



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

Sixty-third General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Chuck Porter, Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin with the daily routine, the topic for the Adjournment debate this evening under Rule 5(5), as submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre, is:

Therefore be it resolved that the government's disregard of the right to collectively bargain, demonstrated by Bill No. 148, will negatively impact the front-line workers who support our health and education systems, and other important services.

That's late debate this evening. We'll now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 346

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

Whereas October 11th is International Day of the Girl, a time to focus on issues concerning gender equality facing young women all over the world; and

Whereas this year's theme is Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030, promoting programs and initiatives for young women to take on their unique challenges and harness their potential; and

Whereas a group of young women from East Preston started the Young Women of Excellence initiative to discuss issues important to them and their community, and they will be heading to Ottawa in November to share their perspective on the national stage;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly encourage all young women to become leaders in their communities, and wish the Young Women of Excellence of East Preston great success as they continue to speak out for equality and help build a better future for all women and girls in Nova Scotia.

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 Acadian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 347

HON. LENA DIAB: Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure je demanderais l'adoption de la motion suivante:

Attendu que le 28 juin, 2017, est la date à laquelle l'honorable Arthur Joseph LeBlanc a prêté le serment d'office comme 33^e lieutenant-gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Écosse depuis la Confédération; et

Attendu qu'en son honneur Arthur Joseph LeBlanc est né dans la communauté acadienne d'Arichat-Ouest dans le comté de Richmond; et

Attendu que la communauté acadienne et francophone est reconnue par la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse comme une partie intégrante et fondamentale de son identité collective, contribuant grandement à faire de la Nouvelle-Écosse une province forte, diversifiée, et dynamique;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour féliciter son honneur Arthur Joseph LeBlanc pour la réalisation historique d'être devenu le premier lieutenant-gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Écosse de descendance acadienne.

Monsieur le Président, je demande l'adoption de cette motion sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas on June 28, 2017, the Honourable Arthur Joseph LeBlanc took the Oath of Office as Nova Scotia's 33rd Lieutenant Governor since Confederation; and

Whereas His Honour, Arthur Joseph LeBlanc was born in the Acadian community of West Arichat, Richmond County; and

Whereas the Acadian and Francophone community is recognized by the Province of Nova Scotia as an integral and fundamental part of its collective identity, contributing greatly to making Nova Scotia a strong, diverse, and dynamic province;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating His Honour on the historic achievement of becoming the first Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia of Acadian descent.

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 Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 348

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

Whereas the month of October marks International Walk to School Month; and

Whereas this encourages children, parents, school teachers, and community leaders to be part of a global event and to celebrate many benefits of walking; and

Whereas walking or wheeling to school or creating a “walking school bus” is positive for physical activity, the environment, safety, and fun;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this Legislature recognize October as International Walk to School Month.

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 Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 349

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

Whereas this morning I was honoured to meet John E. Peller as he shared his family’s immigration story during the Breakfast with a Fascinating Canadian Speakers Series at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; and

Whereas Mr. Peller is the third-generation leader of Andrew Peller Limited, the largest Canadian-owned winery in the country, which has had a significant influence on the wine industry both in Nova Scotia and in Canada; and

Whereas this business was built by the grandfather of Mr. Peller, an immigrant from Hungary, with a dream of building a business of premium quality wines;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in acknowledging the hope, determination, and success of Mr. Peller's grandfather, his father, and himself, as immigrants and business leaders and congratulating the Peller family for growing and continuing his legacy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: Seated in the galleries today, we have some people that are here in support of proclaiming October 15th as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day and I'd like to say their names and they can stand and collectively, at the end, receive the welcome of the House. We have Paula Harmon, Raylene MacPherson, Adam Morse, Natalie Brown, Jan Ferguson, Jan Densmore, Neil and Matt Densmore, Dana Rennie, and Geoff Walford.

They've come from near and far: Berwick, Bridgewater, Pictou County and, also, here in the city. I ask the House to give them a warm reception. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 38 - Entitled an Act Respecting Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness. (Mr. Tim Houston)

Bill No. 39 - Entitled an Act Respecting Certain Financial Measures. (Hon. Karen Casey)

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

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, may I have permission to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. DUNN: In the east gallery are members of the Pictou County Injured Workers Association and I'll ask the members to stand when I mention their names: Mary Lloyd, the president; Larry Maloney, vice-president; Mary Kellogg, director; and members Jimmy Fitzpatrick, David Creed, and Ben Hines.

I'd ask the House collectively if they would welcome these members to the House. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

Bill No. 40 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Workers' Compensation Act. (Hon. Pat Dunn)

Bill No. 41 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 87 of the Acts of 1948. The Digby Water Commission Act. (Mr. Gordon Wilson)

Bill No. 42 - Entitled an Act Respecting Osteopaths. (Ms. Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

BYERS, CONRAD: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: On Sunday, October 15th, friends and family of the late Conrad Byers will gather at Ottawa-House-by-the-Sea to launch his new book, *I Saw One Ship Come Sailing In: A Parrsboro Christmas Story*. They will also reflect on the remarkable life of Con Byers, who passed on September 21st at the age of 74.

Con Byers was a teacher, a coastal marine captain, an historian, and a community builder. For these reasons, and many more, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his service to Canada. Con was instrumental in refurbishing Ottawa House Museum; he helped refloat the Kipawo ferry and brought it to Parrsboro to establish the Ship's Company Theatre; and he was a big part of the Age of Sail Heritage Centre as well.

By mining the rich history of the area, Conrad Byers changed the face of Parrsboro. He will be missed by many of his fellow town citizens, at home and around the world.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

NDP (N.S.): WOMEN REPRESENTATION - HISTORIC

MR. GARY BURRILL: I rise today to acknowledge a significant historical fact which I have stated in this House before, but which I think deserves mention again in the context of Women's History Month.

On May 30th this year, seven candidates of the New Democratic Party were elected as MLAs and, of these seven, five are women. This gives the NDP caucus the great designation of having the highest proportion of women of any caucus of a Party with official Party status in all of Canadian history. The MLAs for Dartmouth North, Dartmouth South, Cape Breton Centre, Halifax Needham, and Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River were elected from a roster of NDP candidates, nearly 50 per cent of whom are women.

The achievement of near gender parity in our field of candidates was the result of the Party's conscious effort to encourage and support women in running for office. Not only do these five women comprise 71 per cent of the Nova Scotia NDP caucus, they represent 10 per cent - imagine, a whole 10 per cent - of all women ever elected to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a member of the two-person male minority of the Nova Scotia NDP caucus and to observe this great moment in the history of our province.

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

CORBIN, BARBARA: SS ATLANTIC DONATION - THANK

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to thank Barbara Corbin for her generosity.

Almost a century and a half after one of Nova Scotia's worst shipwrecks, *SS Atlantic*, the basements, attics, and sheds of the province are still yielding important artifacts from the ship. Barbara Corbin was given such a treasure that hung for many years over her fireplace in the family home in Indian Harbour, a beautiful 11-foot-long nameplate called a "quarter board," which would have identified *SS Atlantic* while she was in port.

On July 7, 2017, Barbara generously donated the nameplate to the *SS Atlantic* Heritage Park and Museum in Terence Bay where it will be enjoyed by visitors from all over for many years to come.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Barbara for her kindness in sharing this provincial treasure with the community and the world.

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

SNOW, SANDY - GLACE BAY WALL OF FAME: INDUCTION - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mr. Sandy Snow from Donkin who was recently inducted into the Glace Bay Wall of Fame. Sandy Snow was scouted by the Detroit Red Wings and played three games with the NHL team.

He also played with numerous other professional hockey teams including the Phoenix Roadrunners and the Flint Generals. He scored 111 goals and 138 assists during his professional career. He was also named the Rookie of the Year in 1964-65 with the Hamilton Red Wings.

I am proud to congratulate Sandy Snow for being inducted into the Glace Bay Wall of Fame. It is indeed an honour for the community of Donkin and surrounding areas. We are all proud of Sandy.

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

FRANK MAGAZINE: CARTOON DEPICTION - DENOUNCE

MS. LENORE ZANN: I would like to thank all those who made phone calls and wrote emails over the past few days to denounce *Frank* magazine's racist caricature of Halifax Poet Laureate, teacher, and human rights activist El Jones. It appears our communal outrage and actions have been effective. The managing editor of *Frank's*

Atlantic Region was forced to apologize to readers on Tuesday. And the cartoon is being modified by the cartoonist after being roundly denounced by the public.

The racist image of Jones ignited a firestorm of angry social media commentary over the weekend, including from me, with a number of people referring to it as similar to other racist depictions of African Americans appearing in periodicals during the 1800s. The cartoon has also resulted in a boycott campaign in which many of us began calling for stores, including Sobeys, to pull the latest issue off the shelves and stop selling the magazine published by Parker Rudderham.

It appears our efforts have been successful for now. This is an example of how we must all remain vigilant that racist stereotypes are called out and curtailed as soon as they raise their ugly heads in Nova Scotia.

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

FRANCIS, RYAN: C.B. SCREAMING EAGLES - CONGRATS.

MR. BILL HORNE: On August 31st, the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles released their 2017-18 roster. Ryan Francis from Beaver Bank, who turns 16 this December, earned a spot on the roster and his first training camp with the club.

Ryan was drafted in this year's entry draft in the second round, 21st overall. It was Ryan's speed, skill, and work ethic that earned him a spot on the Screaming Eagles roster. I am happy to announce that Ryan opened the scoring for the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles in the team's home opener in Centre 200.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ryan.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MURRAY, ANNIKA: HIGHLAND DANCING COMP. - RECOGNIZE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Annika Murray from Greenhill who in August travelled to Scotland to compete on the world level in Highland dancing. Annika, who has been dancing since age six placed first in fling, sword, laddie and barracks, just to name a few. She also competed in the Premier 12 Scottish championship with 58 other girls. She took the 4th place medal in that Sean Triubhus. What an amazing experience and accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Annika Murray and wish her much success in her future competitions as a Highland dancer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

BEST, CARRIE: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - RECOGNIZE

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Last week in this House, on Wrongful Conviction Day I spoke about the legacy of Viola Desmond who bravely stood against racial segregation and was punished for her actions, becoming a leader and symbol in the movement for racial justice and human rights.

As part of Women's History Month, I want to recognize another Nova Scotian woman whose story is connected to that of Viola Desmond. Carrie Best was born in New Glasgow and in 1943, she and her son James were arrested while trying to watch a movie at the Roseland Theatre. They fought the charges and challenged the theatre's segregation policy but their case was unsuccessful. Not one to give up, Carrie went on to found *The Clarion*, the province's first African Nova Scotian-owned newspaper. It spoke truth to power, and told stories of black lives, and it was that newspaper that broke Viola Desmond's now-famous story.

Carrie Best had a distinguished career as a journalist, published her autobiography, and received the Order of Canada, and the Order of Nova Scotia. Let's remember her as an important woman in our province's history.

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

FRASER, MALCOLM: INNOVACORP APPOINT. - CONGRATS,

MR. HUGH MACKAY: I rise to congratulate Mr. Malcolm Fraser. On August 2nd of this year, the Innovacorp board of directors announced the appointment of Malcolm Fraser as the organization's new president and chief executive officer, a role he began on October 2nd.

Innovacorp is Nova Scotia's early-stage venture capital organization. It works to find, fund, and foster innovative Nova Scotian start-ups. Mr. Fraser is an ideal leader for Innovacorp. He has been a leader in Canada's digital sector for the last 20 years, earning recognition, and awards, for innovation, management, and community leadership.

He has recently been the board chair at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Research Committee chair at Destination Canada, a board member with the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, and the Sobey Art Foundation, and past chair of Digital Nova Scotia.

I ask the members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Malcolm Fraser on his new appointment to lead Innovacorp, and take this organization to the next level.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

FITZPATRICK, DEANNE: AMHERST ENTREPRENEUR - SALUTE

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I stand today to recognize Deanne Fitzpatrick, a world-renowned rug-hooker, writer, and long-time local entrepreneur in the Cumberland North community.

Deanne has a rug-hooking studio in downtown Amherst, where she showcases her one-of-a-kind hooked rugs, creates rug-hooking kits, patterns, hosts workshops and sells supplies. It is there in that warm, colourful space that she writes her books on rug-hooking and creates designs for kits, and patterns. Deanne is a part of Amherst's downtown history, and her strength, dedication, and purpose will remain in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Deanne brings her positive spirit, and creative arts to our community, and connects with other artisans on a global scale. I am proud to call her a friend, fellow businesswoman, and a strong female role model.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

JOE, RITA: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - RECOGNIZE

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Women's History Month is a time to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of women throughout our province's history. Today I'd like to recognize a woman whose words and songs have left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness.

Rita Joe was a Mi'kmaq woman, born in Whycocomagh, Cape Breton, and orphaned in 1942. She attended the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, where, along with so many indigenous children, she was subjected to cultural assimilation and a range of other traumas.

Rita Joe resisted this assimilation, and wrote poems and songs about her experiences. Her words honoured and celebrated Mi'kmaq culture, and she became known as the poet laureate of the Mi'kmaq people, publishing seven books and receiving national recognition, including the Order of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years after her death, let us remember Rita Joe, who once wrote the words, "I lost my talk." May we remember her words, and the important truths they told, as we work towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

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

MATTHEWS, QUAKE: JUNO HONOUR - CELEBRATE

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I rise today to recognize Quake Mathews, a local rapper who has been awarded the title of the 2018 Allan Slaight JUNO Awards Master Class winner.

Quake was born and raised in Fairview, Nova Scotia with a passion for creating music. When he was just a young teen, he began writing his own songs, which would later become hit tracks loved by many.

Not only has he had the pleasure of being selected for this award, he was also featured on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Summer 2017 Spotify Music Playlist, an incredible accomplishment for an unsigned musician. In fact, his song Confessions, featuring another remarkably talented group, Neon Dreams, became a fast favourite of many this summer, thanks to that exposure.

I'd like to ask the members of this Assembly to join me in celebrating Quake - otherwise known as Matthew Arab's Struggle - and wish him only the absolute best in the future. We're all very proud.

[1:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

DOOKS, STEVE: A DIFFERENT STAGE OF MIND - RECOGNIZE

MR. TIM HALMAN: Every year, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia puts on a fundraiser called A Different Stage of Mind. I rise today to recognize the long-time musical director of this fundraiser, Mr. Steve Dooks.

As musical director, Steve has the responsibility of taking prominent community members, and turning them into skilled, musical performers in a very short period of time. A versatile career musician, no one who meets Steve can deny that he is an entertainer on and off the stage.

I applaud Steve for his continued commitment to this fundraiser and to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WOMEN'S RIGHTS: GENDER BARRIER - REMOVE

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, last Friday I brought attention to the role of women in advancing workers' rights, women's rights and the principles of social justice

and equity throughout our province's history. Our caucus's position in favour of a \$15 minimum wage is now very well known. What some in this House may not know is the origin of wage legislation in Nova Scotia and the critical role women played in bringing about this important change.

As a segment of the workforce, women throughout history have been subjected to gendered forms of economic exploitation. The road to women's participation in the paid economy has often been paved with low wages, unpaid work, harassment, discrimination and violence. It was women's precarious economic situation that prompted the introduction of wage legislation. Even then, women and men earned separate minimum wages in Nova Scotia until they were equalized in 1972.

Mr. Speaker, today in our province, women's voices are at the centre of the citizen groundswell calling for a \$15 minimum wage. This is a change that would disproportionately benefit women. It's time that our province takes the next step towards removing gender as an economic barrier.

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

**GLEN ARBOUR GOLF COURSE – HAMMONDS PLAINS COMMUN.:
ANCHOR - RECOGNIZE**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Mike DeYoung, Sue Kessler and the Glen Arbour Golf Course in Hammonds Plains. This expertly-designed course opened in 1999 and quickly became an anchor in our community. Winding around three lakes with sculpted bent grass fairways, paved car paths and a fully manicured practice facility, this course is a golfer's delight. It was recognized by *Score* magazine as one of Canada's finest facilities, a top 20 ranking in SCOREGolf Top 100, and a 4.5-star rating by *Golf Digest*.

They have hosted the BMO Canadian Women's Open, the inaugural Wayne Gretzky and Friends Invitational, the TELUS World Skins Game. Glen Arbour is an exceptional thing to have in our community. I would ask all members of the House to take a moment to recognize the work that is done there, to maintain and ensure that that is an anchor within the Hammonds Plains community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HRSB - UNIFIED SPORTS: STUDENT PARTICIPANTS - RECOGNIZE

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I rise today, I want to thank the students at some local high schools, Millwood High in Sackville and Lockview High, all of whom recently participated in a tournament for Unified Sports. Unified Sports is a peer mentoring initiative that pairs

students experiencing intellectual difficulties with other students who provide them with social interactions while developing basketball skills.

This student-led initiative was the first of its kind in the Halifax Regional School Board. It brought together students for a day, for fun and lighthearted competition where the score didn't matter in the end.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the student participants and the volunteers in this worthwhile program.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DUCKWORTH, MURIEL - LEGACY

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, for Women's History Month I'd like to speak to the legacy of Muriel Duckworth, a leader in the peace and feminist movements and a remarkable Nova Scotian. Muriel was known primarily for her role in Voice of Women, organizing anti-war demonstrations in the 1960s and early 1970s. She was a fierce critic of militarism, especially its perpetuation of violence against women and children and its role in exacerbating poverty and economic inequality. She famously stated that war is stupid, an example of her clear analysis and deep conviction.

Muriel's interest was not just at the global scale, she was an activist for social and economic justice here at home and a Halifax Raging Grannie. She ran as provincial candidate for the NDP in 1974 and in 1978, making her the first woman ever to run for a seat in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, let us hold up the legacy of Muriel Duckworth, who lived to be 100 years old it should be noted, as a standard to which we should measure our own efforts to work towards a more just, peaceful, equitable and sustainable world.

