



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**First Session**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
ARRIVAL OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR .....	11
SPEECH FROM THE THRONE .....	12
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
An Act Respecting Oaths of Office, Hon. M. Furey.....	23
SPEECH FROM THE THRONE:	
Moved - Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	24
Seconded - Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	30
ADDRESS IN REPLY:	
Hon. J. Baillie .....	34
Adjourned debate .....	38
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., Sept. 22 <sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.....	38



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017**

**Sixty-third General Assembly**

**First Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Mr. Chuck Porter

[The First Session of the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly was opened with historic ceremony on a warm, clear day.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Please rise. His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, preceded by members of the Official Escort, his Private Secretary, his ADC, and by Mr. David Fraser, Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, entered the House of Assembly Chamber. The Lieutenant Governor then took his seat on the Throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then departed and re-entered the Chamber, followed by the Speaker, the Honourable Kevin Murphy; the Chief Clerk of the House, Neil Ferguson; and the Assistant Clerks, Annette Boucher and Nicole Arsenault.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, that the ladies and gentlemen be seated.

[1:15 p.m.]

### **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

**THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR:** Before I begin I would like to honour those who have passed since our last Speech from the Throne. Those who contributed to the strength and prosperity of our great province.

We remember remarkable Nova Scotians like Dr. Cora Greenaway, a founding member of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, Rudy Haase, conservationist and humanitarian, and Donald Reid, who was instrumental in Joggins becoming a UNESCO World Heritage site. All three of these individuals are also Order of Nova Scotia recipients.

We also recognize the contributions of Nova Scotians including Ethel Garnier, who served for 50 years as Executive Housekeeper at Government House, Wayne Smith, CFL star and two-time Grey Cup winner, and Phil Pacey, a champion for heritage in our province. We lost community leaders like Joan Eisner, former Director of Volunteer Services with South Shore Health, and Wade Smith, beloved educator and coach.

John Nichols, retired Provincial Court Judge, and Dianne Tompkins Brushett, former Member of Parliament for Cumberland-Colchester, and Joe Feeney, former Mayor of Mahone Bay, proudly served Nova Scotians in their respective public institutions.

Just last week, our country said goodbye to the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, a former Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister. His accomplishments as a parliamentarian leave behind a legacy felt by all Canadians.

Finally, we pay our respects to three former members of this House of Assembly - the Honourable Paul MacEwan, the Honourable Ralph Fiske, and John Archie MacKenzie. Our sincere condolences to their friends, families, neighbours, and to all those carrying on their memory.

### **Open to the World**

I am honoured to deliver this address, and I thank former Lieutenant Governor J.J. Grant for his years of service. I am humbled to hold the same office as him - he served our province in a way that makes us proud.

À titre de premier lieutenant-gouverneur de la province d'origine acadienne, je suis fier d'avoir cette occasion d'être au service de ma province et de représenter ma communauté.

As our province's first Lieutenant Governor of Acadian descent, I am proud to have this opportunity to serve my province and represent my community.

Congratulations to all those elected, who sit in this Chamber, as they earned the confidence of their constituents. And we are here today not focused on celebrating victory, but focused on what needs to be done to make our province stronger.

We owe all those who voted our thanks for their support and for their continued participation in our democracy. To those who worked and volunteered to ensure we could hold free and fair elections, we thank you for your service and commitment. Government has made much progress, but we know there is more work to do. It is clear that challenges exist.

This spring, Nova Scotians voiced concerns about challenges in health care. We know that more mental health supports are needed, access to primary care must improve, and wait times are too long. Government heard these concerns, and will respond.

This is the second term for Premier McNeil and his government, but the world and our province is different now than it was in October 2013. In four years, Nova Scotia moved from a deficit to a surplus. Our finances are stronger. Our seafood exports are soaring. Our wine sector is growing and is internationally recognized. Our tourism sector is booming. And our population is on the rise.

Without a spirit of openness, these achievements would not be possible. Our province accomplished these feats because citizens stood up and pursued an optimistic plan, government stood with them, and we are stronger now because we worked together.

Government's plan focused - and will continue to focus - on opening our province and communities, welcoming newcomers, and breaking down trade barriers wherever possible.

Now is not the time to give into fears arising from global uncertainty. Now is the time to press on. Our government is leading by example. Just recently, Syrian-refugee-turned-entrepreneur Tareq Hadhad was appointed to the board of Invest Nova Scotia. He has helped grow Nova Scotia's Peace by Chocolate in Antigonish, received mentions from the Prime Minister at the United Nations, and plans to keep growing his family's business. He now gets to help as Nova Scotia continues to become more open and welcoming. His experience is invaluable. Through will and determination, he and his family pulled together to create a business - they created something great.

By continuing to embrace a spirit of openness, we will discover new ideas, welcome new people, and create new businesses. Government wanted to position itself to capitalize on opportunities when they arise. That is why such a focus was placed on controlling spending and making smart strategic investments over the last four years.

Entamons cette séance de l'Assemblée législative en faisant de notre province un exemple, non seulement au Canada atlantique, non seulement dans cette fédération, mais à

l'échelle internationale. Même si nous sommes une petite province, nous pouvons avoir un grand impact.

Let us begin this sitting of the Legislature focused on making our province an example - not just in Atlantic Canada, not just in this federation, but internationally. We may be small, but we can make a big impact.

### **A Healthier, Stronger Nova Scotia**

A stronger Nova Scotia shares the benefits of economic growth by investing in the services we need most. If we want a stronger Nova Scotia, we need to have a healthier Nova Scotia. Government is ready to keep investing in health care to ensure better access to the services people need.

Providing better access to health care involves hiring and retaining health professionals: doctors, nurses, paramedics, pharmacists, and mental health clinicians. We know we can do that by providing more flexibility and by further investing in efforts to educate and attract doctors. Our doctors are not just health care providers, they are a source of information and insight into the health care system. That's why our government will provide flexibility to doctors so they can choose where and how to practice. It's why input and advice of doctors, including working with Doctors Nova Scotia, will be sought out when developing recommendations or changes to primary care.

Further funding will be provided to attract and educate new doctors by adding more spaces to the family residency program, adding more spaces for internationally trained doctors, and providing more tuition relief to doctors who want to practice here.

The focus on collaborative health care will continue as we hire more nurse practitioners and family practice nurses. These nurses will further improve Nova Scotians' ability to access health care services where and when they need it. We are also supporting the recruitment of young doctors, because they have told us this is the type of team they want to be a part of. Most importantly, the evidence demonstrates that this approach to providing primary health care will improve services and ultimately the health of Nova Scotians.

