability. From youth to seniors, learning disabilities affect all ages, and can add unwanted stress to daily life.

Mr. Speaker, raising awareness can help with acceptance. It can encourage those with learning disabilities to seek out the help they need. As a society, it is important that we ensure that the necessary social supports are in place for those who need them.

Today I stand in this House to show my support for all those with learning disabilities. Thank you.

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

SMITH, MALIQUE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to send out my support to the family and friends of the late Malique Smith. Malique was a young constituent who passed away due to a severe asthma attack earlier this year. In celebration of his life, his sisters Kyla, and Kasey, along with teacher Ms. Munroe, have planted tulips at Malique's memorial plaque at the Sackville Heights Elementary School that Malique attended.

Monday, October 10th, would have been Malique's 10th birthday. I ask that we please keep Malique's family and friends in our prayers.

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

PLAYFORD, RHONDA: STONE SOUP PROG. (SYDNEY) - SALUTE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Rhonda Playford who runs the Stone Soup program at Community CARES Youth Outreach Centre in Sydney Mines. A few days each week students from Grades 3 to 5 meet to cook healthy meals and do some baking. Nutrition, life skills, co-operation, and sharing are also encouraged and developed.

The kitchen is a venue that allows these young adults to grow and flourish. Once a month, the children host a supper for their families. I applaud the organizers of this program that teaches children about nutrition, cooking, and life. Bon appétit.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

VIOLA DESMOND FERRY: RENAMING - THANK

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: On July 7th, Halifax Regional Municipality launched the Viola Desmond Ferry from Dartmouth. It serves not only as a commemoration to Viola's legacy but of a reminder of how much work there is still to be done in the pursuit of equality, the work that Viola began 70 years ago when she was unjustly convicted for a tax violation code for challenging racial segregation.

Last spring, we brought to the attention of the House the overrepresentation of African Nova Scotians and indigenous people in our correctional facilities. This is just one example of where Viola's fight for justice continues, and having her name on the ferry seeks as inspiration for that fight. I want to acknowledge all the people who had a hand in the renaming of the ferry and thank them for keeping her legacy at the forefront of our province's dialogue.

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

OCEAN VIEW ELEM. SCH. - OSCAR AWARD

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you about an amazing assembly Ocean View Elementary School holds each month for their students. It's called the Oscar award and at the end of the year, a special Oscar award is given out. The school invites local author, and a former Ocean View Elementary School secretary, Mary Conrad into the school to present the special award created in her honour. Mary is a long-time resident of Eastern Passage and has been an incredible asset to our community and the school. The special award is presented to students who write stories and poems that demonstrate a message of peace, friendship, and anti-bullying. Last year's winner was Haley Myra and the finalists were Corali Balbuena-Thyer and Cole Thomas.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members of this House of Assembly to congratulate last year's winner and all the nominees and other children involved in this inspiring initiative.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MURPHY, JOEY - COMMUN. COMMITMENT

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise from my seat today to recognize Joey Murphy, a local business owner in the Annapolis Valley. Joey moved to the Valley

approximately 13 ago and opened a popular restaurant franchise in New Minas known as Jungle Jim's. In the years that followed, Joey has purchased two other businesses in the Town of Kentville, the well-known watering hole Kings Arms Pub and the café he has historically named the Half Acre Café.

In Kentville alone, Joey employs 30 staff but his contribution to the community doesn't stop there. He chairs the Kings County Family Resource Centre and has been a generous supporter of the hospital foundation L'Arche Homefires, the Rotary Club of Kentville, the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn, and youth sports coaching girls volleyball. It is this commitment to the community that small business owners need to be recognized for, and I'm proud to have Joey Murphy as one of the many dedicated business owners to the beautiful Annapolis Valley.

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

KUN'TEWIKTUK - MONUMENT UNVEILING

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I was honoured to join with Membertou Chief Terry Paul and community members unveiling a monument to commemorate Kun'tewiktuk, the original Kings Road Reserve, and the former community of Membertou. With the purchase of the Medical Arts Building on Kings Road in Sydney, Membertou reclaimed the land of their first community, the land 100 years ago families were forced to leave and relocate to present-day Membertou.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in support of the community of Membertou. One hundred years later, they commemorate their first community, their first families, and a significant part of our history as they reclaim their original home.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

AUTISM PICTOU CO.: AWARENESS WALK - CONGRATS.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Autism Pictou County on a tremendously successful walk. I've been particularly impressed by Colin Wood's dedication to making this walk happen. On June 11th, over 400 walkers marched through Stellarton to promote autism awareness. Everyone enjoyed bouncy houses, fun carnival games, a barbecue, a bubble zone, and a huge silent auction after the walk. In total, \$67,000 was raised, and that ensures that the programs and supports will continue in place for another year. All the funds raised stay in Pictou County and benefit families living with autism. A swim program, new golf, music and art programs have raised the bar for support, and the children have thrived.

The generosity of our local communities during difficult financial times is just one more example of why I am so proud to call Pictou County home.

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

STOFFER, “SIR” PETER: PUB. SERV. - CONGRATS.

HON. DAVID WILSON: I rise today to recognize the latest accomplishment of “Sir” Peter Stoffer.

After serving as Member of Parliament for 18 years for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook, Peter is continuing his incredible work to protect and empower this country’s veterans. He recently took on the position of public relations advocate for the Trauma Healing Centre, an organization that helps veterans, first responders, and civilians dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and other emotional and physical traumas.

I think all members would agree that Peter was an incredible advocate for his constituents. His brand of politics and representation is without precedent. I’m happy to see him extend his public service here in Nova Scotia, and look forward to seeing his work improve the lives of some of our bravest Canadians.

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

DIGBY CO.: GREEN INITIATIVES - RECOGNIZE

MR. GORDON WILSON: I rise to recognize the ongoing efforts of the municipal units, the local businesses, and the people of Digby County who live in the greenest county in Nova Scotia. As we continue to foster new green initiatives in the area, I would like to illustrate these efforts with a few examples. The campus at Université Sainte-Anne has been recognized as one of the greenest in Canada, with its two wind turbines, 100-plus solar panels, and two gasification biomass furnaces fueled by wood chips.

These are not the only turbines in the area. The county is home to a 30-megawatt wind farm in Gullivers Cove. Also, the Municipality of Digby and Southwest Eco Energy has an anaerobic digester yielding biogas from mink farm waste that fuels a 300-kilowatt generator.

Now, as we continue to add new green initiatives across the county, we are pursuing the biggest and boldest green project of them all - tidal power development. We have always known the potential of harvesting the power of our renewable resources and the benefits this brings to our environment, our communities, and our economy.

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

PRISKE, JENN: VOL. EFFORTS - RECOGNIZE

MR. IAIN RANKIN: I rise today to recognize the volunteer efforts and positive community contribution of Jenn Priske of Timberlea Village.

Jenn has volunteered at BLT Elementary for the last six years, including at the Spring Fair and Safe Arrival Program. She has been on the parent-teacher coalition executive at BLT Elementary for five years, serving as both vice-president and president. Her volunteer efforts for the youth growing up in BLT go beyond the school, as she's also a Sparks leader and volunteers with West Halifax Cheer, and with Techsploration, whose mandate is to empower young women to explore careers in science, trades, and technologies. Jenn's non-profit involvement extends to promoting the development of Nova Scotia's digital technology industry by serving as a board member of Digital Nova Scotia.

I would ask the members to acknowledge the countless hours put into these initiatives and join me in thanking Jenn Priske for all that she does for Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea and for Nova Scotia.

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

KEARNEY, SHERRIE & DALE: MONKEYS & MORE - CONGRATS.

MR. DAVID WILTON: After a number of major health scares, Sherrie Kearney needed to find a way to work from home.

In 2014, she thought that since everyone loves sock monkeys, she would make a few and try to sell them from a local craft show. She was not successful at the craft show, but when she returned home she decided to put them online to see if they would sell there - and sold two right away. With those few sales, an online business was born.

Since then, Sherrie and her husband Dale have moved back to his hometown of New Waterford to continue an online business. Having made over 3,000 sock monkeys, monkeysandmore.com has been shipping all over Canada, the U.S., and even as far as Guatemala. Along with the sock monkeys, she's also made some custom orders like sock dogs, sock cats, and even sock moose.

Please join me in congratulating Sherrie and Dale Kearney on their successful online business Monkeys and More, and wish them many more years of success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BETWEEN THE BRIDGES - COLLECTIVE IMPACT

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Over the past two years, Dartmouth North has been the focus of Between the Bridges.

I personally have witnessed the growth of this work supported by government but woven by community. Simply put, Between the Bridges is about collective impact. It's about supporting people from cradle to career in Dartmouth North by identifying and nurturing the collective strengths of community members, organizations, agencies, business, and government, and stewarding that collective strength into action led by community.

Leadership of this work in Dartmouth North has been tasked to Bette Watson Borg and Matthew Spurway, who work collectively with our foundational partners - United Way of Halifax and the Nova Scotia School Board Association. Both come with years of experience in community engagement and are familiar with the unique challenges in Dartmouth North.

One milestone Between the Bridges is anticipating happens today, when they open up their new base camp in Highfield Park. I, like many others in the community, am looking forward to the continued success of Between the Bridges in Dartmouth North, as it becomes the prototype community for collective impact in Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MURPHY, DANIAL: PARALYMPICS - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Bedford's Danial Murphy on a return to the Paralympics. I first met Danial four years ago, before the last Paralympics, and I should tell you that Danial holds National PARA Records in the men's S5 50-metre freestyle, the 100-metre freestyle, the 200-metre freestyle, the 50-metre backstroke, and 50-metre butterfly.

He has continued to break Canadian records in these events at every major event he has attended since 2009. He has been ranked in the top 10 in the world for the last two seasons in the S5 200-metre freestyle. This summer, Danial was a late add to the Canadian team when the Russian team was disqualified. Danial headed off to Rio and the community fundraised to help send his coach, Kevin Ross.

I want to say how proud we are of Danial. We claim him - as does Sackville, so we fight over him a bit - and what a great role model he is. Well done, Danial.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

WHYNACHT, JOEY - ART LIGHTFOOT MEM. TROPHY

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, high school hockey programs provide opportunities for young athletes to develop and compete against each other in our Canadian sport. In addition to this, high school hockey also instills a sense of community and pride among staff, alumni, students, and fans, and it is through the efforts of many that the hockey programs we enjoy in this province thrive.

I would like to take a moment today to recognize a man who has embodied the highest level of dedication and support to high school hockey in the riding of Kings West. Mr. Joey Whynacht has been a pillar of the Central Kings Gators hockey team for nearly three decades, attending every possible game. His enthusiasm for the sport and high school program is unrivalled, and this year Mr. Whynacht was awarded the Art Lightfoot Memorial Trophy for his dedication and support of high school hockey.

Mr. Whynacht is loved and respected by all CK players, staff, and alumni for his demeanor and support. As a member of the Legislative Assembly for Kings West, I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for Mr. Whynacht, and his contributions and devotion to the Central Kings Gators and Nova Scotia high school hockey.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

PRASAD, CST. DEEPAK - JOHN DUNLOP AWARD (2016)

MR. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, each year the Nova Scotia Criminal Justice Association presents a member of the Nova Scotia criminal justice system with the John Dunlop Memorial Award. This award honours Mr. Dunlop's memory by recognizing members who have gone above and beyond their duties through their involvement with youth-oriented community activities.

I'm happy to stand here to say that Constable Deepak Prasad of the Antigonish RCMP Detachment was selected as the 2016 John Dunlop Memorial Award recipient. Constable Prasad has only recently come to the Antigonish Detachment, coming to us from Port Hawkesbury. He spent much of his off-duty time these past years working with youth, to educate and involve youth in the community.

A major project he was involved in was the Port Hawkesbury cinema. The project was a collaboration between the RCMP and the local high school, and was an effort to add regular youth-focused activities in the small town where there is not always something for kids to do. The project continues to be a success, regularly hosting cinema nights on select weekends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Constable Deepak Prasad for being named recipient of the 2016 John

Dunlop Memorial Award and thanking him for all he has contributed to each community he has served in.

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

WILLIS, LAWRENCE: BUS. ACHIEVEMENTS - APPLAUD

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Lawrence Willis, owner of Willis Plumbing and Heating, who credits his family for a start in the trade, when he began by helping his father plumb their home.

Lawrence took his training in the former Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, then worked for Eastern Plumbing, and received his Journeyman's status in 1983. Lawrence worked with his brother in their joint company, United Plumbing, before he formed his current company. Lawrence, focusing on the future of his company, has encouraged his grandsons, who are enrolled in the plumbing program in the Nova Scotia Community College.

Mr. Speaker, I would applaud and congratulate Lawrence Willis on his notable achievements in business, and for preparing and encouraging family members to continue his company. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank all members for those thoughtful Members' Statements, as we get ready for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers, on this Tuesday, October 25th - just a few days before Halloween. We'll move on.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

**PREM. - MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS SERV.:
WAITING LIST - LETTER**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. We have been bringing to this House many examples of Nova Scotians who are suffering from mental illness and not getting the help they need. The situation keeps getting worse. This summer a letter went out from the Mental Health and Addiction Services in Amherst to people who are on their waiting list. The letter says: "You were referred for individual therapy at Mental Health and Addictions some time ago. Our waiting list is quite extensive . . . We are contacting you at this time to determine whether you wish to remain on the waiting list."

My question to the Premier is this, why is his government trying to get people to quit the waiting list for mental health and addiction services, instead of ensuring they get the help they need?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, in no way are we trying to get any Nova Scotian who requires support and services to quit any waiting list. The honourable member raises an issue of concern that I can assure him we'll look into.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in fact the government is writing to people on the waiting lists and asking them to get off the waiting list. Maybe the Premier is not aware of that letter but I'm sure the public relations people he hires are because no doubt we're going to see a press release sometime in the near future with a government patting itself on the back for shortening the waiting list, but this is no way to do it.

That letter goes on to say: "You were referred for individual therapy at Mental Health and Addictions some time ago. Our waiting list is quite extensive . . . It is our hope in sending this letter that we will be able to close a number of referrals since many people have likely improved by waiting."

Mr. Speaker, you'd never send a letter like that to someone who was waiting for hip surgery or for cancer surgery. Would the Premier condone sending letters like that to people who are waiting for a physical surgery, like hip or cancer, hoping that they had improved by waiting?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. There's no question that investments are required in mental health supports across this province. We've listened to clinicians to make those investments.