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

MASKWA AQUATIC CLUB: ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Maskwa Aquatic Club for their recent accomplishment and contributions to the community. Maskwa Aquatic Club, located on the beautiful Kearney Lake, has put our community of Clayton Park West on the map nationally. The club has won nationals two years in a row, as well as four gold, three silver and two bronze medals in canoe and paddling.

Maskwa is home to many aspiring young athletes and each day their coaches and athletes train tirelessly to continue their long streak of wins. This once small club has become a home for many people in the community. Not only does the club offer canoe and

paddling lessons but also swimming and summer camps for youth. Without the support of their coaches and parents, these athletes would not be as successful as they are today. A tremendous amount of work goes into making Maskwa the club that it is, and it does not go unnoticed by fellow community members.

I ask that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Maskwa Aquatic Club on their victory. We wish them all the best in their future competitions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

BOND, SUSIE/JEFF: DAUGHTER - BIRTH CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to congratulate the special project assistant from my office, Ms. Susie Bond, who on October 5, 2017, at 1:15 in the morning, gave birth to her second daughter, Zeya Marion Baker. Zeya weighed in at eight pounds, six ounces, and 19.5 inches long.

I'm pleased to announce that mother, father, big sister Zaxy, and new baby Zeya are doing well, and I wish to congratulate Susie and Jeff and grandparents Keith and Joanne Bond on the addition of Zeya to their family.

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

STATUS OF WOMEN, ADV. COUNC.: ANNIV. (40th) – CONGRATS.

MS. LENORE ZANN: I rise today to recognize the Day of the Girl and Women's History Month, and I can't think of any better way than to once again recognize the record number of 17 women elected this year, 2017, to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. (Applause) I want to congratulate each and every one of them.

I would also like to congratulate the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women on their 40th Anniversary. Women's centres are so important - an important part of our province's history. They've helped transform women's lives and the lives of entire communities through advocating against sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia, and advocating for poverty reduction and economic justice. They have taken a lead role in establishing sexual assault services in areas that previously had little support for victims and survivors.

We're with you in sisterhood and solidarity. Here's to the Day of the Girl.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we move on, all three caucuses today are running over their one minute. Not that the statements aren't great - they are, and they're

very important - but I would ask you to be cognizant of the Rules of the House. They are supposed to be within a one-minute time frame.

The honourable member for Kings South.

**DRAHOS, TERRY ET AL:
UNCOMMON COMMON ART ANNIV. (10th) - CONGRATS.**

MR. KEITH IRVING: No pressure, Mr. Speaker.

For the past 10 years, Uncommon Common Art has added whimsical and thought-provoking visual art pieces to the landscape of Kings County, providing residents and visitors alike the rare opportunity to experience public art in the natural beauty of rural Nova Scotia. Uncommon Common Art installations enrich the lives of those who discover them, and their presence contributes greatly to the vibrancy, health, and economies of our communities.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Creative Director Terry Drahos and all of the amazing artists and volunteers who have been involved over the years on the 10th Anniversary of Uncommon Common Art, and in thanking them for their commitment to bringing art out of the museums and galleries and making it accessible to all citizens.

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

CRITCHLEY, STUART ET AL: SYDNEY MINES HERITAGE SOC. - THANK

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to congratulate Stuart Critchley and the staff of the Sydney Mines Heritage Society.

The society has three separate museums, all featuring different things such as heritage, sports, and fossils. Stuart is the curator of the society and believes that the museums are an important part of the community, providing visitors with a better understanding of the Town of Sydney Mines. Attendance peaked at over 10,000 people last year, with people coming from all over the world to visit a world-class fossil centre.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in these museums for their countless hours of hard work that have created a top-drawer view into the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HALIFAX WOMEN'S HIST. SOC.: EFFORTS - RECOGNIZE

MS. LISA ROBERTS: On this International Day of the Girl, and in this month of Women's History, I'd like to recognize the efforts of the Halifax Women's History Society. After years of fundraising and organizing, the society will unveil the first full-size bronze statue of women in Halifax next month.

"The Volunteers," designed by artist Marlene Hilton Moore and chosen through a national competition, will remember the contributions of women during the Second World War. It is actually composed of three different figures: an older woman, seated, who is knitting for soldiers overseas; an African Nova Scotian woman carrying food to feed soldiers at a canteen; and a girl pulling a wagon of salvaged materials.

I often have conversations about the public art and monuments in our city, especially when I am with my children. I look forward to the different conversations that the volunteers will provoke, and I'm grateful to the Halifax Women's History Society for their efforts.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier on an introduction.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I want to thank the Opposition Parties for allowing me to make a couple of introductions. I want to apologize to the member for Kings South for walking into his camera shot, and I want to thank the honourable members opposite for reminding me to heed the protocol in this place.

I do want to recognize three members who are in the east gallery, from my constituency of Annapolis. They are lifelong educators and great community builders, all of whom have played a significant role in the lives of generations of young people who grew up in the Bridgetown area and continue to make a huge impact on the social fabric of our community into retirement: Len MacDonald, Art Marshall, and Bill Hirtle.

Len was my elementary school principal. (Applause) When I was leaving Grade 6, I thought I was leaving him behind, but my sister brought him home (Laughter) and he has been an important part of our family through ups and downs. I had the great fortune of being in his house with my sister Elaine on Sunday, celebrating Thanksgiving with his large family of six children and I think 14 grandchildren. There is never enough, so he continues to invite us into that environment. Leonard has been an important part of my personal life.

I also want to recognize Art Marshall, who was the vice-principal of the high school when I was in Grade 12 as student council president. He was also the first athletic coach who convinced me maybe I should leave the ice surface and go to the gymnasium, into Grade 9 volleyball. We had great success.

Art has been a continued community builder for us as a community member. Art, as you continue down this most recent journey, you may be in some points of that journey on your own. I hope you realize and feel the fact that there is an entire community surrounding with you and in your presence as you go down that journey and are there to help support you in any way they can.

Mr. Bill Hirtle was my high school principal. He puts the first Tory sign up in the riding of Annapolis in every election. (Applause) He has been a lifelong educator. We were at the most recent announcement of the opening of the new high school that all three gentlemen would have been part of. Mr. Hirtle reminded me that he was there when Henry Hicks and Angus L Macdonald opened the school that was now the current high school in Bridgetown.

What wasn't lost on me, Bill, and I haven't told you this personally, but I'll tell you in front of all members of this House, is that building, like the current one, is bricks and mortar and wood and all kinds of other fabric. What happened inside of it, what has made that building what it was, is a part of your legacy. You continue to build a community.

That school has had four Rhodes Scholars, one of whom went on to be Premier - and it wasn't me. For small schools across this province, it has more provincial titles than any other school in the history of this province. That has been by your legacy and the way that you continue to build it that when young people walked into that school, they recognized it was a privilege to be in there. You made sure each and every day that each of us felt the important role that we play. One of the things that you have continued to do in your long years of retirement, whether it's at the Legion service reading off the names of those brave people from our community who lost their lives or what you continue to do to this day with the Lions Club - you are building our community.

One of the things for our family that many people who are in this House don't know you were part of - in 1973 when our father died, my mother was left with 18-month-old twin boys, an 18-year-old boy, a bunch of kids in between, and a few outside. She had no driver's licence and no education. You were the instructor of the business class that was at that high school. Through your generosity and willingness to step outside the traditional educational box, you allowed homework to come home with my sister Elaine for my mother to do her work. She would send it back to your knowledge with a few crayon markings on it from the younger kids. You would grade those and because of that, it gave her the confidence to take her next journey, which was at the United Elastic plant and then finally take her place as the first female sheriff in Canada. Your willingness to step outside the educational box had a huge impact on our family and on my life.

The three men who are standing in this gallery are great examples of what it is to be a true man and leader in our communities, and great examples for young people all across this province by giving true examples for the young men in the Community of

Bridgetown and surrounding area who had the great fortune of having their lives connected to yours.

I ask you to rise and I ask this House to give you a great warm welcome. (Standing Ovation)

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. Welcome, gentlemen, to the House this afternoon.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

ARGYLE ABUPTIC FESTIVAL: ORGANIZERS - CONGRATS.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Argyle Abuptic Festival turned 30 this year. Organizers brought back the parade, held a concert, had sailboat races, and had the obligatory Nova Scotia cancelled fireworks. The parade started from the old Argyle school to Spinney's garage, and the theme was "You Know You Are Canadian When . . ."

There were food events sponsored throughout, which included a barbecue chicken supper, lobster boil, as well as pie sales.

Please join me in congratulating the Argyle Abuptic Festival and its many organizers for bringing this festival back to its former glory, and wish them good luck in the years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

HALPERN, EMMA - EQUITY OFFICER: TIRELESS EFFORTS - CELEBRATE

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, on this day that has been named by the UN as the International Day of the Girl, I rise to celebrate Dartmouth South resident Emma Halpern.

Currently the Officer of Equity and Access to Justice at the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Emma is one of *Chatelaine's* 2012 Women of the Year; a pioneer in using the restorative approach in Nova Scotia's schools; a long-time Elizabeth Fry Society volunteer; and announced today as the new Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Nova Scotia.

The UN recognizes the need to break cycles of poverty and victimhood for young women and girls as key to making a difference. Emma has been working tirelessly in this

area for years in the places where help is needed the most - schools, prisons and marginalized communities where assistance is hard to come by.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this House to join me in celebrating the work of Emma Halpern and the many other people in our communities who work tirelessly to protect the rights of women and girls in order to effectively break the cycles of poverty and victimhood.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

D'ENTREMONT, JULIAN: THE GREAT CAN. BAKING SHOW - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, The Great Canadian Baking Show will premiere on November 1st on the CBC.

The show will bring together 10 amateur bakers from all across Canada to compete in a series of culinary challenges. Each week the competitor who shows the most skill, creativity, and finesse will be named Star Baker, and one contestant will be sent home until only three finalists are left vying for The Great Canadian Baking Show title.

Julian D'Entremont has been selected as one of the show's 10 contestants. Julian is a contractor who lives in Halifax and who was born and raised in Yarmouth. He has been baking since he was a child, after learning how to bake from his grandmothers. Julian is not just the only contestant on the show from Nova Scotia but the only contestant from the Atlantic Provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this House to join me in congratulating Yarmouth's Julian D'Entremont on this wonderful opportunity and to wish him the very best of luck as he competes on The Great Canadian Baking Show.

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

INTL. DAY OF THE GIRL - EMPOWER GIRLS

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, as mentioned before, today is International Day of the Girl. It was created to recognize and appreciate how hard it can be to be a girl and to empower women and girls everywhere.

This year's theme is EmPOWER Girls - before, during and after conflict in particular. We know that a girl's source of power, energy and creativity can be fostered or suppressed and that there are millions affected by conflict and disaster.

Today I stand in place supporting and advocating for the beginning of the United Nations' year-long effort to spur global attention and action to the challenges and opportunities facing girls both before, during, and after crises. We have seen a number of

new bills presented in this sitting of the Legislature, including one today by the honourable member for Pictou East, as well as by the extraordinary number of female candidates in the May election.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibility lies with each elected official here, every citizen in the province - locally, nationally and internationally, on every mother, father, sister or brother, to empower the lives of girls everywhere. Thank you.

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

KIRK, DR. EMILY J.: BOOK PUBLICATION - CONGRATS.

MR. GARY BURRILL: I wish today to recognize Halifax resident and Dalhousie University post-doctoral fellow Dr. Emily J. Kirk on the launch last week of her newest book, *Cuba's Gay Revolution: Normalizing Sexual Diversity through a Health-Based Approach*, published by Lexington Press.

Cuba's gay revolution is the result of Kirk's exciting new study of Cuba's unique health-based approach to improving LGBTQ rights. The book examines the contributions of leaders in the normalization of sexual diversity, such as the Federation of Cuban Women and the National Centre of Sexual Education.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Kirk on this publication and look forward to her future work as she continues to pursue research in the areas of global health, Latin American development and South-South co-operation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**EISNER, KATHERINE/MOSHER, EVA/ROGERS, MEGAN:
HEROIC ACTION - THANK**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, how appropriate that on the International Day of the Girl that I rise to acknowledge the quick thinking and heroism of three local high school students. Katherine Eisner, Eva Mosher and Megan Rogers saved the life of Paul Raymond on March 27th. The Park View Education Centre students happened to be driving by the area where Paul was eating his lunch at the time he went into cardiac arrest. Without question, the quick-thinking of Katherine, Eva and Megan saved Paul's life. They called 911 and began CPR on the father of two, until paramedics arrived.

I would ask members of this House of Assembly to please join me in thanking Katherine Eisner, Eva Mosher and Megan Rogers for their quick thinking and heroic actions. The world needs more people like them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ST. PETER'S: PIRATE DAYS (SEPT. 14-17) - BEST WISHES

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of a group of volunteers in the community of St. Peter's. From September 14th until September 17th, St. Peter's became a town full of pirates while hosting the annual St. Peter's Pirate Days festival. The festival involves many different events in the community for all ages. Various activities include trivia events, parades, fireworks, markets and fun for children and adults alike.

In addition to being an economic boost to the local community, St. Peter's Pirate Days is becoming an annual event that has not only included local residents of all ages, but tourists from all over the province. I wish all the organizers and volunteers continued success with this fun and colourful annual event.

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

MACPHERSON, CHRISTINE (TUDDY): BIRTHDAY (95th) - CONGRATS.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Christine "Tuddy" MacPherson who was born on October 19, 1927, in New Waterford and has celebrated her 90th birthday on Saturday. She is the oldest of nine children and had to quit school in Grade 6 to take care of her younger siblings, due to her mother's health issues. She married Boyd MacIntyre in 1952. He passed away in 1974, leaving her to raise six kids on her own. She has since lost one son, a son-in-law and her only brother. She is a very strong woman who has left a legacy for her 11 grandchildren, four great-granddaughters and another great-grandchild on the way. She also makes remarkable home-made bread, toasted and a good cup of tea.

Her birthday was celebrated Saturday evening with lots of family and friends and of course lots of music. Knowing Tuddy and her active lifestyle, she was probably the last to leave the party. Happy 90th birthday, Tuddy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HICKS, HANNAH: ART WORK - THANK

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, on this International Day of the Girl, I'd like to tell the House about a teenage constituent of mine who is a talented artist and dancer. Hannah Hicks loves singing; she takes voice lessons. She is involved in Special Olympics, rhythmic gymnastics and she likes to play golf. Hannah creates beautiful paintings with vibrant colours that catch people's attention. The most common comment about her art is that it makes people happy.

For many years Hannah has sold her art at local fairs and at the L'Arche Art Show and Sale. Most recently, she attended the Maritime Gift Show where she presented her cards to gift shops and stores throughout the Maritimes. Now more stores in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are carrying her art, including our own provincial Protocol Office. I'd like to encourage my honourable colleagues to check out her work there. I'd also ask the members of this House of Assembly to please join me in thanking Hannah for bringing joy to our community through her art work. I wish her continued success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

LOCKE, STEVE: GOLF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: There are many golfing stories coming out of Brookfield this past summer. After winning the Nova Scotia Senior Men's title in August, Brookfield resident Steve Locke moved on to represent his province at the 72-hole Canadian Men's Senior Championship in Quebec in September. With 30 years of golfing experience, the 13-time winner of the Men's Club Championship in Brookfield, was honoured to join Dean Woodman and Steve Ward as part of Team Nova Scotia. Familiar with competing at the national level for Men's Fastpitch, this was Mr. Locke's first national golf tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Steve Locke on his tremendous accomplishment and for proudly representing this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: May I make an introduction, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Please do.

MR. DELOREY: In the east gallery, I would just like to direct members' attention, and I would ask these individuals to stand to receive the warm welcome of the House: Bridget Burgess and Andrew Blanchette. Bridget, if you look closely at her right hand, sports a particular ring that's well known in the Province of Nova Scotia. They're first-time visitors to the Legislature. Both of them work at National PR and are very interested in public relations. Please give them a warm welcome to the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

N.S. POWER SCHOLARSHIPS: ANTIGONISH RECIPS. - RECOGNIZE

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Each year, Nova Scotia Power delivers over \$120,000 in scholarships to students pursuing energy-related trade and degree programs across Nova

Scotia. I would like to take the time today to recognize the recent deserving recipients from our riding of Antigonish.

Majd Al Zhouri is the recipient of an employment equity scholarship, renewable each year in the amount of \$1,500. Majd, a recent graduate of Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional and a Syrian refugee, is now enrolled in engineering at St. Francis Xavier University.

Chris Wallace and Brandon McInnis are also both recent graduates of Dr. John Hugh Gillis and were the recipients of the trade scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. Both Chris and Brandon are currently studying at the Nova Scotia Community College.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Majd, Brandon, and Chris on being selected as recipients of 2017 Nova Scotia Power scholarships and wish them the best of luck in their studies.

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

BURSEY FAMILY ET AL: DIXIE LEE RESTAURANT - CONTRIBUTION

MS. KIM MASLAND: In 1972, David and Diane Bursey opened the original Dixie Lee Family Restaurant in Liverpool. During its 20 years of operation, the restaurant was an integral part of the community, and the Burseys were very supportive of events and sport groups and were well loved. Almost 20 years after closing, Dixie Lee reopened under the management of the Burseys' son Andrew. People were ecstatic to have the opportunity to, once again, dine on that amazing chicken and fish. They lined up around the corner for three days straight.

On November 8th, the five-year anniversary of the new restaurant, Andrew will hold a customer appreciation day to say thank you for the support over the years. I would like to congratulate the Bursey family on this milestone and thank them for the contributions made to the community over the years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

BENT, KYLE: RACING DEBUT - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Every summer, racing enthusiasts across the province look forward to a new season at the Valley Raceway. Located in Melvern Square, the Valley Raceway hosts dirt track racing events from May until October, gathering large crowds of spectators and motorsport fans every second Sunday.

This season marked the racing debut of Kyle Bent of South Berwick, whose impressive performances on the track suggest a level of experience beyond his 14 years of

age. An aspiring heavy-duty mechanic, Kyle was the youngest driver during this year's racing season and was ranked as high as third place in the highly competitive four-cylinder class for his debut season.