Cutting wait times for surgical procedures is also a priority. To help, government will add 15 new specialist residency positions. Five of these positions will be in Cape Breton. This will support efforts already taken to reduce wait times. Those efforts were made possible by an \$8.1 million investment that made 2,200 additional surgeries possible. Going forward, we will continue to invest more money to further reduce wait times.

More doctors and more surgeries will help many Nova Scotians, but our province also needs more mental health supports and faster access to care. Government will make investments to hire more clinicians and support workers, improve community-based

supports, and expand crisis services. Helping our children and youth in their schools will be made possible by expanding the SchoolsPlus Program and developing new Youth Health Centres. Nova Scotians are clear - they want investments in health care, and those investments will be forthcoming.

### **More Opportunity for All Nova Scotians**

Using our resources to create more opportunities for all Nova Scotians doesn't happen accidentally. It requires careful planning, determination, and strategic investments in our people. For starters, government will cut income taxes for those in the middle class and those who need it most. This tax break will benefit 500,000 Nova Scotians. It will increase the amount going back into the pockets of Nova Scotians who need it the most. The benefit will increase to \$1,000, and it means more than 60,000 people will no longer pay provincial income tax. This is the largest income tax cut in our province's recent history.

Many Nova Scotian families are caring for loved ones with health needs. Our government will support them, too. Wait-lists for home care services have almost been eliminated. People deserve to stay in their homes as long as possible. Government will ensure more people can receive the caregiver benefit, a program that provides \$400 per month in support and allows seniors to stay at home, around loved ones, longer. With this change, more than 1,600 people will become eligible.

Government has listened to Nova Scotians who say they want to be able to stay in their own homes and communities. Supporting people at home and supporting their caregivers has meant that fewer Nova Scotians have had to rely on nursing homes; and when it is needed, access to nursing home care has improved – with more than a 50 per cent reduction in the wait-list for nursing homes.

This September brought a game-changing investment to the education system in our province. Government launched pre-Primary sites around the province. This investment is crucial because we know the early years of a child's life are critical for their development. The facts show that four-year-olds who have access to such a program perform better in school. That is the strong start our children deserve.

Not only does this program help our children, it helps families too. This program is free for families enrolled in it. That means it will save those families thousands of dollars. That savings means more support and opportunity for middle class Nova Scotians.

### **Education for Prosperity**

Our government has always believed that a strong education is the foundation for a stronger Nova Scotia. Over the last four years, education funding increased by \$65 million. I am proud to say funding for education will continue to increase.

Government created the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions so it could work with teachers to build stronger classrooms. This council empowers teachers to make a real difference in education policy, and change has already happened.

[1:30 p.m.]

Government funded the hiring of more teachers to implement class caps from Grades Primary to 12. There are more teachers to provide even more help with math and literacy skills. Student assessments and data entry are being streamlined so classroom teachers can focus more on teaching.

These changes will help our young people as they grow and develop. They will also help them be more prepared to enter the workforce when they eventually graduate. We know that it is as important to educate and train our children as it is to bring new people to our province.

### **Opportunity and Jobs for Young Nova Scotians**

Already government has helped more than 2,500 young Nova Scotians stay and work here through programs like Graduate to Opportunity and the co-op program. In addition, more than 2,100 young Nova Scotians were hired into the civil service since 2013. While progress was made, there is more work to do. The Graduate to Opportunity Program will see its budget doubled so we can help even more Nova Scotians. Over the next four years, this expansion could create as many as 1,200 new jobs.

The number of research- and innovation-based jobs in Nova Scotia will increase through Innovate to Opportunity, a new program that will help employers who hire Masters and PhD graduates. While government also eliminates tuition for apprentices when they leave work to complete their training, the apprenticeship START program that focuses on hiring apprentices will grow and support 700 new opportunities.

Keeping young people here also means making life more affordable for them. Government is taking steps that collectively will mean, along with other changes to student assistance, university students can receive over \$40,000 in non-repayment support over five years. That is more than five years of average tuition.

Our government wants to make access to university more affordable, and it wants to make it easier for young Nova Scotians to buy their homes. To do this, households earning up to \$75,000 per year are eligible for a down payment assistance program. With more jobs, less debt, and a down payment, more young Nova Scotians will be living and staying here.

### **Helping Those Who Need It Most**

A stronger Nova Scotia is only possible when we help those who need it most - a more inclusive and accessible Nova Scotia, a Nova Scotia that provides more support to at-risk women and works to bring an end to the cycle of poverty that holds so many Nova Scotians down.

Around one in five Nova Scotians identifies as having a disability. Our government wants to create a more inclusive and accessible Nova Scotia. The first step was to work with community leaders to create and pass the province's first ever Accessibility Act. To support this legislation and accelerate the spread of accessible spaces and buildings, government will create a \$1 million Small Business ACCESS-ability Program and increase the Community ACCESS-ability Program to \$1 million per year.

Becoming more inclusive and accessible will also help families caring for people with disabilities. Government will create a respite care program, expand the independent living program, and improve the existing Independent Living Support Program. These changes will help families, help people with disabilities gain more independence, and create stronger communities.

While working to make our province more inclusive and accessible, government will take concrete steps to address violence against women. We cannot create more opportunity for everyone until people feel safe and secure in the province. A safer province will come from an annual investment of \$1 million to fight sexual violence. This will fund things like Prevention Innovation Grants that help organizations support victims and help prevent sexual violence.

A safer province will also come from an action plan to address domestic violence. We will start by working with existing groups who help at-risk women by funding new facilities. This action plan will also lay out several programs to address domestic violence. Finally, we will add a domestic violence court in Halifax and maintain the current domestic violence court in Sydney.

A safe and secure province is one that also focuses on improving economic security. That is why government will create Advance Nova Scotia. This plan promotes six actions to boost the income of low-and middle-income Nova Scotians.

In addition to the income tax cut previously mentioned, government will take steps to increase support and make it easier for people to get back to work. Together, these efforts will give more Nova Scotians a chance to build a better life for themselves and their families. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives proposed introducing a standard household rate for income assistance clients. We will do that and increase rates for all types of households.



Our government will make it easier for people to transition off income assistance and back into the workforce. This will be accomplished by creating a work incentive to allow clients to earn more without seeing a reduction in their payments. This does away with an old, antiquated system that actually made it hard to get off income assistance by putting up barriers to people who wanted to re-enter the workforce.

A four-year Blueprint to End Poverty will be funded, and \$20 million will help form partnerships between the province, other levels of government, and non-profits. It will focus on working with community groups that have new ideas, focus on employment and skills development, and find ways to tackle barriers that prevent people from improving their standard of living.

In addition to these steps, more maintenance enforcement workers will be hired to collect the millions owed to children. Government will work to ensure no one can hide behind provincial borders. This sends a clear signal that parents are expected to meet their financial obligations to their children.

