



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Third Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017

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. We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition on behalf of residents. The operative clause is:

“We, the undersigned, call upon the provincial government to install a set of traffic lights at the intersection in Whycocomagh that connects Main Street, Trans Canada Highway 105, and Route 252, Whycocomagh.”

The petition has 592 names, and I have added my signature as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition on behalf of the member for Eastern Shore. The operative clause being: “We the undersigned petition the Provincial Government to have the Conrod Settlement Road Repaved.” There are three compelling reasons added after that, and I see that the member for Eastern Shore has affixed his signature to that.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition on behalf of the member for Eastern Shore. The operative clause being:

“WE, THE UNDERSIGNED PROPERTY OWNERS WITH PARCELS OF LAND WITH ROAD FRONTAGE AND/OR ACCESS FROM LORIANN DRIVE IN PORTERS LAKE, HRM, NOVA SCOTIA, HEREBY PETITION THE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY AND THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF CAPITAL UPGRADING AND IMPROVEMENT TO OUR ROADWAY FROM A GRAVEL STANDERD [sic] TO A PAVED STANDARD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THIS WILL BE COST-SHARED ON A 50/50 PERCENTAGE BASIS IN ACCORDANCE TO THE NS AID TO MUNICIPALITY PROGRAM FOR PAVING SUB-DIVISION STREETS.”

The member for Eastern Shore’s signature is affixed to that also. I will affix my signature if you wish.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 59 - Accessibility Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would move that the bill just tabled be added to the order paper and be considered for debate in Committee of the Whole House on Bills today.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of the House to direct themselves to the east gallery where we are joined today by a group of students from Horton High School. Their teacher, Brad Richard, has once again brought his political science class here to the House to observe proceedings in this hallowed hall. I would like all members of the House to join me in welcoming the Grade 12 political science students from Horton High School. (Applause)

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

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period September 2015 to June 2016 of the 62nd General Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I beg leave to table the 2015 Annual Report of the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Resources Committee, I beg leave to submit the annual report for 2016.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I beg leave to table the annual report for 2016.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report entitled Procurement Shared Services Health Check Analysis - 2016/17.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

As Speaker of the House of Assembly and pursuant to Section 163 of the Elections Act, I am pleased to table the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Proceedings of the Halifax Needham By-Election held August 30, 2016, Volume II: Financial Information and Statistics.

The report is tabled.

As Speaker of the House of Assembly I am pleased to table the House of Assembly Management Commission Annual Report for the calendar year 2016. The report was prepared by the House of Assembly Management Commission pursuant to Section 11(1)(f) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 913

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

Whereas April 23rd to April 29th is National Volunteer Week, a time to celebrate the selfless contributions and many acts of generosity that Nova Scotians carry out each and every day; and

Whereas last week we honoured 65 award recipients who showed their passion and dedication to Nova Scotians as volunteers at the Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony; and

Whereas it is encouraging to know that in this province we are surrounded by people who generously give their time, help strengthen our communities, and enrich the lives of so many;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join Nova Scotians in showing sincere appreciation to the countless people who contribute to their communities each day, and in taking the time this week to thank a volunteer who is making a difference in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, joining us in the Speaker's Gallery today is a delegation from the United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Interior - Asalum Aleykum, which means "peace be with you," to our guests.

The delegation is visiting this week for meetings and discussions with officials from the Department of Internal Services about our achievements with our shared services model. Mr. Speaker, the delegation has done research throughout the world and has found Nova Scotia to be a leader in implementing shared services. (Applause)

For the warm welcome of the House, I would like to introduce Major Hamdan Alyammahi, Major AbdulRahman Altimimi, Major Ahmed AlShihhi, First Lieutenant Saeed Aljunaibi, and Madame Rafeya Bushenain. I ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 914

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

Whereas significant steps have been taken to centralize delivery of corporate functions like procurement, financial services, information technology, telecommunications, and construction project management for Nova Scotia's public sector under the provincial government; and

Whereas a recent review of this shared services procurement initiative found that it has resulted in improved delivery of vital support services to the public sector and saved more than \$50 million; and

Whereas the Department of Internal Services continues to look at ways to work more effectively across the public sector to provide better, more efficient services to Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge the work of the public servants in delivering shared services success by realizing savings and improving services delivery to Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 915

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall:

(1) read and table the message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor transmitting the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, for the consideration of this House;

(2) table the Estimates Books;

(3) table the government business plans;

(4) table the Crown Corporation business plans;

(5) table the Estimates and Crown Corporation business plans resolutions;

(6) deliver my Budget Speech; and

(7) move that the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, being Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, and the Crown Corporation business plans be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Supply.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the information of the House, the budget will be presented on April 27, 2017.

[MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 79 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2017. The Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements (2017) Act. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 80 - Entitled an Act to Repeal Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2017. The Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements (2017) Act. (Ms. Lenore Zann)

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, before I do this, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. BAILLIE: In the gallery today, we have two very special young women: Chrissy Merrigan and Amanda Dodsworth, who are the organizers of a rally here in our capital city of Halifax a few months ago against sexual violence and in favour of stronger laws for survivors of sexual violence.

I want to invite all members of the House to welcome both of these young ladies and thank them for the work that they've done. (Applause)

Bill No. 81 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 238 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Provincial Court Act, Respecting Sexual Assault Law Education for Judges. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 82 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2010. The Finance Act, Respecting Intergenerational Reporting. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 83 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act. (Hon. Christopher d'Entremont)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 916

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

Whereas Statistics Canada estimates that there are as many as 106,000 Nova Scotians without a family doctor; and

Whereas on October 19, 2016, the member for Clare-Digby admitted that under this government's current plan, the Liberals will not be able to provide a doctor for every Nova Scotian until up to 10 years from now; and

Whereas the Liberal Government keeps trying to convince Nova Scotians that they have the mental and physical well-being of citizens at heart;

Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Government inform the members of this House why they cannot make good on the promise that they made to the people of this province in 2013.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader in the House of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 917

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

Whereas for the past two years, this government has cut operational funding to nursing homes and long-term care facilities, resulting in a direct impact on the quality of care and quality of life for seniors and other residents; and

Whereas long-term care administrators have experienced reductions of funding even greater than the 1 per cent required by the department; and

Whereas our seniors deserve a high quality of living and care, healthy food, recreational opportunities and adequate staffing;

Therefore be it resolved that the House call for the \$8.2 million in operations funding cut by this government from long-term care to be restored immediately to ensure our seniors receive the best possible quality of life and care.

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

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

It is agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMN. (2012)
- EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are so concerned with winning the upcoming election that they don't care if they trample on the Charter of Rights of the people of Nova Scotia.

Our Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled that the process that drew up the 2012 boundaries was unconstitutional. Our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that Canadians have the right to effective representation. The rights of Acadian and African Nova Scotians have been violated, and the Liberals have done nothing to help them. The Liberals had plenty of time to ask the court to rule on the constitutionality of the ridings; however, they have dragged their heels at the cost of minority rights. What are the Liberals afraid of, and why won't they guarantee effective representation for all citizens?

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

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES: ACADIAN RIGHTS - PROTECT

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government has refused to address the electoral boundaries issues, suggesting boundaries will be addressed at a later date. Yet, the southwest region of Nova Scotia today has two (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne has the floor.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yet, the south boundaries . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government has refused to address the electoral boundaries issue, suggesting boundaries will be addressed at a later date. Yet, the southwestern region of Nova Scotia today has two fewer Acadian ridings, and Shelburne County has been split in half since 2013. This government has a mandate until October, 2018, to engage an Electoral Boundaries Commission, however, it is more interested in a lust for power.

In 2012, the member for Annapolis, today's Premier, spoke of protecting Acadian rights. Today, in April, 2017, he has an opportunity to do just that. Yet, he is clearly not

protecting Acadian rights by not engaging an Electoral Boundaries Commission. It is never the wrong time to do the right thing. Justice delayed is justice denied.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

D'ENTREMONT, RACHELLE - PROV. VOL. AWARD

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the province recently presented its Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards, and Rachelle d'Entremont was named the 2017 Volunteer of the Year for the Town of Yarmouth. Rachelle is a founding member and advocate of 100+ Women Who Care of Yarmouth County. She has helped with the Yarmouth Central School Breakfast Program and is a member of the Yarmouth Rotary Club where her involvement has included Meals on Wheels among other initiatives. She also has served on the annual Business Awards Committee for the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce and has been an in-school mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Rachelle gives her time and energy selflessly and is a shining example to those in our community. The Town of Yarmouth is proud of Rachelle d'Entremont and her continuous volunteer efforts, and I'm proud to recognize her here in this House today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

ATKINSON, CHELSEA - MUSIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chelsea Atkinson on opening Canadian country music star Brett Kissel's show in Liverpool this January. Chelsea is a 16-year-old country music star from Springhill. She began singing at the age of eight and started playing the guitar at 13. Chelsea won the contest to open Brett Kissel's show by submitting a video of her playing Kissel's song I Didn't Fall in Love with Your Hair. (Laughter) I can assure you no one has ever sung that song to me. Having said that, this gave Chelsea the opportunity to perform 20 minutes of her original material in front of a large Liverpool audience.