As the MLA for Kings West, I would like to congratulate Kyle Bent on his successful debut as a competitive racing driver and wish him all the best for continued success in the seasons ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**MILNE, MARGARET/JOLLYMORE, JOSEPHINE:
PARKINSON'S SUPER WALK (PICTOU CO.) - THANK**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: The Parkinson's Super Walk in Pictou County garnered super support this year, and Margaret Milne and Josephine Jollymore couldn't have been more pleased. The dynamic duo organized the 11th annual walk, which raised over \$16,000. Both of these ladies lost their husbands to Parkinson's and have continued to belong to the support group and chair this annual fundraiser. The group consists of those who have lived with people dealing Parkinson's and some who are dealing with it first-hand and who fight the battle every day. I'm proud to call these ladies friends, and I thank them for all they did and continue to do for our community.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: CAP AND TRADE SYSTEM - REDUCTION TARGETS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. Nova Scotians are being asked to buy into a cap and trade system without any information about whether this system will actually help the environment or not. In exchange for their sacrifice, they deserve to know how much greenhouse gas emissions will go down under the cap and trade plan. How much will other atmospheric emissions go down, whether it is sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxide, or even mercury; but there's been no information shared with Nova Scotians about whether the environment will get better under the Premier's cap and trade plan.

I would like to ask the Premier if he could share with this House, what are the targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emission and other atmospheric emissions under his cap and trade plan?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to congratulate and thank all Nova Scotians, who for the last decade have been doing a tremendous job in reducing greenhouse gas across the province.

Because of them, we are leading the country in greenhouse gas reductions and it allowed us as a government to go to Ottawa to negotiate what is a made-in-Nova Scotia solution, to ensure that we were recognized for the tremendous work that businesses and individuals did over the last decade when it comes to power rates, and recognize that when they bring in some of the other issues that are going on in other Canadian provinces, that they don't impact our province in a negative way, which in turn impacts the pocket books of Nova Scotian families.

What we have been able to negotiate with the national government, is a cap and trade system which recognizes the hard work by all Nova Scotians, at the same time smoothing out the benefit of that to ensure that we do not get the sticker shock when it comes to the amount of fuel tax or other aspects of our economy.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, I am sure you have noticed there was not a single answer on environmental improvement or greenhouse gas reduction, or any reduction, in that answer. In fact, the only thing Nova Scotians know today is what the pricing will be, which is \$10 to \$50 a ton. When this government brings an environmental plan before this House, that does not have any environmental targets but only has carbon-pricing targets, it is not an environmental plan. It is a taxing plan. That is the problem.

When you bring a taxing plan before this House, people want to know what is the effect on the economy; how many jobs is that going to cost. The Premier refuses to share with Nova Scotians any environmental target. Can he at least assure them that he has done an economic impact study and they know how many jobs this will cost?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question again. I want to reassure him and tell all Nova Scotians, and thank them for the tremendous work they have been doing over the last decade, through all political Parties, when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas production here in our province. We now have 30 per cent reduction from 2005; by 2030 we will be 50 per cent reduced. We are going to continue to find savings and to reduce our greenhouse gas production.

As he would well know, we have continued to operate with and work with the national government, to ensure that the carbon tax that was put in place in British Columbia was not part of the solution for our province. We work towards ensuring that the cap and trade system in other provinces is not the solution for Nova Scotians. What we did is, we went on behalf of all Nova Scotians to continue to defend and fight for the fact that they have continually been working on this issue for over a decade. While other provinces have ignored it, Nova Scotians have been succeeding, and we want that recognized in the piece of legislation introduced yesterday, which recognizes the hard work by all Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier really wanted to thank Nova Scotians, he would be open and transparent with them about whether his cap and trade plan actually helps the environment or not or actually cost us jobs in the economy or not, but he will not do that. It is an empty thank you when the government does not want Nova Scotians to see the fine print, which is so obvious today. They don't want Nova Scotians to know whether the environment will actually get better, or whether jobs will actually be lost.

So I would like to ask the Premier, why is it that he won't share with Nova Scotians those crucial pieces of information about the environment, about jobs. Is it because they actually don't know.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to continue to remind the honourable member that we have seen job growth in the last two months in this province, we continue to see more young people choose to live and work in this province than we have for a decade. We have seen youth unemployment drop. Those are all positive signs. Not only Nova Scotians, but all Canadians recognize the value of what is happening inside this province.

The bigger question for the honourable member is, why can't he help celebrate the success of Nova Scotians and stand with their government when they go to Ottawa to defend the best interests of this province.

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

PREM. - DOCTORS N.S.: COMMENTS IN LEG. - RETRACT

MR. GARY BURILL: Last week here in the House the Premier said more than once that he was not going to allow doctors to "hoard the monies of the province." He also referred to amounts in the Doctors Nova Scotia professional support program fund as a "stash."

The use of the words "hoard" and "stash" is insulting to doctors for obvious reasons, because the clear connotation of these words is selfishness and greed. I want to ask the Premier, will he retract the use of these words, which he has used in such an imprudent way in the government's current dispute with Doctors Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank all those doctors across this province who are working in collaborative care centres, or working individually to ensure primary care access for all Nova Scotians.

Again, I want to tell the honourable member, what he's referring to is that whether it's medical costs, whether it's dental costs, whether it's malpractice insurance, all of which is paid for by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia - all of which has been paid for by the taxpayers of Nova Scotians.

What's in dispute is an additional \$4.4 million. They're not doctors, let me be clear about this, it is Doctors Nova Scotia's hoarding and stashing in their portfolio. We want that money to come back to the Nova Scotia Government so that we can invest in front-line health care services that we know Nova Scotians are requiring.

MR. BURRILL: This is an entirely unhelpful distinction, to distinguish between doctors of Nova Scotia, and Doctors Nova Scotia. A piece was written about this in the media this weekend by Dr. Don Pugsley in Truro, who took exception with the Minister of Health and Wellness having made this very same distinction. Then Doctor Pugsley went on to liken the government's current actions to those of the Liberal Government in the 1990s, whose unilateral cuts to physician payments led to the loss of many family physicians and specialists across the province.

It is not a way to reach out in negotiation to speak with these kinds of very loaded words, and so I would also ask the Premier: Would he like to reconsider what he has just said, and point out that he really does understand that the doctors of Nova Scotia and Doctors Nova Scotia are the same?

THE PREMIER: There's really a philosophical difference here. When they had an opportunity in government, what they did was they brought in every union boss you could find, and they sat around and negotiated a pay raise that this province simply could not afford to pay. So they chose to stand next to all the union leaders in this province when front-line teachers and health care workers were all being cut.

We've taken a different approach. We've invested the \$65,000,000 back in classrooms across this province. We've invested in collaborative care centres across this province. This current budget will invest in over 70 inside of this province and we presented a wage package that is affordable. What we said to every organization, every union in this province - your membership can afford to pay for their union, taxpayers need to pay for services for all Nova Scotians.

MR. BURRILL: I'm sure that the physicians of the province will be comforted by that measured and reflective response.

I want to ask the Premier about a related, but somewhat different matter. Yesterday, media reports in Cape Breton indicated that the Northside General Hospital was raising money through a Chase the Ace event. The executive director of the Northside/Harbourview Hospital Foundation made clear that each year they receive a wish list from the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and then the foundation makes purchases for the hospital, based on these requests. The items that hospital foundations like the Northside/Harbourview are fundraising for aren't multi-million-dollar upgrades but, rather, relatively simple pieces of infrastructure like patient lifts.

Does the Premier think it makes sense that while the Department of Health and Wellness underspent its budget last year by \$31,000,000, communities are having to pay for patient lifts with Chase the Ace?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the union members across this province who continue to support public infrastructure in every way they possibly can. The honourable member raises a question that I think is important in this House.

It was brought up by successive Ministers of Health and Wellness, and I think there's a number on the other side. When the capital budget is underspent, it raises a simple question - why?

We know there are times when we've budgeted stuff, that either the construction hasn't happened in that time, piece of equipment haven't arrived in that current budget year, but that money was actually spent on that equipment, and we'll continue to make those investments.

The honourable member also raises the question, about whether or not people understood the position that I have. One thing that I am very proud of, in the last four years of being the Premier of this province, I've been very direct and honest with Nova Scotians, and they've responded in an honest, positive way.

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

PREM.: COBEQUID PASS TOLL - REMOVAL

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I have with me a copy of the Highway 104 Western Alignment Act, the laws of the province of Nova Scotia that govern the Cobequid Pass toll road. I would just like to quote for the Premier Section 13(2), which says: "Tolls shall cease to be imposed or collected in respect of the Western Alignment . . ." which is the Cobequid Pass highway, ". . . when all costs and liabilities relating thereto . . . have been paid or otherwise discharged . . ." It does not say "some tolls," it says "tolls" - tolls means all tolls.

I'd like to ask the Premier to be open and honest with the people of Cumberland County and tell them that he will respect the laws of the Province of Nova Scotia and commit to removing all tolls when the debts are discharged, which is estimated to be 2019.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, the phrasing of your question there, to ask the Premier to be open and honest, is inferring that he is not being open and honest, so just make note of that please.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know what the honourable member meant. He would never call into question my integrity. I will tell the honourable member that what I said, and what we continue to say is that by 2019, which we believe is the date that the

bond will be paid off in advance - I think it's eight years in advance - that that toll will be removed for all Nova Scotians.

What we've said, is we're going to continue to have a conversation whether or not that toll stays on, Mr. Speaker, for large trucks as well as for tourists who are coming into our province. I want to reassure the member and all Nova Scotians that if there's any toll left on that piece of highway, that that fund will be used to continue to improve 100-Series Highways infrastructure across our province.

One of the things I think all Nova Scotians should be positive about is the fact that when that Cobequid Pass was put in place, what it was put in place for was to reduce the deaths on that highway. As a matter of fact, it was named Death Valley. What we want to continue to make sure is that we continue to make those important infrastructure investments, whether it's in Barney's River, whether it's on the South Shore or the Annapolis Valley, to continue to make our roads safer.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I need to remind the Premier that it was a Liberal Government in 1995 that imposed the toll highway on the people of Cumberland County. Now, 20 years later, it's a Liberal Government that has inherited the toll highway at a time when the debt is about to be paid off.

A deal is a deal. It is ironic that it would be this Liberal Government that feels they want to have a conversation about whether to honour a commitment that was made to the people of Cumberland County, or not, at the time that this very bill was passed into law.

Yesterday, the Premier said the government might like to continue to collect tolls from some people, to pay for all the 100-Series Highways of the province. I'd like to ask the Premier, why is he singling out the people of Cumberland County, their visitors, and their businesses to pay a toll when no one else has to?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank on behalf of all those families, quite frankly, over the last two and a half decades who were spared the sorrow of losing a loved one on that piece of highway. As a matter of fact, as the government of the day I was a part of that conversation. I'm going to tell you, it's a difficult conversation when you're sitting there, where do I find the capital to approve infrastructure, to ensure we save lives across this province? They made a decision and I can guarantee you that families who had lost one prior to that wished a previous government had made the same decision, to put in place a piece of infrastructure that made it safer for a family to move about this province.

We will continue to do so and what I've said for those people who live in Cumberland County, that toll will be removed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV.: CHILD SUPPORT - CLAWBACK END

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, for recipients of income assistance, some types of income get deducted from their benefits while others are exempt and do not affect the total amount of assistance paid. Court-ordered child support is currently treated as income and clawed back. This is a significant negative impact on the financial security of single parents and their children.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Will she agree to follow the lead of her Liberal colleagues in Ontario and end the clawback of child support from single parents on income assistance?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, this is one of the things that we're looking at through our transformation process. We know that it is occurring elsewhere and we are looking into that. Thank you.

MS. LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Other child-related amounts, like the Canada Child Benefit, do not affect income assistance payments. Ending the clawback of child support would put an average of \$2,000 annually per child back into the pockets of single parents receiving income assistance. We have often heard the Premier speak about his commitment to strengthening maintenance enforcement to collect the millions owed to children. I am concerned that these efforts will have no benefit for children whose parents receive income assistance.

[2:15 p.m.]

Hearing what the Minister of Community Services said, my question is for the Premier. Does the Premier think it's appropriate for his government to be clawing back this money from single parents and their children?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She could go back to election night in 2013 - part of my election night speech was about this very issue. What happens between two adults is between two adults, but when it impacts their children, whether you're a father or a mother in this province who's ordered to pay maintenance for children, we expect you to pay it.

There's far too much money owed to children in this province that people are using to go against their spouse, when in fact it's related to those children. It's exactly why, in the last budget, we've increased support and maintenance and enforcement, and will continue to do so. The very issue you brought up, the minister and I spoke about two days ago. We'll continue to make sure that the children in this province are respected the way they should be. What happens between two adults is their business, but when it comes to the children of the province, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are treated properly.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable Premier not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

**JUSTICE - CANNABIS LEGALIZATION:
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS - ACCURACY**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Justice. Yesterday the minister indicated that 22,000 completed the online survey regarding the legalization of marijuana. I'm hoping that today the minister can confirm, out of those 22,000, how many are actually over 18?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. What I can confirm for my colleague is that over 27,000 Nova Scotians - unique hits to the survey - individuals, Mr. Speaker, not multiple repeats - have accessed that site for purposes of gathering more information and taking advantage of the opportunity to respond.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, it's perplexing to think that that is individuals when I know for certain that you can repeat it. I'll say it again: you can use the same IP address, you can use the same device, and it's an unsecured survey site that's easily manipulated by any age. It's as simple as that.

When the survey concludes on October 27th, will the minister be satisfied to make major decisions on the legalization of marijuana based on inaccurate results?

MR. FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. Mr. Speaker, this is about public access. If you take a computer at the new Halifax library - if we were to restrict access the first and only time that computer is used to access the survey (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor.

MR. FUREY: It is about maximizing the opportunities for Nova Scotians to contribute their opinions and thoughts around the legalization of cannabis in the Province of Nova Scotia. The survey is simply one element of the decision-making process, and I assure my colleague that we will make decisions in the best interests of Nova Scotians.

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

H&W: EHS OFFLOAD DELAYS - CLINIC/ER AVAILABILITY

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the CBC highlighted the impact that EHS offload delays have on patient care. In some cases, patients are reported to have waited hours to be transferred. I'd like to table that.

The delays could easily be tied to a lack of available clinics and ERs across this province. The health care system in Nova Scotia is in crisis, but we know that there are a few simple fixes for issues like this one. If more ERs were available more often, we would have more paramedics able to do what they're able to do best, not waiting in hospitals for hours.

My question is, does Minister Delorey agree that the opening of additional . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: The Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. JOHNS: The Minister of Health and Wellness, my apologies. I will get this, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Minister of Health and Wellness agree that opening up additional emergency rooms will help solve this issue?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously emergency access to health care services, when needed by Nova Scotians, is an important topic. We have one of the best EHS emergency response systems in the country. They do a great job, and the services being provided by our paramedics right across this province are top-notch. The times that the member referenced in those ERs, I believe he suggested that opening new ERs would be an easy or a simple solution. It was the language that he used. I think he recognizes that there are many communities (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor. This will be the last time I'll make reference to the lack of respect for the Chair in the interruptions.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in conclusion, as I said, the member, I believe, made reference that it was one of the simple solutions opening additional ERs, but I think the member also recognizes that there are many ERs that we have across this province where we struggle to staff them appropriately based on changes in the primary health care availability of staffing.

MR. JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I can clarify that. I said that I think there a few simple fixes that can help to address these issues. I do agree with the Minister of Health and Wellness. I do think that we have world-class physicians, health care workers here in our hospitals, particularly here in HRM. I think that the Cobequid Community Health Centre in Sackville is an example of one of these wonderful facilities. I think Sackville is lucky to have it. However, I think it could be better utilized to resolve issues.

My question is, will the minister commit to making a plan to open the Cobequid Community Health Centre on a 24-hour basis?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the member's question. We've spoken previously about how important a role the Cobequid Community Health Centre plays not just for his community where it's physically located but, indeed, for individuals that live in surrounding communities that obtain health care services at that location.

I can assure the member opposite that, indeed, the Department of Health and Wellness, and both the IWK and the Nova Scotia Health Authority, work on a daily basis towards the plans to improve our health care access - again, not just for the people in his community but for all Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other.

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

EECD - GDL SOCIETY PROJ.: GOV'T. (N.S.) SUPPORT - WITHDRAWAL

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Volunteers are the heart of every school district in this province. Thinking outside of the box is a watchword that this government uses very loosely and many, many times they are telling the community, you have to think outside the box. The community of Louisbourg did just that.

My question is, why did the government repeatedly offer its support to the George D. Lewis Gateways to Opportunity Society but then, following the election, ended their support with a two-paragraph email to the society saying they weren't interested anymore?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the government was very excited about this opportunity. We had put money on the table for the school board's consideration to move forward with this project. After the election, I did communicate our desire to move forward with this project to Darren Googoo, who is the co-chairperson of the board.

As the member would know, based on his understanding of the Education Act and its regulations and policies, there is no ability for a minister to overturn the decision of a school board on a closure. In this particular case, we had indicated we wanted to move forward with this project. The school board had indicated that they weren't interested.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the minister's answers where there's no ability to turn over the decision of a school board and, yet, he is the very minister who said that we're going to do a review of all the school boards - we're going to do a review of how they close schools.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is, does he agree with the statement that was just made by his minister, considering the fact that on live provincial television he was going around telling everybody what a great idea the George D. Lewis opportunities program was?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I still believe it is. That's why we put money on the table but, ultimately, we need a partner and that's the school board - the final decision is up to the school board. I still believe it was one of those community hubs that actually would have worked. We had a private-sector partner that actually had money on the table. We had institutions that were prepared. We had the municipality that was prepared to come forward, but the fact of the matter is, the minister is correct: the final decision is up to the school board.