Because of our government's changes, the Heating Assistance Rebate Program will help 5,000 more Nova Scotians with the cost of energy. This means we can now help more than 42,000 people across the province.

These steps are the culmination of a once-in-a-generation effort to transform our system that helps those who need it most. It is going to produce real results that will make meaningful changes in the lives of thousands. Economic security, personal security, and fewer barriers will create a stronger province and a healthier Nova Scotia.

### **The Power of New People and New Ideas**

Whether it is investing in healthcare, strengthening our classrooms, or helping those who need it most, we need a stronger economy. A stronger economy provides the resources necessary to make these investments. We cannot build a stronger economy without embracing new people and new ideas.

Over the last four years Nova Scotia has continued to welcome more immigrants, more international students, and more refugees to our shores. This effort led to our population growing, and it is adding to our province's diversity. This success was not accidental - it was planned, supported, and invested in.

Our government repeatedly made it a priority to attract new people, launching new immigration streams for international graduates, aggressively recruiting immigrants from around the world, and making it easier for people to move here and start new businesses.

Last year, Nova Scotia welcomed more than 5,000 newcomers to our province - the highest number of arrivals since the end of the Second World War. The federal government

has recognized our immigration success and believes in our ability to attract immigrants. They have signaled their support for our population growth by working with our province to develop a multi-year plan for immigration levels, addressing ongoing labour market demands faced by provinces and territories.

Now, under the Provincial Nominee Program, Nova Scotia received 1,350 nominations in 2017. The province also has a further 800 nominations through the new federal Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program. Combined, this totals a record 2,150 potential nominations. We will continue to work with the federal government to keep growing our population.

Welcoming new people to our province is the right thing to do. Immigration strengthens the economy by increasing the labour force, finding people with skills we need, and improving our productivity. Bringing new people with new perspectives and ideas will also see more businesses get started and more Nova Scotians employed. Helping our traditional industries thrive means investing to help them hire more people, help them find the skilled workers they need, and help them create new products to sell around the world.

We are on track to post the best tourism season in our province's history. This follows last year's record-breaking season that brought \$2.6 billion in revenue to the province. Government created Tourism Nova Scotia, and put the leadership of the organization in the hands of people with business experience. They have developed a new strategy which emphasizes bringing new first-time visitors to the province and developing unique experiences for tourists.

Our success is possible because we are working with businesses to take risks and try new things. We want to keep building on this success. That's why government will create a \$2 million annual fund, partnering with the federal government and the tourism sector, to invest in some of our iconic tourism sites that attract first-time visitors.

Our fisheries sector is booming. Seafood exports nearly doubled to \$1.8 billion annually. We want to keep finding ways for the fisheries and aquaculture sector to keep growing so we can meet international demand. That is why we will continue with our Aquaculture Development Program. This will fund important research to help the industry improve productivity, support strong regulations, and ensure the public is engaged while we responsibly develop this sector.

Our Building Tomorrow Fund will invest \$3 million per year to build on the success of the Honeycrisp Orchard Renewal Program. This fund will help farmers and fishers create new products and capitalize on new ideas to ensure their businesses are around for generations. This is just one more way to focus on helping to bring new ideas to our traditional industries.

The Building Tomorrow Fund will help our agriculture sector, and so will the Wine Development Program. The investments supported by this important program will help Nova Scotian producers double grape production by 2020. While we work with our businesses to increase grape production, government will also direct the Department of Finance and Treasury Board to adopt policies that encourage further growth in our local wine, distilling, and craft beer industries. These changes will ensure better marketing and promotion of our made-in-Nova Scotia products.

We know Nova Scotians have a taste for locally made products. For proof, we only need to look at the most recent NSLC annual sales results. Nova Scotia-made wine saw growth of nearly four per cent. Craft beer grew by 34 per cent - that's \$10.6 million in craft beer sales alone. The Building Tomorrow Fund and the Wine Development Program will build on the recent success of our agriculture sector, which generated \$350 million in exports last year.

[1:45 p.m.]

While we work with traditional industries, we want to support new high-potential, high-growth industries. Our government is placing a focus on ocean industries and technology where economic potential is very strong. With partners like the federal government, the private sector and other universities in the Atlantic region, Dalhousie University has created the Ocean Frontier Institute. As well, the province, the federal government and the private sector have all been at the table for the creation of the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE).

Government will keep working with partners to build an innovation infrastructure in this province so future inventors and entrepreneurs have the support they need. We will do this by continuing to invest in sandboxes around the province. Government worked with universities and our community college to launch these innovation hubs around Nova Scotia. Through this initiative, over 4,600 students worked with 130 mentors to turn their ideas into reality. In addition to the seven sandboxes currently operating in Nova Scotia, we will add another sandbox focused on our ocean sector.

While continuing to support tech companies, government will invest in and support small business here in Nova Scotia. We will also cut small business taxes so they can invest, expand, and hire. We will increase the income threshold for the 3 per cent small business tax rate from \$350,000 to \$500,000. This means small business can earn an extra \$150,000 and their tax rate is reduced.

Our government knows that cutting red tape helps small businesses grow. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has recognized Nova Scotia for the work we're doing to cut red tape. They've said we have made the most progress, in the shortest period of time, of any province in the country. We will build on this success and further reduce red tape by \$25 million.

Government will provide better Internet access by taking concrete steps. We have already partnered with municipalities, private service providers, and community groups to improve service. We are developing a longer-term plan which will use fibre optic cable to build a backbone for service in rural areas of the province backed up by satellite service to reach areas with challenging geography. And we are working with the federal government to leverage our investments, to reach more rural homes and businesses with improved service.

### **New Markets**

While our government works to bring more people to Nova Scotia, we want to sell more of our products abroad. The Export Growth Program produces success stories every year. We are growing the size of this program so more businesses can find customers in other markets. This support will help with the cost of trade shows and conferences, travel to markets, and partnering on trade missions.

An Export Accelerator Program will also be established to help get Nova Scotian products to market. This program will connect businesses with international experts. It will be led by Nova Scotia Business Inc., and it will provide direct support and service to important exporters.

Our resources are in demand around the world. We are supporting our traditional sectors to find new ideas for new products so they can create even more value when sold in other markets. These efforts, combined with increased support for export programs, will help create more jobs.

These efforts will build on past government successes. Just one example is the China strategy government launched in 2016. Exports to China have grown to \$420 million per year. This strategy combined with new export programming will continue to see exports to China climb.