I agree with the honourable member that that letter, if indeed that letter was sent out, it should not have been sent out. I told him in my first answer that I would look at it and get to the bottom of this, Mr. Speaker, and I will report back to him.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer. I think it's important that the Premier look into this because in fact many, many Nova Scotians, in Cumberland County for sure, did get that letter and I've tabled it here for this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear, these are people suffering from mental illness, as surely a disease as any other physical illness. They are on a waiting list because a doctor placed them there and they need help. To ask them to bump off the list, if they are still waiting, is not acceptable. This is happening in Cumberland County, but I would like to ask the Premier, will he also determine whether other letters of a similar nature have gone out in other parts of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I told the honourable member, I will take the question, the information he has provided, and we'll look into it and we'll report back and let Nova Scotians know.

I want the honourable member to know, from the very time I was given the privilege to be the Premier of this province, we have made mental health an issue. The Minister of Health and Wellness has invested in mental health clinicians, listened to clinicians across this province, ensured we provide services, working with our education system and SchoolsPlus to enhance mental health programs in our school system.

The issue of mental health is treated by this government like every other health issue, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do so. I do not want to dismiss the issue that the member has brought to this floor. I told him at the beginning of his first question that I will look into this issue.

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

PREM.: ONLINE VIDEO - PURPOSE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier posted a video online; he said he wanted to talk about education. What he really wanted to talk about to parents was to fuel their fears over the possible teachers' strike. One parent called the video "a piece of propaganda aimed at creating divisions between parents and teachers." - I'll table those documents.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain why he is trying to divide and conquer, rather than listening to teachers' real concerns?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We have negotiated two different agreements, two different executives of Nova Scotia Teachers Union. As recently as Monday I was in the school in my constituency, continued to talk to teachers. I know every member of this Party has talked to teachers. It was important that I had a chance to speak to Nova Scotians to make sure they had the full facts of what was out there. We continue to lay those out in a positive, thoughtful way.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with classroom teachers to make sure they continue to improve the learning environment in the classrooms across this province, and that they get an opportunity to continue to stay in front of our kids where I know they want to be.

MR. BELLIVEAU: The video posted online yesterday was paid for by the Government of Nova Scotia. When the government threatened to make changes to Seniors' Pharmacare, the people of Nova Scotia were on the hook for the cost of mailing out

thousands of apology letters. Why does the Premier think it's appropriate to continue to use taxpayers' dollars to clean up his messes?

THE PREMIER: The Premier of Nova Scotia has an obligation to speak to Nova Scotians.

MR. BELLIVEAU: The experts on education in this province are the teachers, students, and parents. Many teachers have written about the concerns, the frustration about PowerSchool and crowded classrooms. Parents are worried about their children falling through the cracks. All members of this House have received a letter signed by more than 300 students saying they do not support this government's treatment of teachers. I'll table those documents. Will the Premier agree to stop the spin cycle and listen to the people who know education the best?

THE PREMIER: That's exactly what we've done, Mr. Speaker. We've worked with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, which told us they wanted smaller class sizes, so we capped class size. We worked with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, which said there were too many outcomes from P-6. We worked with teachers from across this province. We brought them in and we reduced those. We realized we needed more math mentors, and we hired more math mentors. We even went and reversed the mistake of the previous New Democratic Government, which cut Reading Recovery. That's positive. It's in the classrooms (Interruptions)

I hear the Progressive Conservative members standing up on the opposite side. They're going to have to be counted at some point. Are they going to stand with teachers in classrooms, or they going to defend the actions of the previous government, which cut \$65 million out of classrooms? We're going to continue to invest in education, invest in teachers, and invest in classrooms.

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

**PREM.: MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS SERV.
- WAIT-LIST REMOVAL**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I want to return to this mental health letter that went out. I was perfectly prepared to accept that the Premier was going to look into it, but of course he couldn't help himself, and he had to try to tell Nova Scotians that they were serious about helping people with mental illness. At the same time that he's spelling out those usual talking points, the reality is that thousands of Nova Scotians are getting letters that are going to bump them off the waiting list.

I am going to return to that letter because the letter was very clear. It says you're dropped off the waiting list unless we hear from you otherwise, and then it suggests, "Please be aware of our Coping Skills Workshop that runs three times a year . . ." Does the

Premier really think it's okay to bump people who are suffering from mental illness off the Mental Health and Addictions wait-list and refer them to a coping workshop that happens exactly three times a year?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I gave him an answer. I said I would look into the situation for him and report back. I don't know what it is - he can't handle it when I give him an answer. He says I don't give him an answer. The fact of the matter is, I said to him at the very beginning that this is unacceptable. I'll look at it, and we'll go forward.

But we have made investments, Mr. Speaker, in mental health across Nova Scotia. We've listened to clinicians to make sure we put community-based mental health services in communities across the province. We've listened to teachers. We've put mental health clinicians - the SchoolsPlus program, we've enhanced it. This is unacceptable, and I told the honourable member that when he asked me his first questions. He can stand up in this House for the rest of Question Period if he prefers, and I will give him the same answer. When I've looked into this, I'll be happy to report back to you.

MR. BAILLIE: It is not an answer to tell people in Nova Scotia suffering from mental illness that all is fine and that his government is doing a great job when in reality they are sending letters out to people on the wait-list for help that are going to get bumped from the wait-list. This is exactly what's wrong with this Premier and this government. They spin out these lines to try and tell people everything is okay when they know perfectly well there's a mental health crisis, and they're getting nothing but spin, and the cold shoulder from this government. So yes, I'm glad he's going to look into that letter. Will he stand in this House and tell every member and, more importantly, the people of Nova Scotia that, when he's confirmed what we know to be true - that it did go out - he will ensure it never happens again?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I told him - this is my fifth time now, telling him - that I will look into the situation. I said this is unacceptable. But I do want to remind all members of this House of the investments that we've made in mental health listening to clinicians across this province and the enhancement of the SchoolsPlus program - but this letter is unacceptable. I will look into it, and I said I would get back to him to find out an answer for it.

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

LAE: LBR. NEGOTIATIONS - GOV'T. APPROACH

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Today, 9,000 members of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union are set to hold a strike vote. This government's track record with contract negotiations has been marked with protests and heavy-handed legislation. In 2014 this government recalled this

Legislature in order to pass a law preventing a strike by home care workers. In 2015 we witnessed university professors mobilizing against Bill No. 100, a terrible piece of legislation that would see collective agreements suspended and strikes banned for up to 18 months.

I'd like to ask the minister, will she admit that the government's approach to labour negotiations has failed?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As the member well knows, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education does not comment on ongoing labour negotiations. But I won't be doing what that member did, which is negotiate a contract in a parking lot.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I would like to remind the House that this government has not signed a single contract with any public service union in this province. That's their track record. I guess that's the accomplishment of the minister and her government.

This is not negotiating in good faith. Even children who are students - the Premier and the MLAs received a letter from over 300 of them expressing their concerns and supporting their educators. They rightfully echoed teachers who have been saying that teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Neither of these will improve if the government refuses to come to the bargaining table and truly negotiate.

I would like to ask the minister, if the Premier has said that the financial package is non-negotiable and arbitration is off the table, will the minister tell this House whether this government intends to negotiate a contract for Nova Scotian teachers?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education does not comment on ongoing labour negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MUN. AFFS.: RICHMOND CO. - OMBUDSMAN'S REPT.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Page 21 of the Ombudsman's report about Richmond County revealed that the municipality reimbursed some councillors for the cost of participating in a partisan political event. I can table that report.

Two councillors claimed the \$50 ticket to a recognition dinner for provincial politicians. In both cases, kilometres to and from the event were claimed as well.

Has the minister canvassed his colleagues to find out if any of them were the beneficiary of this irregular spending by the Municipality of Richmond?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, obviously the situation in Richmond has been a cause for concern. All Parties did receive some sort of funding or expense related to activities with various members, including the member's own Party.

Of course all of us would expect that guidelines be followed and that the rules of Elections Nova Scotia be followed. Only individuals can donate to Parties, Mr. Speaker, so if it was the case that those individuals did not donate themselves, they would have been breaking the laws of the province.

MS. MACFARLANE: I believe we all know in this Chamber that reimbursing someone for a political contribution appears to be a clear violation of Section 236 of the Elections Act.

Will the minister confirm whether he or anyone in the government caucus has been contacted by Elections Nova Scotia investigators about this possibly-illegal political fundraising?

MR. CHURCHILL: There are members in that Party's own caucus who were implicated in terms of expenses. Obviously every member in this House, whenever we receive any donations from our community members, would expect that those donations follow the rules of the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**MUN. AFFS. - RICHMOND CO.: OMBUDSMAN'S REPT.
- ILLEGAL PERKS**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his comments. I do hope he'll be able to table his statements that just indicated that we received something with regard to that.

Page 16 of the Ombudsman's Report says that the Department of Municipal Affairs stepped in to stop Richmond councillors from receiving a payment of \$100 per day for travel in addition to their meals. The minister's own department flagged the inappropriate spending prior to the Ombudsman's Report even being released, and the public has since learned that Richmond taxpayers have paid for alcohol, valet parking, political fundraisers, and spousal travel.

Mr. Speaker, did the minister not know about these illegal perks or did he just simply ignore them?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Obviously I would share the same concerns of that member or any member of this House when we hear of such abuses of expense. There is

an ongoing RCMP investigation. We are going to wait until all the details of this case come out and then we'll be acting appropriately.

What I do not want to do, Mr. Speaker, is paint all municipalities with the same brush. There were a specific set of circumstances here that are currently being investigated and addressed, and if there's further action needed in our department of course we are there to proceed.

MS. MACFARLANE: I agree, I don't believe all municipalities should be painted with the same brush, but we need to clear up this scandal.

The minister knew there was a problem in Richmond, the Ombudsman's Report says the department stepped in once to stop the \$100 per day travel bonuses, and just last year a Grant Thornton audit examined travel expenses and corporate credit card usage by municipal staff and councillors. The audit contained 20 findings and related recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, we know that last week the Premier put the hammer down on nursing homes with auditors. Why won't the Minister of Municipal Affairs dole out the same treatment to Richmond councillors and staff for the sake of the taxpayers of Richmond County?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in fact the audit the member is referring to came about because of a recommendation from our staff and our department. There were red flags in the audit that all municipalities have to provide to us every year. Because of these red flags, we sent a recommendation back to Richmond that they should undergo a forensic audit, which they did.

The Ombudsman's Office took it upon themselves to conduct an investigation and that has warranted an investigation by the RCMP. Obviously there were serious concerns here and we do need to wait for these investigations to conclude so we can act appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, to suggest that the localized decision making of these independent councils and independent councillors has anything to do with advice they are getting from Municipal Affairs is completely outrageous and false, and I don't think that member should be continuing with that level of rhetoric in this Chamber.

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

EECD: CLASS CAPS - EFFECTIVENESS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development likes to talk about class caps as one of the major improvements they've made to the education system. However, she neglects to mention that the NDP put class caps on Primary to Grade 3, and this government has seen 85 classes across the province now exceed the set limits. For instance, in the 2015 school year there were 72 classrooms over the cap. The letter received by all members of this Legislature, from high school and junior high students, references classrooms with over 40 or more students.

My question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development today is, if class caps is what this government touts as one of their major accomplishments, why is class size still one of the primary concerns of teachers?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I'm pleased to hear the member acknowledge that class caps have made a difference in this province. I would remind all members of the House that in order to implement a class cap, you have to begin gradually. We have done that up to the end of Grade 6. We will be capping some math classes at high school next year, in September.

We recognize that the funding that goes to school boards for junior, senior high school is a ratio of one to 24, so we certainly are respecting and asking that boards implement and hire their teachers based on a 1 to 24 ratio.

MS. ZANN: Yes, I do say that class caps are very important. What I'm saying is that unfortunately they are not being used right now and that they are soft caps, with many extra students in the classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, teachers across the province have been loud and clear about their concerns. They say soft caps, data collection, split classes and, in particular, systems like PowerSchool and TIENET have exhausted their personal resources at the expense of time with students. They are struggling to support students on individualized program plans who are unable to meet grade level outcomes.

Just last week the Teachers Union accepted the Education and Early Childhood Development Minister's offer to proceed with a committee to address workplace concerns, so my question for the minister is, given the government's track record on the class sizes, what assurances can the minister actually give that the government will act on the concerns of teachers that they bring this committee.

MS. CASEY: The assurance that I can give the House, and all members of the public, in particular our parents and teachers, is that the implementation of the class cap from Primary to Grade 6 is has been extremely successful. We have 96.5 of our classes that

are within the cap - that's huge, that's something of which we can very be proud, and I stand on that record.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: DART. CATCHMENT AREA
- PHYSICIAN VACANCIES**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Information provided by Nova Scotia Health Authority indicates that in the Dartmouth catchment area there are currently 14 vacant family physician positions and another seven about to become vacant. This total represents 25 per cent of all the doctors serving the Dartmouth catchment.

Already this is impacting residents who has been left without a doctor or who cannot find one. So can he explain what is being done to recruit family doctors to the Dartmouth catchment area and fill those vacancies?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you, member, for the question. I want to let the member opposite know that in fact Doctor Lynne Harrigan has been personally to visit some of the sites to help with their recruitment and their planning for next year. We have hired 42 new doctors since July 1st, and some of those are certainly placed in the metro area.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Health Authority says that each one of these physician sees an average of 1,500 patients, and they estimate 21 vacant positions means 30,000 people in the Dartmouth catchment area are currently or soon to be without a doctor. Solving that would require recruiting 50 per cent of next year's graduating class of residents just to Dartmouth - something which is seen unlikely as many locations are competing for doctors. The two to three nurse practitioners allocated to Dartmouth in the recent announcement obviously can't handle 30,000 people.

So, Mr. Speaker, what is the minister's plan to address the physician vacancies in Dartmouth which is an issue now with already many vacancies?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, in terms of addressing provincially, in fact recruitment from the classes of 2017 residents across the country, we already have a number of contracts signed that will start in June or July of 2017. So, there is a very strong and robust recruitment plan, and I think to have some already signed speaks very promisingly for next year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MUN. AFFS. - RICHMOND CO.: OMBUDSMAN'S REPT. - SERIOUSNESS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

People in Richmond County had to go as far as the Provincial Ombudsman to get action on an issue of inappropriate spending practices by their municipal government. Mr. Speaker, no one was helping them, certainly not this government. In fact the minister in his last answer said that the Ombudsman took it upon themselves, in that office, to investigate the matter.