I'm happy to congratulate Chelsea on this remarkable accomplishment, and I wish her continued success in her music career.

[1:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**OUTPATIENT HEALTH CTR. (BAYERS LAKE)
- TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: The Government of Nova Scotia has committed to helping residents of this province be healthier and move more. Through Thrive! and the Sustainable Transportation Strategy, the government has committed to walkable and bikeable communities and better transit. To quote the website of this Sustainable Transportation Strategy:

“Driving is increasingly expensive . . . Physical fitness has suffered, as people drive more . . . Some people cannot own or drive a car . . . To meet our provincial greenhouse gas reduction targets, we need to tackle transportation emissions.”

Yet this government has decided to purchase land in Bayers Lake for a major outpatient health centre where procedures will be performed after which, in some cases, the patient will not be allowed to drive.

Leadership involves fixing our sights on the future we want and then, with every decision, moving ourselves towards that future. By contradicting the government’s own efforts to promote health and sustainability, the Liberals have failed to lead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

OVEN READY: DART. NORTH - WELCOME

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I love it when new businesses choose Dartmouth North to house their business, especially when it brings an affordable alternative to home cooking to our community.

Oven Ready opened its doors at 31 Albro Lake Road in early January. They offer a unique spin on takeout. They cook and prepare meals consisting of chili, turkey, and chicken pot pies with all the fixings. The meals are frozen and ready to be taken home. Once frozen, the food only takes around 45 minutes to an hour to heat. Oven Ready also offers baked goods daily at a very affordable cost.

This business is owned and operated by Trish McDonald and her sons, Josh, Alex, and Greg, who work tirelessly to prepare these delicious dishes. I ask members of this House to join me in welcoming Oven Ready to Dartmouth North, and I look forward to their continued success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES PROCESS (2012)
- UNCONSTITUTIONALITY**

HON. PAT DUNN: We are here in the House today on the cusp of an election that this government seems intent on calling for all the wrong reasons.

As we know, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled that the boundaries process of 2012 was unconstitutional. The member for Annapolis agreed with that in 2012. As Premier in 2017, he won't let that detail get in the way of manipulating the province's Acadian communities for political gain.

Mr. Speaker, this is only the latest reckless demonstration of power politics by the Premier and this government. His only vision for this province is one in which constitutional inconveniences and working families make way for his backroom priorities.

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

LIBERAL PLATFORM - PHYSICIAN PROVISION

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: As we grow nearer to the next provincial election, we are all reminded of the Liberals' platform promise of a doctor for every Nova Scotian. Just this last session, the Liberal member for Clare-Digby tried unsuccessfully to change the goalposts to a doctor for every community in the next 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, the spin doctors at One Government Place will need to come up with a new slogan for the Liberal health platform in the next election. Based on the Liberals' track record over the last three years, perhaps just three words will do. Those three words? Don't get sick.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

WAGNER, ERIC - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you about a constituent of mine who gives back to our community.

Eric Wagner is a chartered accountant. Every year, for the last 13 years, he has run a free tax preparation clinic for those on low incomes who need assistance preparing their taxes. Mr. Wagner says he and his wife have lived a fortunate life, and he wanted to give something back.

Back when he started his practice in 2003, he received many inquiries from widows, retirees, and people on fixed incomes, but he didn't feel he could charge them for tax preparation. The idea grew from there.

Mr. Wagner limits his free tax prep service to people with low incomes, but there's no magic cut-off number. He listens to people's stories and decides from there. He has a lot of regulars. The tax clinic runs for two Saturdays with five meeting slots per day. If the clinic fills up he always makes arrangements to meet with his clients another time; and some of his clients have mobility issues so he goes to their homes.

I would like to thank Mr. Wagner for helping those in our community who could benefit from his expertise at one of our least favourite times of the year. Well done.

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

MORRISON, ROY: LANCASTER LIVING LEGENDS PROJ. - INDUCTION

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, between November 15, 1944 and March 10, 1945, during the Second World War, Royal Canadian Air Force Warrant Officer Roy Morrison participated in 17 daytime and 13 night missions in a Lancaster bomber over Germany. The harrowing experiences from his seat in the Lancaster's glassed-in bubble at the rear of the plane are forever etched into the former Avro Lancaster tail gunner's memories. Recently the 93-year-old Truro Heights resident was honoured with an induction into the Lancaster Living Legends Project at the 14 Wing Greenwood Aviation Museum.

I would like to extend congratulations to Roy Morrison on his induction into the Lancaster Living Legends project and thank him for his brave service to our country 72 years ago.

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

ENRICH PROJ./EAC: ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS - COLLABORATION

MS. LENORE ZANN: I want to commend the collaborative work of the ENRICH Project and the Ecology Action Centre that was presented last week as we approached Earth Day. Their proposal of an environmental Bill of Rights which would ensure that all Nova Scotians have protection from environmental destruction and have access to clean air, earth and water is very much in keeping with our caucus' position on this matter.

Our caucus has introduced two bills in the past, Bill No. 7, an Environmental Bill of Rights, and Bill No. 111, an Act to Address Environmental Racism. While we've seen little action from this government on environmental issues, I find it reassuring to know that groups like the EAC and ENRICH are continuing to stand up and bring these matters to the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank these organizations again for their work and say that I stand with them in their fight for environmental justice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

AGRIC. DEPT.: BACON/LORRAINE BLDG. - RENAMING

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, two farmers who are credited with helping to build the agriculture sector in Nova Scotia were honoured in March 2017 by having two refurbished buildings, now serving as Department of Agriculture offices, renamed for them.

The Annapolis Building has been renamed the Roger Stewart Bacon Building in honour of Upper Nappan dairy farmer and pioneer of the blueberry industry, Roger Stewart Bacon. He was elected as a Progressive Conservative MLA in 1970, appointed Minister of Tourism in 1978, Minister of Agriculture from 1979 to 1988, Deputy Premier and Minister of Housing until 1990 and then served as interim leader of the PC Party as the province's 21st Premier for six months in 1990.

The Northumberland Building has been renamed as the Edward F. Lorraine Building, in honour of the late Ed Lorraine, a beef farmer from Upper Onslow, who served in numerous political roles; a member of the county council, county warden, Colchester North MLA from 1981-1984 and 1988-1999 and Minister of Agriculture from 1997-1999. In 2004, he was named to the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Three of Ed's five children and his wife Shirley were there, as well as Roger Bacon's son Dougie. All proudly attended the ceremony to show support and appreciation for the accomplishments and recognition of their fathers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

WESTVILLE ROTARY CLUB: SPLASH PARK - FUNDRAISING

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, with signs of spring popping up around us our thoughts drift to summer holidays and ways to entertain our children. These same thoughts have been in the minds of the Westville Rotary Club as they have pledged to build a splash park in Westville's Acadia Park.

Fundraising is currently underway and as the weather improves and the calendar flips forward, excitement around this project is growing. I am impressed that this small club has taken on this large initiative to bring a new and exciting venue to Westville. I know it will be a welcome and well-used facility.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend a huge thank you to President Dave Dignan and his fellow Rotarians who truly do put service above self.

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

LIBERAL GOV'T.: HEALTH CARE - PROMISES

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have learned the hard way that there is a major difference between campaigning Liberals and governing Liberals.

Do you remember that time in 2013 when these Liberals across the aisle said that they would build a Collaborative Emergency Centre in Lunenburg. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can promise you that the people of Lunenburg and surrounding areas do. While money seems to be raining from the sky recently, there has still been no mention of the Liberals fulfilling this campaign promise.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health care in this province, the Liberals have no plan, only promises and, with an election around the corner, Nova Scotians can expect many more hollow Liberal promises on the campaign trail.

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

ANJOUL, MADELEINE - ACADEMIC/COMMUN. ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. DIANA WHALEN: It's my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Madeleine Anjoul on her stellar academic achievements and her record of selflessness and dedication towards her community.

She is a dedicated volunteer at Our Lady of Lebanon Church and a proud instructor of Lebanese folk dance at Diman Association of Canada. Her dedication to her studies was recognized by her receiving the prestigious Lebanese Chamber of Commerce Scholarship and entrance into the Commerce program at Saint Mary's University in Halifax in the Fall of 2016.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you to join me in congratulating Madeleine Anjoul for her academic excellence and community involvement, and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

GOV'T. (N.S.): LAND PURCHASE - PRICE EXPLAIN

MR. JOHN LOHR: As elected members, we are entrusted with the responsibility of treating taxpayer money with respect - that means doing our homework and making sure taxpayers are getting real value for their money.