We want to grow the economy, not just for the sake of growth itself, but because of how that growth will empower so many Nova Scotians. Focusing on these priorities is how government will build a stronger Nova Scotia. To ensure the successful implementation of the priority objectives highlighted here today, beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, the mandate of the Premier's Delivery Unit will evolve to become the Office of Strategy Management. The office will be led by a deputy minister, and have a broader focus on government's overall strategic objectives. The office will establish clear measures, track and report performance, and will work across government departments to focus on achieving results while advancing government's policy agenda.

### **Opportunity and Optimism**

Providing more opportunity for all Nova Scotians and creating a healthier Nova Scotia will only be possible when we open ourselves, our communities, and our province to new people, new ideas, and new approaches. To see the benefits of this kind of openness, we don't have to look far. We can look to a chocolatier in Antigonish.

The growing prosperity of our Mi'kmaq communities is being recognized nationally and internationally. Our African Nova Scotian community helped establish the province's human rights commission.

Notre communauté acadienne travaille sans relâche dans nos secteurs traditionnels importants, soit la pêche, la foresterie et le tourisme. Elle joue aussi un rôle important dans notre secteur culturel, à la fois par les arts et par les expériences touristiques culturelles.

Our Acadian community works tirelessly in our important traditional sectors - fisheries, forestry, and tourism. And it plays an important role in our cultural sector, both through art and through cultural tourism experiences.

European immigrants travelled here and powered our coal mines and steel mills. The impact of our province's Lebanese community can be felt throughout our province. Our government has appointed more women to the bench, and we are approaching gender parity.

Our province's diverse culture shines through in our art, and our creative economy is growing. For cultural inspiration, we can look to the work of Alan Syliboy, an accomplished Mi'kmaq artist from the First Nations community of Millbrook. Or Shauntay Grant, whose storytelling is inspired by the traditions of her ancestors in Nova Scotia's historic Black communities.

We want to celebrate our culture, hold tight to optimism, and remain open to new ideas, because that is the foundation of a plan that will make our province stronger. Openness and understanding come from education and experience. The more we learn about one another and the more we interact with one another, the more we understand. Our province's future and our children and grandchildren's prosperity depends on this very interaction. Prosperity will come as new ideas are turned into new businesses and traditional businesses create new products.

La croissance dont nous avons besoin découlera de notre volonté d'agir pour miser sur des possibilités. Ces possibilités font que je vois l'avenir de notre province avec optimisme.

The growth we need will come from a willingness to reach out and capitalize on opportunities. These opportunities make me optimistic about our province's future.

From openness and opportunity comes optimism. And I know no problem exists that we as a province cannot tackle together. When we stand together, we are stronger together.

God Bless Nova Scotia,  
God Bless Canada,  
God Save the Queen.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber preceded by his escorts and the Sergeant-at-Arms.]

[2:00 p.m.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill entitled An Act Respecting Oaths of Office.

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

His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor is pleased to make a Speech to the members met in General Assembly, of which Speech, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy which the Chief Clerk will now read in its entirety.

THE CLERK: I am honoured to deliver this address, and I thank former Lieutenant Governor J.J. Grant for his years of service. I am humbled to hold the same office.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speech from the Throne be taken as read. I am sure over the ensuing days we will get all kinds of commentary on the accuracy of that speech. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the Speech from the Throne be taken as read.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker it is an honour to rise today to move the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne as read by His Honour, the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc. Here it is opening day of the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, and here I stand before you and my colleagues to move the Speech from the Throne.

If you recall, Mr. Speaker, at the opening of the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in 2013, I was selected to move the Speech from the Throne also. As I look around this Chamber, I see you, Mr. Speaker, are once again presiding over this House of Assembly, and I wish to congratulate you on your re-election. I know that you will continue to maintain order and lead us through a productive session.

Then, I look to my front and I find the same Premier as in 2013. This is the first time a Party has won back-to-back majority elections in Nova Scotia since 1988. That is 29 years, Mr. Speaker. So, I wish to congratulate the Premier on another re-election and a successful campaign.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the 2013 MLAs who are not here with us today. They provided me with great friendship and guidance over the past four years and I welcome my new colleagues, my member for Chester-St. Margaret's and my member for Clayton Park West. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to celebrate that a record number of women - 15 - are sitting here in this House of Assembly. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to stand here again in this historic House and I must say I was thrilled to have been re-elected to represent the constituency of Lunenburg. I did not get back here on my own. I had an incredible campaign team, engaged volunteers, a keen constituency association, generous donors, and an amazingly supportive family.

Mr. Speaker, it is bittersweet to hear the names of two members of my campaign team remembered during the Throne Speech: Joseph Feeney who was my campaign manager and a great mentor, and Joan Eisner, a member of our association's executive and a valuable events planner. I know both of them would be proud of the positive campaign we ran.

In the past four years, Mr. Speaker, we've seen record-breaking growth in tourism on the South Shore. This can be attributed to the reinstatement of the Nova Scotia-to-Maine

ferry and *Bluenose II*. Many tourist operators and business people have constantly thanked me for these services.

I am thrilled to announce that the Town of Lunenburg in my constituency won the prestigious Cultural Destination of the Year in the 2017 Luxury Travel Guide of the Americas Awards. The award recognizes and celebrates excellence across all sectors of an affluent travel and tourism industry. Local past-chairperson of the board of trade and now the marketing chair, Kathleen Quinlan, is responsible for entering Lunenburg into the contest. According to the Luxury Travel Guide's project manager, Rocky Singh: "Lunenburg has shown vast amounts of culture and lived up to the standards of a World Heritage Site. The warm welcome feeling and the amount of cultural related activities has proved to be deserving of this award."

As the representative for this constituency, it is an honour to receive such a prestigious award that recognizes the hard-working constituents who make Lunenburg a great place to live and visit. Mr. Speaker, last year Lunenburg was the top destination for tourists outside of HRM. This year, Rendezvous Tall Ships 2017 and the Folk Harbour Festival attracted thousands to Lunenburg in just one weekend. Last week, the 100,000<sup>th</sup> visitor stepped onto the deck of *Bluenose II* this year. Sea Captain Phil Watson and Land Captain Alan Creaser have been marvellous ambassadors for Lunenburg and all of Nova Scotia, whether in home port or in any tall ship port along the route. I am very much looking forward to this year's tally for tourism. I'm sure Lunenburg will be right up there.

Mr. Speaker, like 2013, on the doorsteps of my constituency the most pressing issue continues to be roads, roads, and more roads. That's a quote from my 2013 speech. So you can imagine our excitement when the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal announced in April that for the first time ever in Nova Scotia, an annual \$10 million is being created specifically to maintain and rehabilitate gravel roads. It gets better: \$2.9 million of the funding will be shared among the ridings in the western district; also, there will be more to come. Finally, the government is listening. Constituents have told me that their roads have not had upgrading for 30 and 40 years. This is great news for my community, and the Ivany report on the rural economy affirms the need for good infrastructure to improve vital links wherever possible. It is also vital for citizens in rural areas to have safe and reliable roads. Our transportation infrastructure is the lifeline for many communities in my constituency.