My question is, where was the minister, and why hasn't this government and this minister's office taken this matter seriously?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, this issue has been taken very seriously by the department. In fact it was our suggestion that this council conduct a forensic audit, which they did. It was our suggestion that they enhance their expenses but then it became clear that there are actually rules in place that were being broken in the local level. It is the responsibility of council to conduct their business on behalf of their citizens. They are held accountable to their citizens through a vote - and that has recently happened.

We are looking at the laws of the province, looking at expenses in particular, if adjustments need to be made to ensure that the municipalities are held to the high standard that all of us here are in the Legislature when it comes to expenses and accounting. We will make sure that happens.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, another comment the minister made in his answer to my colleague was that she was speaking rhetoric, and that she was talking about independent councillors. But the fact of the matter is one of the councillors in question was actually also an employee of the Liberal caucus office. With the minister in this Liberal Government in conflict of interest given that they had employed one of the councillors responsible for the inappropriate spending in their own caucus office until recently, perhaps there was an interest on the part of this government to protect that employee and manage possible damage to the Liberal brand.

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not think that is a fair statement at all for that member. Obviously, we hold ourselves here, all of us in this Chamber, to a very high standard when it comes to accountability to our constituents. All of our expenses are put online. Our expectation as government, and my expectation as minister, are that that same high standard is being applied across the board in our municipalities.

If there's more work that needs to be done in this particular case, we're going to look at it, but we are going to wait until the investigations are complete, so that we have all the details. If there are adjustments that need to be made to the Municipal Government

Act, which oversees the rules and regulations of our municipal units, we will make those adjustments as well.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:
CANCER ORAL AT-HOME MEDICATIONS - FUND**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Last week, I think I tried twice to ask this question revolving around the issue of at-home cancer medications, but of course, the time conspired against me. As the minister is aware, many cancers are diagnosed and begin with treatment that can actually be taken at home, without the chemotherapies that, of course, people have to go and receive intravenously. This can relieve the added burden and stress that many Nova Scotians face after receiving a diagnosis of this kind. As the member does represent a rural area, he knows that many of his constituents have to travel either to the city, or far away, in order to receive those treatments. Will the minister commit to funding oral at-home medications for cancer patients so we can keep people out of the hospital?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I thank the member for that important question, so that we can start to improve where we are. We currently fund oral cancer drugs to \$10 million. Right now we have 87 per cent of Nova Scotians, who are covered by one of the provincial programs, having their oral medication funded.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I know the minister has referenced that it would cost up to \$40 million to cover such an issue, yet he's never really presented a background of what that expenditure is. The cost of one staying in hospital for their care is, of course, significantly more, and options would allow patients to have more comfort, and to save their loved ones from a great deal of unnecessary travel. My question of the minister is simply this: will the minister commit to actually reviewing this expense and present his analysis to the House of Assembly?

MR. GLAVINE: What I can commit to the member is that we're currently working with a company, STI, to look at how, in fact, we can improve the cost of the oral cancer drugs, so that we can also have an expedited process for them to be able to move from diagnosis to treatment, and have oral cancer drugs delivered to local pharmacies in a much more expedited way than currently takes place.

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

ENVIRON. - DEPT.: CLIMATE CHANGE DIV. - REMOVAL CONFIRM

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: My question is to the Minister of Environment. The Citizens Climate Lobby of Halifax recently spoke out in the media

criticizing this government's lack of action on climate change adaptation. The group leader claimed that this government has axed the climate change division in the Environment Department, and I will table that. I would like to ask the minister if she can confirm whether or not the climate change division has been eliminated in her department.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Thank you to the honourable member for that wonderful question because this is a success story for Nova Scotia. We are actually leading all provinces in GHG reductions; I think that's amazing. I will also note that this is not the result of just this government's action, but other governments in other years as well. Nova Scotia is a success story. This government has four departments that are working very actively on the climate change file. They will continue working. We will certainly be on top of this.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you for that answer, but I wanted to know if the division was actually axed. Maybe the minister will answer that in the second question.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, events in southwestern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton demonstrate the need to adapt as best we can in preparation for more extreme weather, yet there are concerns that the work of the Climate Change Adaptation Fund program has stopped. This program was launched in 2010 to support communities in identifying and assessing the threats and opportunities related to climate change.

I'll ask the minister, what work has been done through this program in the last two years? Will she table that work in the House, and also answer whether the division was axed?

MS. MILLER: I can tell the member opposite that climate change continues to be a major effort and a major consideration of this government. We can't deny what's happening - with the flooding, with the drought - all these different issues that are going on.

My department has been working very hard on this, as we've also been talking to stakeholder groups, like the Ecology Action Centre and other groups. We're also going to be - I've had conversations about coastal mitigation as well, so we will continue this conversation and we'll be continuing the work, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - SEXUAL OFFENDERS: ANKLE BRACELETS - MIN. CONFIRM

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Justice. A children's entertainer was recently granted bail as he awaits trial for sex offences against a young girl. The Provincial Court put conditions on his bail, including no contact with his alleged victim, or anyone under the age of 18.

Mr. Speaker, this is a charge that is a crime against a child. He will have his rights to a fair trial but what about the rights of all the children who deserve protection? Remember Fenwick MacIntosh - he couldn't stop himself.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, we need ankle bracelets to monitor every movement of people charged with sexual offences against children. Does the minister believe that children in Nova Scotia deserve that level of protection?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. He certainly raises a very important question of safety in our communities.

As the member would know, we are the first province in the country that began using ankle bracelets for community monitoring with our community parole offices. That was done under the previous Progressive Conservative Government so we certainly have them in use, and we do use them in particular situations. I would say it's used in a case-by-case situation, and this is something I could look at, as the member has suggested.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for offering to look into it.

People who commit sexual offences against children need help, and until they get that help, they need help to keep from doing it again. In September 2012, we all remember the story of David James Leblanc, who was wanted in connection with sex crimes against a teenage boy who was tied up in a remote cabin. At the time, the Liberal Justice Critic said that more restrictive conditions should have been placed on Leblanc when he was released back in 2010, because back in 2010 he was awaiting a hearing on other charges of sexual assault and possession of child pornography. I will offer the quote and I will table that.

At the time the Liberal Justice Critic said, "If it is decided that individual should be released because of the nature of the crimes that they've been charged with, an ankle bracelet should be an option." Why the change of heart? Does this government no longer believe children in Nova Scotia deserve this protection?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite isn't suggesting that we no longer believe in that - is that part of the quote? We certainly have not said that we don't believe in it. (Interruption) Good, yes, because absolutely the protection of children is paramount, and the protection of anybody who is sexually assaulted is paramount to all of us. Therefore, we certainly would look at other avenues to do that.

We have to remember, too, that sometimes the government doesn't make that decision or the Department of Justice. People have to be convicted, and they have to be serving a sentence in the community to be monitored, so there may be other avenues to express our interest in that.

I will also tell the member opposite that we don't give direction to the courts, that there's a great division and independence in our whole justice system, with prosecutors, with courts, and with our judges, but we can certainly work together on common interests.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PHYSICIANS - TREATMENT RESTRICTIONS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, last week Nova Scotians learned that a Halifax doctor had his licence suspended for a month after he failed to properly post a sign warning women patients that he can't treat them without supervision.

The doctor was first disciplined last year by the College of Physicians and Surgeons after admitting professional misconduct during a pap examination. He also served a brief suspension when he returned to work but had failed to post the warning sign.

Does the Minister of Health and Wellness believe that a four-week suspension is sufficient in this case?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. It's one that the College of Physicians and Surgeons has to address in terms of disciplinary action that doctors receive from time to time.

MS. MACFARLANE: I do believe, though, that the Department of Health and Wellness should have a say in this. I mean, really, posting a sign in an office seems like a very mild warning for any woman who could be in jeopardy of being taken advantage of. A sign may not be effective for women with literacy challenges, vision problems, or language barriers.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe that there should be other ways, in addition to a sign, to warn female patients that a doctor cannot examine them without supervision?

MR. GLAVINE: These cases become very public. They are well known throughout a community. Again, periodically I get to meet with the head of the college, and it's an issue that I can raise in terms of cases generally - specific cases, the college has to go through due diligence and make their determination about what is appropriate discipline.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: FOOD SECURITY - MIN. ACTION

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Last week I took the opportunity to ask the Minister of Community Services about the alarming increase in food bank use since this government took office. Yesterday it was reported that the North Sydney Food Bank saw a jump in the

number of people they were serving last month that went from an average of 170 people using their services to 218. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. I will table that.

Families are struggling with the high and rising costs of groceries and cannot wait for the millions of dollars the department is spending on transformation to trickle down. Mr. Speaker, what is the minister going to do now to help the growing number of people struggling to meet basic needs?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite would know, food security is decades long. I went through food insecurity in the 1990s. It's a complex issue. I don't appreciate the triteness that she attributes to transformation, because it's a decades-long problem with that department not having any substantial changes to positively affect the cycle of poverty in this province.

MS. MANCINI: The prices of food, shelter, and transportation have all increased since this time last year. In 2013, the Food Action Research Centre at Mount Saint Vincent University calculated that a single man who was receiving social assistance would face a monthly deficit of \$686 when trying to pay his bills and eat a nutritious diet. I will table that.

That's not the \$20 this government is patting itself on the back about, Mr. Speaker. It's \$686.

The minister seems to be satisfied in having more and more Nova Scotians relying on charities to meet their needs. These are needs that are the responsibility of the government. Does she not recognize that it's her role and her responsibility as the Minister of Community Services to these individuals?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I take my role as Minister of Community Services very seriously. That's why we're changing a system that has failed Nova Scotians who are in vulnerable parts for decades in this province. It's a very comprehensive system. There are changes that will be announced this week - stay tuned - and there will be more changes in the future.

To suggest that this government or any member of this House thinks that the Department of Community Services doesn't care about vulnerable Nova Scotians is offensive.

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

**COM. SERV. - SOC. ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT:
PROPERTY DEED - ACQUISITION**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services and maybe a touch for the Minister of Justice.

I have a family in my constituency on social assistance. They own a house, but they did not get the deed transferred. The house needs major repairs, such as roof, new windows, insulation. The family does qualify for the Housing Nova Scotia programs, but needs to have a deed for the property in order to get it. They cannot afford the cost of getting that deed legally. My question is, what can be done for a family in this position?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. I'm not sure what the cost is, but I know that they can work with their caseworker . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: \$2,500.

MS. BERNARD: Well then, we would work with the Department of Justice, because I'm sure there are other people in Nova Scotia that are caught in that situation as well. I would be more than happy to look into that for your constituent, with my colleague, the Minister of Justice.

MR. HARRISON: I appreciate that, because I know my office has contacted Nova Scotia Legal Aid, and Dalhousie Legal Aid Service. I have contacted lawyers that I know just to get some advice from them, and they all say what it's going to cost. Nova Scotia Legal Aid has said they just don't do that kind of litigation. So the person who could sign the house over is now dying and unable to sign. We are in a quandary here - and, like I say, the folks really need work done on the house - so I'm hoping that something can be arranged by the two ministries for this family.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it just warrants my saying that I will work with the Minister of Community Services to see what can be done, and we'll look for the details of the case from you. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: HOSPICE OPENING - TIME FRAME

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On August 18th, the minister announced the long-awaited hospice for the Annapolis Valley, and certainly, that was a very welcome announcement. However, part of the announcement was that the hospice was expected to be open in 2019. I will table that. However, at that event, Tricia Cochrane, Vice-President of the Health Authority, said it was a goal of opening in 2019. Would the minister clarify that for the residents of the

Valley? Will the hospice be open in 2019, or is it merely a goal that it be open in 2019, and may open at a later date?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. The long-awaited hospice is now going through its final design plans, and putting a date on, as we know, always raises hopes and expectations. I believe that we'll see - that will be the very latest when the hospice will open.

MR. LOHR: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. The last time I checked, Mr. Speaker, it's 2016. We're talking about something for 2019, and this was in the works from 2013 on, and before - well-known. My question for the minister is, can he explain why we are waiting until 2019 for something that was announced this year?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know that was the date put out there, but I think we'll see work getting under way with the hospice. There's always a change now that it's under the Health Authority. Also, it comes under the direction of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. These were situations that, in the past, were a go with the local Nova Scotia district health authorities before the nine became the one Health Authority. We now have a more rigorous oversight of those projects, and that's what's currently taking place, but I think the member opposite will see this project under way very shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: INCOME ADEQUACY - STANDARDS/MEASURES

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, recently the Provincial Association of Women's Centres wrote to the Minister of Community Services to express their concerns about the transformation process currently happening within the Department of Community Services. One of their concerns is that, in order for women and their children to have meaningful choices, income assistance benefits must meet their actual needs. In her response to this letter, the minister has said that the issue of income adequacy is part of the analysis being done within the department. Can the minister explain what standards or measures the department is using to define adequate income?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: What she neglected to talk about was the first part of that letter, where they said transformation was long overdue in the Province of Nova Scotia. The complexities that go with poverty, and food insecurity, and certainly, the programs that were in the Department of Community Services are intersectional, and they're complex. It's not just about benefits. It's not just about one thing or another. There are many challenges that people on income assistance face, everything from income adequacy, to benefits, to education supports, to supports for persons with disabilities, to investments in child welfare - all are part of that basket. To simplify the cycle of poverty does it an injustice, and doesn't get anybody any further ahead in any province.

MS. MANCINI: In 2000, the government changed the ESIA rules to exclude post-secondary students from receiving assistance and instead directed them to student financial assistance to cover their costs. This effectively shut out many high-needs students from the possibility of attending university. I'm sure the minister would agree that students now should be afforded the same benefits as past generations of recipients. In her response to the women's centre, the minister says that the transformed ESIA system will offer improved post-secondary and employment programs which will be specifically focused on removing barriers. Will the minister agree to change the regulations to allow ESIA recipients to attend college or university while receiving benefits?

MS. BERNARD: Actually, Regulation No. 67 does just that - it enables people to go to university. But I would invite the member to join us Thursday in the media room, at 11 o'clock with my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, as we make some very poignant, very focused investments in post-secondary education for persons facing poverty challenges in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

PREM. - POLICIES: NEGATIVE EFFECT - ADMIT

MR. JOHN LOHR: My question is for the Premier. On Tuesday, the Premier quoted a very favourable comment from the BMO Provincial Monitor Fall 2016 Report that said real GDP is expected to grow at 1.1 per cent, up from 0.8 per cent, which would be the best in Atlantic Canada. Because of his rose-coloured glasses, the Premier failed to mention that the report had plenty of bad news in it. This is what it said about our labour market: "The labour market continues to underperform, with employment down from year-ago levels through August, and private sector employment down 6% from peak levels in 2012. With the participation rate also falling (even for prime-age workers) . . ."