Rushing a process for political advantage is an abuse of taxpayers' money. An open and transparent process like a tender ensure taxpayer dollars are not abused.

Mr. Speaker, this government must explain to Nova Scotians how paying \$7.5 million for 15 acres - 12 times the assessed value - provides value for taxpayers. This government must clearly demonstrate how their untendered deal gives the people of Nova Scotia the best bang for their buck.

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

STRIKING JOURNALISTS - NDP SUPPORT

MS. LENORE ZANN: We've been inundated with days in Nova Scotia when our democracy seems to be under attack - imposed contracts and voices drowned out in government committees. Most recently we saw it on April 13th - 14 months after its workers went on strike - when *The Chronicle Herald* purchased all Transcontinental news outlets in the Atlantic Provinces while continuing to deny its workers fairness.

It's never a good sign, Mr. Speaker, when one outlet owns all publications, especially when said outlet has the labour record of *The Chronicle Herald*. Yet in the face of this, we've seen extraordinary resilience from striking Nova Scotian journalists who have continued to contribute to the media cycle with their acclaimed online publication, the *Local Xpress*.

We in the NDP will keep standing with our striking journalists who continue to offer valuable, intelligent, and fresh perspectives to all Nova Scotians.

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

**WAVERLEY-FALL RIVER-BEAVER BANK VOL. AWARDS
- VOLS. THANK**

MR. BILL HORNE: The 14th annual Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank volunteer awards were held in April at the Waverley Legion. I'm very happy to be a member of that organizing committee, having joined in 2008.

Twenty-three volunteers from groups, clubs, and non-profit organizations have been recognized for their volunteer efforts in their community. To date, over 300 community volunteers have been recognized.

This night is dedicated to founding member and veteran Crawford Reid, who passed away this March 23rd. His dedication and contributions to the committee were recognized.

Thanks to the committee for organizing this event once again, and thank you to each and every volunteer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: SURVIVORS - PROTECT

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: This Spring, we as legislators have an opportunity to put partisan politics aside and do the right thing.

We have a chance to dedicate our work here to protecting survivors of sexual violence. We have an opportunity and an obligation to lead the charge and create meaningful change to make our province a leader in protecting survivors and sending a message to offenders.

Mr. Speaker, a court decision in March sparked public anger and frustration. Now is the time to harness that energy and continue to put public conversation first. Now is the time to put survivors first.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

WHITE, GORDON PATRICK: STRATFORD THEATRE CO. - CONGRATS.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I rise today to congratulate a long-time resident of Halifax Needham, actor Gordon Patrick White. Gordon is Mi'kmaq, from the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I've known him for more than 20 years. I've seen him in shows at Grenfell College, the Stephenville Festival, the Kyber Centre for the Arts, and Alderney Landing. I've also seen him between shows, during long stretches when he has had little income, often washing dishes at restaurants while waiting for the next chance to do his life's work.

A couple of months ago Gordon moved to Stratford, Ontario, where he has joined a rather famous theatre company.

Knowing Gordon has helped me to always be aware of the struggle of artists, to be curious about the backstories of people working in the service industry, to be motivated to show up to little shows, and to thank artists for their work.

I am thrilled that this summer he is at the Stratford Theatre Company and I congratulate him on his success.

[1:45 p.m.]

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

NSHA: BAYERS LAKE OUTPATIENT CTR. - CHOICE COMMEND

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the hard work of senior management and staff at the Nova Scotia Health Authority for choosing an evidence-based decision to locate an outpatient centre in Bayers Lake Park, in the centre of the cross-sections of Highway Nos. 102 and 103, minutes from the newly-built Lacewood Terminal, and surrounded by the fastest-growing communities east of Montreal. (Applause)

The taxpayers of Timberlea-Prospect and other communities deserve comparable health services close to home. Commuters from the busy highways all over Nova Scotia, including Highway Nos. 101, 102, and 103 (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect has the floor.

MR. RANKIN: No longer will commuters coming off Highway Nos. 101, 102, and 103 have to be stuck in traffic past Exit 0 or struggle to find parking downtown. The NDP state firmly that this centre should be in Sackville and try to pit communities against each other with a zero sum gain mentality.

This Liberal Government and this member stand by the people in Timberlea-Prospect, in the fastest-growing community in Atlantic Canada. Thank you. (Applause)

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

GOV'T. (N.S.) - ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ISSUE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, one of the lessons we are taught in school is that ignoring our problems doesn't make them go away. We can pretend they're not there but they only get worse. Soon tiny problems swell into massive problems and in time they become almost impossible to resolve.

We know that we need to deal with issues head-on. This is the one lesson that I fear this government has not yet taken to heart. After the Court of Appeal ruled that the previous government's intervention in the boundaries process was unconstitutional, this government had a golden opportunity to make it right. But for crass political reasons and despite multiple chances, they've kicked the can well down the road.

They are faced with a clear plan of action and yet they decide to defer and arrogantly insist that they know what is best. Mr. Speaker, what will it take for this government to learn this lesson? Soon enough they will own this problem outright. By then the responsibility will fall on all Nova Scotians to fix their mistakes.

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

FILM INDUSTRY - SUPPORT ACKNOWLEDGE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it has been difficult to watch this Liberal Government acting as if the recent dollars being thrown at the film industry have erased the devastation caused by the Liberal decision to axe the Film Tax Credit just a few short years ago. Since that time, trained film people and their families have left this province. Businesses that once thrived, supporting the film industry, have closed shop.

Mr. Speaker, with one swoop of a pen this Liberal Government wrecked an industry that had been built up for over 30 years. Now this government wants us to believe it is all sunshine and rainbows. There must be an election in the air.

I want to express my support for the industry and acknowledge their determination in rebounding from the devastation caused by this short-sighted Liberal Government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

7 PEPPERS GRILL: QUINPOOL RD. - WELCOME

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome a vibrant new business, 7 Peppers Grill, to Quinpool Road and to Halifax Chebucto. They opened their doors in their new location just a few months ago and have been a welcome addition to the food scene on Quinpool Road.

Formerly known as Aleppo Café in the Brewery Market, 7 Peppers Grill is run by husband-and-wife team Abdulrahman Jabi and Hekmat Ani who arrived in Canada from Syria in 2006; 7 Peppers Grill serves flavourful Mediterranean meals with lots of options from the grill. The name "7 Peppers" is derived from the seven spices commonly used in Syrian cooking.

Mr. Speaker, Abdulrahman and Hekmat are hard-working entrepreneurs and a great example of the possibilities that immigrants bring to our city and to the province. I invite my colleagues to join me in giving them a warm welcome to Quinpool Road, and in wishing them all the best success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

C.B. WEST ISLANDERS: MIDGET AAA TEAM - WELL WISHES

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Congratulations to the Cape Breton West Islanders Midget AAA team that recently won a provincial championship and have since been crowned Atlantic Canadian champions. Yesterday, this team won their first game at the national championships in Prince George, B.C., beating the Quebec champion 2 to 1.

Long Point was proud of their hometown son when Malcom MacEachern scored the opener, followed by Jacob Stewart of Antigonish scoring the winner. If I could borrow a phrase from the late, great Danny Gallivan, Colten Ellis of River Denys made scintillating saves throughout the remainder of the second and third periods to preserve the win. Every player on this team is a star - all have played their roles during this successful season.

May we here in this Legislature wish our Atlantic Canadian representatives well in today's game against the Pacific region champion, Leduc Oil Kings. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MICHAEL, SHURENDA - UN STATUS OF WOMEN CONGRESS

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Shurenda Michael of Sipekne'katik First Nations, Hants East, is part of Canada's delegation to the United Nations 61st Congress on the Status of Women in New York.

Shurenda and Michaela Julian presented a workshop on March 15th on indigenous girls' leadership. It featured the story of Nova Scotia's Peaked Cap project, which is a Mi'kmaq approach to the United Nations girls' round table model.

The Peaked Cap project provided Shurenda and Michaela with the opportunity to find their voices, share their ideas, and embrace Mi'kmaq culture. They also created a YouTube video.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Shurenda Michael for her participation in the Peaked Cap project and being chosen as part of Canada's delegation to the United Nations 61st Congress on the Status of Women.

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

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES RULING - PREMIER'S RESPONSE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, fair and legitimate elections are the cornerstone of our democratic system. Unfortunately, a ruling by Nova Scotia's Court of Appeal put the legitimacy of the province's electoral boundaries into question. Instead of going back to the courts to give the voters certainty that the next elections will be fought

on fair and legitimate boundaries, the Premier has chosen to act in a way that he believes best for him and his Party.