My constituency has the top two towns with the most seniors per capita in the province, Mahone Bay and Lunenburg. I'm proud to work for a government that continues to invest in our aging population. Our government has already spent a year consulting with seniors and advocates to develop the widely-endorsed *Shift: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population*. We are committed to implementing this Shift Action Plan over the course of our new mandate. Some of these initiatives include improving the lives of seniors through supporting community transportation solutions, helping older adults stay in their



homes longer, promoting physical activity and regular exercise at all ages, and working with partnering organizations to promote mentorship opportunities for older adults.

We have already made progress here in my riding. In January, this government announced that South Shore Safe Communities would receive \$20,000 in grant money for the Lunenburg County seniors' safety program. This investment goes towards educational sessions and home visits that encourage independence, address personal safety issues, and promote crime prevention. Support from government will also help improve accessibility for seniors to inclusive programs and services.

In March, I was pleased to announce that seniors in Mahone Bay will soon have access to affordable housing, with the construction of a 26-unit rental housing development, including three units that are barrier-free. These rental units will be built with a \$1.3 million investment in affordable housing agreement between the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia. Furthermore, a shared investment of \$375,000 between the provincial and federal governments will provide 13 rent supplements at Brookside Apartments and will support older adults with lower incomes. These investments will make a real difference in the lives of seniors who want to stay here in this vibrant community.

Mr. Speaker, the Mahone Bay Centre's Seniors Project, under the direction of retired ambassador Ted Hobson, is an example of a community- and volunteer-led action. The SCANS and Conversation programs provide stimulating educational opportunities and embrace lifelong living. The Helping Hands initiative has grown to the point where it has become a partner with the local VON. This demonstrates that what some see as a liability can be an asset.

Last weekend, Events Lunenburg County hosted more than 800 seniors from across the province who took part in the Nova Scotia 55+ Games, including our Minister of Seniors, who surprised participants by running the 5K last Thursday afternoon. I will take this opportunity to congratulate my dear friend Rebecca Rock, who won five gold medals in all five of the swimming events she took part in.

[2:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, following the release of findings and recommendations from the child care review, the Liberal Government pledged to invest \$6.6 million into making child care more affordable while improving wages for early childhood educators. These investments make child care more affordable for families by investing in higher subsidy rates and addressing historically low wages for early childhood educators.

I recall the minister of the time was appalled to know that early childhood educators, some with four-year degrees, were earning a median hourly wage of \$12.84. Now, centres that receive provincial grant funding are required to pay early childhood educators a wage ranging from \$15 to \$19 depending on the level of their training. This

new government is committed to making early childhood education programs more affordable and accessible for families, and they are committed to enhancing the quality of child care and supporting the early childhood educators who work with Nova Scotia's youngest citizens and their families.

A pre-Primary pilot program will start this month in Nova Scotia. It is open to all children who are at least four years of age. It will be offered during the standard school hours, and it is voluntary. As an early childhood educator, I am encouraged that this program will be implemented by highly-qualified early childhood educators who will be delivering a world-class, early learning curriculum framework. This curriculum recognizes that children learn best through play, and it helps educators create responsive learning environments for children.

This is a positive step forward for the early childhood education profession and early childhood educators. They have a government who recognizes their profession and their professional development and their dedication. I must say early childhood educators have been working diligently for more than 30 years to be recognized for their work and qualifications. This program is a positive step forward for early childhood education professionals; their time has come. Ensuring that Nova Scotia's children have the opportunity to get a good educational start that they need and deserve demonstrates the values of this government.

Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1917, at 9:04 a.m., a young Clarence Barnhill - who was clerking in the Department of Treasury of His Majesty's Dockyard - stood at the corner of Barrington and North Street having just been evacuated through north gate and watched the doors close of an overflowing tramcar and start off toward south Barrington. The next thing he remembers was falling to the ground and covering his head. The world's largest manmade explosion prior to the development of nuclear weapons had just taken place. When he finally pulled himself together and to his feet, he discovered the entire tramcar was destroyed and there were no survivors.

Mr. Speaker, Clarence Barnhill was my grandfather. It took hours, but he managed to make his way to his family home on Lucknow Street where he was met by his mother, and she told him that his father had just risen from the dinner table having finished his breakfast and was walking out of the dining room when the explosion took place, and every window in that room was destroyed. He would have been blind had he not moved just moments earlier. He was off helping to see what he could do for others during this terrible tragedy.

My family was fortunate. There were no lives lost, there were no life-threatening injuries, and I remember my uncle Charles Burchill showing us the scars from the glass that was embedded in his head as he sat at the family piano the morning of the explosion. To this day my family cherishes that old piano, pelted with glass. They've never refinished the scars on the piano, and it has been the focus of many family gatherings. His father,

Charles Jost Burchell, would go on to lead the inquiry on behalf of the Belgian Government.

My uncle Robert's father, Arthur Barnstead, a long-serving high-level public servant, was appointed by Alderman R. B. Coldwell to be the coroner, and later took over as the mortuary chair. He used the same technique for identifying bodies as his father, Dr. John Barnstead, which he developed when he was tasked to head the mortuary committee for the victims of the RMS *Titanic*. That disaster had taken place five years earlier.

Although these events have taken place in Halifax, Lunenburg County has its own involvement in commemorating the Halifax Explosion. In 1918, the City of Halifax sent a Christmas tree to the City of Boston to thank them for their aid. In 1970, the Lunenburg County Christmas Tree Growers Association, who are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this month and are the founders of the SMART tree co-op, began an annual tradition of sending a Christmas tree to Boston. In recent years, the province has taken over the initiative, and it has expanded to selecting trees from all over Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and other members of this House will attend the send-off celebrations for this tree to Boston in the Grand Parade in November, to commemorate the centennial.

There is a fabulous display at the Maritime Museum by fabric artist Laurie Swim of Lunenburg. This incredible exhibit is a must-see. I had the privilege of watching Laurie as she worked on this quilt. She has named it "Hope and Survival," and it has been a long, long project that been expanded into a children's book and a school curriculum. It is exciting to know that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has purchased Grade 4-level copies - 2,200, to be exact - for all Grade 4 students, and also 530 copies for libraries throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, I encourage you and all members of this House to take time to visit the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and view this moving exhibit.

That's not all, Mr. Speaker. On December 6<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m., at St. Matthew's United Church on Barrington Street, the world premiere of Lunenburg composer Mary Knickle's choral piece *Halifax Explosion* will be performed with over 100 voices, including a youth choir, sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses.