Before we went back to the school board, we went there with the full understanding of the collaboration that was happening in that community. We went there also with additional funding that we believe would offset that, but the school board made that decision and the minister is tied to the decision that they've made.

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

H&W: FOR-PROFIT PLASMA CLINICS - DEV. PAUSE

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness if he could assure me that no pay-for-plasma clinic would open in Nova Scotia. According to Canadian Blood Services, pay-for-plasma schemes represent the most serious threat to the sustainability of our public plasma supply.

In December 2016, the Board Chair of the Canadian Blood Services wrote to our then-Health and Wellness Minister asking that Nova Scotia pause any paid-plasma developments. I'd like to ask the minister what action has been taken to address the concerns by the Canadian Blood Services?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. I believe this is a topic that will be discussed in a little more detail later this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, as I believe that piece of legislation is actually on the order paper.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think the member answered her own question. The request was dealing with, I believe the language was, pausing any paid-for plasma. I believe the language she used was 'schemes'. Indeed, to my knowledge, there are no paid-for-plasma initiatives, or plans, slated in the Province of Nova Scotia. There's no direct action needed to put a pause to any initiatives that don't currently exist.

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, according to documents obtained through a federal freedom of information request, a for-profit plasma clinic has singled out Nova Scotia as a target market in its 2016-17 business plan. The plan notes that this company will begin to collect plasma from healthy donors, immediately upon receipt of any regulatory approval. I'll table that.

Health Canada has already granted approval, leaving the door wide open for private companies to come and set up shop here in Nova Scotia. Paid-for-plasma clinics exploit the health of low-income Nova Scotians and jeopardize our vital health care resources. My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is, what is this government's plan to protect our crucial blood supply from for-profit interference?

MR. DELOREY: Again, in Nova Scotia, for the benefit of members who aren't familiar with our process for blood collection, it is a national organization, the Canadian Blood Services, that organize blood collections across the province and indeed across the country. They collect these donations from Nova Scotians in our province who take the time to donate, and I certainly take this moment, Mr. Speaker, to encourage all of my colleagues here in the Legislature to roll up their sleeve at the next opportunity to make their donation, if they haven't done so lately.

Again, as the member mentioned in her own remarks, that organization that she is referencing, had plans in 2016-17. We're now into the 2017-18 fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - CORE FRENCH & IMMERSION: TEACHER SHORTAGE - ADDRESS

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Last week I received a call from a constituent whose daughter is in Grade 9 French immersion. Her daughter is short three teachers this year, one in the core subject of science.

Mr. Speaker, I've also heard examples in Dartmouth where students are receiving instruction in English in their French immersion math classes. My question is, how is the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development fixing the shortage of core French and immersion teachers?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the member brings forward a very important point. There is a national shortage of French teachers; it is not a Nova Scotia specific challenge; that is national. However, we are recognizing that that has created a challenge for a number of our schools and immersion programs, so we are working with our B.Ed. programs to ensure that we have more French grads coming into the system who have the credentials and skill set to fill those positions that are required.

MR. HALMAN: As the minister knows, the teacher shortage is widespread and it is impacting program delivery in our province, in our classrooms. Even the Dartmouth All City Music Centre, which is staffed by HRSB, can't fill the gaps.

Mr. Speaker, what is the minister's plan to ensure every class has a consistent teacher?

MR. CHURCHILL: I will note that our government has hired over 760 teachers, full-time in our province, Mr. Speaker. That has been a focus of ours, whether they are being applied to class caps, special needs or for math and literacy supports. There is a national challenge right now with French-speaking teachers. We recognize that and are working specifically with our wonderful institution down in the Clare area, Saint-Anne, to make sure that we're producing the amount of grads from the B.Ed. program there to fill the demand that we have in our classrooms.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - PICTOU CO.: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS - LACK OF

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

Nova Scotians know that Pictou County lost its mental health unit two years ago under this Liberal Government. It has been most sad and frustrating to see Pictou County residents struggling with mental health issues who have to travel as far as Sydney and Yarmouth to be assessed. A couple arrived at the Aberdeen Hospital emergency Friday at 3:00 p.m. One was suicidal. At 5:00 p.m., they were told that the psychiatrist was gone for the weekend - could they come back Monday?

Does the minister believe it's acceptable to tell a suicidal individual to wait two days and come back on Monday?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I believe the member, as I believe all members in this Legislature, takes mental health very seriously. That's why in this budget we have invested heavily in mental health investments. I believe all combined - inclusive of health as well as education - about \$8.6 million is going towards new investments towards mental health, giving about 70 additional clinicians across the province through our schools and in our communities, and additional investments at the IWK to bring along access to videoconferencing to provide their level of expertise to communities outside of Halifax as well. Again, we do take this very seriously, and that's why we're investing to improve services.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer. I hope some of that \$8.6 million will see results in Pictou County.

This past week, I have had three calls from constituents with mental health issues saying that their psychiatrist called and was sorry, but they can no longer take them because they are overwhelmed and too busy. One in five people suffers from mental health issues,

and 46,000 people live in Pictou County. Does the minister believe that 1.5 psychiatrists in Pictou County can serve all those in need with mental health issues?

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member again for this question. Again, the role of various clinicians - not all mental health services are provided by psychiatrists. Indeed, many mental health conditions and supports are provided by other health care professionals, not just psychiatrists, including social workers, nurses, and psychologists. There are many, many different health care providers who provide supports that are very important to helping our individuals with mental health challenges. There's a wide range. I think it's also important to understand that there's a wide range of mental health supports that are needed because of the conditions of individual patients at any given time.

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

H&W/LAE: CCA/LPN SHORTAGE - GOV'T. PLAN

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Nova Scotia, like other provinces in Canada, is already struggling to deal with the senior tsunami that we all saw coming 10 to 20 years ago. Current policies to have our elderly age in place sound very good, but that's in theory. The procedures that we need to have in place to be successful require sufficient staffing levels at all levels of health care and home care, specifically the CCAs and LPNs because they're the ones most frequently sent in.

My question to the minister: Currently, we do not have enough CCAs and LPNs in the system to provide enough home care to help all seniors age in place, so what is the government's plan is to address that shortage?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. Indeed, as the members of the Legislature would know, three key priorities for this government in my mandate are: work to improve primary care access; mental health services; and continuing care, the third major pillar of my mandate. Within that space, I think there has been a lot of good work done. I would like to acknowledge the work that my predecessor - the current Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage - has done on enhancing services and supports, reducing the wait-lists across the province significantly in his time in the work that he has done. I'm going to continue that work with the NSHA and our partners, providing those home care support services.

MS. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, my next question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Over the past three months, I had several calls from frail seniors in my constituency who were advised that their health and mobility impairments supported daily home care, not necessarily health care. I'd like to make a distinction because there is one.

Almost every weekend this summer and on holidays, all nine agencies supplying CCAs and LPNs cancelled the services for all of them because they did not have enough staff. Two weeks ago, one person, whom I won't mention, lay on the floor from Friday afternoon after a fall until they were found Monday morning.

My question to the minister is, as the wait-list time for the Nova Scotia Community College for LPNs is now four years, and CCAs is between one to three years, depending on where in the province, will the minister advise us what his plan is to address the shortage of LPNs and CCAs.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, one of the things our community colleges do is when they assess the courses they offer, they match those courses to what the job market is out there. They try to get the right amount of positions offered for what the jobs will be. They try not to have too many or too little.

I can tell the honourable member that in the Cape Breton area, one area I was looking at, we have had increases in enrolment there, due to more demands. If she has a specific area that's under-serviced, I'd be more than happy to take that back to the community college.

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

MUN. AFFS.: SYDNEY FLOODING (2016) - GOV'T. RESPONSE

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it was a year ago that residents of Sydney, Cape Breton, lost their homes and belongings to flooding. While many people did receive some assistance from insurance and government, there is still frustration about the amounts people were expected to pay out of pocket to replace what they lost.

At the time the member for Yarmouth, the then-Minister responsible for EMO, told CBC Cape Breton's Information Morning that the relief program had limits. For example, he said it wouldn't replace high-end appliances.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Municipal Affairs agree with that member's comments that the residents of Sydney should have to pay out of pocket to replace items lost in the flood?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. I'll start by thanking EMO, thanking the Department of Municipal Affairs, thanking the Department of Environment and thanking the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for all the support they provided to the families at home.

Mr. Speaker, we took an \$80,000 program to \$200,000. When we realized the severity of the situation we removed that \$200,000 cap and went to market value. If somebody's house was worth over \$200,000, that's what they received. We looked after all their meals and their accommodations until they signed off on their disaster relief applications. We covered incidentals and we covered all fees necessary for them to get through that process.

We also put in an appeals process that, if they didn't like the appraisal that they received on their market value, Mr. Speaker - I can stand in my place today as the MLA for that area, and say we did everything we could for those families in Cape Breton.

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in a story in the *Cape Breton Post* on Monday, one resident said it seemed like a bit of divide and conquer, and that those who were tasked with supporting and helping residents could have done a much better job. It's a year later and people in Sydney still have concerns about the values of their home and the prospect of future flooding.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister satisfied with his government's response to last year's flooding in Sydney?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'm satisfied with this government's response and I'll tell you who else I am satisfied with. I am satisfied with every first responder who went out in the height of that storm to look after those families. I'm proud of the work that the United Way and the Salvation Army did to help hundreds of families, provide them with food and the essentials they needed to get by after the flood.

Mr. Speaker, I can stand in my place today and also say that I am proud of my Premier who went into those homes, looked those families in the eyes, said they weren't alone and every one of them is in a new house today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

NSPLCC: GAMING STRAT. - UPDATE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Provincial Lotteries and Casino Corporation. In 2005, the government of the day released Nova Scotia's first gaming strategy. The strategy was intended to direct gaming policy in Nova Scotia for five years. It included a number of measures, such as reducing the number of VLTs in the province, but in 2011, the government of the day presented an update to that gaming strategy. Here we are in 2017. It's six years later. That policy has now expired, last year. My question for the minister is, without a current gaming strategy, can the minister tell this House, what is guiding gaming policy in Nova Scotia.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. We have a gaming policy. We certainly have to make sure that it does provide opportunities for safe, responsible gaming in this province, and we will make sure that we continue to make whatever adjustments we need so that that mandate can be met.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the current gaming policy expired a year ago and one of the commitments of that gaming policy that is apparently in force today, was a commitment to make the My-Play System mandatory on all VLTs in the province, a commitment that has since been reversed obviously. So, if nothing else, this reversal highlights the need for a new gaming strategy. During the 2011 strategy process, this government, then in Opposition, called for an open and transparent strategy update. So, my question for the minister today is, will the minister heed the call of Liberals past and promise to update the now-expired gaming strategy.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite. Commitment of this government continues to be looking at responsible gaming strategies in this province. If that requires an update, that's what we will be doing. We want to make sure that we have provided and lived within a mandate for the safe gaming in this province.

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

MUN. AFFS.: MUN. FIRE SERV. REVIEW - MIN. FEEDBACK

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, in August, the Department of Municipal Affairs received the municipal review of fire services in Nova Scotia. I would table that report. This is the latest in a series of fire reports that have come forward and it recommends that a municipal risk analysis and fire master plan be created. My question is, what feedback has the minister provided to municipalities to provide direction for future planning?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. I'll start by thanking and recognizing all of our volunteer fire departments across the province that day in and day out serve our communities, protect our communities, and are role models and ambassadors in communities across the province. I have received the report and I know our staff has been in contact with some of the communities. That report specifically had more stakeholders than ever before go across the province to receive feedback from volunteer fire services, and we continue to work with those organizations to see what we can do. Thank you.

MR. JOHNS: The report, of course, recommends that there need to be changes made both to the Municipal Government Act, as well as the Fire Safety Act, and talks about currently the silos and fire services across the province that need to create consistency and efficiency for public safety. I'm glad to hear the minister talk about his respect for fire services and the personnel across the province, and this is part of how the province can show that they do value their work. Can the minister tell this House when he will be moving

the recommendations forward by changing legislation and funding the necessary next steps to adopt this report?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We haven't made any decisions yet based on the recommendations of the report, but what I can tell the member is that all groups are working together with municipalities, elected officials, our department, and first responders within those communities. We do whatever we can to support our first responders. We have the first responders fund that we give out, each year, to communities that can apply and access the necessary funds to support some of the important equipment that they need to protect their communities, and we'll continue to have those conversations to ensure that we can support those communities that step forward to provide fire services and to protect the people in their homes.

[2:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

BUS. - COBEQUID TOLLS: CUMBERLAND BUS. OWNERS - CONSULT

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, when I brought up the discussion of the Cobequid tolls to the Minister of Business, one of the comments back was that he may be open to consultation with the truckers, with the business community of Cumberland. I'm wondering if he would be willing to make that commitment to do a consultation process. The idea of leaving the Cobequid tolls on for the businesses of Cumberland North would be an undue hardship. They have quoted prices like \$7,400 per truck per year extra in tolls and tariffs.

Would the Minister of Business make a commitment, today, to do a consultation with the businesses owners of Cumberland?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I do thank the member for the question. Again, what we had said all along was that the tolls would be removed for Nova Scotians when the principal, the interest, and some of that capital requirement to keep Highway No. 104 whole were in place. We know that we're probably two years or less away from that, and I think we all look forward to that day. At that point and leading up to that point, we want to figure out what is the best approach for Nova Scotians. There is still going to be a lot of maintenance, a lot of capital, a lot of work to be done to keep Highway No. 104 in the great condition that it's in and, again to the Premier's point, continue to make mobility fantastic.

Of course, paramount to that is safety, keeping people alive and getting them home safe and sound with their families. When we have the conversations about ongoing tolls, what the mechanism could be moving forward, it will be a conversation we have with all Nova Scotians, and certainly truckers and commercial vehicles in her area, in the region, and all commercial vehicles will be part of that discussion.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I thank the minister for the answer. I would really recommend that the Minister of Business talk directly with the truckers' association even throughout all of Atlantic Canada. I do appreciate that there are significant costs to maintaining that stretch of highway. However, there is a cost to maintaining all the highways in this province, and we pay a gas tax for that. I don't believe that the businesses in Cumberland should be penalized if they have lobsters to go from Pugwash to the port or lumber to the mill. We shouldn't have to pay that extra cost.

Will the Minister of Business make a true commitment today to consult with the business owners of Cumberland?

MR. MACLELLAN: Again, part of the problem here is about open communication and getting all the facts on the table. Lots of times when we talk about tolls - and we saw that in the wide-sweeping consultation that we held last year that our government put together, which was the first of its kind - the reality is that people think that we collect enough in gas tax to pay these bills. That's not even close to the reality. If you look at all the gas tax we collect in this province and all the RMV fees we collect in this province, we're still about \$80 million short to pay the current amount we put out in transportation each and every year. We're doing what we can with the money we collect. We're adding money on top of that to make sure that our highway grid, our network, and our arterial roads are safe and sound. We'll continue to do that.

Again, we will consult with the truckers and we will consult with everyone who is a stakeholder with a vested interest in this conversation. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we have to be concerned with all Nova Scotians, the business community, everyone. We will have that wide-open dialogue because we just want to get this right.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

IMMIGRATION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS - MSI ELIGIBILITY

MS. LISA ROBERTS: This is a question for the Minister of Immigration.

We know Nova Scotian universities have focused for years on bringing international students to Nova Scotia; however, there is more that we can do to make them feel welcome. Currently, international students are not eligible for MSI until they have been here for 13 months. Last week, the Government of New Brunswick announced that they will provide MSI coverage for all international students, their spouses, and dependants throughout their degree program - will our minister commit to establishing a similar program here in Nova Scotia?

HON. LENA DIAB: Thank you very much to the member for that question. Immigration is an extremely top priority for Nova Scotia and for this government. We have invested a lot of money; we have worked extremely hard on all of our programs. In terms

of international students, we have opened up streams that never existed before in order to bring them here. We're working with our university sectors.

With respect to the health questions, it is a topic that we have met with the students about in the last year. It is one that we continue to explore. There is much work to do on that. But in terms of international students, we have opened up streams for them to nominate them for permanent residency. I'm extremely proud of the work that we're doing across all our university sectors.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you to the minister for her answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I was having so much fun, I just wanted to keep going.

The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

We'll now move on to Opposition Members' Business.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 37.

Bill No. 37 - Voluntary Blood Donations Act.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those MLAs who have been in this Chamber for more than a few months, this might sound repetitive. I say that because this is an issue that our caucus has been trying to get the government to act on since 2014. It was then out of some unnerving reports of other jurisdictions in Canada allowing for payment for blood and plasma collection in our country.

The alarming news that came out of a couple of the jurisdictions heightened some of the awareness around the importance of supporting the voluntary blood collection system that we have in Canada. In the next few minutes, I hope to get into some of the

reasons why it's so important and critical for this government, the Liberal Government of Nova Scotia, to stand up and make sure they are very clear on what direction their government's going to take when it comes to paying for plasma and blood collection in Nova Scotia.

In 2013, Canadian Plasma Resources built collection clinics next to a homeless shelter in downtown Toronto and beside a methadone clinic in Hamilton. That was when, over the following months, I started to read about this attempt to erode what I believe is an important part of our health care system. As a former paramedic and health care provider I know how important it is when treating patients, not only in our own province but across the country, to have access to safe blood products. That's why, in 2014, our caucus brought forward the Voluntary Blood Donations Bill to try to get the government to recognize that it was an issue.

As I said, there were a few reports across the country. In Nova Scotia, it was pretty quiet. There was no talk about a private clinic opening up here in our province. But I couldn't get a commitment from the government at that time to say that this was needed, that legislation was needed to enshrine in law that this is not a direction that we would want to go in as a province.

I was told at the time that it wasn't an issue and wasn't going to happen, but we know now, through the last few years, that that private collection company has opened up clinics across Canada. Just recently the Liberal Government in New Brunswick is allowing one to open up in New Brunswick, pretty close to Nova Scotia's border. I think it's time for this government to act.