The Premier used to believe that the protection of minority rights should never be compromised and the process that eliminated the protective constituencies made our province poorer. When faced with the choice of strengthening our province or giving the Liberal Party an advantage, the Premier chose his Party. This cynical act ensures the Premier's legacy will be a series of expensive constitutional quandaries that will last for years.

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

SCRIVENS, GARY & SHIRLEY: VOL. EFFORTS - THANK

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two long-term residents of East Quoddy, Gary and Shirley Scrivens. Gary and Shirley have been volunteering on the Eastern Shore for nearly 40 years, starting in 1980 with the Cubs, Boy Scouts, Brownies, and Girl Guides. Gary also helped with the formation of the Samuel R. Balcom Recreation Centre.

They were also instrumental in starting the local Army Cadet Corps 2610, with Gary becoming the commanding officer and Shirley the supply officer. They have both volunteered with the cadets for over 30 years. They have spent countless hours teaching the cadets' shooting team. This dedication has earned the cadet corps the honour of the best Army cadet corps in Nova Scotia several times in a row. This extraordinary couple dedicate their time to the local Royal Canadian Legion, Courcellette Branch 58. Gary has been a member for over 37 years.

Mr. Speaker, in honour of National Volunteer Week, I want to thank Gary and Shirley for dedicating their time and energy to making Nova Scotia an even better place to live.

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

SURETTE, JILL - ARGYLE MUN. PROV. VOL. OF YR. AWARD

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the 43rd Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony was held in Halifax on Tuesday, April 18th. Eleven recipients from various municipal units or towns in Argyle-Barrington were honoured.

The Argyle Municipality Provincial Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Jill Surette of Argyle for all her work organizing and fundraising for the Abuptic Festival.

She also works with the school breakfast program, coaches, and is also involved in her church community.

I congratulate all the recipients in receiving these awards. Their hard work and dedication are very important in their respective communities. I want to thank all the volunteers. We just couldn't do it without you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount on an introduction.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, if I could take the opportunity to introduce my beautiful daughter, who's home from the Caribbean, in the gallery opposite. She's been down in the Caribbean studying medicine. She's home for a couple of weeks, and she decided to take this week to come up and take in the activities of the Legislature and see how everything's going here, and make sure everything runs smoothly and stays on track. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

DAL IMPACT AWARDS: RECIPIENTS - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the winners of this year's Dalhousie IMPACT Awards. In March, an immensely talented group of students, societies, and professors were honoured for their achievements, and I was proud to witness the recognition of my son Antonios as the recipient of the Faculty Leadership Award in Medicine.

Antonios was honoured for his work with various student associations, his many research presentations in neuroscience, his membership in the Brain Repair Centre and the Atlantic Mobility Action Project research groups, and his role in supporting public Brain Fairs and the Discovery Centre's Brain War event. As a mother, I am very proud of him.

Though the list of worthy winners would be too long to recite here, I want to also give special mention to Salman Sajid, recognized with a Board of Governors Award for his humanitarian involvement and work with international students; Hasmeet Singh Chandok, founder of the Maritime Bhangra Group, for being named International Student of the Year; and the Dalhousie Golden Key Society - of which I am an honorary member - for winning Most Impactful Charitable Society.

Please join me in congratulating this year's winners.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

LIVINGSTON, KIM - NEW GLASGOW VOL. OF YR. AWARD

HON. PAT DUNN: The efforts of one person can truly make a difference in their community. Volunteering has many positive benefits, both for the volunteer and for the community.

Kim Livingston was selected as New Glasgow's Volunteer of the Year. Kim has volunteered her time and talents to many organizations in her community, including Girl Guides, West Side Community Centre, Race on the River, Special Olympics, the Johnny Miles Marathon, Highland Community Residential Services, VON of Pictou County, Pictou County Kennel Club, and Shepherd's Lunchroom.

Kim's contagious energy and enthusiastic approach to volunteering are to be commended. She continues to give her time to assist and help her community. I encourage all members of this Legislature to join me in thanking Kim Livingston for her volunteer work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

DAVID ATKINSON MEM. BONSPIEL: VOLS. - THANK

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, March 4th marked the 10th and final David Atkinson Memorial Bonspiel for Cancer. In memory of a young local athlete, the bonspiel has become a successful fundraiser, most recently supporting the Journey Room, and acting as a venue for friends and family of David to gather once a year and share memories of a remarkable young man.

There are several volunteers whose tireless efforts allow this fundraiser to happen. If it weren't for the efforts of Neil Powers, Cathy MacDonald, Debbie Phillips, Debbie Reid, Bernadette Sansford, Mark Atkinson, Nick Saunders, Shaun Whynacht, Alison Weagle, Al Sullivan, Al and Doreen Oickle, and Sue Atkinson, this tournament could not happen. Thank you for your dedication to this event and for providing a venue for us all to remember an amazing young man.

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

HENDERSON, DR. DAVE - CARSTAIRS AWARD

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, Dr. Dave Henderson's passion and dedication to enhancing and advocating for palliative care in northern Nova Scotia was recently recognized when he was awarded the Honourable Sharon Carstairs Palliative Care Award of Excellence in Advocacy.

The Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada presents this award to individuals who have, at the national level, contributed to and had an impact on the enhancement of the quality of life for individuals and their loved ones who are facing a life-threatening illness and bereavement.

When accepting the award, Dr. Henderson shared the credit for the success of the Colchester East Hants Palliative Care Program with his team of hard-working, dedicated palliative care nurses. Congratulations to Dr. Dave Henderson and his team on this well-deserved recognition.

MR. SPEAKER. Just to make a note to members, we're going to delay the beginning of Question Period by just a few minutes while we deal with a request from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[2:00 p.m.]

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I submitted a request pursuant to Rule 43(2) that the business of the House be set aside for a purpose of urgent public importance, namely the fairness and legitimacy of the province's electoral boundaries.

The legitimacy of the boundaries was brought into question when the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled that the former Attorney General's intervention in the boundary process violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It appears that the Premier is prepared to call an election on boundaries that may not be constitutional. I ask that you allow this urgent debate so that a remedy can be found before irreparable damage is done to our democratic system.

MR. SPEAKER: I did receive notice from the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition more than two hours before the opening of today's sitting, in accordance with our Rule 43(2). An emergency debate is "for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance."

The basis for this request for an emergency debate is based upon the January 24, 2017 decision of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, holding that the abolition of the former electoral districts of Clare, Argyle and Richmond violated Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and was not saved by Section 1 of the Charter.

The decision makes it clear that the constitutional issue respecting the electoral boundaries is not necessarily with the boundaries themselves but with the process in arriving at the boundaries. The court puts it as follows:

“We do not state that s. 3 of the *Charter* requires that there be protected ridings in Clare, Argyle and Richmond. Rather, under s. 3, the body that is authorized by law to craft the electoral boundaries must be allowed to balance the constitutional criteria as set out by the majority's reasons in *Carter*, and to express its view on the matter.”

The court also points out that its decision is a response to a reference to the court and not an application to the court for a declaration striking down the electoral boundaries. The electoral boundaries therefore stand and the decision of the court provides constitutional guidance to any future review of the electoral boundaries, in accordance with Section 5 of the House of Assembly Act.

The next Electoral Boundaries Commission must be appointed no later than December 6, 2022. Although the House of Assembly is free to initiate the process sooner and may wish to do so, in view of the court's decision.

Clearly the matter raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition is a matter of public importance but not, in my opinion, an urgent matter. Also, one of the factors that I have to consider is the probability of the matter being debated by the House within a reasonable amount of time by other means.

In considering this, I have the benefit of previous rulings made by former Speakers of this House. On December 8, 2010, considering a request for an emergency debate, Speaker Parker said the following:

“As members will know, there have been several requests for emergency debates in my time as Speaker and I've granted each of those requests based on the requirements set out under Rule 43. In each case one of the matters I must consider in deciding is whether the business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, as set out in Rule 43(4A), ‘. . . have regard to the probability of the matter being debated by the House within a reasonable time by other means.’

Members have just heard from the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition requesting that the government look at this issue - or a request from the government by the school boards to - a planning exercise of a 22 per cent reduction of their budgets and the cuts that might have on Primary to Grade 12 education. As referenced by the member, he is referring to the Options and Opportunities Program, the autism programs, the math mentors, and so on.

In carrying out this function under Rule 43, the Speaker must have regard to whether there are already any items on the order paper dealing with the same subject under which it could be raised in debate during a reasonable period of time. I've looked at the order paper and there is on the order paper Resolution No. 2490. I'm not going to read it word for word, but it covers many of the issues that the honourable member has raised here . . ." End quote of Speaker Parker.