I'll table the BMO report. The government is failing to create . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. LOHR: Will the Premier admit that his policies are killing jobs in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Unemployment is down. I'm very proud of the fact that, through Graduate to Opportunities, more young people are getting employed in Nova Scotia. We're leading the country on a per-capita basis (Interruptions) We've provided more apprenticeship opportunities in this province. Today, we heard that Conduct Technologies, led by a Halifax Health Tech entrepreneur, raised \$9 million with Series-A round investment - just today, one day alone - \$9 million. Later in the morning, we heard that there was a Halifax-based big data led by a Dal grad that was acquired for over \$20 million.

Those are all positive signs. The good news is, unlike the Opposition, most Nova Scotians are optimistic about the future of this province, because they have a government that is working with them, to ensure that their children get an opportunity to build a life in this province, and find a good job in this province.

Mr. Speaker, let me say to you, it's not only isolated to urban Nova Scotia. We've seen investment in the wine industry. The honourable member should know - he joined me at an announcement. We're always looking to build on the economy of Nova Scotia.

MR. LOHR: I appreciate him mentioning young people because the report . . .

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

We'll now move to the order of business, Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for 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. 41.

Bill No. 41 - Residential Tenancies Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 41, an Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act, be now read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to these amendments. We know that many Nova Scotians are renters and landlords; in fact over 300,000 Nova Scotians - about one-third of all households - rent their homes. Therefore, it's important that where the Residential Tenancies Act touches the lives of so many Nova Scotians that landlords and tenants have easy to use, modern processes that balance their rights and obligations to each other and lead to reduction of red tape. That is why we

introduced amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act that will benefit both landlords and tenants.

After consulting with landlords' and tenants' associations that are supportive of the proposed changes, the amendments introduced will permit alternative hearing formats such as telephone hearings - currently, hearings are held only in person, which results in lengthy wait times for dispute resolution; secondly, Mr. Speaker, to allow landlords to provide electronic copies of the Act instead of a printed hard copy; and third, to transfer the fee waiver authority from the Minister of Service Nova Scotia to the Director of Residential Tenancies, which would reduce processing times.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Nova Scotians' time is valuable, and with these changes both landlords and tenants will save time and costs associated with travel. These changes support government's commitment to cut red tape for business and citizens, modernize legislation and make government services more accessible and efficient for Nova Scotians. This work also aligns with Service Nova Scotia's commitment to become a public sector leader in service excellence and program modernization.

We want landlords, tenants, and associations in our province to know we have been and continue to listen to them. Regular feedback from landlords, tenants, and associations, led us to today's amendments and we will continue this work and listen to those stakeholders. It's important that the Residential Tenancies Act is shaped to best respond to the needs and concerns of Nova Scotians.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my brief comments and I look forward to listening to the comments of my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: I had a chance to attend a bill briefing on this bill; I certainly appreciated that.

Mr. Speaker, these three items are essentially good things and I know they are well-intentioned. The only real thing, and it's a very small point, but one of the concerns that has been raised within our caucus and within our office is there may be some people out there who may not be ready for an electronic copy just yet, and if that is their only option, if their landlord chooses to provide that as an option, the only option, perhaps they may be at some disadvantage there.

Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, we certainly understand that the world has changed and people are very used to reading electronic documents now. We're not looking at black screens with green colour text on them anymore, so to look at documents online sometimes it's actually even easier - you can search for sections with hyperlinks. So I think these changes are good. There may be something there in that some of our population who

may not be as electronically inclined might wish to still have that paper copy, so I just raise that point.

But, generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, and I know on second reading we are to speak generally about a bill, we don't have significant problems with this legislation. We do, however, look to see what Nova Scotians have to say when it reaches the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: I would like to thank the minister for bringing this forward and making these changes. I think that they're positive changes. I know the minister and I have had several discussions around the changes that he was bringing forth in this bill. Both for tenants and landlords, I think it's a very good move to try to provide other options in terms of what we have in existence today.

What as I know is happening today with regard to trying to get a hearing with the tenancy board is it can take some time. Therefore, even though our legislation will give either the tenant or the landlord a number of days that they're able - if it's a landlord, and they're trying to get somebody to leave their place, if they haven't paid the rent, there are 15 days when they have the option to have that individual removed from the property. However, when you are trying to get a hearing, it can take two or three months to get that hearing. Therefore, it really makes the legislation null and void because you can't put it into effect.

I think that this is a great step forward to perhaps reduce that long wait because it really does affect people lives. Often these things are on paper, and we don't see how they can affect somebody's life. Whether they're a tenant or a landlord having an issue, it can be very stressful. It's good that the minister has taken the time to consult with landlords and tenants and has come up with some new initiatives.

Our caucus also looked at the electronic means of providing the tenant with a copy of the Act. We think that that's good. Our only question is if there's a means of having some kind of confirmation of receipt. Often, when we hit the send button on our computers through our email, we just say, oh they've received that; why haven't they replied, et cetera? In the world of technology, there are ways that the person you're sending that email to did not receive it, or they may receive many emails and not see it. So if there had to be confirmation back to the landlord, then that landlord could keep that confirmation in their files so that if there was any future issues, they'd be able to prove to the tenancy board that indeed the tenant received that electronic copy.

I think that the other thing that is important, too, is to promote the fact that landlords must provide a copy of the Residential Tenancies Act. My experience has shown me that if you're a landlord, and you do it as a business, you would know that. Most landlords

would know that. But when you get in the rural communities and other areas, if you're not normally a landlord, you might, at one time in your life, have an opportunity to rent your home or rent a property. Most often you don't even understand or realize that you have to provide that copy to your tenants. If we could add some education to this around what the responsibilities are on both sides, I think that would certainly be an advantage.

In closing, I want to thank the minister very much for the work that he's done on this particular file. We believe that it's a good move forward. I want to congratulate the minister for taking that initiative.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. MARK FUREY: I'll be brief with my comments but acknowledge the questions of both my colleagues in this Legislature.

I want to assure my colleagues and all colleagues that hard copies will still be available. The objective is to find efficiencies through the ability to move those documents electronically from landlord to tenant.

The point that my colleague from Chester-St. Margaret's raises about wait times has been a significant concern communicated by tenants. Circumstances that we captured in revisiting this particular piece of legislation, in making the changes that we have, the option to participate in a telephone hearing quite literally makes every resource in the province available where that is presently defined by region. We believe that this change will have a significant impact on that wait time, and we will monitor to ensure that the outcomes we anticipate are in fact realized.

The second point that my colleague, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's made is the promotion of circumstances and content of the Residential Tenancies Act, how it is important that both landlords and tenants are familiar with this legislation. We will continue with our engagement and discussions and dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that those objectives are met.

With that, Mr. Speaker, at this time I rise to close debate on Bill No. 41, an Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 41. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

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

MR. IAIN RANKIN: It is a pleasure to rise to reply to a very good Speech from the Throne from His Honour Brigadier-General the Honourable J.J. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor.

It is a measured, sensible, responsible, and progressive vision that highlights proven results and the type of positive politics Nova Scotians voted for in 2013. Members in this House, it seems, are more accustomed to governments in the latter part of their mandate promising a long list of new spending and grandiose new initiatives. One of the ways one can appreciate how different it is, is precisely that reaction of the Opposition, who criticized it for not having enough in it.

Mr. Speaker, do Nova Scotians want us to act like governments of the past and outline fancy new projects and promise new deficit spending? That is what is different about it. It's no surprise that the members opposite castigate our government for not promising more. After three short years in government, we are beginning to see this new direction yielding better outcomes. There is now a distinctly different approach to economic development. I'm starting there because a stronger economy results in greater capacity to invest in health care and education and the most vulnerable Nova Scotians.

The facts are that when we came into government, the economy was in decline. Provincial industry output growth in 2012 was essentially flat at 0.2 per cent. Virtually by definition, that is stagnant growth - many quarters showing negative growth in the actuals. What is symptomatic of stagnant growth? Loss of tax revenue. Simultaneous with lower government revenue, labour deals of 7.5 per cent were struck under the last government, with labour costs representing more than half of total government expenditures.

Any business or any family understands that increasing costs while revenue is in decline is not sustainable. Public servants work very hard and deserve every penny that they earn. We just believe that increases ought to be proportionate with economic growth. To state otherwise means cuts in services. That's not progressive. That's not fair to the

general public, not to mention lower-income Nova Scotians. That is the source of the exasperating challenges public servants are facing in the classrooms and the operating rooms across the province. When governments allow collective agreements to grow at the expense of services, it constitutes an unjustifiable defiance of what truly is in the public interest.

That's not rhetoric. These are the facts. You can find them directly in the financial statements. You can find it with an aggregated \$700 million with compounded interest and operating expenses. So let's be honest with the public. HST, for example, is worth about \$180 or \$190 million per percentage point. Are Nova Scotians today prepared to pay 17 or 18 or 19 per cent on HST to finance another labour deal like the one signed in 2012? It's basic math, Mr. Speaker. Are they prepared to take more cuts to the classroom to finance this accrued cost?

The last government did a little of both, by increasing the HST, and cuts to the classroom, removing Reading Recovery, little to no capital investment in our schools, or in our hospitals. Most Nova Scotians understand that you can't have it both ways. you can't expect to continue signing escalating wage settlements that exceed projected revenue growth, and cut taxes, and maintain - let alone enhance - the high-quality services all at the same time.

This government's priorities are clear: improving front-line health care, improving education, sector development, looking out for the most vulnerable Nova Scotians. What government would allow our infrastructure deficit to reach billions of dollars for their children to pay for? Meanwhile, that last government was comfortable signing business deals that are today costing taxpayers over \$800 million and counting, again with compounded interest. Many of these businesses actually failed - not investments, but loans. Not payroll rebates, which guarantee a net return on investment, but forgivable loans. This strategy was too narrowly focused on short-term job gains, and not long-term sustainable growth.

There is a paradigm shift under way with this Liberal Government, Mr. Speaker. The transition is focusing on strategic sector development - the wine industry, oceans, research and development, drawing on the strength of our long list of post-secondary institutions, seafood - particularly with lobster and the value added strategy of Nova Scotia products. This is not just talking the talk. after three years of the Liberal Government, Nova Scotia now leads the country in export growth, with our seafood exports increasing by 33 per cent last year alone.

Canada itself is a country that earns most of its GDP from export-related industries. We are well on our way to achieving this objective and others outlined in the One Nova Scotia report. We have the example of tourism and the increase in numbers with a better debt-to-GDP ratio, mentioned in the report, and also our immigration targets coming close. This is what is possible when we exploit our comparative advantages, not by rewarding

one company over another, or interfering in a market, but by supporting strategic industries as a whole, to unleash the potential of our entrepreneurs.

Our small business confidence has also been among the highest in the country, quarter after quarter. These are the outcomes, Mr. Speaker, not something that we are hoping for. This is the trajectory that now leads the Atlantic Region for the first time in decades.

The creation of a new consolidated research and development entity, outlined in the Speech from the Throne, will help precipitate these types of positive indicators, in the same way that it has under the Obama Administration, relying on data and evidence, as opposed to ideology. Research and development is an important part of an increasingly knowledge-based economy. Obama himself said that if we want to make the best products, we also have to invest in the best ideas. Now is not the time to gut these job-creating investments in science and innovation.

This government recognizes there is a role for government, and that is to facilitate the conditions of private sector growth. Although some would like to address the relatively high taxes left behind by prior governments, we recognize the importance of a measured approach, and the importance of having enough revenue to provide the high quality of services Nova Scotians expect. That is why no level of tax has been increased - not income tax, not HST, and not theoretical new taxes the Opposition talks about in Question Period. That is responsible, forward-looking, progressive governance for today and for tomorrow.

We invest in strategic sectors, we make sure that we've got a strong research and development strategy so we continue to innovate. We understand that no economy is strong without a vibrant arts industry, demonstrated by an investment in our creative industries that is higher than any provincial government before.

This government invests in early childhood education, bringing early childhood educators' wage grants up to the national average - long overdue. Our government has made protecting the environment a priority, meaning the EGSPA target of 12 per cent of land protection. Some of these vast tracts of land are located in Timberlea-Prospect. Rogues Roost Wilderness Area is now officially protected under this government. I also supported our government's expansion of Terence Bay Wilderness Area, and Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area, which now has HRM as a committed partner.

I have spent much of my time as MLA collaborating with many local community groups to help secure funds to access the areas and rebuild our trail systems. We already had Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area protected by the NDP Government, which includes HRM's premier hiking trail, the Bluff Trail. We have been able to build more trails, improve the Rails to Trails system, and allow access for bicycles for the first time in Nova Scotia in a wilderness area, thanks to our Minister of Environment.

The recent Auditor General's Report showed improved debt-to-GDP ratio. All the while, budgets for Health and Wellness, and Education and Early Childhood Development are increasing, not irresponsible spending but spending directly in the front lines. When it comes to health care, 1,200 more orthopaedic surgeries since we've formed government. That's more hips and knees operated on. This didn't just happen by accident, Mr. Speaker. As JFK once said, things don't just happen; they are made to happen. Administrative costs were saved from the reduction of VPs and CEOs in nine different health boards. Wait times are down across the board for MRIs not just because funding has increased, but because of the coordination and improved processes.

Not everything requires more money, but some things do. There will be even more coordination in our system with the introduction of MyHealthNS, finally harnessing the technology that is available to have electronic records with patients and their physicians, and finally a government that is moving ahead with the VG and QEII redevelopment. This, again, goes back to the historic, chronic under-investment in our infrastructure and the lack of courage to repair our existing buildings rather than cutting ribbons at new ones.

Rebuilding our infrastructure, economists all agree, will attract businesses on top of being the most responsible thing to do for future generations, not the hospitals of yesteryear but the type of assets we need for the future. Our home care wait-lists have been reduced by 70 per cent, another key performance indicator. This positive KPI is a direct result of an unprecedented investment in home care to help seniors stay in their homes longer. The experts have been pointing to this transition as the way forward for decades, and this government is finally moving forward with it assiduously.

I am looking forward to the new year when we can begin to enhance the successful breakfast programs in our schools benefiting the health of our children and enhancing their education environment. I have and I'm sure other members have had parents ask for a new program or an expansion of an existing one offered only a couple of days a week in their school. I will be advocating for this in the days ahead.