*Halifax Explosion* is a 15-minute choral piece in five movements. The first movement opens to a busy Halifax Harbour, and as the piece continues, each movement is a different part of the story as the events around and after the explosion are revealed. The composer uses words, music, lights, pictures, and other innovative methods to create a compelling, heart-wrenching, and in the end, triumphant tale of human strength and determination.

They are currently calling for chorus members, Mr. Speaker, should you be moved to sign up. Otherwise, I will personally let you know when tickets go on sale.

For me, what I think defines this government is the leadership of this Premier, the other MLAs, and their work toward humanitarian efforts. On Friday, October 10, 2014, in the Red Room across the hall from this Chamber, before former residents, their families, and their supporters, the Premier apologized on behalf of the government and all Nova Scotians to former residents of the Home for Colored Children. (Applause)

To quote the Premier: “It is one of the great tragedies in our province’s history that your cries for help were greeted with silence for so long. Some of you have said you felt invisible. You are invisible no longer. We hear your voices and we grieve for your pain. We are sorry.” Those of us who were present that day will never forget those words.

Tony Smith, who accepted the apology on behalf of former residents and the group VOICES, said he is glad things are no longer confrontational with government. The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children restorative inquiry is revealing and addressing the harmful legacy of racism in Nova Scotia by examining the home and the experiences of former residents, as well as the impact on their families and communities. Currently the VOICES group is doing a restorative inquiry that will look at the past with a focus on future solutions, not only preventing any more harm but making meaningful changes that will help us treat each other more justly and equally in the future. This apology and healing process, Mr. Speaker, affirms the character of the Premier and the members of this government.

Since Fall 2015, more than 1,400 Syrian refugees have arrived in Nova Scotia. We saw church groups, communities, and individuals open their hearts and doors to these families, fundraising in record time and securing housing, furnishings, clothing, and all necessities for living here in this new climate and country. Immigration became a government priority, and it produced results. The Minister of Immigration worked tirelessly with Ottawa and immigration services to ensure we increase our immigration numbers and set up services for these newcomers. There are organizations that continue to bring Syrian refugees to Nova Scotia, and all of us should commend these extraordinary volunteers for their heartfelt efforts and kindness.

This government is not finished, Mr. Speaker. Just this month, my neighbouring member the Justice Minister announced that the province will support families and communities through the emotional challenges expected when the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls comes to Nova Scotia, beginning the week of October 30<sup>th</sup>. A partnership with the federal government and Nova Scotia will ensure that everything possible is done to ensure indigenous women and their families are kept informed and supported through what we know will be a difficult time.

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and the federal government, three community outreach specialists who have experience in dealing with trauma have been hired to provide cultural support to families and community members until March 31, 2019. These services will also benefit families and community members not participating in the inquiry. The positions are funded by the federal government and coordinated through the province's Family Information Liaison Unit within the Department of Justice's Victim Services. A three-year federal funding agreement will provide the province with \$700,000 until March 31, 2019. This investment will help provide community and cultural supports such as smudging, prayers, and sweat lodges. Other jurisdictions are watching Nova Scotia.

This government has demonstrated that it has worked to make a stronger Nova Scotia through its fiscal management and planning, by making tough decisions, and by acting on compassion. Now it is time to work to build an even better Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to work for the people of Lunenburg. I am ready to be a strong voice in this House. I am ready to be an advocate for rural Nova Scotians. I am ready to do my part for a better Nova Scotia today and for generations to come.

[2:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to thank His Honour for the Throne Speech and with great pride and great confidence, I move a motion that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, as read by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, do pass. Thank you. (Applause)

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

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand here today. I've had the opportunity to bring forward the motions before, but this one is a little bit more special to me. To start, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the Premier for forming a second majority, an accomplishment achieved only through hard work, leadership and understanding of the people that we represent.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Premier on behalf of the constituents of Clare-Digby. Your leadership over the last four years has been recognized and appreciated by everyone I have met on the street and the doorsteps and it has been a true privilege to work directly with you.

To my fellow colleagues, what a team. It is only four years but it seems like a lot more. I will say right now that when I decided to get into this, I made one decision and that was a decision based on something I learned when I was playing hockey, that when you join a team there are three things you look at. The first thing you look at is who your coach is, who your leader is. I certainly think we lucked out there; our Premier certainly made that.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, that you look at is who your teammates are. It's hard for me to describe what this group is, to do what they have done and to see what our Cabinet Ministers, our backbenchers - I congratulate our two new members from Chester-St. Margaret's and Clayton Park West - this group has come together and shown Nova Scotians that we have the right things to listen to the people and bring forward the right things, so our team is strong.

Thirdly, the most important thing is the game plan. I think we have shown Nova Scotians, especially here today again in our Throne Speech, that we're listening and that we are going to bring forward, Mr. Speaker, what the people of this province have asked us to do.

I'd like to take the time to also congratulate and thank my colleagues across the floor in Opposition. I know they worked hard to get where they are. It's exciting to see new faces over there. I think, as a person who has been here before, that I can offer a few words of advice. This job is one that demands two things: credibility and respect. It is as simple as that. I'm giving you that as my secret - I've said it to some others - but remember that, not only when you are in the House, Mr. Speaker, but those two values are important when we're outside this House. Credibility means that you do what you say and you say what you do. Respect is something you earn and respect is something you get from relationships. Those are the two most important things and I look forward to building not only on the credibility of my Opposition people but their respect.

I'd also like to thank our provincial Party. Dr. John Gillis will be stepping down this Spring and he has been a tremendous leader. He along with Mike Mercer, our executive director, had done tireless things in the background to make us what we are as a Party and I truly thank them.

I'd like to thank our caucus staff - the tireless workers who toil day in and day out to try and help us make sure that we're on the right page. We do not go here without recognizing what they do.

Our local executives, I'd like to speak of mine briefly. I have a very unique riding where not only do I have two constituency offices but when I ran my campaign, Mr. Speaker, I decided there was only one way to do it in 2013, and that is with two campaign teams. As you can probably remember, my riding is a new riding - a riding that was created because of the elimination of a protected riding by the NDP, something that has not been forgotten in my riding.

The uniqueness of having to represent a cultural community as diverse and as important as the Acadian community added another feature. I cannot say how proud I am of my executives that stepped up. We have two executives, actually, when we run our campaigns and our offices.

It's important to recognize that, as we move forward with our new review of the boundaries in this province. My two constituency assistants - how could any of us stand here and not recognize our two CAs - not everybody has two. Again, that unique opportunity that I have, to have two people. Let's not kid ourselves. They are, in a lot of cases, the people who get us re-elected. I cannot say enough and thank them enough for the work they do and the professionalism they bring every time somebody walks through our door. I don't know what I'd do without them. I truly do thank them.