The Province of Ontario and the Province of Quebec recognized the importance of supporting the voluntary donation mechanism that we have in place here in Canada, and they introduced legislation - I said this before - I believe it was Deb Matthews who was the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in Ontario, and Quebec has taken a strong stance on this.

It's unfortunate that we haven't seen our federal government take a stance. It's not just at the feet of the Liberal Government but the previous Conservative federal government who I believe allowed this to happen and put the onus on each province and territory to make up their own mind, when collectively we could have come forward with a strong voice on a federal level to say that Canada is not a country that wants to see this type of service or company.

The World Health Organization passed a resolution hoping that jurisdictions across the country would recognize the importance of having voluntary collection of blood and blood plasma. It concerns me immensely to know that Canada is not living up to meeting their goal. I believe it was by 2020 that they wanted 100 per cent of that collection of blood and plasma around the world to be from volunteers. We know that's not the issue.

I know I asked the former minister on a number of occasions - I think it was 2016, when our caucus introduced this legislation for the second time - if the government would be ready at that time to enshrine in legislation this issue, so that we wouldn't see happen what we've seen happen in other jurisdictions - opening up paid-for-plasma clinics in Nova Scotia.

I do not believe for one moment that Canadians for that matter, in large numbers, or Nova Scotians want to see paid-for-plasma blood collections here in Nova Scotia. I think this is an opportunity for the government to do the right thing, to send a strong message, because we haven't heard from the current Liberal Government what their intentions are around this important issue.

There are so many people who are trying to get across to this government the importance of maintaining the way we collect blood and plasma products here in Nova Scotia. It's interesting - we would think we would know better after the devastation that we've seen happen after the tainted blood scandal in our country. Some 30,000 Canadians were affected, and I believe the last number I've seen that there were up to maybe 8,000 deaths that could be attributed to that tainted blood scandal. Of course, when the Krever Commission was going through its report, and to try to find out what exactly happened, they laid blame on a number of organizations - most importantly the federal government and the provinces of our country.

I thought we would have learned out of that and the recommendations of the Krever Commission, that this is not an area we should go down, I think that's really at the essence of this private clinic, and for-profit company starting to try to gain some traction in Canada. Maybe they think Canadians will forget about that scandal. They'll forget about the impact that that has had on so many Canadians, and so many Nova Scotians.

I've met many, throughout the years, who have been impacted by that tainted blood scandal in the 1970s and the 1980s, and of course, those who have been impacted by HIV. It's kind of sad to see that an organization like BloodWatch had to be created, to get the message out across the country. I know Kat Lanteigne, who has been down in Nova Scotia a number of times to try to bring some attention to this issue - I've met with her a number of times when she was down in Nova Scotia. She is one of the co-founders of BloodWatch, and there's some notable individuals who have contributed their names, their organizations, their support, towards their effort to try to eliminate for-profit blood and plasma collection in Canada.

I know that they're frustrated by provincial governments who have not taken a stance. I'm sure they're quite frustrated with the recent reports out of New Brunswick. I'm here again today - and I think I said this in 2016 when I last spoke on this legislation - that I'll continue to make sure that the government - whoever it is - does the right thing and avoids having blood and plasma for-profit companies here in Nova Scotia.

[3:00 p.m.]

I hope this gives the government opportunity, and I've said it before, I know governments are reluctant to pass Opposition pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I hope that they would pass this one; it would be a good thing to do. But if they have concerns with the fact that it came from the Opposition benches, then they should introduce their own. I hope that my colleagues from the Progressive Conservatives will lend some of their thoughts on this. It's a bill that could pass in this Chamber and prevent us going down a path that I think is the wrong one, but many think it is the wrong one.

I hope that the government reconsiders this. I know sometimes it takes years for this government to do the right thing and I try extremely hard to bring forward legislation, not only in my own name but in the name of our caucus and my caucus colleagues, that shows that we care about how services are delivered in Nova Scotia, that we care about the people who live here. I think this is an area where - if you want to use the term, it's a "no-brainer," Mr. Speaker, then the government should do this.

I know the current Minister of Health and Wellness has been asked and he encouraged people in Question Period today to go out and donate blood, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why he just won't cut to the chase and tell Nova Scotians where the government lies on this issue - where do they stand on allowing a for-profit company to come into our province and pay people for their blood and plasma products?

I am not confident that the company that has been going around our country is one that is doing it just to improve access to platelets and blood products. A lot of talk on that side of things, Mr. Speaker - when you open up clinics next to homeless shelters and methadone clinics, you have to wonder about the ethics of that company and you have to wonder why any province or any jurisdiction would allow this to happen in their province.

I know that after the Krever Commission there were a number of recommendations. I think the top one was to ensure that we maintained and strengthened our voluntary blood process that we have in our country. I'm glad to see that Canadian Blood Services has I think stepped up to the plate in the last year or two. Initially I was concerned about what they thought about the direction different provinces were going, but as I think the minister stated earlier today, it's the provinces that kind of own Canadian Blood Services and they should be taking directions from the provinces. I want to see our province be a leader on this front, Mr. Speaker.

As I said before, there are a number of jurisdictions that have banned it outright in their province. Other Liberal Governments have done that, Mr. Speaker, and I would hope that our Liberal Government here would do the right thing and ban the ability for a for-profit company to open up in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, it's frustrating at times to continue to have to stand in my place and try to get across to the government, but it's never too late to do the right thing. And here is an opportunity for the government to do the right thing and to ensure that our collection of blood and plasma products here in Nova Scotia continue to be under that voluntary donation process that we have.

People are very proud of their ability to give blood. I know at times when there are shortages the call goes out and Nova Scotians respond, and I think if government took a stance on this and supported the idea of ensuring here in Nova Scotia at least we'll continue to have 100 per cent voluntary blood and plasma collection in our province.

I look forward to my colleagues and what they have to say, but I'm asking again, Mr. Speaker, for the third time, for the fourth year pretty much now, that the government has an opportunity to do the right thing to ensure that these companies don't gain access to our province, that we support the voluntary blood donation process that we have and I hope they will reconsider it and pass legislation that will do just that. Thank you.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for his comments on this very, very important topic. It was one that certainly became centre stage on several occasions during my time as Minister of Health and Wellness. It's one that I believe, along with the Canadian Blood Services, certainly don't feel that legislation is required. I've certainly had those conversations with the Canadian Blood Services, have attended their national AGM, and it's one that perhaps legislation may not in fact be necessary whatsoever to make sure that we adhere to the primary principles of blood collection in this country and in our province and that is a blood system on the principle of voluntary blood collection. That's certainly what we have talked about during our time as government.

We do, however, realize the precarious situation in terms of plasma supply. In order to have that immunoglobulin available for a whole range of treatments, we need a significant amount of plasma collected and the goal when the Canadian Blood Services was developed was to quickly get to about 30 per cent of the need being supplied by the Canadian Blood Services agency. Currently, in Nova Scotia, about 15 per cent of plasma is provided by donations, the voluntary means here in our province well below our desired goal.

There was a report provided the Canadian Blood Services agency in January 2017 - I was still minister at the time - and they did a business plan ensuring the security of the Canadian plasma supply for immunoglobulin in the country and so that business plan is one now that is being picked up by provinces to start towards a higher percentage. For example, in Quebec, Héma-Québec in fact has set 2020 as the target to have 30 per cent of their plasma needs given by voluntary donations from that province.

So, I believe if we take a look at some other countries - I think in particular Australia is of note because they're targeting now 70 per cent of all of their plasma needs will come from voluntary donations. I believe with a strong business plan, the right kind of targeting of particular donors, and a national campaign, I think all provinces can do better than where we currently are. We rely, of course, on purchasing IG from, especially from the United States and we all know that what is coming across the border for our health care system, most of it would be paid for. These would be paid for blood donations and I know that there has been a pretty strong question sometimes around the safety aspect but, certainly, everything that I've heard from the Canadian Blood Services, from the medical people in our province due to the advances in technology, very strict regulations that the supply, whether it is paid-for plasma, paid-for blood or voluntary, the safety as we know over the past 30 years is very strong, of course, in this country.

We've very familiar here in our province with the great work done by the Canadian Blood Services. Their facility in Dartmouth is certainly state of the art and they provide this region with the donated blood that is required on a daily basis, what we would call the fresh blood supply. Also, plasma is growing in demand. There are many more treatments now where plasma, in fact, is required. So it's possible that even our 15 per cent could move a little bit lower if we don't start to make a very considered and strong plan to reach a higher level of a sustainable supply. That is the real challenge that we're currently faced with.

You know when I heard directly from the Canadian Blood Services, I guess you would say directors and people who want Canada to provide a higher percentage of plasma and now have brought forth a business plan, they are setting targets in our province. I think those goals are realistic and it's simply going to take, I think, that extra effort for us to get there.

You know when I went to visit one of the sites where plasma is collected in our province, you really have to give full kudos to those who line up to provide plasma. It's a longer process than a fresh blood donation, and I know that one of the groups of people who take the time to do this in good numbers are our military community who obviously, perhaps, are more cognizant of the need that we have.

Again, while the minister today was certainly encouraging Nova Scotians to roll up their sleeves to give blood on a regular basis, it really is the plasma that has now the very, very wide need in our medical system. Again, I would say that number one, we don't need legislation to make sure that government's commitment in our health system is very strong. I think even the very fact of the presence of Canadian Blood Services in our province is a reminder of why it's there. We go back to the tainted blood time in our province, the work of the Krever Commission to make sure that we had safety in our system. Adherence to strong regulation is very much part of the daily practice that we currently have.

The Dublin Consensus Report conducted by the World Health Organization states that plasma products from both non-remunerated and remunerated donations are currently essential to meet global health needs. We obviously have a real crisis point around the required plasma needs right across Canada.

I have confidence that the Blood Services collection will do a job, have it earmarked for Canadian use, because one of the realities is that the private companies that come into our province, or to any province in Canada, in fact there's no guarantee that that plasma would be available to Canadians. It's simply collected and put out on the open market to whoever is going to offer the best price, has high need and has the ability to pay for the plasma - that's the country, that's the supply line that is going to be filled.

[3:15 p.m.]

I think while we are still a long way away from a sustainable approach, currently there is a federal review going on, in Canada, with a report scheduled for March of 2018. I would like to take a moment to just outline the three major planks that the panel is working on.

First of all it's to assess the long-term security sustainability of Canada's immunoglobulin product supply; secondly, look at the potential impact on the Canadian blood supply should plasma collection be permitted to expand significantly in Canada; and, third, examine emerging international practices and lessons learned that are relevant to the Canadian context.

So, that's in front of Health Canada, and I believe when that report comes forward with the amount of conversation that is taking place in the country now, I think we'll be on a very, very strong path to up the amount of plasma collected in our province through voluntary needs.

The Canadian Blood Services also consistently stated about the security of supply - not product safety, because product safety now, I think, is a very, very proven entity, no matter where plasma may be coming from. That's one of the messages that I'd certainly like to leave Nova Scotians, as I talk about this very important topic today - we are certainly in a different place and, as has already been pointed out, the Krever Commission was very instrumental in bringing us to a much better place in terms of blood supply.

I think I have covered most of the area that I wanted to speak to. With that, I will take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to Bill No. 37, and some of my comments may be a bit repetitive to the other members. I apologize for that.

Bill No. 37 is the Voluntary Blood Donations Act. This bill states “No person shall provide or offer to provide payment to any individual in return for the giving of blood by that individual, either directly or indirectly.”

This topic has come to light with media coverage of a private company, Canadian Plasma Resources, which has opened two plasma collection facilities that compensate donors. They’re located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and locally, close by in Moncton, New Brunswick - and I will table that document with information on the Canadian Plasma Resources.

Health Canada is the federal regulator and who is responsible for ensuring that Canada’s blood supply for transfusion and plasma used in the production of drugs is safe. Choosing whether to allow payment for plasma donors though, is a decision that falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. So, it is up to our Minister of Health and Wellness if we allow for-profit plasma, and blood collection here in Nova Scotia.

The Canadian Blood Services is a national, independent, non-profit corporation that is responsible for collecting, testing, and manufacturing blood and blood components, and stem cells, to knowledge creation and dissemination, to conducting ground-breaking research.

Canadian Blood Services operates within the larger health care system of transfusion and transplantation medicine. Canadian Blood Services is funded by the province and territories. The Canadian Blood Supply made a statement February 18, 2016, which stated:

“Public debate on whether Canadians should be permitted to be paid for plasma donations has resurfaced. While Canadian Blood Services does not pay donors for blood, plasma or any other kind of donation, it does recognize: Drugs made from plasma donated by paid donors are just as safe as those made from plasma from volunteer donors. Access to the commercial paid plasma market is essential in ensuring enough supply so that Canadian patients continue to receive the lifesaving therapies they need.

While some have argued that a parallel paid donation system for plasma could mean fewer volunteer donors, the experiences of other countries suggest both paid and voluntary plasma donation can safely coexist. We will continue to monitor these practices closely.”

Canadian Blood Services does not and will not pay donors for blood, plasma or any other donation. Canadian Blood Services, the national blood system operator, fulfills 100 per cent of the need for blood banks dedicated to volunteer, unpaid donors. However, Canadian Blood Services is only able to provide or meet the need of about 17 per cent of the Canadian market demand for plasma. Part of the reason for this is the growing demand of plasma for IG.

Canadian Blood Services purchases the other remaining 83 per cent from the United States and the United States supplies almost the whole world market for plasma need. The Canadian Blood Services has made a commitment, and I'll read from their document which states that they are responsible for plasma sufficiency in Canada and they are currently developing plans to significantly increase their plasma collections. Today the amount of plasma they collect only meets 17 per cent of the need for intravenous immune globulins, the plasma protein products in highest demand by patients.

“The remaining products we buy come from plasma donated by paid donors in the United States, which is not unique to Canada and ensures security of supply for patients. Without this system, patients who depend on these drugs would not have ready access to the therapies they need. Canadian Blood Services has set a goal to incrementally increase the amount of plasma we collect, ensuring we operate in the most effective way, with the right balance of product derived from plasma collected from our voluntary, unpaid donors in Canada and those manufactured from plasma collected from paid donors in the United States. Achieving the right balance is critical to the security of supply for Canadian patients, so we have a diversity of sources to deal with potential disruptions or threats.”

If the Canadian Blood Services can create a successful strategy to increase the voluntary plasma donations that will benefit, to create a stable supply, this is necessary. Canadian Blood Services has a responsibility to ensure that this is done. All the blood collected for profit is sold to the United States. This plasma could then be used to supply the growing demand in both China and India and potentially leave a low supply here in Nova Scotia and throughout our country. I'd like to table this document, which reinforces that. It's also from Canadian Blood Services and it states that: Finally there are new markets, like China and India, where use is lower at the moment but has the potential to increase. Even a small percentage increase in those markets could have a significant impact. Other blood operators have already taken steps to increase the amount of plasma they collect, to ensure a safe supply of plasma proteins for their patients.

“Canadian Blood Services has always been responsible for ensuring 100 per cent security of the supply for plasma protein products for Canadian patients. The looming risk to the global plasma supply means that we need to take action to ensure the security of supply.”

In the coming months, Canadian Blood Services will begin to significantly increase the amount of plasma we collect from Canadian donors for the production of plasma protein products as per our voluntary, non-remunerated, publicly-funded collections model.”

The wish of the Progressive Conservative caucus is to encourage the Canadian Blood Services to create an effective strategy to meet the demand for plasma through a voluntary, not-for-profit approach. We would also like to recognize that Health Canada has established an expert panel who will look at the issues related to the collection of human plasma, needed to produce life-saving documents, and I’ll table that document as well. This Health Canada report is due March 2018.

It is our recommendation, Mr. Speaker, that our Minister of Health and Wellness prohibit the collection of plasma for profit here in Nova Scotia at this time, and we recommend our Minister of Health and Wellness to receive this panel’s assessment before allowing any for-profit collection of plasma for sale by the private company of Canadian Plasma Resources to the United States. We support Bill No. 37, Voluntary Blood Donations Act.

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

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, protecting our public blood system is in keeping with the recommendations of the landmark Krever Inquiry that resulted from Canada’s devastating tainted blood crisis. The World Health Organization has recommended that all blood products worldwide be collected voluntarily by 2020. CBS is the sole operator of our blood system and any support for private blood brokers creates competition for CBS. In order to effectively stop paid-plasma donations, Nova Scotia must legislate a ban as Ontario, Alberta, and Quebec have already done and, unfortunately, I am not hearing that from our government side.

Paid plasma means that a private corporation pays people to sell their blood plasma, which they export and sell for a profit. Paid plasma equals paid blood collection. CBS is our national public blood agency. CBS collects blood and plasma on our behalf, that is used for fresh transfusions and plasma use for medications, otherwise known as blood products. When CBS collects blood products or plasma, it is guaranteed to save the life of a Canadian because it’s used under our public system. Their sole purpose for collecting blood and plasma is to deliver life-saving treatments to Canadians. When a private blood broker collects blood plasma, they turn it into a blood product and sell it for a profit. It cannot be guaranteed that the plasma collected under a private model will be for our use, because the source plasma has not been collected by CBS.

Canadian Plasma Resources, the company that is looking to set up in Nova Scotia, sells it to pharmaceutical companies in Germany and the United States for drug development. According to new documents which were tabled during Question Period

yesterday, Canadian Plasma Resources has singled out Nova Scotia as a target market in its 2016-17 business plan.

Only four countries in the world allow donors to be paid for blood plasma: Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, and the United States. According to the European Blood Alliance, when private paid plasma clinics were introduced to the voluntary systems in Germany and Austria, those systems lost donors and could not regain them back into the public system. In the U.S., there are multiple examples of poor and vulnerable populations selling their blood plasma to make ends meet. Imagine selling blood to buy food. How is that not just wrong in every sense of the word?