Speaking of education, class sizes in elementary schools are starting to get smaller and there are more supports for children who require more attention. Public education investment is a fundamental tenet of equality of opportunity. Education really is the foundation of any healthy economy. That is why we will continue to invest more in each of our budgets directly into classrooms with another \$7 million coming in the next budget. That means more math mentors, Reading Recoveries, speech pathologists, early intervention, mental health clinicians, and so on down the line. Some of these investments won't show improved outcomes immediately, but it is the right thing to do for our students.

A driving factor for me on deciding to run for Timberlea-Prospect was to address the conditions of our local schools, and the Liberal Party was the only one talking about putting money back into the classroom and starting to fix our neglected schools.

I am fortunate to say that after three years, after three budgets, two of the elementary schools in Timberlea-Prospect received capital funding to address the roofs and the paving and some accessibility improvements. That is above and beyond the \$65 million in operating funding increases. This was only possible because of an incremental increase of \$36 million in capital spent over the last three years: \$15 million, \$15 million, and \$6 million.

The NDP Government tried to force boards to absorb these maintenance costs within their operating budget. Do we have more work to do? Of course we do, but there is no Party that has put more money into education in our local classrooms in Timberlea-Prospect or in the province's classrooms than this Nova Scotia Liberal Government.

Mr. Speaker, our historic high taxes and high deficits are really a symptom of not finding the courage to make difficult decisions. This government has not raised any taxes, and it has reduced the deficit all the way to a surplus while protecting education and health care services. We know that the far left advocate for higher taxes and the far right advocate for low taxes but really what stimulates growth is competitive taxes. Neighbouring provinces have all increased their taxes, including HST, which makes Nova Scotia a more competitive place to do business because ours have stayed the same.

We are at a juncture whereby managing our finances and investing strategically we have become an increasingly competitive place to do business. Our immigration strategy is a big testament to that. Many of our new Nova Scotians are investing their dollars in our downtown where you see the cranes in the skyline - essentially, betting on Nova Scotia and on Halifax.

Our new four or five streams of immigration is a source of economic growth. No government in the past in Nova Scotia has done more for attracting new Nova Scotians - by finally meeting and expanding our cap - and no government has worked hard enough to be able to retain our newcomers. That is why our population is the highest that it has ever been.

This is a great province with great potential not only for newcomers but for our young people right here. The Graduate to Opportunity program is working very well in the constituency I serve, where companies like Rosborough Boats have utilized this support. Last year, we were actually the only province in Canada to reduce our youth unemployment. Gone are the days when university students and graduates are unable to find a job in the Public Service because of lack of experience. This government has put more confidence in young graduates, demonstrated by over 1,000 of our graduates hired in the elimination of the three-years-experience requirement. Young people have more job opportunities, and they have more opportunities, more importantly, to create their own jobs, and jobs for others.

High-tech job opportunities are on the rise downtown. The investments in Volta Labs, and COVE, and payroll rebates - this a stark contrast from the old Innovation Fund, or more recently, the NDP Jobs Fund. This projected growth, such as our province's capital city, where we were third in the country last year, and projected second only after Vancouver this year. It is this growth that will allow government to continue to invest in classrooms and operating rooms, in collaborative care, in long-term care, and in community services.

We've made some good investments in the last three years, and challenged the status quo. But what I am most proud of is not the palpable, prudent administration of government resources, but the demonstrated compassion and drive to right some of the historic wrongs in Nova Scotia.

Firstly, the improved relationship with African Nova Scotian communities, starting with the very human response to the Home for Colored Children, recognizing the systemic abuse that occurred. Some of the people working on the inquiry and restorative process have deep roots in the community I serve, historic Beechville - formerly Refugee Hill - a community that has experienced encroachment over successive governments, but has survived over 200 years. There is more work to do to recognize their rich heritage, and on a macro level, to reach out to other communities that have endured historic wrongs.

There are 50 distinct African Nova Scotian communities throughout the province, such as Africville. Africville is now recognized as a national historical site, but still does not have a bus stop for those interested in visiting the museum - the closest one being two kilometres away. This is something I hope that we can work with HRM to remedy. I will note that as late as 1962, half of the African-Canadian population resided here in Nova Scotia. This museum is an important part of our collective history that should be highlighted.

I want to commend the Minister of Justice for answering my request in being the first Justice Minister to actually meet with the racial equity committee. Already, positive steps have been taken, like reducing the guidelines from 15 years at the Bar to 10 years, which allows for a bigger pool of people from diverse backgrounds to apply to the bench, and I understand they are looking at an equity audit now in judicial appointment process. These are positive changes that will help people get into the positions having an impact on the whole system. Under-represented communities want to see judges, Crown attorneys, and defence lawyers who look like them when they walk in a courthouse. Everyone has a role to play, including all levels of government, in recognizing the imbalance of incarcerated African Nova Scotians and Aboriginal Peoples.

Secondly, the inclusion of treaty education in schools - one of the first provinces through the signing of the partnership. In my short time so far as caucus chair, the most important meeting I have chaired was the Treaty Education Nova Scotia Memorandum of Understanding government caucus members received from the Office of Aboriginal

Affairs. It wasn't until 1985 that a court case actually recognized treaty rights. Now, young Nova Scotian students will learn about residential schools, centralization policies, the Sylliboy case in 1928, and the Marshall case.

Equally important for our government was the firm commitment to clean up Boat Harbour, one of the biggest injustices that needed to be addressed - undoubtedly a scar on the history of Nova Scotia.

Thirdly, amending the animal protection legislation where I worked with the Minister of Agriculture to include cats in the Act, and to have better protection for dogs. We now have better standards of care in the requirement of the vet signature for sale of dogs, limiting the proliferation of puppy mills. I am proud that Nova Scotia is now on the map for having some of the strongest legislation to protect our domestic animals in our country.

Lastly, from this Speech from the Throne, the legislation we will be introducing for persons with disabilities. The Speaker's Chair might be accessible, but the province and the city is not. We have a lot of work to do, and I do look forward to this legislation serving as the foundation of a journey long overdue.

I could go on with more examples of social progress such as the general analysis the Minister of Community Services brought in or the number of women in leadership roles now in the province. I sincerely hope that in the future governments see these as progressive steps to be built upon further. We have to confront the injustices head-on in order to bring everyone into the fold, to ensure that every Nova Scotian can see themselves in our institutions, to identify systemic racism within our own institutions - and that includes law enforcement and looking at how they target strategies like street checking, and looking again with a reconciliation lens at the Sylliboy case and the Marshall case, including the recommendations that followed.

That's the Nova Scotia way of the future and whether or not I will be able to earn the privilege of sitting in this House when it happens, it will be these issues that I will continue to fight for.

Thin soup in three years, Mr. Speaker? I think not. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, I rise today honoured, as I always am, by the privilege of being able to speak in this historic House, the oldest Legislature in the country, as the Lieutenant Governor referred to in his Speech from the Throne.

As a managing lawyer, I was obligated as part of my duties to conduct performance evaluations on lawyers. This would normally involve a two-part process of selecting, first

of all, the first part was selecting files randomly, which I would review. I had a checklist and I had to look to see if there was a reporting letter to the client, whether the phone calls were being returned promptly, was the file stagnating, did it need to be moved along?

The second part of that process involved a meeting where I completed a form, a fairly lengthy one, that had very specific questions that I would put to the lawyer I would be interviewing. The goal essentially was to assess the lawyer's commitment to Legal Aid policy to their clients, to their fellow colleagues, to support staff, and also their role in the legal community, to the bench, to the Nova Scotia Bar Society, and to their community.

Another important aspect of that was their own professional development - were they staying current with the law? We would talk about their concerns and their goals for the future and the lawyers would be rated as competent, or superior, or distinguished.

We know for us that there is only one performance evaluation and that is usually conducted on Election Day by the citizens who choose to exercise their democratic right to vote. But if there were mandatory performance evaluations, such as the one that I described, for all of us between elections, what would it look like? What would be the criteria to assess our competency, to continue to represent our constituents?

In the absence of this, who can provide us with the feedback on our performance as MLAs? In the absence of this performance evaluation is it possible to do a self-evaluation, as the Minister of Immigration referred to in her speech? She took time to reflect, and I really appreciated those comments, as to how effective we are being as MLAs, or as I am being as an MLA.

To begin such a task I think it's useful to look back at - well as I did - at my own calendar of the community meetings, meetings with constituents, legislative committee meetings. At all of those meetings I did, and I assume my colleagues did as well, have direct contact with our constituents and heard their concerns. The question I asked myself is, have I helped them?

I think about some of those individuals I have met throughout that process. I think of a young lady - she's in her 30s - severely disabled, very intelligent, completed her Master's Degree in Social Work, currently essentially is underemployed although she is employed on a full-time basis. It is absolutely necessary that she have an attendant assist her because of her physical disabilities, the fact that she is in a motorized wheelchair. She received a letter and was concerned that she might lose the ability to properly fund her attendant, and she came and raised that concern with me.

I think about Maria, who presently has been living at Simpson Landing at the Nova Scotia Hospital for the last four years, who has been ready, in those four years, for a small options home, but hasn't been able to achieve that goal. I think of Charles, a senior who just wants a non-smoking policy in his building so as to prevent further respiratory damage.

I've spoken with Marsha, who is concerned for her mother, who lives in a long-term care facility. She works full time and can't get to her mother for mealtimes. Her father is there, and her father will assist his wife in eating, because she can't feed herself. But there are 13 others in the same position in that facility. There are only two staff on to feed the residents. She worries that if her father weren't there, her mother would be getting cold food and that she would not even be inclined to eat.

There's Amy, who has spent time in segregation at Burnside, and there's Cindy at Direction 180, who's desperately advocating for much-needed funding because she recognizes the crisis from opioid use that's currently happening in this province.

When I think about those people who I myself have had direct contact with, I say, have I helped them in any way? Do they feel like they've been ignored? Have I listened to them? Have I properly advocated for them? Have I educated myself with the goal of improving the system, the institutions within which I am currently working? These are specific concerns, and I can also refer to committee work - Delores Feltmate, who spent years appearing before committees, advocating for a child advocate in the Province of Nova Scotia. Then, of course, there's the Nova Scotia Association for Community Living, who are very concerned that the roadmap has been dismantled.

All of these are very specific concerns that constituents have. What grade would we get - not just government, not just on the government side, but for all of us in advocating and helping, our assistance? The other aspect of it is this: while we can focus on specifics, there is also a bigger or more general notion or vision that I haven't heard referenced in the Speech from the Throne, nor have I heard it from any of the speakers to date in addressing the Speech from the Throne.

There is a glaring problem in this province, and it is not just in this province, but we have noted it specifically here. That is the decline in voter participation. We've seen the lack of engagement, the apathy, and also the anger that is part of our electoral culture. When I watch the U.S. election process, I don't kid myself. That really frightening situation that's been happening in that country can happen here just as easily. I see what can happen when the leaders, which is all of us, fail to engage with our constituents.

What is this government, and what are all of us, doing to promote more participation? I haven't heard from anyone so far on this issue, and sometimes I'm concerned that there may even be a desire to keep citizens disengaged. I've heard the Premier say, after the 2015 by-election, when we had a very abysmal showing of about 35 per cent, that we needed to do more, but I guess I questioned it a little bit when I looked at the circumstances of setting an election in the middle of the summer, and then again in 2016 in Halifax Needham when the turnout was even lower at 32 per cent and called a vote in the middle of the summer.

That's an aside; I think the main point is that we're seeing significant reduction in voter participation. The municipal election fared even worse at 29 per cent in HRM. That's pretty shocking - and even I did take an opportunity to look at voter participation rates since 2003 when they were at 60.31 per cent, and then in 2013 we were down to 54.59 per cent.

So how do we get people interested? Perhaps many of us here - I guess all of us here are maybe anomalies in the fact that we are interested in politics and very engaged in politics and probably have been for many, many years. I don't know how a psychologist would explain that. I happen to know an individual who is passionately, so passionately involved in politics he could tell you the electoral results from every poll, well practically, throughout Cape Breton. His passion for politics - he also knew where everybody who put a sign whether it was a red, blue, or an orange sign, he could tell you that, so much to the point that his wife encouraged him to take a job as a Crown Attorney - because then he was required to no longer be politically affiliated - hoping to ease the addiction. However, that is, as I said, an anomaly - and maybe we all represent that.

I like to think though that something different happens somewhere along the way. We were educated; we were fortunate enough to have our interest piqued in politics; and eventually it piqued to a degree where we agreed to stand for public office. But the real issue is that we all need to look at this and look at a way to address it - how can we motivate that interest in people?

It's not rocket science to say, and we've said it many times before, it's about education. We've heard people talk about - and it was even before my time in high school, in Grade 12 you got a civics course. That was about it, and then eventually it was eliminated from our education curriculum. I believe I may have alluded to this in the past in the Legislature, but it seems to me that it would not be an onerous task for all of us to commit ourselves to furthering the education of our students, and starting at the Primary level, introducing the concept to very young students that you have a mayor, that you have a Premier, and telling them their names and then eventually increasing the level of education to appropriately fit their own age level.

You know, each school has access to a councillor, an MLA, and an MP, and I feel quite confident that any request by any teachers for us to attend in schools would be received in a welcoming manner and that any of us would be prepared to do that. So we have that resource there - and we could also, I would love to think that this room could strike a committee where we could all work on developing that curriculum; we could all be in agreement on it; and I think that I cannot but feel optimistic that we could accomplish something very concrete.

Then, it is when people know, when you're in Grade 12 or whatever when you get to 18 and you can vote, it's not an obscure world that is disdainful or that you just don't want anything to do with maybe just because you know nothing about it. If you've been

educated through your life - I had that, myself, I had very, very little interest in it, but fortunately, my father, I can remember him sitting me down, and it wasn't very often that he would step forward to further my thinking on things, but on this particular occasion, when he recognized I didn't understand that in a federal election there were constituencies and the number of constituencies that there were, he sat down and explained it all to me. It was very important to him, and I feel fortunate to have that.

I honestly think today that there's probably a lot of teachers, never mind parents, who really are not familiar with the process. I think the way we have to approach it is by talking to the students in our schools. It's not a big thing for a teacher to spend 10 minutes to say, did you realize that last night your mayor had a big meeting?

It's funny: I went to meet with Brownies one night, and I tried to use an example of what we did in the Legislature, and I mentioned the Segways. I want you to know that they're not in favour of them. They're very opposed to the use of Segways on the sidewalks. Many of the seven-year-olds had issues with the condition of their roads, and they told me about that too. I didn't want to say it was a municipal issue, but you know.