Let's also take this time - it has been one of the most challenging things - I think I've been married for 42 years now. I probably got the number wrong. The strain that this job puts on a person at home - your spouse, your partner, your family - it's hard to explain to a lot of people. It's hard to explain how you sometimes come home after you've been talking from seven in the morning at the coffee shop to six meetings and then a public forum, and you walk in the house and you just don't want to say a few words - it's hard to explain that to your spouse, who would really like to talk to you.

That understanding, that sometimes you are a little grumpy and you shouldn't be. That understanding of that. Sometimes your children are brought into conversations in the grocery store that they would rather not be in. Understanding that is so important for us to recognize and thank our families for standing behind us. (Applause) We wouldn't be able to do this job without guilt if it wasn't for that, and I thank them very much.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize you in a lot of ways. You have been an inspiration, and I can say that from a different set of eyes, being your Deputy Speaker. What a privilege that was. I will say this to those of you who have never had the opportunity to have that experience: you should. What it takes to keep people like the member for Argyle-Barrington from speaking while other people are speaking, or just the respect we should show everybody in this House, is challenging. It shouldn't be taken for granted, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for the leadership that you have given us.

My last thanks is to my riding of Clare-Digby. I am so proud to be able to represent them. We have one of the most diverse, beautiful ridings, and those of you who come down to it cannot argue. It is an area that has shown growth in spite of challenges. It is an area that has shown optimism despite all the hard things that happen now and then, be it in the resource sector, be it in the mink industry - I can go on. They all rise up, and they continue to. That's what makes me so proud: what we see in spirit and growth in our communities.

There are some important things going on, and I would like to touch on those. Our resource sector is extremely strong right now, thanks to the Minister of Agriculture, and Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Our resource sector is growing exponentially in my riding. It is all the hard work that we've seen that has been done. It's important to mention how much growth we have seen in our resource sector, tourism, and general contracting. The wharves are busy.

Parking places are at premium. Restaurants are full. It's harder than ever to find a contractor in my area.

Work is happening everywhere. One of the biggest challenges I hear from our employers is the shortage of employees - amazing. I thank the Minister of Immigration for the work that she has done to bring numerous people into our ridings to support industries such as Riverside Lobster, to support all those important sectors that we have that we are challenged with in growing.

Tourism is booming. When I walk into a restaurant, and I hear people complaining that they are too busy, we know we've got good things going on. We have seen some amazing growth. There's a lot of reasons that it's happening - the changes in our direction in tourism, the different focus that we've put, the support of the Yarmouth ferry. All of those have shown us that southwestern Nova Scotia is a destination point.

Community pride is growing. I would like to dedicate a few minutes to the strength of our area, our hard-working people, and the tremendous volunteers that we have. It's difficult to fully express how vital they are in making our community strong. We can all agree that things have changed dramatically in the last 10, 20, and even 30 years in Clare-Digby. Most remember the main celebrations in the summer were our Natal Day and the Acadian Festival. That was about it. Most common gatherings that happened usually through the year were small card parties, socials, and fundraisers. Now we see not only these traditional celebrations grow but even more, the number of professional, large celebrations and open events. Chase the Ace, Gran Fondo, and the tall ships are only a few of the new happenings we have seen that have joined Lobster Bash, Wharf Rat Rally, the Acadian Festival, Scallop Days - and I think you get the message.

Our fire departments, ground search and rescue, and many more community-based not-for-profits are becoming more and more active with suppers, celebrations and fundraisers. There seems to be a very visible growth in our community activity across all the various groups and organizations. We are truly blessed with all the positive results that are evident. It is certainly not hard to find something to do if you want to get out of the house. Things are going on in our part of Nova Scotia.

To simply note all these positive stories is not enough. A lot of good people have stepped up, truly stepped up and invested their time and hard work - seniors, youth groups, business people, retirees, et cetera. They are all active, putting in countless hours necessary behind the scenes - 250 volunteers alone to run the Wharf Rat Rally - to make these things happen that a lot of us just show up to and enjoy. It is those who I truly want to thank today. It has been a privilege to attend many of the annual volunteer award banquets held locally each year. It is encouraging to see the growth of volunteer nominees, and it is amazing to meet so many different people who carry out the load in a humble way.



Mr. Speaker, we still face challenges. As we continue to grow our area, I feel strongly that my role toward the future will be to ensure that we protect the jobs we currently have, all while undertaking efforts to draw newcomers to our communities and grow new business initiatives; to work closely with our communities to improve access to primary health care; to advocate for infrastructure repairs that have been neglected for far too long; to invest in home care and senior programs; and last but not least, to improve the conditions of our classrooms, the heart of our education system.

I will continue to build on the mutual trust and respect that has guided us over the past years, and I promise to continue defending the needs and interests of this province and my constituents with determination and hard work. I would like to thank everyone in the Clare-Digby area for their continued support.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to second the motion that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne pass as read. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition. (Applause)

[2:45 p.m.]

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: It's nice to hear that much more numerous applause on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, since we last met. It is a great honour and privilege for me to rise in reply to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that we have been doing our job even as recently as today, when the speech was printed and came out. I want you to know that we went through the document in total to do a complete spelling check, and I am pleased to report to you, sir, that there is no I in "Throne Speech." I'll let that rumble out there.

On a serious note, Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the member for Lunenburg and the member for Clare-Digby for their moving - literally moving - and seconding speeches today as well as His Honour for the Speech from the Throne itself.

I am very aware that there are a number of new members on all sides of this House, and this is their first official day. There are those who say that it is a day of pomp and ceremony - we have the justices here, the Stadacona Band, the military, and the Queen's representative - and that that's all for show. I don't agree with that. This is actually a very important day.

We are celebrating a very, very important thing here in this House. We are celebrating an institution that is a thousand years old, that has been built up and defended by people and countries that follow our democratic system around the world. For all its flaws, we are witnessing today the continuance of power, a peaceful transition from one government to the next, from one mandate to the next. We had an election, and whether

you like the outcome of that election or not, no one died. No one had to be at the end of a gun. No one was denied their right to have their say. I want to say this in front of the symbol of authority in this House that sits between us: we are proudly here on this side as the Loyal Opposition.

I have been giving some thought to what that means, Loyal Opposition. It sounds kind of funny. We are here to hold the government accountable. We are here to point out the error of their ways. We are here to encourage them to keep the great promises that were made in the election just past. But we are a Loyal Opposition, and that is a loyal government. What we are loyal to is our democratic system, to our Queen and her representatives here in Nova Scotia, and to the rules and procedures that we follow in this sacred place. That's what we're loyal to.