We are worried that this situation has unfolded in Moncton and it will be repeated here in no time. The Minister of Health and Wellness said during the estimates that he wasn't aware of any plans to set up a pay-for-plasma site in Nova Scotia but CPR and similar businesses don't need to provide advance notice of their intentions to open up shop. All regulations are already in place. Other parts of Canada have already taken steps to safeguard against for-profit centres in their provinces, Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario.

[3:30 p.m.]

Historically, Minister Glavine initially indicated he didn't have a problem with private, for-profit plasma clinics setting up in Nova Scotia. According to bloodwatch.org, lobbyists for Canadian Plasma Resources met with then-Health Minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I noted that you referred to members opposite by their proper name, so I would just like to remind you to be vigilant on that.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MS. MARTIN: However when bloodwatch.org paid the Nova Scotia Legislature a visit, the then minister rescinded his support, citing the fact that he endorses the World Health Organization recommendations of all blood and plasma collection being voluntary by 2020.

Nova Scotia has a very unique place in our country's blood history. Former Health Minister George Moody broke ranks with the provinces during the tainted blood era and helped get compensation for families that were impacted. One of those young men lived down the street from where I grew up as a child. He was nine years old. He had leukemia. He needed a blood transfusion, and he subsequently died of AIDS. It's 30 years now that he's been gone.

This House has an opportunity to continue the tradition by passing legislation to ban the paid collection of blood plasma in Nova Scotia. Provinces and territories have a

tremendous amount of power and the constitutional right to implement provincial health policies to safeguard the integrity of our blood system.

Ontario is the perfect example of this. The private blood plasma clinics had been built in Ontario with permission from Health Canada without any public consultation. Ontario stepped up and implemented the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, which bans the private sale of blood or plasma in the province, effectively making it illegal for private blood brokers to operate in Ontario's borders.

Mr. Speaker, if a provincial Health Minister says, it's not up to me, it's up to Health Canada, that is absolutely not the case. Provincial and territorial Health Ministers have a direct responsibility to protect our public blood system and can do exactly what Ontario did without any logistic hurdles. In fact, the federal minister has said publicly that it's up to the provinces to decide.

To think that we are even talking about a system where people can take blood out of their body or that they even need to so that they can provide food for their families is disgraceful. I urge this government to stand behind this bill and support not-for-profit blood plasma.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: It's a pleasure to get up today and take a few minutes to address the House and the bill. I don't seem to have had much opportunity to stand on my feet this session. I've been busy doing other things.

I know that the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid, who I know well and have for some years - he's a former colleague - has brought this bill to this House now a few times. I'm not sure how many. I think three. This may be the third time (Interruption) Not that it really matters who brought it forward. It's a good discussion.

I think that the government so far has been clear that they're certainly monitoring the situation. We're not aware of any of this happening in this province. That is for sure, and I don't think anyone in this House would argue, quite frankly, that they would want to see that happening. I have not ever heard that said either.

I don't know a lot about this subject. I know a lot about the need for blood, unfortunately, from my previous history, and the importance of giving blood.

I want to take a few minutes to recognize not only some of those people who work at Canadian Blood Services, do the job, do it safely, set up clinics, and go from community to community, but also the donors who come out. Some of these people have done this hundreds of times. I haven't done it hundreds of times. I have done it a few times. It has been a little while since I have done it, actually. Donating blood is what I'm referring to

here. But I want to thank those people who continue to do that. We are reminded of events around the world that happened and the absolute need for blood to be donated. We see that happening almost immediately onsite following these mass incidents that take place.

It's imperative that we continue - this government, future governments, any government for that member, all members, and Canadians as a whole - to monitor this very important situation. It's hard to believe that any country around the world would allow this to happen when we really think about it. I think the honourable member mentioned there were four countries around the world that they know of that allow this to happen. It is hard to believe that they do allow it to happen, but we find that hard to believe. Perhaps in Germany and other places they don't find this hard to believe. Maybe it's something they deem is okay in their world. We as Canadians, as Nova Scotians, see that to be a bit different.

I would say if myself having a history of working in the health care system, the emergency front line part of that industry and seeing again the absolute need for blood to be supplied, and not only in the emergency side of things, surgeries that happen and so on, it's an ongoing need, we know that, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's imperative that we continue to pay attention to this idea that could transpire.

There's nothing to say anywhere at any time that this isn't something that could happen, I suppose. When you really think about it, it's certainly nothing that has ever been brought to my office by anyone, and in all of my years that I've been in this House no one has ever raised the issue. It's nothing I ever heard about in the days that I worked as a paramedic on the street. When I was around the hospitals, it's not anything I've ever heard about although again I would argue that there's nothing wrong with continuing to monitor a situation that is serious or something that could actually happen.

I would tell all members in this House, the honourable member who brought this bill forward, the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid who has brought this bill forward in the past and you never know when I suppose, if we really think about it and we would hope that that would never happen in this country but if government had to step up and there was an issue, I'm sure that it would be well supported by all sides of this House, if there was an issue. At least I'll speak for me, as the member for Hants West, as a former health care worker, a paramedic, a guy who has lived that world unfortunately for a number of years, I'll speak for me. If it ever came to that in this province, that there was a need to put a bill like that in place, I would be number one to stand up and vote yes for it, I can tell you that right now.

I think it's imperative that we as all members, not just the government side and the Opposition, but all 51 members in this House, do the right thing on behalf of all our constituents and continue to monitor the situation, and should it arise, should it walk into one of our offices, it's imperative that this House knows, it's imperative that the

Department of Health and Wellness and the Minister of Health and Wellness know, Mr. Speaker, that this is in fact an issue or has become an issue.

I don't want to take a lot of time but I do want to be on the record as saying that should it become an issue, Mr. Speaker, this member would be very open to that debate in supporting a bill that would help correct anything that would have our people selling blood and plasma to feed themselves or their families. That is not right. Nobody in this House would agree with that, that was ever right, at least no one I have ever talked to and again I'll only speak for me. But I can tell you again, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take a lot of time. I know I've got a few minutes left that we could chat more about it but I think it's important to get our point across, or my point across.

I think I've probably spoken to this bill before when it has come to the floor of this Legislature and probably similarly, so with those few words, Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member opposite for bringing the bill back to the House and I'm hopeful that it's a bill that we'll never need to have a discussion or debate about in this House, quite frankly. Thank you.

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

MR. GORDON WILSON: It's an interesting world, the blood supply world. I'll just give a quick story. I was a young fellow, actually I was 15 years old when I donated blood for the first time. I can remember it just as clear as today. It was in the Lions Club in Digby and there was a group of us in school who had the opportunity - it was going around the school that if you wanted to volunteer blood you got to get out of school. So, my first experience at donating blood, and I must say that I have donated 52 times since then, was one that my motive was different than maybe it should have been.

I will say this much, that I've watched the Canadian blood supply transform since those days. Those days you walked in and basically you just told them who you were and away they went, drawing blood out of you. My, how it has changed today. Now when you go in to give blood you really don't know what the new procedure is going to be. It's computerized, it's everything I could say in the world, plus the safest. And I have to commend the service for the work they have done to get us to that point. I also have to thank the member for bringing this forward. I know that he is very passionate about it. He is one that, as he has with the bill on PTSD, as with any bills that he brings - he brings them with the best intentions and I do have to commend him on that. I think that his motives are genuine.

We have watched Canadian Blood Services go through some challenging times. We have seen that service grow and I just want to touch on the fact that being a volunteer service, what that means. I think there is a principal difference when you do something out of the kindness of your heart versus doing it for money. And I must say that the volunteer side of it to me, when I walk into the blood donor clinics and I see the people who are in

there, I think that it would be a different group of people if it was anything but volunteer. I think it fosters different things in your community when you do something out of the kindness of your heart. I think that it is important to keep that aspect in mind. We wouldn't want to lose that.

I know we have seen just recently the tragic event that happened in Las Vegas and how that impacted that community. The news the day later, focused on the lineups. The unbelievable community rallying that came around to stand forth for that community. And these are the stories that I think that volunteers - when I think of blood donation, I think of volunteerism. I think that the truest thing that we can give is that gift of life.

I, unfortunately, never had the opportunity to give plasma. That is an opportunity that you see an awful lot in the city with the plasma clinics, as everybody knows. There is that ability to do that now. I know some good friends and colleagues of mine, certainly I'll shout out to the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, who is one of the biggest blood donors. Maybe some people wouldn't realize that we have that in the Public Service, and I commend him for what he has done to raise awareness to that.

But the reality of it is that we have a very safe, a very risk-free system right now that is being - there is a review that is ongoing. I believe the report for that review is supposed to be brought forward. Health Canada is looking at it for March 2018. It's to assess the long-term security of our sustainable immunoglobulin product supply. So, it is being looked at by a very credible organization, I think, and it would be a little presumptuous of us to, at this point in time, make any kind of decisions on what we do as a province to move forward.

But we need to take a look also at what this would do to impact the Canadian blood supply should plasma collection be permitted to expand significantly. And again, this organization is huge in supporting the lives of all Canadians. I think we need to fully understand what the implications are.

Examining the emerging international practice and lessons are also important for us to understand. They are very relevant to the Canadian context. We know that it is happening in other countries. The models that are happening, just simply "cookie-cutter" and say, it's being done here, it's being done there, fits Nova Scotia. I don't think that is the same, or even fits Canada as far that goes. We certainly have a far different organization here and we have learned from our experiences.

I know, unfortunately, we're probably not in a position right now where we feel that we can support this move forward but, again, the one thing that I've learned about this Legislature is that every time we raise topics in here, even though we agree to disagree, it's an extremely important opportunity for us to talk about those topics, to raise the awareness of what some of the challenges are, to look for solutions and plant seeds.

[3:45 p. m.]

As we all know, sometimes things don't happen simply through the sitting of one course of the Legislature. It takes years sometimes. I've always looked at the political world - I think I've learned this from experience - it's not just something that you strike a pen to and it works. It's more - and this is probably why I'm here - just being at the right place at right time.

So, again, I do commend our folks from across the floor for the conversation around it. Whether it's the right place at the right time, I think that's the question. Whether it will be the right place sometime, who knows?

We're not one to say that we don't accept everything that's brought forward. I think there's been good examples where we have done that. I think when we do we need to recognize the fact that these are initiatives and, again, I'll go back to the great advocacy work that we saw around PTSD. That took more than just one Party to have that happen and, again, these are the kinds of things that we as a government down the road will keep our eye on.

So, in summary, to look back at it again, you know, we do have a very good, reliable, fresh source that the Canadian Blood Services does use. At this point in time, volunteer donors - again, my heart is always with volunteers and fostering volunteerism, and at this point in time, I think that even though it does save lives and these kinds of things do make a difference in our world, there's no doubt about it, we cannot live without these kinds of services. Being at the right place at the right time is important. We have, again, that report. I think we're all probably going to be speaking about this again - March 2018 is not that far away.

I've got a feeling we're probably going to be seeing a Spring sitting of the Legislature, very similar to what we're going through here today, with another opportunity then for us to digest those things and I'd be very surprised if this isn't something that we get to have a chance to chat about in the future.

Just on one closing note, another quick little comment going back to my original opening statement about being a young 15-year-old donating blood - what was interesting out of that is back then you used to get IDs that would be almost as good as a birth certificate and what was interesting about it is because I had a blood donor card which you were supposed to be 16, I believe, at the time to get it, for some reason they thought I was a year older and that carried on with me into that age when you're 18 when it was, for some reason, when you turned 18, things happened in your life that made it - maybe I should be careful what I do say here but that's an interesting story that goes back to a day when I experienced my first opportunity of giving blood and I was a year older when I turned 18. I was only 17 but I got to chum around with some of my 18-year-old buddies a little bit more than maybe I should have.

Anyway, again, I thank the member opposite for bringing this forward. I think it's a great initiative and I look forward to other comments when we do have a chance down the road in this House to speak about this. So, thank you very much.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill No. 21.

Bill No. 21 - Environment Act.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, tire recycling in Nova Scotia began when the used-tire recycling program was established in 1997 as part of Nova Scotia's solid-waste resource management regulations.

When you purchase on-road passenger tires, you pay a one-time environmental fee to support the cost of collecting and processing used tires. Divert Nova Scotia, in partnership with retailers, administers a stewardship agreement to help facilitate keeping used tires out of our provincial landfills. In fact, recycling beverage containers and tires has contributed \$594 million, almost \$6 million, to Nova Scotia's economy since 1996. That's quite enormous.

The history of tire burning and the use of scrap tires as an alternative fuel source began in 2007 when the Nova Scotia Government rejected - rejected - Lafarge's Brookfield proposal to burn used tires, replacing coal in its cement kilns. The rejection was in part based on the government's interest in developing a local tire-recycling industry, together with the ongoing lack of local tire-shredding services needed for complete combustion.

Lafarge's proposal was also rejected in Ontario in 2007 and 2008. Unclear risks of this burning - TDF burning, it's called - conflicted with ecosystem approach and the precautionary principle in Ontario's guidance. Nova Scotia's environmental legislation shares such principles.

In 2015, a non-peer-reviewed study of predicted environmental health impacts from TDF coal burning was completed by the Faculty of Engineering at Dalhousie University. This study, claiming a better cement plant environmental footprint as highly likely, was offered in support of Lafarge's environmental impact statement to the Nova Scotia Government earlier this year.

The Ecology Action Centre found multiple general and specific concerns with this Dalhousie study. They say that there were 21 missed relevant studies of toxic TDF burning pollutants. They found at least 21 relevant studies that were published by early 2015 but

missed in the Dalhousie study, indicating increased highly toxic pollutants. These pollutants include dangerous inhalable fine particulate matter, toxic metals, and cancer-causing or DNA-damaging chemicals.

The EAC is also concerned that with its high percentage of missed relevant studies, the Dalhousie study cannot offer an adequate scientifically-grounded basis for a major policy shift affecting environmental and human health. We, the NDP, further believe that government has relied too heavily on this one narrowly-focused engineering assessment of TDF's environmental safety, and that given the high stakes involved, an independent government scientific assessment canvassing multi-disciplinary insights from experts in health care, public health, environmental, social, and other sciences is warranted. This is what we believe, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing I'd like to say is that tire recycling offers local value on many levels. The Dalhousie study claims that tire recycling is low value, but in fact the opposite is true. In addition to local recycling jobs, the Nova Scotia Government also gains significant value from almost-free recycled tire crumb for highway building. If all Nova Scotia tire crumb were diverted to fuel use, as Lafarge proposes, government would need to purchase more stone aggregate for its highways at a likely cost of millions of dollars, and more ecologically-disruptive stone quarrying would then be needed.

We already know that people are complaining about all of the quarries across Nova Scotia. For 22,000 kilometres of roads, there are 12,000 quarries, and only 3,500 of them are actually in use.

Meanwhile, by burning tires, Lafarge will benefit from reduced fuel costs, being paid approximately \$1 a tire, by the Nova Scotia taxpayer for recycling fees, to generate purely private profits. Lafarge's proposal offloads some private business costs onto the Nova Scotia Government, and therefore, onto taxpayers, benefiting mainly Lafarge's international shareholders. This is not okay in our books.

Lydia Sorflaten is a resident of Shortts Lake, and she never had a problem with paying an environmental handling fee for tires because they'd be recycled. But now that some of the tires are going to be burned, she's outraged. She says, it's not fair, it's not responsible, it doesn't make sense.

While the province cited reduced greenhouse gases as a reason to approve this project, Lydia Sorflaten says that it misses the point. The primary concern, she said, should be increases in toxic chemicals, like dioxins, and furans, and heavy metals such as zinc, nickel, cadmium, and manganese in the air.

The company, working with Dalhousie on the project, will use tires to replace some of the coal it uses. But it follows Lafarge winning a tender, for access to 30 per cent of the recyclable tires in the province. Until this spring, all tires were being sent to Halifax C&D

Recycling, for shredding and use as aggregate. Now, 30 per cent of the approximately one million tires a year will go to Lafarge, and this is going to pay them \$315,000 per year.

Mark Butler at the EAC says that he's upset at Divert, and he says, personally, I don't feel like paying that fee, if it's going towards subsidizing the fuel costs of one of the largest corporations in the world. Mark Butler, of course, is Policy Director of the Ecology Action Centre.

Now, the minister said in Estimates that there is no difference between a subsidy that's being provided to the Halifax C&D, and this multinational company. Really? Well, I beg to differ. He believes that there is no difference between investing in a local, Nova Scotian recycling company, that has developed a world-class tire recycling program, that helps us achieve our environmental goals, versus giving millions of dollars to a multinational corporation, in the end, that thinks that the conversation should be about whether to burn tires or coal.

Because, right now, it's a one-year pilot, but it looks like they are aiming towards a five-year program, and in fact, they are investing a couple of million dollars into this building, in the hopes that it will turn into more than a one-year project. Also, I'd like to point out, it's no secret that the Premier's campaign director, in the last two elections, was a registered lobbyist for Lafarge in 2014 and 2015. Yet when I asked the minister of Environment, was there any connection between this decision and any person that was hired by the Liberal Party, he said, no.

The Premier and the minister both say that they have had no dealings with Mr. MacInnes in this capacity. Well, it sounds a little bit like Mr. Trump and some of the dealings that he has with his children, where he says, he has no dealings with them when it comes to work. And yet, they're friends, they're family, in this case, they're working together. So, what did Lafarge pay Mr. MacInnes to do as a registered lobbyist? That's what I'd like to know. The optics of this are terrible, and will further erode the credibility of this government.

So, I would like to also point out that our NDP caucus wants to give community members a say in what happens with industrial projects that are happening in their neighbourhoods. The community around Shortts Lake have not been consulted. I know many of them, many of them are actually my constituents, and they live both in Shortts Lake, and in Truro.

So, we believe in the precautionary principle, we believe that Section 2(b)(ii) of the Environment Act lays out the purpose of that legislation. It states, "the precautionary principle will be used in decision-making so that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, the lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation."

[4:00 p.m.]