Anyway, I just think that there are young budding minds out there. Their curiosity would be sparked by very little effort, by trying to put forward an age-appropriate curriculum in the schools from the very beginning and by making all of the teachers aware that we would be willing to participate fully and help out in any way we can by coming to their classrooms and putting a more direct face to what we are doing here in the Legislature.

I put that out to you as my comments. I ask all of my colleagues here to give some thought to that. Then maybe our citizens will give us excellent performance ratings when we go to the polls again.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask your indulgence for the next 15 or 20 minutes. I'm going to go about this in a different way. I want to draw an analogy, and I want to use that analogy throughout. The majority of this House has experiences in law, finance, education, business, and community services. My background is a touch different, and I want to speak out of that background.

I was in Olympia, Greece, a few weeks ago. I was fascinated by the history of the Olympic Games. I'd never really heard it before, so I was really, really interested in it. The Games date back to 776 B.C. At least the first recorded Olympic Games were held then. There is speculation that the Games were held as early as the 900s B.C., but the first recorded one for every four years was in 776 B.C. I was fascinated by the mythology of the Olympic Games, but I'm not going to go into that because it's of no use to what I want to say this afternoon. However, there are a few things that I would like to draw your attention to.

First of all, I want to talk for just a couple of minutes on the politics of the area. Power in ancient Greece was centred in the city state. The city state was a population centre organized into a self-contained political entity. Those city states often were in close proximity to each other. It created competition for the limited resources that were there. There was conflict between the states, but it was also in their self-interest to engage in trade and to engage in alliances - military alliances and also cultural interaction. The city states had kind of a dichotomous relationship. On the one hand, they needed that co-operation with respect to trade and alliances, while on the other hand, they competed fiercely for those resources that were common to them. The Olympic Games were established in this political context.

Okay, let's have a look at the participants for a moment. The citizens of ancient Greece lived by a set of values, morals, and ideals. Those ideals were known as the concept of the Olympic spirit. These ideals were virtue, noble competition, honour, freedom, and peace. So for an athlete only a life of honour was worth living. An honourable man was a man of self-discipline and respect for himself, "the Gods", and of course, the ordinary citizen. He took pride in carrying out his duty towards his family and his community. The athlete was well-respected by all the other athletes and the citizens who aspired to do their best. He showed himself to his fellows in a manner in which he held the respect of those who were with him and followed the rules of the Olympic Games. A noble competitor accepted both defeat and victory gracefully.

Now, while I was digesting the information shared by the guide, I don't know for what reason, but the life of the Legislature came to mind - I don't know why, but it did. It's said many times that we are playing games in this place. I have said this, God forbid, I have said this, but what I want to do is explain my view in this analogy. We gather here to represent our constituents. In ancient times, of course, it was the city states, but we each try to get what we can for our constituents here. That's the way we are, and in a way, it is very competitive.

The athletes are the very best for the city state, and there is a process by which they determined who is the best, who is going to represent the city state in the Olympic Games. There is a process that determines who the constituency will send to the Legislature; we call it an election. The people vote in the one they consider will be the best representative for them. We are the ones sent to the Legislative Assembly. We have the support of the constituency to do our very best.

Now, there is a prize, and the prize is to be the governing body which has the best interests of the province at heart. These are the ways in which I thought of the Legislature and the Olympic Games: positively. But, then again, I thought, well, there are a few differences here. One difference was the spirit of the Olympic Games and the spirit of the Legislature. The spirit in the Olympic Games was one of respect, integrity, and bringing in their very best.

Then I thought about how we act out our position in the Legislature sometimes. Now, I'm not going to make a statement here, I'm just going to ask a question: do we have that spirit of respect, and integrity, and values that are inherent in the Olympic spirit? I thought about the truce - that's another part of this, by the way - and I must admit that I was almost in tears when the guide was telling me about the truce in the Olympic Games. When the games were to be held, what would happen is a messenger or two would be sent out to all the city states around - all those that were going to be part of the Olympic Games. They had to sign an agreement not to enter into any hostility for about a three-month period, and anyone who did not sign that agreement was in huge trouble, so most of them signed that agreement and kept to it.

The agreement was bound by the city states out of respect for the Games. So I thought to myself, wouldn't it be something to have a truce between the political Parties for a period of time, which included the sitting of the Legislature, that we come in here with the spirit of integrity, respect, aiming for the prize of making this province the best it can be. (Applause)

When the Lieutenant Governor finished the Speech from the Throne I thought to myself how nice it would be for him to say, now let the games begin. I don't mean the games being held in the gladiatorial spirit, but in the spirit of the Olympics. I don't use the term "games" in the sense that we compete against each other and try to outsmart each other all the time, that's not what I mean, but in the sense of using all our skills for that prize, which is the betterment of the Province of Nova Scotia. So, let the games begin.

We have had time before coming in here to gather information concerning all kinds of issues. We have had time before coming here to make our points in Opposition. Sometimes it's done through the paper, sometimes radio, and other ways. Now we have come here to where the prize is actually fought for. Here there should be a truce. It's here that we need to feel comfortable and safe, so we can concentrate on making the province better.

What I want to do for the remainder of this is to talk about the prize that we're competing for. One prize is to have enough doctors so that all Nova Scotians will have one. That's the prize, so now we need to figure out how are we going to get there. We all need to ask the doctors what they need to function and how to attract others to help them in their job, help them make this province healthy.

I'm assuming that all of us want the prize. We all need to come up with ideas on how to reach it. All the background information should be gathered outside this time, so that when we come in here we are ready to go and come up with good legislation.

I've always approached my ministry home for the sake of the individual. I know we have good stuff in place, but there are a lot of people who fall through the cracks. Health-wise, I want to tell you this story about a 97-year-old. She was mostly blind, but

she could get around her house fairly well. Anyway, a few months ago she fell in the house and she was taken to hospital. She went to emergency and emergency really did not know what happened to her. She couldn't move some limbs where before she could, so they thought maybe she had a stroke. Well they ruled that out and they were going to send her home.

A few family members were there and said no, you can't send her home because she can't move. Six days later they found out she broke her neck - six days. Now I thought that was kind of hard, but it does happen. I just want to get it so that these people don't fall through the cracks, that hopefully we can do a better job.

Anyway, another prize we compete for is education. We all want our children to have the best education possible. Part of this means setting an atmosphere for the teachers to teach and not load them with a lot of administrative stuff, not put them in a classroom where students rule and not the teacher.

Before coming here, we should have found out what it is that is going to create a good working environment for teachers, find out how we can create an environment for teachers and students to do their job, and when we come in here we have the information and we pass legislation that is going to lead us to the prize.

Another prize we are competing for is to create an economic status that is good for this province. Small businesses are a huge part of our economy, so what is it that will encourage small business in this province? What is it that's going to allow small business to grow instead of just trying to hang on? What resources do we have that are not being marketed properly? How can we get from the resources we have so that we can have a healthy economy? We should have the information prior to coming in here and when we're in here, we can make good decisions and good legislation, to attract new business and to help the present ones get stronger.

Another prize is Community Services. These services are here to ensure that people are sheltered and they're fed. They are in place to see that maintenance enforcement is properly handled. I know that falls under Justice, but there's kind of a back and forth there. These are services to protect children from abuse, and we have strong legislation in these cases, but with all the legislation, people are still struggling.

I guess most of you were here - well, you were all here when I asked the question in Question Period about the family on social services . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the member not to speak directly to members but through the Chair.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley has the floor.

MR. HARRISON: I don't want to rehearse all that information, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to go to another category, and that is maintenance enforcement.

Again, there are tough rules there for dads who owe ex-wives and children so that they can survive well, and it's good that we have those rules there. I have been talking to a chap in my office with respect to maintenance enforcement. He has paid on time for years and sees the responsibility - and he's done this for 13 years - making sure that his ex-wife and son were being looked after. Because of a payment that was late by a few days, they started to garnish his wages, and his payments got so messed up that maintenance enforcement actually owes him money, and it is just a mix-up. Enforcement offices are trying to deal with him, trying to deal with this situation, but nothing is getting worked out, to the point that he's going to be okay and his present family is going to be okay, plus his past family is going to be okay.

I know a family of 10 that is under child protection legislation. The family has done whatever the court has asked them to do. There comes a point at which the family needs resources and support to be a better family, but there also comes a point where the learnings need to be practised in the family setting. This family is losing the window of opportunity to be healthy again. The longer this goes, the more distance is put between the family members.

Now, the point is not that the legislation is bad; it just needs that human compassion and care to make it work properly in every single situation, or as much as we can. Everyone's different - all the situations are different. I hope that we never become content with 80, 85, 90, or even 95 per cent. Every family needs us to guide them and support them in times of difficulty. People really are basically good - they just need a little nurturing along the way.

Another prize is infrastructure, and I do appreciate the broad classification. I know that the main arteries need to be serviced first. Then there comes another classification, and another, and another. By the time it gets to the rural roads, time and money are running out. I'm an MLA in a predominantly rural area. I have hundreds of kilometres of gravel roads. Yes, they are graded twice a year.

The minister has said constantly in this House that safety is the first concern - and you know what? I believe him. I believe he will see that roads are safe if it comes to that. But gravel roads have absolutely nothing left on them to grade. The grader operators tell me that all the time, that there is just nothing left.

While I understand that roads with thousands of cars over them in a day are the primary concern - and I realize that - there are people living and working on these back roads that need attention as well. People call and they think I can make these roads better with a word to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Wrong. It

doesn't work that way. You and I know it doesn't work that way. We have to find something more workable.

Another prize is going to be the care of seniors. We're all getting older, and there's going to be a time when we're all going to need these services. (Interruption) Some sooner than others, like Pat - I'm sorry, I was goaded into that, Mr. Speaker.

These folks have worked all their lives and are now at a point where they need shelter, food, medicine, and other basics. It's good that we have this service, but it's a long way from being perfect. We don't have enough facilities, and we don't give facilities that we do have enough money to adequately look after the needs of these people. We have addressed the shortfalls many times in this House. We just need to put our heads and our hearts together to find the solutions.

I want to close by saying I really feel privileged to represent the constituency of Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. This constituency is comprised of mainly rural communities. These are ordinary people who are just trying to survive. The medical resources seem to be centred in the urban areas, and rural folks are feeling that they're out on their own sometimes. The roads they drive on are not what they used to be, because money is not available. Again, they feel that they're on their own. These are good people. They are citizens of this province. They should be able to expect us to stand for them and with them in their struggles.

Now, having said these negatives about living in a rural area, my constituency has a lot of good things to offer. I'm often in awe of, number one, what God created. This sense of awe comes as I look out my window at Shortts Lake. It comes when I see the beautiful colours of this time of year in the Musquodoboit Valley and the Stewiacke Valley. It comes as I view the farms and the animals.

But the most important thing rural communities still possess is a sense of care. There is still that feeling that says, we are here away from the big centres and the help they can provide, we need to care for each other in all the ways that we can. This is the way it should be, and I'm very thankful that I see this. I'm thankful that I'm a part of this kind of spirit.

Whenever I am called in to help in a situation, I feel privileged, but I wish I had a magic wand. To be asked to come into someone else's life for any reason, I find a privilege. I'm thankful to be working in this Legislature with my colleagues, staff, and Pages.

I would love to say at the beginning of each session, let the games begin. It is serious interaction, and the prize is worth our very, very best effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. It is my privilege and honour to stand in this House to provide my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne that was delivered by the Honourable J.J. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor, to speak about Cole Harbour-Portland Valley and how grateful I am to represent the people of this great community.

I want to share some of my thoughts about the role of an MLA, specifically how I and my staff have taken some of the responsibilities that come with this job and turned them into opportunities. I know many of my colleagues in this House know exactly what I mean when I say that the most rewarding part of being an MLA can be summed up in two words: helping people.

We help people in small ways and profound ways and many ways in between. I want to share a few examples and highlight what they have taught me as an MLA and what I think each of us in this House can take away from these experiences.

As MLAs we respond to a wide variety of constituency concerns. These interactions can range from heartwarming to heartbreaking, and sometimes we encounter situations that defy common sense and often leave constituents dealing with unnecessary frustrations.

I will start with a matter that was easy to resolve but contains what I think is an important message. Duncan Mason worked in the provincial Public Service for more than 25 years. After retirement, he continued to wear his 25-year long-service pin proudly and daily for another 20 years. After a lot of use, the pin fell apart. To Mr. Mason, his long-service pin was precious and probably irreplaceable.

When he came into my office, he said something that many people say: “you are probably not going to be able to help me, but...” It turns out that replacing the pin was easily done, and I had the pleasure of presenting Mr. Mason with a new pin and reiterating my gratitude for his long service.

I hope everyone here today will take a moment to think about this: 20 years after his retirement, Mr. Mason is still proud of his service to the people of Nova Scotia and still proudly displaying his Long-Service Award pin.

I believe Mr. Mason’s pride can be a reminder to us all in this House and all across the Public Service that we have been given a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives. It is a reminder that, if we are fortunate, we may find ourselves, 20 or 30 years from now, fondly recalling these days and being proud of the contributions we are making here and now in this House and in our communities.

I am very proud to be a member of this government - the most diverse government in Nova Scotia’s history. (Applause) Because of this diversity, our government has embraced innovation and taken new and different, better approaches - approaches that have

been enriched by broader perspectives, a willingness to listen and learn, greater respect, sincere empathy, and an unflinching commitment to serving the people of Nova Scotia.

I believe this is why our government has been willing and able to tackle long-standing issues, including those affecting seniors. I am proud to be a member of a government that has invested an additional \$59.1 million in home care. I am proud that our government has reduced wait-lists by almost 50 per cent for long-term care and the wait-list for home care has been almost entirely eliminated. I am also proud that more than 12,000 seniors no longer pay Pharmacare premiums.

In all these situations, the issues facing seniors were not new. The wait-lists were not new. They have been around for a long time. These are just a few of the many examples of the kinds of progress our government has made in resolving long-standing issues, issues that others were unable to address. I don't fully understand why we have been able to succeed where others had failed, but I suspect that, at the heart of it, you will find that it has a lot to do with thinking in new ways, taking new approaches, and making space for fresh ideas. All these things come from making sure that diverse perspectives are at the table.

The second constituency matter I want to share today involved a Workers' Compensation case. Specifically, the constituent's claim to WCB could not be processed because of missing paperwork from his employer. The case had been stalled for many months. It had caused this gentleman great stress and a lot of frustration. I can't talk about the full details except to say that after this man came to my office, the matter was quickly resolved.