It is in that spirit that I rise as the Leader of the Official Opposition and congratulate Premier McNeil on his re-election to a second term in government. I will point out that, by ancient tradition, we are kept two swords' lengths apart. I'm glad it's not two arms' lengths apart because I think he would have me on reach, Mr. Speaker.

We have had many heated battles in this House over the first term of this government. I have no doubt that in the days ahead we will have great debates on the issues that this province faces. But today we celebrate that we have a peaceful continuance of power, that we have a loyal government and a Loyal Opposition, loyal to the great democratic institution that we all serve. I just want to start with that.

I also want to congratulate the Leader of the NDP for his return to this place. You don't often see a member who takes an unpaid leave or sabbatical and then returns. We have one on our side, the member for Victoria-The Lakes. I know there have been some on all sides, but I just want to congratulate them on their return to the House.

It's pretty impressive if you look at the caucuses of all three Parties. All three Leaders and all three of our great Parties are dedicated to bringing more women into the elected life of this province. We celebrate that today. I can't help but point out in the NDP caucus that they have come so far that I actually think we need to ask the Leader of the NDP to take a look at gender diversity in his caucus now that it's so imbalanced. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, we are all mindful of the fact that hundreds of our fellow Nova Scotians worked very hard along with their own campaign teams to run for a seat in this great Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the Official Opposition - and I'm sure it's echoed on the government side - I want to thank every single Nova Scotian that put their name on a ballot regardless of Party and worked very hard to serve our province in a democratic way. They deserve a round of applause for the work that they do. (Applause)

None of us would be here without the incredible team of volunteers that sent us here so, first of all, as the MLA for Cumberland South, I do want to thank the voters of my

incredible, awesome constituency and my own campaign team led by Doug Marshall and Troy Henwood of Springhill. I owe them a great deal of thanks, as I know every member here feels the same about their own camp. (Applause)

When you operate at the level of a provincial Leader, you know how many volunteers literally give hundreds of hours a week, week after week, for a year or more leading up to an election and they also deserve our thanks. I want you to know that my political spouse - not my actual spouse, who I'll talk about in a minute - our campaign chair for the Progressive Conservative Party, Janet Fryday Dorey, is in the audience, and I want to thank her and our incredible provincial team for the work that they do. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in the hour that I have, I just want to also thank all the members here for getting themselves elected, whichever Party they're in, for stepping up, for putting their careers on hold, their family time sometimes suffers to serve their political Party, to serve the people of Nova Scotia in their constituency and here as well.

I'm particularly proud that we have seven new Progressive Conservative Party MLAs that are sitting in this House for the first time, and I am honoured to have them join our team. I know I shouldn't do this, but I want to single out two for a reason that will become obvious. I am very proud of the member for Cape Breton-Richmond who is with her father today, who passed away yesterday and for whom the memorial is coming up. She is serving her family. It is a reminder, a sad reminder, that at the end of the day with all the great issues, we are all people. We all have our families, and we all sometimes feel the highs and lows of family life.

The member for Victoria-The Lakes as well - his wife lost her father, Mr. Speaker. I do want to recognize that he is where he should be today: with his family, tending to the service and the requirements there. I want to assure the members on the government side that both of them will be here vigorous and ready to go as soon as the House commences its business next week.

I think I still have 50 minutes or so left, but I just want to address the Throne Speech briefly. When an election is concluded and the government comes forward with a new Speech from the Throne, it is quite right that the hopes for change are high among the people of the province, that the expectations are raised, and that we're going to see real results and we're going to see real action on the problems that we face.

For us, we are very focused on health care, on primary health, on family doctors for every Nova Scotian in every region of Nova Scotia. For us, we are very focused on mental health and getting supports to every family that has a member of their family suffering from mental illness and their caregivers to make sure that they get the help that they need. For us, we want to see a real plan for the economy, for jobs and growth, and to get the cost of living and taxes down in this province so families can stay and prosper.

As I look at the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but conclude that there is a great disappointment that will be felt as Nova Scotians see this speech. Yes, it has the usual lofty rhetoric but it falls far short in actual action to make things better. It is a document completely lacking in any vision for a brighter or more prosperous future or a more healthy future for this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier himself has already foretold to Nova Scotians that they should lower their expectations, even on something as important as a new cyberbullying Act which we know will come to this House in this session. The Premier has told the people of Nova Scotia not to expect too much on an issue as important as protecting Nova Scotians, particularly young Nova Scotians, from the danger and peril of cyberbullying.

The lowering of expectations has already started, Mr. Speaker, and that is a shame. In a province that is crying out for more doctors, the Throne Speech contains the same old rehashed promises that they will be more flexible. Nova Scotians know they need more than just flexibility, they need a real recruitment plan and real investments to bring the number of doctors to this province that Nova Scotians deserve.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of mental health, the Throne Speech makes one mention to acknowledge that it's a problem and then never speaks of it again. That is not acceptable to the one in five Nova Scotia families who have a member suffering from mental illness who want to know they are going to get the counselling they need, who deserve to have the modern medicines that can help people live productive lives with mental illness, they deserve far more than the one little mention that this Throne Speech gave today.

For all those Nova Scotia families who are working hard and paying their taxes, as high as they are, and are hoping for a break, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that gives with one hand and takes away with the other. They trumpet their tax cut, but the Throne Speech is actually silent on the cap-and-trade, carbon-pricing scheme that this government has committed to bringing in in this very session. They are so ashamed of it that they won't even mention it in the Throne Speech, but that is going to cost Nova Scotia family budgets far more than the modest tax cut that the Premier printed in the Throne Speech today.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, it is the Fall and we're reminded of that old Charlie Brown cartoon where every year Lucy convinces him to try and kick that football one more time. Just like Lucy, this government has teed up the football of political promises once again but all Nova Scotians know the dashed hopes that are ahead when it inevitably gets yanked away. In case anyone has any doubt on that side, I can only remind them that when we were here the last time around, it was this government, in writing, on video, that promised the Nova Scotia film industry that they would extend the Film Tax Credit for five years, only to yank it away in the first budget after. It was this government that promised the last time around that every Nova Scotian would have a family doctor, where today 40,000 more families go without a family doctor than when that promise was made.

Mr. Speaker, with those few gracious remarks, I will move that we adjourn debate for today and I look forward to continuing with my analysis of the Throne Speech when we reconvene tomorrow. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, thank you. At the conclusion of this session today I want to invite all members, members of the gallery and those who are outside, to the Red Room for an afternoon celebration that you've been so gracious to put on.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government business for today. The House will resume tomorrow, Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Following the daily routine we will move to the Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.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 at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 3:00 p.m.]