I note that this issue was also considered by the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg when he was Speaker. In 2008, he stated with respect to a request for an emergency debate: "It is not on the order paper for discussion and I have no indication that it is likely to be debated within a reasonable time by other means . . ." before allowing the matter to be considered for the leave of the House".

In the case of the electoral boundaries issue, there are two notices of motion respecting this issue that have been on the order paper since February 2017 that are available for debate: No. 888 and No. 889, both moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition and available to debate. I also need to consider whether the matter raised concerns about the government's administrative responsibilities or could come within the scope of ministerial action.

In his letter to me, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition specifically states that, "This matter . . . DOES NOT concern the administrative responsibilities of the government alone, nor does it . . . come within the scope of Ministerial action." That position argues against the matter being suitable for urgent debate.

Finally, Rule 43(10)(d) includes the restriction that the motion must not revive discussion on a matter which has been discussed in the same session. Members will recall that the matter has been raised in this House several times in the previous sitting, both in Question Period and debate.

Based on all of the foregoing information, I have decided that this matter should not be given urgent consideration.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: BAYERS LAKE LAND - PURCHASE PRICE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier announced that his government has purchased 15 acres of land in Bayers Lake. What he didn't tell the people of Nova Scotia is that he paid 12 times the assessed value for that land. Nova Scotians are scratching their heads over this latest deal, and I would like to ask the Premier to explain to them why his government paid 12 times the assessed value for that land.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's my pleasure to stand up and tell this House that we are on track with the redevelopment of the QEII. We knew we were a generation, quite frankly, that gets an opportunity to reshape the health-care delivery model.

When you look at the outpatient and some of the day surgeries that are being offered downtown, it makes more sense to move them out where the people are. We realized that 60 per cent of the people who are using the QEII actually come from outside. Of the 40 per cent that live in HRM, very few live on the peninsula. So we looked at where traffic was and where the volume was coming from. We looked at where Highway Nos. 102 and 103 converge. There were a number of sites; TIR went through a number of explanations.

We came down to a site that has been prepped and is ready to go, and we're looking forward to the construction to beginning on that so that Nova Scotians can continue to get the improved health-care service that we've been providing for the last three years.

MR. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's very telling that the Premier didn't answer the question about why he paid 12 times the assessed value for that land. No wonder this area is called the Whopper Drop when we get an answer like that. This is the latest in a string of bad deals that this government has made, spending taxpayers' money like it's going out of style.

In this case, a developer paid \$52,000 an acre for this very piece of land just three years ago. Last week, the Premier announced that he was buying that land for \$500,000 an acre. That's what Nova Scotians want answers about. Here's the thing: it was untendered. There was no tender to try and get a good deal for taxpayers. Why did this land purchase go untendered?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If he paid attention to the original answer, he would have recognized that we looked at where the people were coming from that were using the facilities: 60 per cent are from outside and of the 40 per cent from HRM, many live outside in the surrounding area we were looking at. We looked at a number of sites, TIR went out and looked at a number of sites and expressed some interest. We looked at the way the roads connected, the way those lots would be serviced, and the work that would be required. That this lot will be ready for the development.

TIR went through a number of negotiations. This ended up being the best price, best value. We're looking forward to continuing to deliver those services to Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Let's get this straight, Mr. Speaker. Here's how the Premier uses taxpayers' money. They looked at all the options, decided that this is the only one they wanted, and then they approached that person and asked for the price.

Mr. Speaker, imagine deciding you want to buy a new car. You look at all the models, and you decide you want a Honda. You go to one place, the Honda dealer, and you ask for the price. What kind of price are you going to get in that situation? You're going to pay a very high price.

The Premier has made Nova Scotians pay a price 10 times the purchase price from just three years ago. He can defend that deal if he wants to, but I will ask him this: if he's so confident in this deal, will he release all the documents, all the emails, all the background information on that purchase before the end of business today so Nova Scotians can judge for themselves?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I think Nova Scotians are judging for themselves, Mr. Speaker. That's why we've had such a positive response to that decision.

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

PREM.: SPENDING SPREE - JUSTIFICATION

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has said that this government's recent spending spree is a result of, and I quote, "good fiscal management"; I'll table this. I'm wondering if the Premier can explain to health care workers, to the patients and the staff of nursing homes, to teachers and students, to farm workers and to community groups in all Nova Scotia, how starving the province for three and a half years in order to finance a Liberal pre-election spending spree is good fiscal management.

THE PREMIER: Over the last three and a half years, we put \$65 million into classrooms. We've put \$70 million into home care. We continue to invest in services across the province, at the same time putting this province back into fiscal health after the mess that that member and the former NDP Government left this province in.

It provided us the opportunity to be in Shelburne to welcome two new doctors and one of the nurse practitioners that we announced, and family practice nurses - all moving into Shelburne at the same time. As we work with the community to build a collaborative

practice, it's unfortunate the honourable member wasn't there to celebrate with his community.

MR. BELLIVEAU: I've heard the broken record before. Good fiscal management - this government has spent nearly \$1 million studying whether to privatize our registries that bring in over \$100 million in profit a year to this beautiful province.

For three and a half years, Nova Scotians have been told that there's no money, that the cupboard is bare. It turns out, Mr. Speaker, yes, there is money, lots of it. But the money had to be squirrelled away for the Liberals' pre-election spending fund. To think that this is the government that promised to put Nova Scotians first . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. BELLIVEAU: I ask the Premier, how can Nova Scotians trust this government that has put the needs of his Liberal Party ahead of the needs of the people of this province?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank all Nova Scotians, who have worked so hard to ensure that we get ourselves back to fiscal health. I want to thank all those Nova Scotians who continue to support our government as we make those investments in classrooms and as we provide home care to ensure that seniors get an opportunity to stay in their homes as long as possible. We're continuing to make those investments to ensure that young Nova Scotians get their first job opportunity here at home with Graduate to Opportunity. We're going to continue to make the right decisions for Nova Scotians (Interruption)

I hear the member from Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River talking about it. The issue was, she chose to put all of it in wages to her friends in the labour movement, as opposed to investing in classrooms. We struck a balance. We would go at it (Interruption) at the same time we would invest in services. (Interruptions)

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

[2:15 p.m.]

MR. BELLIVEAU: Do you know who seems to have some good fiscal management skills, Mr. Speaker? It is the developer who is selling the lands in Bayers Lake to this Liberal Government. The developer bought 177 acres of land for just \$9.4 million and is now relying on getting almost the money back on just 15 acres of that land to this government.

Mr. Speaker, I know the developer has given \$3,000 to this Liberal Party, so I'd like to ask if the developer will also be giving the Premier any lessons in good fiscal management?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know and the honourable member asked the question earlier, that piece of land was part of a number of parcels we looked at. It was purchased at one point, that property is being developed, as he knows.

Mr. Speaker, the question for the honourable member is, did he sell his lobster licence when he retired for the same as he paid for it in the beginning? I doubt so. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: BAYERS LAKE PURCHASE - TENDERING DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier paid \$500,000 an acre for Whopper Drop land in Bayers Lake. That land was purchased just three years previously for \$50,000 an acre. He paid 10 times more only three years later. He defends that with the exact same kind of thinking that explains the Yarmouth ferry deal, that explains the overruns on *Bluenose II*. This is a Premier who cannot be trusted with taxpayers' money.

If it was such a good deal, Mr. Speaker, it should have been tendered. I'll ask the Premier a straight-up question: why did he not ensure that that land went to tender for taxpayers' value?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member. As he knows, I went through this process a few minutes ago. Six per cent of the people who use that facility come from outside, the 40 per cent in HRM are in and around that area.

TIR looked at a number of pieces of land, Mr. Speaker. They narrowed it down to two. They negotiated with those developers. They landed on this piece of land that when the person bought it was a stranded piece of real estate. They made improvements to it; it's the right place for us to be building this facility and we're going to continue to enhance the health care system in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that the only way he can show that he got good value is if he had done an open tender. He knows that because he used to believe it when he was in Opposition, when the NDP went the untendered route for office space in Cornwallis. The Premier said at that time that the government appears to have done a deal with little regard for taxpayers' money. "I have no idea why" - direct quote - "other than the fact that they were desperately trying to get this move done before an election."

The Premier also said that this is the exact kind of thing you run into when you don't tender something, Mr. Speaker - critical of the NDP for wasting taxpayers' money without tender, now he defends it.

Let's ask the Premier, what changed? Why are untendered NDP deals bad and his good?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As we started through this process I told the honourable member we are generating an opportunity to shape our health care delivery model. I'm very proud of the investments we made in the Dartmouth General Hospital where the third and fourth floor are being developed, the fifth floor is on the way. There will be eight operating theatres there.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the second OR that is being opened in West Hants - 800 surgeries will be moved out to there. We also looked at 60 per cent of the people going to the Victoria General Hospital for stuff that wasn't needing to be downtown were coming from outside. The 40 per cent of HRM was coming from a large catchment area. We looked all through that area; we found a number of sites, and we negotiated down with a number of developers. We ended up with the best price for the best piece of land and continue to move the health care system forward.