I don't need to share the details because the interesting part of this story is something the WCB caseworker said. I should note the caseworker was not the problem. She genuinely wanted to process this man's claim, but her hands had been tied. She told my staff that it had never before occurred to her that an MLA's office might be able to help. She went on to ask if it would be appropriate for her to refer these types of cases to MLA offices in the future. Yes is the answer.

But there is more here than meets the eye. This WCB caseworker reminds us that we need to continually look for ways of informing people about what we do, certainly our constituents but also the agencies that serve them. The MLA's office is a community resource. I strongly believe that maximizing efficiency and making sure better relationships and stronger connections are forged between all community resources is the best way that we can achieve progress on long-standing issues.

As I mentioned, I'm particularly proud that our government has tackled significant issues that had gone unaddressed far too long. I will mention a couple more: issues like greater transparency in our investment decisions and making sure issues faced by women are given their due consideration - often long-overdue consideration.

Just five days after our government's first Speech from the Throne, we introduced Bill No. 9, an Act to Ensure Accountability in Providing Economic Development Assistance in Nova Scotia. This piece of legislation, less than a week into our first sitting, made sure that Nova Scotians now have more access to information about financial transactions of the government than ever before in the history of this province. Frankly, I don't understand why it wasn't done long ago.

Here we are today; just moments ago, we heard the introduction of a bill amending the Maintenance Enforcement Act. This legislation will further strengthen our efforts to ensure court-ordered child and spousal support is paid in full and on time. The issues around maintenance enforcement are not new. They have been around for quite a while. They are complex and not easy to correct, but it is important. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, like the other issues, I don't understand why other governments did not address this before. I commend my colleague, the Minister of Justice, for her determination, as well as the Minister of Community Services, for her hard work in addressing issues affecting women, issues that other governments ignored.

Mr. Speaker, the third constituency matter I want to talk about is quite sad. A woman came into my office to share a secret she had kept for a very long time. It related to a minor brush she had with the law, a very minor brush, a very long time ago. Shame and embarrassment had prevented her from talking about this incident that dated back to her teen years. I heard first-hand how it had affected her entire adult life. It even impacted the kind of jobs she felt she could apply for, or chose not to apply for, because she feared the incident would be discovered. She thought she had a criminal record. She was asking for help to get a pardon.

After some diligent digging, it turns out there was no record. The incident was so minor that it had been dismissed a long time ago. Mr. Speaker, during her first visit to my office, the lady felt so ashamed she broke down and cried. During her last visit to my office, she had tears again, she was crying again - but they were tears of joy. They were tears of relief, because a great burden had been lifted for her.

Although her story had a happy ending, it is still a sad one, but I believe it contains an important message for all of us, because it has to do with how some people view government, it has to do with trust. If more people reached out to their elected representatives, and those representatives or their staff took the time to delve deeper into those issues, I can only imagine how many more problems could be fixed, how many more people could be helped, and how many more lives could be improved.

Each of us has a part to play in building trust. Between the offices of our constituents, we do this on a case-by-case basis every day, but I think we need to take it a step further. The lack of public trust in government is a serious issue, and we're watching the result of this play out south of the border right now. Fortunately, here in Canada, with

the election of the Liberal Government federally, we have seen a resurgence of trust in democracy.

This is good news but it cannot be taken for granted. That's why I've looked for ways to support and grow trust at the community level. That is why, Mr. Speaker, as an MLA I have made youth engagement a top priority. That is why I'm proud to stand here today to share with you all, on all sides of this House, some of the innovative things we are doing in Cole Harbour-Portland Valley to expand our connection to young people, and increase their understanding of our role. These are good ideas, and good ideas deserve to be shared. When we share ideas and allow for discussion, the ideas tend to get better. When we listen, we think; when we truly listen, we can gain a lot more insight. That is why I believe diversity is so important. Different life experiences and perspectives enrich ideas. New and wonderful things happen. I hope some of the ideas I'm about to share about youth engagement will inspire members on all sides of this House, and together we can build on these ideas.

There have been many times during the past three years and many times during the course of my life before politics that I have found myself in meetings listening as a group of well-intentioned adults talk about the challenges young people face. These are complex challenges; they require complex solutions. I listen intently and inevitably find myself saying, have you asked young people what they think? It's a simple question, but adults often overlook the value of involving young people.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I found myself posing that question a lot during my lifetime. So when I became MLA, it wasn't enough just to ask the question; I had to do something about it. As I said earlier, we have a unique opportunity, a gift actually, so we have to ask ourselves: what are the things we can do with this special gift, this opportunity? So this thinking led me to the past July 25th when I announced the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley youth engagement initiatives. As MLA, I saw a need for my office to play a larger role in encouraging more young people to become more engaged in our community.

We've seen what young people are capable of when they have support, encouragement, and community resources, whether it is in sports or science, social activism, arts, or culture, or in many of the areas where young people can excel. They need support. As the saying goes, "it takes a village." So as an MLA office, we established valuable partnerships, many of them were previously untapped resources. We are building a different kind of village through our Youth Engagement Initiatives. This initiative has a number of elements, but today I will highlight four.

The first is a unique collaboration between my office and the Duke of Edinburgh's International Awards. This collaboration is the first of its kind in Canada. My staff have successfully completed the Duke of Edinburgh's team leaders training program, and we now have formed the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley Duke Group with 16 local, ambitious, dedicated, young participants, our own very leaders. Our primary role as Duke Group

Leaders will be finding and engaging necessary partners for each of the program's four merit categories.

We will also help young people identify volunteer placements and link them to community partners. We will keep them engaged through meetings and help them prepare for activities through learning sessions. We will provide mentorship and leadership guidance. Through this unique collaboration, I am excited that my office is able to support the important work of this internationally renowned award program.

We are able to support the ambitious young people who strive to complete the stages of this very challenging program. Young people who were previously in a self-directed program now know we care. They know we want them to succeed. We want them to be able to put their prestigious award on their resumé. We want to see them walk through the doors that this award will open for them.

The second element of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley Youth Engagement Initiatives is our MLA for a day. We wanted to introduce young people to democracy and show them that the MLA does what the MLA does, and how the MLA's office is a part of their community. So in June, we launched Democracy, Your MLA, and You. We piloted these workshops in Grade 6 classes at Portland Estates Elementary School and George Bissett Elementary School. The youth in these classes held nominations, speeches were given, and students voted on who would be selected to be the MLA for the day. The winners were Will Myrer and Tydan Francisco. We spent a great day together, and by the way, the students had the opportunity to visit this place and tour it with me.

I have to share with you a priceless moment that occurred during the selection process. Two students were asked to speak about why they wanted to be an MLA for the day. After the speeches, one student turned to his class and said, "Give it to him. He deserves it. His speech was better than mine." Mr. Speaker, that's a rare moment in the world of political discourse.

Another element of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley youth engagement initiative is our citizenship certificates, which recognize four areas that are important to citizenship and civic engagement, and acknowledges young people who have excelled in each.

Nikolas Harris earned a certificate for volunteerism. Nicholas was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis at just 22 months of age. He has become one of the Arthritis Society's most dedicated supporters. In fact, his list of activities reads like a lifetime achievement award, but Nikolas is only in his early 20s.

Bryony Jollimore is another student, and she earned the certificate for community services. Her work with the Rehtaeh Parsons Society as a friend of Rehtaeh's goes unknown. She works hard at that. Bryony continues to honour Rehtaeh's memory by being a strong advocate against sexualized violence and bullying.

Another young person we recognized was Ryan Rutledge. Ryan received the certificate for youth advocacy. As a program coordinator for the Boys and Girls Club, Ryan consistently goes far above and beyond in leading and involving young club members in countless community projects.

Ashley MacLean received the certificate for integrity and perseverance. Many of you will recall that we nearly lost Ashley in a shooting a couple of years ago in which her spine was severed by a bullet. Her strong will to live has defied the odds. Through her indescribable hard work in rehab, she has and is continuing to gain mobility that was never thought possible. Through sheer determination, she graduated from her high school and attended her prom this past Spring. Ashley is truly an inspiring young woman.

At the event in July where I launched the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley youth engagement initiative, I presented Nikolas, Bryony, Ryan, and Ashley their certificates. I have to take a moment now to say how significant that was. Each of them had the opportunity to bring their friends and family, and that was a very proud moment for their friends and family. They were there to see these young people be recognized, and that was a well-deserved recognition.

Mr. Speaker, the entire event demonstrated the power of recognition. When we talk about keeping our young people in our communities, I believe we also need to consider the value of creating opportunities for the community to simply say, we appreciate you and what you do.

I am also proud of our government's many, many efforts and initiatives aimed at retaining young people in Nova Scotia with the work we have done on advancing the youth employment action plan; with last year's launch of the Graduate to Opportunity program; with the START program, which assists employers willing to hire people who need work experience; by doubling our support for apprenticeship; by creating payroll rebates for hiring new graduates; and by hiring more than 1,500 younger workers in the Public Service, just to name a few.

Meanwhile, at the community level, I believe that recognizing the achievements of young people is one way we as MLAs can do our part to support our government's retention efforts. Another is by making sure that young people know that they have a voice, their opinions matter, their ideas are worth sharing, and their contributions are needed. This goes back to what I said earlier about asking young people to share their opinions and ideas. I believe they have a great deal to offer. We are trying to fix the problems that affect them; we need to find ways to involve them.

Another element of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley youth engagement initiative is the formation of the MLA-youth advisory committee. This is currently being developed, and nominations are still coming in. The goal is to create a group of diverse, inclusive youth representatives. They will be responsible for talking and listening to their peers about

issues affecting them and bringing these concerns and recommendations to me. I want to hear what young people are thinking and dealing with. I want to know what I can do to help. I want to know what excites them. I want them to tell me from their perspective how the provincial government can be even more responsive and supportive. Tomorrow's leaders are being developed today.

But trust is a two-way street. If we are asking young people to trust government, we need to demonstrate how we trust them. Let me give you a little example and an experience. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to be at a school in my riding, Sir Robert Borden. When I talk about trust, I'm talking about the fact that the administration in the school, the teachers, and everybody trusted the students to put on and do a presentation - not so much a presentation but a shared history - of Mi'kmaq history to the community. These young students did a fantastic job. They were the ones who coordinated and brought the community people in. Actually, the principal told me that the young people were the ones who asked the principal to reach out and invite me. They invited many local groups.

They shared the story of Glooscap, which is a very complicated story; it's not easy to understand, but these young people did an excellent job. They shared a story in spoken word on Rita Joe and the legacy of residential schools. They talked about how the Mi'kmaq as people of first treaties were people who often hunted and fished during the summer months and moved inland during the winter months. These kids were very well versed; they were very knowledgeable. They did an excellent job. To see young people take on a role like that and put on a big event was fantastic. Kudos to the Grade 7, 8, and 9 students at Robert Borden.

I am proud that the Nova Scotia Action Plan for Education commits to including the language, history, and culture of Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Mi'kmaq - including treaty education in Primary to Grade 12. I have seen first-hand how teachers are empowering students to lead these activities, to seize the great learning opportunities, and to celebrate and share experiences in ways textbooks cannot. Although we do not tend to include this among the retention initiatives, I believe these activities work hand in hand with other efforts.

I also believe we as MLAs can do our part in helping to retain our young people by acknowledging and celebrating their achievements, by inviting them to share their concerns and ideas, and by letting them know they are valued members of our communities.

The young people I am talking about may not be able to vote yet. They may not pay taxes. But their voices are important, and their ideas deserve to be considered. If they are able to gain a better understanding of what we do and what we are here for, maybe they will reach out to their MLA when they need help, or advise people to do the same. Maybe they will become more involved in community and the political process. Maybe they will vote in greater numbers. Maybe they'll put their names on ballots. Maybe they will become elected representatives themselves.

The young people of Cole Harbour-Portland Valley are an integral part of our community, and I want to take a moment to talk about how we have recognized other members of our community as well.

This past June, we hosted First Responders Appreciation Day. This was a collaborative effort with the Cole Harbour and Area Business Association. Local businesses sponsored refreshments. Invitations were sent out to the RCMP, firefighters and volunteer firefighters, EHS, and the regional police, as well as GIS, Squad 4 HRP, Citizens on Patrol, and Nova Scotia Security Services. With help from my staff and volunteers, my office remained open for 24 hours as a gesture of thanks to those who work around the clock to protect our community.

Other important members of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley community include our business owners. That is why my office has been working closely with the Cole Harbour and Area Business Association. It is also why we make it a point each year to acknowledge and participate in Shop the Neighbourhood. This year it will take place on November 28th. This Canada-wide initiative encourages people to make their purchases in local small businesses to help sustain healthy, thriving neighbourhoods.

For me, it's a win-win. I get to support the hard-working business owners in Cole Harbour-Portland Valley and I get to do my Christmas shopping. Actually, it's a win-win-win because Shop the Neighbourhood also builds a stronger sense of community.

Speaking of community, like many MLAs, I wear more than one hat. I am a proud member of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley community, and I'm also a proud member of the African Nova Scotian community. As an African Nova Scotian, I am also proud of our government's record and the significant progress that has been made in such a short time.

I will start with the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry. I want to quote from the Restorative Inquiry website, under the heading "A Different Way Forward."

"The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry will reveal and address part of the harmful legacy of racism in Nova Scotia by examining the Home and the experiences of former residents, as well as the impact on their families and communities.

A traditional public inquiry is focused on uncovering facts and laying blame. We need to understand not only what happened, but why it happened and why it matters for all Nova Scotians. We need a process shaped by restorative principles that does no further harm, includes all voices and seeks to build healthy and just relationships so we can learn and act together.

The Restorative Inquiry will look at the past with a focus on future solutions: not only preventing any more harm, but making meaningful changes that will help us treat each other more justly and equitably in the future.”

Mr. Speaker, those are powerful words.

The announcement of the process started with the Premier’s apology to the former residents. We hear your voices, we grieve your pain, the Premier said. For the trauma and neglect you endured, he added, and the lingering effects on you and your loved ones, we are truly sorry.

I am so grateful to have been there when those words were spoken, to see history being made, and to see the pain of my friends acknowledged. I have heard comments from many former residents, the most recent was just two weeks ago. They have told me how important this apology was, what it meant to them, and how it still means so much to them two years later. This is definitely one of the moments I spoke about earlier. If I am fortunate enough to find myself reflecting on these 20 or 30 years from now, this is one moment I will definitely share with my future grandchildren, and maybe my great-grandchildren.