It is our opinion in the NDP caucus that the minister should not have approved this application by Lafarge to burn tires in Nova Scotia, and we sincerely hope that he will not approve the industrial permit, which is the final stage in this project. We sincerely hope that the minister rethinks this and that people start asking more questions about the connection between the lobbyist who worked for the Liberal Government and his dealings with Lafarge.

We also feel that it's important to pass our bill, which is an environmental bill of rights. It is important for the people of Nova Scotia to have a say in what happens in this province, to the air that they breathe, to the water that they drink and swim in. I know from talking to the people who live in Shortts Lake that the last time Lafarge actually started to burn tires, they woke up one day and the snow and their cars were covered in black soot.

What do you think they were breathing? What do you think was going into the lake? What do you think was going into the rivers that bound that area?

We here in Nova Scotia need to keep our province as clean and as pristine as possible. Going forward with climate change, with global warming, with droughts, with floods, and with a lack of clean potable drinking water - our water sources are going to become more and more valuable. Therefore, why should we allow multinational corporations like Lafarge, like Northern Pulp, and like others to get away with ruining our province?

The deforestation, the burning of tires, the spraying of glyphosate, the ruining of our forests and flora and fauna, taking away the habitats for our wildlife - Nova Scotia is going to be left with nothing but burnt stumps. The fact that wildfires are also a huge problem around the world right now is something we need to take into consideration, and realize that everything we can do to protect the environment needs to be done. It needs to be done now, because time is of the essence. The bird of time has but a little way to fly, Mr. Speaker, and I would say the bird is definitely on the wing.

I would also like to point out that the conservation and efficient use of resources, the promotion and development and use of sustainable scientific and technological innovations and management systems, and the importance of reducing, reusing, recycling, and recovering products for our society is part of the answer. Therefore, why are we taking four steps backward and going back to burning tires instead of simply recycling them?

I have also spent time with people who are very, very worried about these quarries that are being enlarged in their communities. It only takes over 3.99 hectares to enlarge a quarry, and when the environmental assessments are done, there's no baseline for them to be able to tell where they started from. People are saying that there are endangered species and species at risk that are all going to be seriously affected by the enlargement of these

quarries and pits. The burning of tires instead of using them for roads is, in my books, a very important part of this equation.

The other thing I would like to say is that subsidizing these large corporations is the wrong way forward for Nova Scotia. We need to have locally-owned, locally-produced, locally-manufactured products, and I would say that the recycling plant that was formed and built here is something we should all be proud of. Right now they're going to be accepting tires from Newfoundland and Labrador instead of from Nova Scotia, which I think is a shame and a blight on our reputation.

Avoiding landfill spaces was another large part of why the recycling was started. The recycling of our tires needs to be rethought, and I would hope that the minister does that. Thank you very much.

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

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's discussion. I want to thank the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River for adding to this dialogue and certainly bringing the NDP's perspective to the House today. I would also say that I look forward to hearing comments from the Progressive Conservative caucus as well.

I think before I get too far into my comments it's important to acknowledge that all members of this House and, furthermore, all Nova Scotians have a vested interest in ensuring that we maintain our position as a leader with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is something that on a local level I know there are many people throughout my community in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville who pay very close attention to the decisions that government makes to the emphasis put into being constructive around policy development to ensure that government, as a regulator, has a strong stability possible to protect our environment and the communities that we've all grown up in that we all have moved to and grown to love and appreciate.

I think we can all buy into the concept that we'd like to see our best foot forward in terms of enabling controls on business development in the sense that we want to protect the environment.

On the topic at hand, like many, if not all, like endeavours, heavy industrial applications go through an extremely rigorous process. At the Department of Environment there are separate levels of approvals that need to take place in order for this type of business to set up shop. Now we know that the minister has approved the environmental approval as part of the process that one business has to go through to get acceptance to do business of this type. That part of the process, like an industrial approval process, goes through our team of very qualified, capable staff who are trying to sort things out in terms of what's in the best interests of Nova Scotians with respect to protecting our environment.

These are people who have made their careers on developing policy and creating regulations to ensure that the environment and our communities are protected. So, when this type of endeavour from a business of any sort comes to the table, these are passionate people who are truly focused on ensuring that we get the best results with respect to policy.

I'd like to highlight that the approval that was granted is only a pilot project, Mr. Speaker. We are a province that wants to enable innovation, that wants to be a place that is friendly for people who do business, and this company, Lafarge, has expressed to the minister, by way of this application, their interest in trying to be innovative and reduce their carbon emissions by switching from a substance that, by comparison, as I understand it is far more harmful in terms of its carbon footprint. The substance I refer to, Mr. Speaker, is called pet coke. It's a by-product of petroleum refining.

This endeavour to shift some of their energy resources to a format where they're burning tires is based on the confidence that they can reduce their overall carbon footprint and make that contribution through their shop. There are many, many things as a part of this environmental approval that took place. If they get to the point, I suspect they will make that application for industrial approval.

There are many different aspects through regulations that they will be required to adhere to. It's important to note that they will have to make a point to comply with requirements around tire storage, waste management, and air dispersion modelling. Their emissions will be continually monitored at the stack, which will take place before the project launches so that we have that clear baseline on where they're starting so we have a better ability to closely monitor just what type of impact it is having. They also have to have some emergency protocols in place in the event that something unforeseen takes place.

To that point, as I understand it, Lafarge has an ambition to invest significantly in their infrastructure to ensure that they're prepared to deal with their endeavour in such a way. I believe, when they're saying that their ambition is to reduce their overall carbon footprint, that this investment in that infrastructure has a lot to do with ensuring that their facility has the capabilities to make good on that.

I know the member opposite did make some comments about the public's inclusion as a part of policy development. I don't think anyone would disagree that that component to decision-making and policy development is critical to getting a full picture of what Nova Scotians expect. We in this House get elected to represent our communities. I appreciate that the member lives in close proximity to the site that we're talking about. I respect her willingness to get up and continually speak on behalf of her constituents.

But I do want to draw it back to an example of what's known as a CLC, a community liaison committee, which is a part of a condition of this environmental approval. I will speak about an example of one of these committees as I understand it in

my community. I have participated on a CLC through a project development in my riding. I will say that these CLCs are designed to bring different levels of government together with proponents, with experts, and with members of the community from any type of background simply to create an opportunity for dialogue, for constructive discussion, for suggestions on how to enhance our ability to comply with a community's expectations to hold industrial businesses of this nature to account.

[4:15 p.m.]

One of the valuable things about these types of committees is that they have the ability - I think the opportunity for exchange of information is critical. In many situations, regardless of what we're talking about, we can all cite examples of inaccuracies in information. Maybe you didn't say something the way that you wanted to say it, perhaps. A community liaison committee is a good opportunity, like I said, for the community to meet with experts and proponents to set the stage right and to clarify things that may be misunderstood on one side of the debate or the other.

Mr. Speaker, I would also indicate - and I'm sure that it has been said on the floor of the House, and I'm sure that it was discussed in the Red Room during estimates the other day - that Nova Scotia is not a guinea pig in this regard. This type of industrial endeavour is being done in British Columbia. It's being done in Quebec. It's being done in the United States in a number of different states. So there is pre-existing research that we have the ability to access to heighten our ability to create effective policy that will lend itself to protecting Nova Scotians to the best of our abilities while maintaining the position that we do seek to be an economy here in Nova Scotia.

If a business wants to be innovative, wants to step up and make an application to do something that perhaps is not being done at the time, we have the people in the Department of Environment, and we have Nova Scotians across this province who - let's face it - are very invested in ensuring that we protect this province. But we do want to make sure that we do have a open-door policy that, make no mistake, is maintained by policy that doesn't compromise our environment. We do want to encourage business to develop and to take risks.

I'm very proud of the fact that this government has been very supportive of the small-business community and the business community across this province. Small, medium, or large, we're a province that needs to encourage business development. Regardless of whether you're a multinational community, you're a small community, or you're a mom-and-pop shop, we want to be a place where people can look to, to go and do business. Make no mistake, we still have a responsibility to respect what Nova Scotians expect of us in regard to maintaining and respecting our environment.

I believe that the process that exists at the department through the various levels of approval will satisfy Nova Scotians' expectations for us, as legislators. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I guess I'm the one who should be speaking to this bill since I live at Shortt's Lake and my daughter lives at Shortt's Lake and her husband and my grandchildren from my son, they swim at Shortt's Lake. So this is crucial to our lifestyle, what happens at Lafarge, because I'm very close to it.

I have met with Lafarge on a number of occasions just talking about this, because I want them to convince me that this is a good thing and will not harm the environment. I have asked them and asked them to give me as much information as possible on the study of this.

Our approach as a Party, it's also my approach in many things, too, is one of balance. What I mean by that is that we need to make sure that the business imperative - and there is a lot - is balanced with public safety, with healthy, local communities, environmental stewardship and transparent regulations and processes.

Again, I want to say this again, we need the balance. We can't let the health and safety of our communities be harmed by any actions that are not fully transparent and the environment must be protected for Nova Scotians and also for our children. Any burning of tires or tire-derived fuel, must be accompanied by an industrial approval that sets very clear, unambiguous and serious targets for the kiln emissions at Lafarge, Brookfield. Emissions must be monitored in real time, results must be provided publicly. Transparency is very important and that's one of my asks of Lafarge, to have that information available to the public, to the residents of Shortt's Lake, to the public at large.

I know we can't stand in the way of growth in this province. We need growth, we need good business, but we must be very prudent and we must be transparent with this. This decision that we're being asked to make needs to be made with very heavy feeling and heavy thought and shouldn't be entered into carelessly. If a process is evidence-based, then we need to see and we need to understand the evidence that is before us.

This project to burn tires as fuel must, under no circumstances, be a slippery slope that will lead to higher intensity carbon emissions or similar projects that are across the province. The current policy of recycling tires is forward-looking and it's an important part of our sustainable future. Our caucus has met with that business that does recycle tires for infrastructure and for roads. I in no way want to see that business go under.

Again, it comes to balance. Lafarge is applying for a certain percentage of tires in the province to be burned and the other business will get the rest. I know their fear is that

one is going to take over the other eventually. I would be one who would fight against that because I think both are very valid, so far, in what I have heard and seen. We need very clear, unambiguous markers from the government as to what is considered unacceptable operations.

I want to ask a couple of questions of government. I have asked these questions of Lafarge, and I'm going to ask them of the Department of Environment too. Will the department implement real-time emissions monitoring and make those facts available online? I have asked that question of Lafarge, will they do that? Again, will the Department of Environment implement real-time emissions monitoring and make that data available on a public online platform?

Will periodic meetings be held in the community with Department of Environment and Lafarge personnel to update residents on the environmental and public health impacts of the TDF project? Specifically, how frequently will Lafarge hold community liaison committee meetings? Again, I see this as a very important aspect of any business that comes into a community that has questions around it. I feel the community really needs to have some kind of input on that decision. I would certainly implore the department as well as Lafarge to make sure that meetings are held and that residents are kept up to date on what is happening.

This is another question I guess for the minister: if the project violates the industrial approval or departmental regulations, will the minister be empowered to terminate the TDF project? These are just some questions and thoughts around this very, very important environmental concern.

I would hate to see my environment at Shortts Lake disturbed in any way. If this project is deemed safe, I accept that. But if it is not, then I think we need to do something different.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill. I'm proud to be part of a caucus that has brought this forward, in part to remind one of the members opposite of his former stance with citizens near Shortts Lake against tire burning.

Perhaps there is some new evidence that the Minister of Environment is considering as Nova Scotia looks to change a former policy or former practice of not allowing tire burning. At this point, I'm not convinced. I don't want to second-guess the science so much as talk to what is kind of clear and evident for all of us to see and speak to some of the dangers I see in this pilot project.

First of all, I want to address that language of "pilot project" because I do feel like in this case it's somewhat disingenuous. There are widespread reports that the company is

investing in infrastructure. I believe one of the members opposite just referred to that, that there is investment at the plant in new infrastructure in order to be able to take in this tire-derived fuel. What multinational corporation is going to invest in new infrastructure at a plant without some sense of security that that investment is going to result in a profit on an ongoing basis? I think when people are skeptical or people are raising concerns about this pilot project, it's partly with that in their mind.

[4:30 p.m.]

But I also want to speak to the public trust and the contract which Nova Scotia, through the mechanism of Divert Nova Scotia, has made with Nova Scotian consumers and the Nova Scotian public in general which has been paying a tire tax, a recycling fee on tires, for the past number of years. What is the understanding behind that payment? Well, the understanding is that those tires will be diverted from our waste stream, and they will be used in some ecologically sound fashion to divert them from our landfills.

Well, that has been working. That has been working and we talk about valuing innovation and we talk about valuing small and local businesses. Well, Halifax C&D Recycling Ltd. is 100 per cent local business that has innovated, that saw an opportunity, took risks, invested in its own infrastructure in order to develop a new product and new markets which we are using on our roads and which is diverting, which is having multiple positive environmental outcomes including a reduction in the quarrying of aggregate. So, that is a Nova Scotia success story that should be held up and supported.

I just quickly went on the Registry of Joint Stocks of Lafarge just to see - I mean I was googling Lafarge and looking for whatever is not in my binder that our caucus staff had prepared. Not one of their directors lives in Nova Scotia. They don't have the attachment to this issue that my colleague who just spoke has, that my colleague, the member for Truro -Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River - this is why I'm always just going to refer to people as my colleague, member opposite, or my colleague - so, there is nothing in their lived experience, there is nothing in their family experience which holds them to the standard that, frankly, C&D Recycling Ltd. is held to. They live in the environment where they do business and that creates a whole other level of responsibility, of sense of stewardship.

So, to be perfectly plain-spoken about it, we are paying our recycling fee to a multinational corporation so that they can reduce - not only can they receive that revenue but they can reduce their own expenditures on other sources of fuel to pad their bottom line. That's it. That is, like, the nature of global capitalism and I recognize that, you know, the majority of people in this House are quite fine with that, but let's call it what it is. Let's be plain-spoken about it. So, I worry about what impact this had on the public trust, on their trust in the government to make the best decisions for our long-term future, for our health, and for the health of our environment.

There are 11 staff who work for C&D Recycling Ltd. They have markets for 100 per cent of the tires that they currently recycle in Nova Scotia. They have markets, so this is taking inputs into their business away, so as my colleague mentioned, they will have to import tires from Newfoundland and Labrador - frankly, partly because I'm from Newfoundland and Labrador originally, I would rather see a great local company in Corner Brook invest in, and looking at C&D Recycling Ltd.'s model, and figure out how to do the exact same thing there where they are attached to the environment, and so that you're not spending the greenhouse gases transporting recycled tires from Newfoundland and Labrador to Nova Scotia. If you want to look at the whole cost, at the whole life cycle of tires, surely that would make more sense.

I will resist the green-washing of this decision. I will resist the green-washing of Lafarge's message to the public that they are doing this to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It is not true. Because a member opposite raised greenhouse gas emissions, again, let's just speak the truth. There has been a lot of time spent in this Legislature, particularly in this session, building up a strawman of a carbon tax and then beating on that strawman for the costs that is going to be to our economy and to Nova Scotian consumers.

Again, let's speak plainly. Many people have looked at the cap and trade system that is also before this House and called it out for what it is - words that comply with the minimum requirement of what the Government of Canada is demanding of Nova Scotia. Yes, we have reduced our greenhouse gases a great deal in Nova Scotia. Yes, some of that cost has been borne by all of us, but again, let's be plain spoken. At the point of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, we were largely burning coal for all of our electricity.

So yes, we've made great reductions. It's because we were starting from the back of the pack and so, sure, let's give ourselves a pat on the back, but saying in 2017 that we've done this great job of reducing emissions, well frankly, that is based on initiatives that are 10 years old. Surely, we could be setting new benchmarks, looking at what we know and see evident all around us today, including I would mention, in the Public Accounts of Nova Scotia where there are all these unexpected expenses related to the October floods, related to fires, related to the real lived experience of climate change that is coming home here as well.

Lafarge is motivated by its bottom line and with this pilot project Nova Scotia and Nova Scotian consumers, Nova Scotian citizens, are contributing to Lafarge's bottom line. That is it.

I wish that the members opposite would recall all the reasons that they considered - well that they voted for, many of them, a bill very much like this one that we have brought back forward today, and consider voting for ours. I think that would re-establish some public trust, and I appreciate your indulgence as I spoke some truth as I see it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the members' comments from the other side of the House. Specifically, I think there were a few questions of the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley regarding how the process will unfold in the coming months.

The first one that I wrote down was making sure that we had clear, unambiguous parameters in the permit. I share that view and certainly when the industrial approval is submitted, when the application comes in for the one-year pilot study, I will be inserting myself in all the discussions with the Nova Scotia Environment staff who, by the way, do a great job and have been doing a great job.

When this file landed on my desk, I wanted to make sure that I took the time to read through all the expert reviews from our department internally, from our Public Health Officer, from the external sources that were provided - the Dalhousie study that was completed with the engineering team. I want to extend an invite to the member to meet with me if he feels that he has specific concerns around the operation at the cement kiln. I think it is important for the member representing the area to have confidence in the process.

Another part he mentioned was the monitoring and transparency to ensure that it's real time - I believe the words the member used were "real time." I can assure the member that there will be monitoring. There's an air dispersion modelling system that will be installed at the cement kiln and will be monitored - not by Lafarge but by an independent third party. That is important, and as my colleague had mentioned, an important part of the approval and the environmental assessment, which I wanted to ensure was in place, was the community liaison committee. Individuals from the community will be able to meet with Lafarge periodically to review all the information coming out.

Again, this is a pilot study. I know there's criticism from some members who don't believe that it should be a pilot study, or don't believe that it really is, because there's an investment. But the reality is that private sector companies take risks. That's the nature of why they're in the private sector. If they're willing to invest a substantial amount of money, then they obviously have confidence that the evidence they've provided in the study will line up with what is actually going to happen at a practical level at the cement kiln when it's measured by an independent party.