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

PREM.: BILL NO. 75 - REPEAL

MS. LENORE ZANN: The Premier has repeatedly said that there was no room in the fiscal envelope to negotiate with teachers. The government's unwillingness to negotiate in good faith resulted in the first province-wide teachers' strike in the history of Nova Scotia.

In the past few weeks, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be absolutely no cap on pre-election spending in order to do damage control and try to garner votes, while there is a clear cap on specific proposals to improve classroom conditions.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit today his mistakes when it comes to the way he has treated the teachers of this province and repeal Bill No. 75?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all those teachers across the province who day in and day out are standing in front of kids in classrooms, providing wonderful education. I particularly want to thank those 15 teachers who have come in as part of the commission. They are working very hard to provide solutions to go forward. What's disappointing is, the honourable

member is prepared to stand with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive instead of standing with teachers.

MS. ZANN: I would challenge the Premier any day to come to Truro and watch me standing with all my teachers there, Mr. Speaker. That is a direct invitation.

When the teachers came to the negotiation table, the Premier told them: this is all I have. He said the province was broke, that the cupboard was bare. Yet suddenly, in the last month, on the eve of an election, he seems to have found a fountain of gold, spending more than \$70 million all over the province. He was even mentioned by Steve Murphy on CTV, who was surprised that he suddenly came up with all this money.

Would the Premier explain to us and to Steve Murphy why he thinks payroll rebates for big businesses are more important than kids in classrooms?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As she would know, negotiations are always tough. We had on the table a 3 per cent pay raise over four years. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive accepted that three times, as well as freezing the long-service award.

When she was in government, she made a choice. She provided 7.5 per cent pay raises over three years and cut \$65 million from classrooms, and let the QEII start falling apart.

We've taken a different path. We've provided an affordable wage increase, and at the same time we're making these strategic investments in infrastructure all across the province so that Nova Scotians can get the services they deserve.

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

PREM.: BAYERS LAKE LAND - PURCHASE DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: The Premier paid 12 times the assessed value for that land at the Whopper Drop in Bayers Lake. That's money that could have gone into more doctors, that could have gone into more clinics, or that could have gone into more emergency rooms.

He thinks he got a good deal. He thought he had a good deal with *Bluenose II*. He thought he made a good deal on the Yarmouth ferry. Taxpayers know that he doesn't make good deals. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they know that he is wasting their money instead of being careful with it.

He defends the deal here. I will ask him a straight-up yes or no question. Will he release all the documents related to that land purchase today so Nova Scotians can see them for themselves?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the hard-working people at TIR who continue to go out to make sure that we look at all the possible options that are there. They went out and assessed a number of pieces of property and got down to negotiate to find what was the best deal for Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: I guess that's a no, Mr. Speaker, which will just make people even more suspicious of what went on here. It is not lost on them that after this process the Premier is so proud of, that land purchase for 12 times its value was made with a significant donor to the Liberal Party. That's why the Auditor General has been called to look into it.

If this is such a good deal, why is the Auditor General being called to look into that purchase?

THE PREMIER: The honourable member is now calling into question the hard-working public servants who work on behalf of all Nova Scotians to ensure that we continue to have the right investments for Nova Scotia. They've gone out and looked at a number of pieces of land. After narrowing those down to a number of pieces, we're looking forward to that. It's unfortunate that the honourable member continues to be so negative about a province that is moving forward.

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

PREM. - LAND PURCHASE: AUDITOR GEN. - REVIEW

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: We absolutely did ask the Auditor General to look into it because the Premier is hiding behind all of these words, but he won't do simple transparent things like tender the land in the first place or release the documents that show how this decision was made. You would think that the Premier of Nova Scotia would want to know what went on with this land purchase that was 12 times the assessed value. But instead he doesn't want to know.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he join the Opposition and call on the Auditor General to review the very documents that he is hiding from the people of Nova Scotia so he can tell us whether we had a good deal or not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm way too optimistic about the future of this province to join the Opposition.

MR. BAILLIE: You know what, Mr. Speaker? We're optimistic that some day we're going to get a straight answer from this Premier about what he is doing with taxpayers' money. We've asked him to make all the information publicly available. He refuses. Why?

We've asked him to share the information with the Auditor General, he refuses. Why, Mr. Speaker? This is why people are questioning not the department, far from it, they are questioning the integrity of that Premier and this government. That's the question.

It is incumbent on the Premier before there is an election to clear the air on why he paid 12 times the value for that land. Will he clear the air and release all those documents, yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear, any information the Auditor General has asked for from this government we've provided. It is unfortunate that the honourable member cannot see that this province is moving forward and celebrate, along with every other Nova Scotian.

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

PREM. - HOSPITALS: CODE CENSUS - ACCEPTABILITY

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, today Nova Scotia has made the news again for the crisis in our emergency department. I'll table an article. Code census allows emergency department staff to alleviate pressure when there is overcrowding by forcing units throughout the hospital to accept patients.

In the Halifax Infirmary, a code census was called 23 out of 31 days in January. Unfortunately during those days at least one patient died in the hallway. The family of that patient tells how the crowded hospital failed her husband. This human suffering is the direct impact of the crisis of our hospitals trying to operate well beyond their capacity.

I'd like to ask the Premier, does the Premier think this is acceptable?

THE PREMIER: I apologize to the honourable member, I thought he was going to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In order to do him justice, if he wouldn't mind repeating that question, if you're okay with that. Mr. Speaker. I do apologize.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering if the Premier thinks it's acceptable to hear about the unfortunate death of a patient in the hallway during code census at the QEII?

THE PREMIER: Thank you to the honourable member and I appreciate him repeating that question. Mr. Speaker, all of us, when our loved ones are requiring health care services in the province, of course, when there's a passing we all mourn for that family. We know that the member spoke about the code that was called for the facility. It is an opportunity to look at whether there's more staff required to come in.

I want to reassure all Nova Scotians though, Mr. Speaker, as they enter into our health care system, regardless of whether it's in urban or rural Nova Scotia, we have professional health care providers and quality infrastructure that is providing top-quality health care.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in the article that I tabled, a senior staff at the Nova Scotia Health Authority agreed that the patient should not have spent seven hours in the hallway but the system is at capacity. The overcrowding of our emergency departments is at a crisis level and emergency room closures are moving in the wrong direction.

There has been a very real human toll as a result of the political decision to merge the DHAs and not making health delivery the priority. I'd like to ask the Premier, will the Premier explain why the government hasn't made any progress and, in fact, has made the status of our emergency care in the province worse?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We all feel for this family and families whose loved ones are lost. I think it's a big stretch to suggest that the amalgamation, the elimination and tearing down walls is causing the issue the member is referring to.

What we're doing is continuing to work with our health care providers at all levels to make sure that people are receiving the right care in the right place.

I would agree with the honourable member that that is unacceptable, the level of time the person was in the hallway and circumstances in and around that. The minister will continue to work with not only that site but also with our health care providers to ensure that we continue to improve the delivery of health care in this province.

Again, I want to reassure all Nova Scotians that as they enter into our health care system they are entering into an environment where professional health care providers are there, top quality health care is there, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they return home to their families.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SUICIDAL PATIENTS - CASE MANAGEMENT

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, on May 5th of last year the Health and Wellness Minister said in this House that he expected a statement timeline and "a robust plan in place" soon to address inconsistencies in case management and treatment of people presenting at the province's ERs with suicidal ideation and multiple suicide attempts.

That still hasn't happened, Mr. Speaker, so when is soon going to be, and when will a plan be announced and implemented?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. In fact, just this week I toured the new ER at the Aberdeen Hospital, and now in Pictou there is a crisis team in place to deal with any trauma that does enter the hospital. Once the new site is up and operating, in fact, there will be two observational beds, and there will be a secure area for anybody in trauma. We have this being duplicated across the province, and I would say, provincially, we're in a much better place to respond to mental health emergencies.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it's a year later, and last year the Minister of Health and Wellness stood in this Chamber during Budget Estimates and promised that he had met with Dr. Linda Courey and he would be out with her and announce a robust plan and a timeline to address inconsistencies across all ERs in the province, so there were standards in place. Many doctors and nurses in the province's ERs say there are still many inconsistencies of the area of critical care.

Why has it not been a priority for the minister over the past year when he said in this House on May 5th of last year it was going to be a priority and would happen soon?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure the member opposite knows, or members of the House, but mental health was one of the seven areas that the Nova Scotia Health Authority was preparing a plan for. We know that in our emergency rooms doctors in fact are - in fact, a number of them have now received further professional development around the mental health area. Many of them of course are trained obviously for the physical medical emergencies, and now a number have been trained and are ready to deal with patients who present with mental health traumas.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JUSTICE: SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS - SUPPORTS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Justice.