Think about the courage it took for former residents to speak out publicly about their pain, and to share the agonizing details of what they endured. We owed it to them to work with them, to develop a different way forward, one that focuses on uprooting systemic racism, and fully and honestly, examining its causes and impact, a process that ventures into very new territory, one that severs traditional lines of bureaucracy and authority and allows the community to take the reins, one that gives up control and replaces it with faith, one that involves trust that the government is giving, and the government is getting back in return. A different way forward, indeed, and the process that truly is innovative and a very significant first.

Mr. Speaker, the restorative inquiry process is very big, it’s huge. It has the potential to make profound change. People across this country and, in fact, around the world are watching our restorative inquiry closely. They are eagerly discussing how they can apply it to their own painful situations.

Yes, I’m proud of our government and I look forward to sharing this story with my grandchildren who will, I truly believe, enter into a better world because of what is happening here and now, in Nova Scotia, Canada, today.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to highlight some other things that have positively impacted the African Nova Scotian community, such as Heritage Day 2014. Nova Scotia’s first Heritage Day honoured Viola Desmond. I want to acknowledge that many in the community wanted Viola to be the only honouree of Heritage Day, and I didn’t disagree with them, but there were also very good arguments for why many

noteworthy people, places, and events in Nova Scotia also deserved to be honoured. But, Viola deserved special recognition, so once again we took a different approach.

Viola wasn't part of the naming contest that went out to the schools; she received ministerial designation as the first Heritage Day honouree. I had faith that my community would understand this decision. I had faith in them because despite centuries of being excluded by others, we are inclusive of others, and when Viola's story took centre stage during the first Heritage Day, some beautiful things happened. There were 200 songs written and recorded about Viola. As part of the song-writing contest, MAJE, a winner, told Global TV that he recognized Viola's name, but didn't know what she had done until he researched her for the song contest. MAJE recorded his song at Centreline Studios, just down the street from where Viola's business once stood.

This young black man, in Viola's own neighbourhood, didn't know her story. Many young black people all across this province who should have known her story, who should have been inspired by her legacy, didn't know what this important piece of their own history was, but they do now, and so do many more people, young and old, of all races, all across Nova Scotia and around the country.

I had the great pleasure of saying these words, that I had the opportunity to say, and they're going to be on record now, in this historic House. I'd like to say Viola Desmond is not Canada's Rosa Parks - her fight against segregation took place nine years earlier. With all due respect, Rosa Parks is America's Viola Desmond.

Nova Scotia's first Heritage Day helped ensure Viola's legacy continues to challenge injustice and inequity, and it continues to inspire pride. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some really great initiatives have followed. Just down the road at the Hope Blooms site, an outdoor theatre was created and named for Viola Desmond. At the federal level, Heritage Canada launched the Viola Desmond Heritage Minute. At the municipal level, the City of Halifax unveiled the new ferry, named in her honour. I truly believe many more honours and recognitions will follow in the years ahead, because her story is now better known.

Awareness of Nova Scotia's Black history is growing, and you know what? Pride is growing as well, Mr. Speaker. Last year, I'll tell you, the United Nations gave us a wonderful opportunity when it declared the Decade for People of African Descent. Our government welcomed the declaration with open arms, and we leveraged it by hosting Canada's first-ever Black Government Leaders Summit in Birchtown, at the new Black Loyalist Heritage Centre. When we did this, we put Canada on the map as the first United Nations member state to host a significant event as part of the Decade for People of African Descent.

When we did this we woke up a lot of people in Nova Scotia and across Canada, who didn't know about the decade. When we did this, we were able to also share the story of Birchtown - sacred ground where 3,000 enslaved Americans took the first steps as free

people. When we did this we brought attention to the fact that Canada had 13 Black government leaders at the provincial and federal levels, the highest number in our country's history.

We also pointed out that to be truly representative, the number needs to grow significantly. Yes, we still have a lot of work to do, and when Black government leaders gathered in Birchtown, all three major Parties were represented. So we did something else, we showed Canadians that elected officials can set aside partisan politics and work together to address shared issues, and achieve common goals, and we can do it with civility, with respect, and with trust, and we even forged solid friendships in the process.

The Black leaders who gathered in Birchtown were inspired by our history and the great many things Black Nova Scotians have done to lead the way, both past and present. The summit also inspired some people who weren't at the table. In February of this year, I had the honour of attending the first-ever Prime Minister's Black History Month Roundtable, and just this past summer, the Black government leaders gathered for our second meeting in Toronto.

Despite the many challenges that our communities face, we are able to agree on key priorities, and these priorities are youth engagement, economic development, education, and health. I am proud of this accomplishment. I am excited about the future. Black government leaders are no longer working in isolation. We are sharing and learning from each other, and through our colleagues when we sit, and through us, we will come together and provide greater opportunities to unite our communities on a national scale.

As a member of the African Nova Scotian community, I want to acknowledge that trust is an issue, and justifiably so given the centuries of painful history to overcome, but our government has made great progress towards building that trust.

In closing, I want to share the motto that I have for my MLA office in Cole Harbour - this is one that we've adopted: "Together, we are one." This model is a starting point for a discussion at the first meeting of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley MLA Youth Advisory Committee. I have also discovered that when people are asked what the phrase "Together, we are one" means to them, the answers are always interesting. Answers range from a geographical perspective, like bringing together the communities of Cole Harbour and Portland Valley, while others interpret this very differently, and bring up things like ecological concerns, and how each of us is part of one planet.

Together, we are one. I like that it has a broad range of interpretations, but the original inspiration came from the One Nova Scotia report. It was Aristotle who said, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is greater than the sum of each of us in this room. I took to heart the message in the One Nova Scotia report, and I asked myself what I as an MLA can do to increase the sum of the small part that I play. My answer so far has been the initiatives and activities I just shared here today,

helping people understand what MLAs do, so they will be more willing to ask us for help when they need it.

Building trust by acknowledging that trust is a two-way street, sometimes we need to give it in order to receive it. Giving well-deserved recognition to the accomplishments of young people in my community, building unique partnerships to support them, and creating the space where their voices can be heard, being a champion for diversity and inclusiveness, and seizing opportunities for advancing these important goals.

The One Nova Scotia report told us that overcoming Nova Scotia's challenges would take a lot of work in getting everyone on the same page. This is a large task, but the longest, most exhausting journeys begin with a single step. When I spoke about a starting point, the One Nova Scotia report said this: "Being respectful of each other, expressing trust in our institutions and in our fellow leaders in different fields, and avoiding parochial and unduly partisan considerations," the report described these crucial starting points.

Mr. Speaker, in some ways, I feel like the past three years have flown by. In other ways, it feels like we arrived here a lifetime ago. A part of me feels like we have only just gotten started, but when I reflect back, I am amazed at how much we have accomplished. It has truly been a privilege to participate in this journey.

Perhaps the best way for me to close my response to the Speech from the Throne is by again thanking the people of Cole Harbour-Portland Valley for giving me this great opportunity. Thank you to my mother for her strength as a single parent raising us and providing the leadership and mentorship that she provided. Thank you to my family for being here and being on the ride with me, because lord knows they have to put up with a lot from me when I'm not happy. I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and everyone in this House - all colleagues on both sides of the House - for giving me some tips, for giving me pointers, for helping me get through this whole process through many challenges and times. Regardless of what people say about us when they look at this fishbowl, as I call it, if you really look at us all, we are all here for the same reason: to help Nova Scotians advance. To all those students who give me so much energy, thank you.

Thank you to our government for achieving the great progress and, in some instances, I believe, profound progress. It's the kind of progress that makes me inspired, motivated, and more confident than ever that I have a positive future for my children, for my grandchildren, and for my friends and family. We are going to have a great province. It is a great province now, but it is going to be greater with the work that we all do. I can tell you that when we look back 20 or 30 years from now, you can smile and be proud of the work that each and every one of you has done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That concludes the government's business for today. Tomorrow being Opposition day of the NDP caucus, I would call upon their House Leader to give me their hours and business for tomorrow.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: I move that the House do now rise to meet again between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on October 26th. We will be calling Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading: Bill No. 16, the Fair Drug Pricing Act, and Bill No. 46, the Community Colleges Act.

I move that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow between 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on October 26th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until Wednesday, October 26th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 4:54 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 115**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas the Preston Girl Guides celebrated 35 years on October 22, 2016, by holding a tea in their community of East Preston; and

Whereas the Preston Girl Guides, over the past 35 years, have been an essential part of our children's youth and have been instrumental in promoting the growth and development of future leaders in the community; and

Whereas they learn, pick up the torch, and do their part in giving back to our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize and congratulate the young people and their dedicated leaders for their continued contribution to the Girl Guides of Canada.

RESOLUTION NO. 116

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Dr. Philip Jardine is a long-time resident of the Musquodoboit Harbour and East Petpeswick communities; and

Whereas Dr. Jardine had provided excellent medical care to thousands of residents of the Eastern Shore, in the early days of his practice visiting clients at their residence; and

Whereas Dr. Jardine has been an advocate for improved services at Martinique Beach in East Petpeswick and a pioneer of establishing the Eastern Shore Minor Hockey Association;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Dr. Phillip Jardine for giving of his time and talents for residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 117

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas April Arnold is a long-time resident of Musquodoboit Harbour and has been an active volunteer in her community; and

Whereas April is a parishioner of the Marine Drive Pentecostal Church in Head of Jeddore, volunteering with various aspects of parish activities; and

Whereas April has been working in the food service industry for many years and provides excellent customer service to all her customers;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking April Arnold for giving of her time and talents for the people of the Eastern Shore and the greater Metro area through her excellent service to the hungry motoring public.

RESOLUTION NO. 118

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas John Burton is the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Halifax; and

Whereas for over 20 years Mr. Burton has had significant involvement in community activities and project development in Dartmouth East, including being a leader in the development of the East Dartmouth Community Centre; and

Whereas on October 26, 2016, Mr. Burton will be bestowed with a lifetime membership from the Kinsmen Club of Dartmouth, one of the highest honours that their members can receive;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking John Burton for his enduring commitment to his community and wish him all the best in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 119

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas Divine Dishes Catering and Gourmet Takeaway, providing hearty and healthy lunches and dinners, is located on Waverley Road; and

Whereas co-owners and husband and wife Peter Hiscott and Nora Lindner-Hiscott have overseen the rapidly-growing business since September, 2007; and

Whereas the couple have recently had an expansion of their own with the arrival of their daughter Ania (Stephania), on October 1, 2016;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Peter Hiscott and Nora Lindner-Hiscott on the birth of their daughter Ania, and wish the entire family all the best in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 120

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas Gerald Martin is a long-time Dartmouth East resident who is a committed advocate for the Canadian Blood Services; and

Whereas Mr. Martin recently celebrated his 100th whole blood donation and his 1,050th plasma donation while also volunteering his time to help drive the Life Bus for Canadian Blood Services; and

Whereas on September 12, 2016, Mr. Martin was recognized at the Canadian Blood Services' 17th Annual Honouring Our Lifeblood event in Ottawa;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Gerald Martin on his commitment to saving lives through his support of the Canadian Blood Services and wishing him all the best in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 121

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Efficiency Nova Scotia Engagement Award recognizes leadership and commitment to energy efficient programs through project development, employee engagement, and so much more; and

Whereas Farnell Packaging is a family-owned business located in Burnside that employs 185 people and has been in operation for 50 years; and

Whereas Farnell Packaging has receive one of this year's Engagement Awards for their proactive commitment to energy efficiency through their creation of a cross-functional energy team to oversee the departments and explore new energy efficient ideas for the business;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Farnell Packaging on their ongoing commitment to becoming more energy efficient.

RESOLUTION NO. 122

By: Mr. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Brad Firth, AKA Caribou Legs, is an ultra-marathon runner who has become a message carrier in the style of the traditional Gwich'in message runners, in order to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women; and

Whereas Brad's cross-country run began in Vancouver on Mother's Day, May 8th, and by November 18th he should finish the last leg of his journey in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, a distance of 7,420 kilometres, during his run Brad has been promoting three main points: to increase support for the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, ending violent measures and reactions, and to promote health in body, mind, and spirit; and

Whereas Brad has an incredible backstory, having overcome a 20-year addiction to crack cocaine, he found joy and purpose through Vancouver's running clubs and a couple

of years later, his alter ego, Caribou Legs, would be born out of the healing that focused running gave him, Caribou Legs is an old-style message runner of his people;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Brad on his extraordinary journey and wish him well in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 123

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Holly Lapierre is widely known as one of, if not the most, committed volunteer in the Hammonds Plains baseball community; and

Whereas Ms. Lapierre's contributions to the sport community continue to enable positive experiences and competitive successes for our young baseball players; and

Whereas Ms. Lapierre continues to serve as President of the Hammonds Plains A's Baseball Association, and has recently taken on a new role as VP Finance at Baseball Nova Scotia, after serving in a similar role at Baseball Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize Ms. Holly Lapierre's commitment to baseball in Hammonds Plains and across the country.

RESOLUTION NO. 124

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Ryan Adams is a dedicated and hardworking member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Adams and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship, and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 125

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Leighton Carruthers is a dedicated and hardworking member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Leighton Carruthers and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DW National Atlantic Championship, and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 126

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Nolan Cheeseman is a dedicated and hardworking member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nolan Cheeseman and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 127

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Ryan Fitzgerald is a dedicated and hardworking member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Fitzgerald and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 128

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Jake Furlong is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jake Furlong and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 129

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Logan Harvey is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Logan Harvey and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 130

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Kyle Hunt is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kyle Hunt and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 131

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Jacob Lawlor is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jacob Lawlor and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 132

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Colton MacLaren is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Colton MacLaren and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 133

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas TJ Norris is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate TJ Norris and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 134

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Camden Rendell is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Camden Rendell and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 135

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Ryan Trenholm is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Trenholm and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 136

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Seth Wright is a dedicated and hard-working member of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Seth Wright and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 137

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Mike Cheeseman is a dedicated and hard-working assistant coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mike Cheeseman and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 138

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Adam Gardner is a dedicated and hard-working assistant coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adam Gardner and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 139

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Keegan Gaskell is a dedicated and hard-working coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Keegan Gaskell and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 140

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Brett Hunt is a dedicated and hard-working assistant coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brett Hunt and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 141

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Brad Lawlor is a dedicated and hard-working coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brad Lawlor and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 142

By: Mr. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 baseball team won gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, in September, 2016; and

Whereas the Hammonds Plains A's U13 team was named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year; and

Whereas Andrew Trenholm is a dedicated and hard-working head coach of the Hammonds Plains A's;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Andrew Trenholm and the Hammonds Plains A's on their impressive achievements in winning gold at the DQ National Atlantic Championship and being named 2016 Baseball Nova Scotia Team of the Year.