Recent comments by a judge in a sexual assault case sparked outrage in Nova Scotia - and I'm pretty certain that we are all aware of what case I am referring to. This Liberal Government had an opportunity to harness that public interest in protecting survivors of sexual assault and transform it into action. My question is, why didn't the minister commit to working with MLAs from all Parties to make our province a leader in supporting survivors of sexual violence?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, certainly just to preface my answer, it's important to know that when we have any comments in the public about judges the Attorney General and Minister of Justice would never criticize a judge; that's not our role. We would not do that, and it is part of the separation of duties and the pillars of our society. So, I think that's important for you to know.

But we have responded, and I would like to just tell the member a few things - we've agreed that there will be two new specialized prosecutors at the Public Prosecution Service who will specialize in sexual assault, that there will be money from the Victim Services budget that will allow for victims of sexual assault to have their own legal services, to have four hours of legal services. That's a request that's in, and we're very confident that will come. Thank you.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the minister for her answer. However, the fact is that the Progressive Conservative caucus did ask that the government dedicate the Spring session to protecting survivors of sexual assault. We offered to work with all Parties to introduce and pass a comprehensive bill. It's a non-partisan issue. When people are brave enough to come forward, we, as legislators, have a duty to make sure they are treated fairly and, definitely, with dignity.

Will the minister please commit to supporting legislation that provides survivors of sexual assault with confidence that the justice system will not fail them? Thank you.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important that we remember that this province was the first ever to bring in a sexual assault strategy and the Minister of Community Services, and Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, have overseen that strategy for three years and have been very successful. It's raised awareness, and I think we can credit it with a lot of the awareness around the public response that we saw in the last month.

In addition to that, what we'll continue to do is work hard to provide the services through Victim Services, through all the partners in the justice system, to ensure that victims will come forward, bring their complaints and charges, and we can have justice for all.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MUN. AFFS. - MUN. OFFICIALS: SPENDING - OVERSIGHT

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Last week a report by the Auditor General into expenses at the Municipality of the District of Guysborough characterized spending by the former warden and other officials as "indulgent and opportunistic." The former warden charged thousands and thousands of dollars in personal expenses to the municipal credit card and

what amounted to a number of short-term loans from taxpayers. He treated this privilege as a luxury.

What oversight measures will the minister put in place to end this indulgent spending of taxpayer dollars by municipal officials?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I do want to clarify that I do not agree with the characterization that the member has presented to this House. I know that member and I know that he serves the interests of his people always. I know that the Ombudsman report indicated that there was no misappropriation of funds.

I do not appreciate that that member - and I would hope that she would learn from other members from her caucus who have used slanderous language in attacking our municipal officials who have had to apologize publicly for it. I would urge her and her caucus not to paint every single person with the same negative brush.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I did not slander. The former warden of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough told the Ombudsman investigators that he believes alcohol greases the wheels of government - I am going to table these comments. He said, "Alcohol is a process, an accepted process for the way society as a general rule . . . to me [it's] all part of the devices and tools that will get you where you need to be in terms of the objectives for the municipality." I can table that right now.

It's time to change the attitude and culture of municipalities from one of alcohol-fuelled deal-making to one of accountability for the taxpayer. I want to know does the minister agree with his colleague that alcohol is an accepted process that will get you where you need to be?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, again there is a provincial policy in place (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, there is a provincial policy in place around the use of alcohol for hospitality reasons. We are going to standardize the rules across the province for every single municipal unit to bring in line with provincial regulations in that matter. Furthermore, the changes that we will be bringing forward will ensure all expenses are online, open, and transparent so Nova Scotians can judge for themselves on where their tax dollars are being spent. I look forward to the day when all members of this House will support us in bringing that piece of legislation forward.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ARBORSTONE ILLNESSES - DETAILS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday, we learned of the recent death of six residents at Arborstone Enhanced Care who died in the past two weeks after contracting a respiratory infection - all six residents lived on the same floor. It's been reported that family members were not informed about the outbreak until their family members were quite ill. I'd like to ask, could the minister please explain why there was a delay in informing family members about this outbreak of this fatal virus?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know that when there were multiple deaths at Arborstone, the management as well as the owners of Shannex did reach out to NSHA and the Department of Health and Wellness. It obviously triggered Public Health to take a look at why there were multiple deaths.

I don't have the detailed information on how they communicated with families. I know they put notice in the facility that this respiratory infection was now in the institution, but they worked to balance both the visiting ability to meet with loved ones as well as mitigate against the infection.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I think all members of the House would like to offer our condolences to the families who lost loved ones. Sadly, families are wondering if their loved ones' illness could have been caught and treated earlier if the nursing home had more staff.

We share those concerns, Mr. Speaker, so I'd like to ask the minister, will the department be looking into the circumstances that led to the deaths of six residents at Arborstone Enhanced Care?

MR. GLAVINE: I certainly join the member opposite in expressing condolences to all the families involved - this morning we heard one of the wives speak about the loss of her elderly husband - and I expressed the same to the media today.

But in terms of this issue, I know that any time there are deaths in adverse numbers, as in this case, the department will review what has transpired and taken place. I do know, in checking, that the complement of staffing that is required by the province was in place - 24/7 nursing, LPN support, CCA in the home - but we will have more information as we go forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

INTERNAL SERV.: CIVIL SERVANTS - PUBLIC SPEAKING RULES

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services. Documents obtained through a freedom of information request show that an

employee of the Department of Agriculture was planning to make a presentation at a community meeting in Cumberland North on January 30th, but was later told that they could not make that presentation. Documents show that the employee was not aware that approval was needed, since they had made similar presentations many times over the past couple of years without undergoing an approval process.

My question for the Minister of Internal Services is, will the minister tell the House what rules are in place for civil servants to speak at public events, and where those rules can be found?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: I'm not familiar with the case the member is speaking about, but I'm more than happy to get the information from him - who the employee is, what the speaking engagement was regarding - and look into it for him.

MR. HOUSTON: We will follow up with that, because there is some confusion as to whether there are rules - one set of rules, two sets of rules, three sets of rules, whatever. We do know, through another FOIPOP request, that the member for Cumberland North, corresponding back and forth with senior Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal bureaucrats about their attendance at a public meeting, had no problem getting them there.

In fact, nowhere in that FOIPOP is there any mention of needing approval, and the member for Cumberland North told these civil servants that they are the show - and what a show I'm sure they probably put on, Mr. Speaker. But here we have two meetings in the same constituency, in the same town.

Will the minister explain why civil servants were denied approval to attend a meeting with Agriculture but were given carte blanche to attend the meeting for the member for Cumberland North?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the only show is whenever that member gets up and speaks.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - ANNA. VALLEY HOSPICE: OPENING DETAILS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On August 18, 2016, the minister announced a hospice for the Annapolis Valley. At the time, it was stated that there was a goal of opening the hospice by the middle of 2019.

My question is, is that opening still the goal? Does the minister think that is a goal that will be scored?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm pleased to inform the member opposite that this week I met with the architects for the hospice. While there was a little bit of a challenge with some aspects of design and location, they are now in a much more hurried-up fashion to get this started.

We know that this has been a long journey. We also need to confirm with those who have made generous donations that the work will be under way shortly.

[2:45 p.m.]

MR. LOHR: I'm not sure whether that goal is still achievable or not. At the Valley Hospice announcement, Mr. Speaker, two items normally associated with a construction announcement were strangely missing. There was no building design plan, and there was no budget. It would seem the hospice announcement was missing these details even though it had only been about seven or eight years in the planning stage.

Can the minister confirm that there is an actual building design and a budget? Can he table both of these in the Legislature today, seeing that he already announced the build six months ago?

MR. GLAVINE: Selecting the final site of the Valley Regional Hospital was up to the hospice association. Looking at final design and costing is what the NSHA and the hospice association have been working on. I know that much more significant plans will come forward at their May 4th meeting. What I can assure the member opposite is that the goal is in fact to break ground this Fall and work through the winter on the hospice.

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

PREM.: SOFTWOOD LUMBER TARIFF - GOV'T. RESPONSE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: My question is for the Premier. Media has reported that U.S. Government officials have confirmed that the Maritime exclusion for softwood lumber has been eliminated. This news is a disappointing outcome for the lumber industry in Nova Scotia. It's an important part of our economy, particularly in rural Nova Scotia. While it is not the decision that we hoped for, the government has known for some time that this result was possible.

I would like to ask the Premier what his government will do to fight this decision. In the meantime, what is the plan to support the lumber industry in this difficult time?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the Minister of Trade not only for the tremendous work he has been doing with our neighbours in international trade, but also for the fact that we've been able to tear down trade barriers inside of our province. The situation the

honourable member is referring to, we continue to work on that. The report that he's referring to has not been confirmed; we have been in contact. When the announcement comes out, either later this evening or tomorrow, we're looking forward to seeing what that ruling will be. I want to assure the honourable member that we have defended the forest industry in this province, and we will continue to do so.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Past negotiations about the Maritime exclusion were led by the industry-led Maritime Lumber Bureau. However, this time around, the provincial government took charge. I would like to ask the Premier why there was a change in who led these negotiations, and if he thinks that had any impact on the outcome.

THE PREMIER: As I said earlier in my first answer, the honourable member doesn't know the outcome. We also don't know the outcome. All I can tell the honourable member is that we stood up for Nova Scotia's interest.

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

COM. SERV. - CHILDREN: PROV. CARE/FOSTER CARE - DETAILS

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Earlier this month, CBC featured a story about a husband and wife, the Pikes, who are foster parents to many sick and sometimes terminal young children in the province. According to the department, there are just over 1,000 children in the province's care. Of these children, roughly 400 are not in foster care for various reasons. How many children in care are not in foster care due to having high needs?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. It depends on the physical, mental and cognitive health needs of children in care. We make every effort, and it is a priority, to make sure that we match foster parents to the needs of children.

I watched that CBC program about the Pikes, and they truly are angels among us. They take children, who are often terminal, and give them end-of-life care that every child in that situation deserves. I'm happy to report that today, the Pikes are in the process of picking out their new van - Mrs. Pike is picking the colour - for the foster children they currently have in their care who need access and transportation.

MR. HARRISON: We certainly know that a family like the Pikes is very, very rare, and not everyone is undertaking responsibility for a child who has great needs due to health conditions and care needs. We need to salute people like the Pikes for their great compassion and commitment.

My question is, as the province phases out the larger institutions like Kings County Rehabilitation Centre, where will the children with high needs be placed?

MS. BERNARD: Those actually are two separate issues. Children who are in residential care now generally aren't under provincial care within Child Welfare Services.

What we've been doing, and what we'll continue to do over the next seven years now, is continue to move children and adults and youth and older persons from the larger residential facilities back into the community. In fact, over the last year with just \$1.45 million, we've been able to move 47 people from larger residential facilities back into the community and we'll continue to do more as we go forward.

It really is two different issues, children in care and children who are in residential facilities, such as Kings.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**AGRIC. - CDN. MINISTERS:
GROWING FORWARD 2 PROG. - DISCUSSIONS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Last July, Ministers of Agriculture from across the country committed to working together to enhance the sector's ability to prosper, through competition, innovation and new innovations. This came in response to the need for a plan to grow sustainability after our government's Growing Forward 2 program ends next March.

My question for the minister is, during these meetings what issues did the ministers discuss to ensure the renewal of the Growing Forward 2 program?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: We're in the process of working with our provincial colleagues and territorial colleagues, as well as the federal government, to put in place a Growing Forward 3 program.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, at last year's Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture AGM, two resolutions were passed about the new agreement and some of the policy changes required to best meet the needs of the agriculture sector. One of the resolutions read, ". . . the NSFA request that the provincial Department of Agriculture take over administration of the Agri-Stability Program at the provincial level, or coordinate it's [sic] administration on a Maritime Regional level."

It went on to request ". . . the NSFA lobby the Provincial Government and the Department of Agriculture to commit 5 year support and funding to the Home Grown Success Program, so farmers can access multiple year funding in one year for larger scale projects that will help lead to organized progressive development of their farms."

My question for the minister, can the minister tell us if any of these issues will be addressed in the next five-year agreement with the federal Department of Agriculture?

MR. COLWELL: Those are both very important topics and indeed, we've been working with our provincial counterparts and our federal counterparts in that regard. We've recently met again with the Federation of Agriculture in Nova Scotia to discuss these possibilities and hopefully we'll be able to negotiate a new agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: For those keeping track, we will conclude at 2:58 p.m.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SPECIALIST REFERRALS - ISSUES

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Certainly a lot of health care concerns do come through all of our offices for sure. I had a very interesting one a couple of weeks ago where this lady moved from out west. She has been here for a number of months now but she had about five or six serious things wrong with her. She ended up going to emergency and so on but no one could refer her to a specialist - just the way things were set up.

Without a family doctor, how can patients with chronic illness or newly-diagnosed symptoms receive a referral to a specialist, when needed?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: The member opposite raises a very important issue on the floor here today. This is an area that certainly goes beyond his riding, his individual case. We're finding a number of people, especially here in metro, who in their younger years relied on going to a walk-in clinic and now, as they get older and have a chronic disease or require a specialist report to come back, they certainly do need a family doctor.

One of the areas that we now have available with the 811 identification is for people in fact to speak about the fact that they need to have a specialist report come back. We're trying to prioritize some of those who are on the list. It was wonderful to see last week that a number of nurse practitioners started in our clinics across the province. Some were collaborative practices, others were regular clinics, and this is allowing for a number of patients to be added.

MR. HARRISON: In this particular case, I was fortunate to locate a family doctor who would take her on, but there is another concern somewhat in the same vein. If patients don't have a family doctor to maintain their medical records and they have to attend emergency rooms and walk-in clinics, where do their test results and visitation summaries get filed and maintained?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, most doctors in fact pass their records on to a company that for a fee will house those documents. We've started the process of moving to One Person One Record, and there would be an electronic record available in time when

this is fully developed. But in the short term, they're often stored and do have to be retrieved in order for a specialist or a doctor to have access to those records.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PHYSICIAN AVAILABILITY - DETAILS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. We all know that we live in a province where we are trying to increase our population. Yet we have the highest corporate taxes, the highest income tax, the highest power rates or some of them anyway, and we're desperately trying to increase our population.

Recently, I had a young couple, two teachers who moved from Fort McMurray, Alberta when their house burned. They were lucky enough to get part-time jobs teaching and they want to hang their hat here. They have some medical conditions that need to be monitored on a weekly/biweekly basis. I want to know if the minister can tell me when I can tell them when they will have a doctor so that they don't head back west.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be in Westville at the collaborative practice last week to announce a nurse practitioner, and the doctor very clearly stated

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Time allotted for Oral Questions put by Members to Ministers has expired.

The Official Opposition House Leader on a point of order.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, during question period, while the member for Pictou West was quoting something from the Auditor General, the minister said that she was slandering another member of the House. I was wondering if he could withdraw that from his statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'll take the point of order under advisement and come back.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby on an introduction.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish permission to make an introduction.

I would ask the House to draw its attention to directly behind the Speaker's Gallery where today we are joined by not only the founder of the Rural Transportation Association in Nova Scotia, the founder of Le Transport de Clare, current member of NS LEO, but probably one of our largest advocates for people with disabilities. I would have to point

out that he's probably here to watch the smooth transition of Bill No. 59 this week on behalf of all of his colleagues.

I would ask the House to please stand and give Mr. Claredon Robichaud a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid on an introduction.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the members' attentions to the west gallery where we're joined today by Barry Abbott and Barbara LeGay who are from the Bill 59 Community Alliance. I'd like all members to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

[3:00 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice on an introduction.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: A number of the people I was going to mention have already been acknowledged with the specifics of their great work on disability issues and accessibility, but I did want to draw the members' attention to note that there is a group of advocates who are here today. Gerry Post has been a spokesman for the Bill 59 Alliance and spoke yesterday at our Law Amendments Committee. He is here, and he is joined by Claredon Robichaud, as was mentioned, and Barry Abbott. Also, Linda Campbell and Barb LeGay are in the gallery - and I think we may find other advocates who will join us through the afternoon, I'm not certain.

It means a great deal to have people here to watch the proceedings of the House and to be part of what can be a very historic process that we're going through for Bill No. 59, the Accessibility Act, and for Nova Scotia.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills, and that we recess once you have left the Chair and the committee reconvene at 3:15 this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess until 3:15 p.m. while it resolves into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

We now stand recessed until 3:15 p.m.

[3:01 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:24 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Mr. Gordon Wilson in the Chair.]

[4:32 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 59 - Accessibility Act.

which was reported with certain amendments by the Law Amendments Committee to the Committee of the Whole House without further amendments, and that the Chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. The House will meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, April 26th, from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Following the daily routine, it will be the NDP's Opposition Day, so I invite the NDP House Leader to give us the business for tomorrow.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will be calling Bill No. 21, the Health Authorities Act, and Bill No. 16, the Fair Drug Pricing Act.

I now request that the House rise and meet again tomorrow between 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment - for the House to rise and meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, April 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.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 26th, at 1 p.m.

[The House rose at 4:34 p.m.]