When you couple that with the fact that there are successful operations throughout the world and in our own country, with provinces that have comparable air emission quality, we have confidence that, taking in all those considerations, an environmental assessment was approved with strict terms and conditions. My colleague mentioned some of them, and some of them I personally felt were important to have in there, such as limiting the percentage of tires for the actual fuel source, which we limited to 15 per cent, which is

a lower level compared to some other cement kilns in the country, where it's a little bit higher.

The important point is to make sure that it's operating at a safe level and that we're monitoring to make sure that there are a limited amount of upsets in the kiln so we don't have nanoparticles going up into the atmosphere.

The member mentioned that he had met with C&D Recycling, and that business currently has a monopoly on the tire management program that is administered by Divert Nova Scotia. They have for a number of years. It's actually located in Timberlea-Prospect. The employees who work there do a great job. Some of them live in the constituency that I represent.

I've toured the facility a number of times, even with the Premier. I toured the facility both before I was a member and after. They've had some success, certainly, with tire-derived aggregate and some other materials, but they've had some challenges finding markets for the material, given the availability of aggregate today, which is priced around \$15 per ton. Of course, I think the members know that the tire-derived aggregate costs about \$200 per ton. Up until the tender was actually awarded by Divert Nova Scotia, the vast majority of tires were being left on the property of that business.

[4:45 p.m.]

Divert Nova Scotia is a board made up of people who have varying environmental backgrounds. They decided that they would put a tender out, a competitive tender that had varying options. This particular tender that was awarded still keeps the majority of tires with the tire-derived aggregate in hopes that they will be able to find markets better, and then keeps the smaller percentage, the 25 per cent of tires, going to Lafarge.

I think that's an important part to ensure that we have more than one source for getting tires, to avoid the stockpiling of tires, which was the whole intent behind trying to find a place that could recycle tires, given that we do have a relatively low volume compared to other places like Ontario, who have a significantly larger volume, where you can actually make a higher-value product at the end of the life cycle, like crumb rubber for athletic fields. We don't have that type of scale here.

So essentially, there have been some challenges, and that's why Debert, Nova Scotia, put the tender out, to diversify the portfolio and the tire-management program. Of course, that's contingent on environmental approvals, which has gone through the first phase for the pilot project, the environmental assessment.

We still have the industrial approval to go through, as I said. But at the same time, I think there was also concern about what the minister would do and what the department would do if there were challenges with the pilot project, if they were not able to achieve

the reductions that they were speaking about in the study. There is a range of options that the minister and the department can take in terms of warnings if it's something that's not egregious or a directive. Or, as I said in the past, there could be a ministerial order. It can escalate all the way to revoking approval. The minister has that as an option if it's not achieving what we expect it to achieve based on applications in other provinces nearby.

We will keep them accountable through the requirement of the minute-by-minute monitoring. I think that's important to give confidence to the community surrounding the area.

At the Department of Environment, we don't consider whether the company is a multinational or a small company or a medium-sized company. As a regulator, the application is purely based on the science and the evidence provided and expert review.

I took it upon myself to go further and look at how it is operating in other jurisdictions. To give some confidence to the member, there are already discussions from staff in Nova Scotia Environment and our counterparts in the other provinces to see what challenges they may have had in the actual operations of the cement kilns in Quebec and in British Columbia to ensure that we can achieve best practices. Consider that in five provinces and Nova Scotia, all the scrap tires end up in a tire-derived fuel application for energy recovery. It's an accepted practice. Nearby New Brunswick exports their tires for that purpose, and Newfoundland exports most of their tires.

I do want to correct the member for Halifax Needham. She said that there would be tires exported from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland, or something around that. C&D is actually bringing a piece of equipment over to Newfoundland, and they will be utilizing a portion of the tires in Newfoundland to test out tire-derived aggregate. I thought it was telling when the officials from the Newfoundland and Labrador Government were asked, if this does well, would you consider putting all your tires into this tire-derived aggregate application? They have said no because they have recognized that there is value in a diversified portfolio. It limits risk in terms of coming to a situation where you have stockpiled tires. You have two end locations, as long as they're acceptable. If the tire-derived aggregate works out in Newfoundland and Labrador, then they'll have tire-derived aggregate, and they will still continue to export to Quebec, to the Lafarge plants in Quebec, to be utilized for tire-derived fuel.

You can see the value that they see in a diversified portfolio for their used tire program, which is the value that Debert, Nova Scotia, sees. It's about a sustainable program to keep tires from landfills, which is where you see that fee that the consumers are paying when they purchase tires. The nominal fee that is paid goes into the program to ensure that the program continues to operate sufficiently and sustainably.

I want to ensure all members that I take this issue very seriously. Currently, there is room for tire-derived aggregate in the province. I hope that they are able to find more

markets. There is room for tire-derived fuel if it is safe for the environment, and we have no reason to believe that it isn't. I look forward to the results of the pilot study.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: That concludes Opposition Business for today. I'll pass it over to the Government House Leader to continue on with government business today.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we get to the Government House Leader we have reached the moment of interruption. We do have late debate this evening under Rule 5(5). The topic, as submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre is:

“Therefore be it resolved that the government's disregard of the right to collectively bargain, demonstrated by Bill No. 148, will negatively impact the front-line workers who support our health and education systems and other important services.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

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

LAE: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - DISREGARD

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, what a shame it is that I have to stand in this House and talk about free and fair collective bargaining, something that our forefathers fought for, something that the miners in Cape Breton have fought for, to allow for people to come together collectively and bargain a collective agreement that everybody takes part of, that everybody has a voice in. Seventy-five thousand members of Nova Scotia have lost their right to free and fair collective bargaining under this Liberal Government.

When something is told to you, in my world that's called dictating - free and fair collective bargaining as in an ad in 2013 by this Liberal Government said, we believe in, and there were three points. The first one said, free and fair collective bargaining. The second one said, fair wage increase. And, to be quite frank, after that I can't remember the third one.

Mr. Speaker, how can we stand here and say that Bill No. 148 is constitutional? I think when we get to the courts we're going to see that Bill No. 148 not only will cost this province millions and millions of dollars, that it is actually unconstitutional. Why would midway through, it be decided to send the whole bill to the courts to decide when, in fact, at the beginning of it only part of it was being sent.

Members of this House need to understand that a free and fair collective agreement is something - and I've referred to this before - both parties go in with a wish book. Everybody has their hopes and dreams of what we can get in a better world and at the end of the day if you come out with a wish book on both sides, you are doing good.

Do you know what? Standing here I would be hard-pressed to say that I wouldn't have more appreciated a wage freeze that was bargained than dictated and that, Mr. Speaker, is the difference. As in my other role, in my other life, I said to my members that we have to look at the climate of what's going on around us. We have to realize that times may be a little tough, so let's maintain what we have and if we have to take a wage freeze or two, then so be it. But that's called bargaining, that's called going to the table and having honest, frank, respectful discussions. What this government didn't take part in, they didn't have those discussions. They just said hey, you know what? We're going to freeze your wages. But guess what, that's not a wage freeze because when you have economists who will come in and do the math over four years, the net effect is actually a decrease of, I believe, it's 8.9 per cent over four years.

So we have 75,000 Nova Scotians who are going to have a decrease in salary of almost 9 per cent. I don't think that the price of bananas is going down; the price of gas isn't going down. How do we expect these people in Nova Scotia to make ends meet, especially when predominantly the jobs held by public sector workers are women - 64 per cent of all public sector workers are women, traditionally in a lower-paying job.

We have public sector workers who are barely making \$30,000 a year. I don't know if anybody in here knows how hard it is to run a home, possibly have a car and feed your kid on \$30,000 a year. I do, it's not easy. In most cases if it's not for family, you don't make it because you cannot survive on \$30,000 a year. Then when we go to social services, and I think it's a vicious circle; some people feel what am I working for? And to be faced with the disrespect of this government when for the first time in history we had probably the largest protest when this government locked the teachers out. In 110 years and we've always said in the labour movement, teachers are probably one of the most passive groups that tends not to get riled up easily. Let me tell you, they were riled up this time. You know what? It's not something that they're probably soon going to forget.

It still shocks me that you can enter into these decisions so lightly when you're dealing with the lives of students, teachers, health care professionals, and municipal workers. There are so many sectors that this affects. Like I said, at the end of the day, one of the base salaries is probably, I want to say between \$25,000 and \$30,000, and you've just decreased that by 9 per cent over four years. I think that's shameful, and I think this government should be embarrassed.

If we had entered into an agreement knowing on both sides that it's something that we had good debate about, as we tried to in this House, then I think that would have been

a different kettle of fish. In 2013, when this government was trying to take over, as I said, Mr. Speaker, their ads sang a different tune than what they said in January of last year.

I was present at the protest in New Waterford when the teachers were locked out of the classrooms that day. The Premier says it was for the children's safety; however, we know that wasn't the case. Teachers were angry. Teachers were very angry.

Those of us in health care and the other public sectors knew that it was coming for us too. We knew that this wage legislation was coming for us. I'm going to tell you, when we get to talk about this further, when we get to talk to groups going forward about bargaining, the people of Nova Scotia are going to look for this government to do the right thing. I think if they don't, things could drastically change in the coming years.

We have fought for decades for the freedom to choose, the freedom to make decisions, the freedom to come together without being told what we have to do. All that was taken away with one swipe of the pen.

Just by definition, a predetermined package does not mean free and fair collective bargaining. A predetermined package - we're going to go in, and I'm going to say we're not allowed to talk about Pages 1 to 15. Anything after that is okay. Logically speaking, I know the members of this House have to understand what I'm saying. That doesn't constitute free and fair collective bargaining.

This legislation will cost the province millions and millions of dollars. I for one look forward to the day when the decision comes down that this Bill No. 148 is unconstitutional because I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, it will.

One in six workers in this province will have their wages frozen. How is that going to affect our growth? How is that going to affect the economy? We know that everything is going up. We see it when we go to the grocery store. We see it when we go to the pumps. Yet we're going to take home less and less money.

Mr. Speaker, I've said this before and I'll say it again - I think this government is spending their money in the wrong places. I'm not saying that at any time did we expect to make a fortune this time, but we at least deserve the respect to sit at the table and come to those decisions together as we have in the past. I can tell you one thing: lots of times I have walked away severely disappointed, but I have walked away with the knowledge that I was at the table, that I had a say, and that I would take that back to my members, and they can either say yes or no. At the end of the day, they take their direction.

I think the government needs to learn from that and take their direction from what they are hearing. Never before have I see all four sides of this House full of members protesting.

I can't say enough how wrong this is. Our Premier is the third-highest-paid Premier in the Province of Nova Scotia. I think that needs to reflect the residents that he is supposed to serve.

[5:00 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand and share in the conversation here tonight on how we best support our front-line workers.

I want to begin my comments with respect to our front-line workers, all of our civil service workers. We as MLAs come in contact with them daily, and as an MLA, I think we are constantly impressed with the professionalism of our civil service and their incredible value to us as a province. I just want to go on record on behalf of all MLAs in this House, from all sides of the Party, to thank our civil servants for the important work they do.

With respect to how we can best support our front-line workers, what we've heard about a lot over the last number of years is the issue of working conditions. Those have been building for decades, with the lack of finances available from the taxpayer to properly fund the civil service and the work they do. Those stresses and strains have built up over several decades, over multiple governments, as the financial situation of the province deteriorated.

This government has worked extremely hard over the last four years to bring our province into stronger fiscal health so that we can begin to address those gaps with respect to funding the services that Nova Scotians need and expect in this province, whether that's health care, education, or community services. We've worked extremely hard to analyze all the programs in government. We've made changes eliminating ineffective programs. We've actually cut and eliminated a department, the Department of Economic and Rural Development, as it was not effectively improving the economy of Nova Scotia. Without a strong economy, we have a poor government, and a poor government is not able to support its front-line workers and deliver the services that Nova Scotians have come to expect.

When we arrived in government, we were handed a \$680 million deficit with a ballooning debt, saddling our children and grandchildren with a debt that was getting very, very difficult to repay. We have now moved, over these several years, to our second balanced budget. That is being applauded across the country as one of two provinces that are in sound fiscal health. In fact, Standard and Poor's has recently upgraded the bond rating for our province from A+ to A+ positive, citing the sound management of this government, its balanced budgets, and its foreseeable future balanced budgets that we are continuing to work on.

Now that we are in a situation in which we have some fiscal sustainability, we can begin, as we are doing in this budget, to invest in the services that Nova Scotians need. Investing in those services is also improving the working conditions of our employees. This budget has numerous investments that will be improving working conditions throughout the civil service, whether that's in Community Services as we transition Community Services - and social workers have spoken to me about how they are now able to do social work rather than paperwork. That transition is an important step that the department is working on.

There's a piece of legislation before this House right now on PTSD for our first responders. Even the challenges of our highway staff, who deal with the numerous, numerous complaints of roads, we now have more money in the budget so that their working conditions dealing with an angry public about the roads are at least a little better.

I can think of no better example of where the cries on working conditions and the lack of investment has been louder - and it was referenced earlier - and that is within the education system. In this budget from listening to teachers, front-line workers who know best that we have over the past four years been investing back into education after significant cuts from the previous government that have deteriorated the working conditions for teachers, we are now putting more money back into the education system.

But those investments in our children, those investments in our classrooms increase and have positive impact on the working conditions for those teachers. One of the most significant stories I have had with teachers is the situation with students arriving in school ill-prepared. I learned a new term from talking with a Primary schoolteacher - not being an educator the whole idea of self-regulation and the need became very clear that we are not preparing our students to get off on a good footing in Primary.

And, so the introduction of the pre-Primary program is a significant investment in the whole education system, as we have children better prepared to go into the academic stream. In Primary that will translate through the grades and make those classrooms more effective and make the working conditions for teachers that much better. We have increased class caps from P-6, we have invested over \$65 million in those working conditions in those classrooms, but we are doing more. In this budget we are putting more money in community health supports for our students, there is \$1.4 million more for additional school psychologists and speech-language pathologists, and \$800,000 more for supporting children with autism.

These are all the challenges that our society is putting on the education system socially and we are now as a province beginning to have funds to begin to address those needs in the classroom, which improve working conditions for our teachers and also obviously improve outcomes for our students. We have also listened to teachers with respect to the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions - again, these are the working

conditions of our front-line workers in the classrooms - and investing \$9.5 million for hiring an additional 139 more teachers into our junior highs and high schools.

We are beginning to make investments as well in the health care system, particularly on the capital end. I want to highlight that this government is investing in the replacement of the Victoria General and, again, working conditions that our front-line workers are working in in this aging infrastructure that has been ignored by governments over the years and has reached the point of disrepair, causing floods and all sorts of disruptions to the working environment of our front-line workers.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude my comments to say that it is from our position of fiscal health that we are investing. We are investing millions and millions of dollars in this budget which will positively affect our citizens but, as well, will positively affect our front-line workers who do so much for our communities and for our citizens.

So, with that, I will take my seat.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise this evening to say a few words on Bill No. 148 and the negative effect it will have on our province and the workforce in our province.

As we've heard previously, Mr. Speaker, there's upwards of 75,000 workers who are going to be affected by this bill. We were here when we had protests, when we had all kinds of people march around the Legislature because, really, the government didn't want to do the hard work and bargain with these groups of people to come to a fair and open and even negotiation and negotiated contract.

The rights of our workers in this province go back as far as the workers in Cape Breton, such as, Bill Davis, who fought for the rights of the workers in this province. Mr. Davis even lost his life for the rights of the workers in this province and we do celebrate William Davis Miners' Memorial Day in June every year, because of what Mr. Davis offered to our society and that was that we could fairly and openly negotiate and bargain a contract that was acceptable to both sides.

Now, does every party win in a negotiation? I've been involved in a few where I wasn't involved in negotiations but I was affected by the contracts that happened. Was I happy with everything we got or didn't get? Not a bit, but our leaders told us that that was the best we could get. I'm sure they didn't go in there and say, oh well, you know what, we want more than this but we'll take that. They negotiated something else for it.

To take that right away from the workers in this province I think is absurd, because not only do people get upset with the process, the working conditions after the fact are

greatly affected. The conditions between management, the conditions between workers, the conditions between the government and the workers of the province. Do you think people go back to work and give their 100 per cent when they have a chance to do something - I won't say that they don't give 100 per cent, I shouldn't say that, I take that back. Every worker I've ever known has always given 100 per cent, but they got rewarded for that in one way or another, be it an increase in their salary, an increase in their health plan, an increase in their time off and, you know, there are some things that you can negotiate that don't really cost a lot of money up front.

I mean, I could never see us being very excited about a 1 per cent raise at the time when you could get maybe 2 per cent on your pension or a little extra on your health plan so you got a hearing aid or glasses or something more. You know what, as a 22-year-old kid starting work in this province, I didn't care about that stuff but, as we get older, that negotiated contract means an awful lot, especially in the line of pension, health care, you know, different drugs that you can get on your prescriptions, the copay you have to pay, whatever. But that's all stuff that's negotiated in a contract and when you take that right away from people to negotiate that contract, people don't think that that's the best thing in the world for our morale or our workplaces, for our workers.

We've heard it said and, I think, I'll say it, the member for Cumberland South said this Bill No. 148 was really the bill that we don't know how to negotiate or we really don't want to negotiate. We have the majority. We're going to use that majority to get what we want and that's too bad if you don't like it. We're just taking it from you. In my opinion, that's no way to bargain in this province.

We live in the Province of Nova Scotia. It's 2017. We're not back in the 1920s and 1930s and 1940s when you took what you wanted through force. You got what you wanted because you had the power to do it. I'm disappointed that the province has gone to that, backward to those days when they just took what they wanted. You know, the government knew what they wanted and they knew what they wanted from day one. We'll have negotiations but this is not on the table and that's not on the table. We're not going to talk about that.

Now, fair and open to me is, here's everything on the table. We really want this. You really want that. Okay, that's two things that we're not going to - what you get, you get but everything in the middle then we can - or I want to keep that but we'll give up that and that's negotiation. When you get to the stage where that doesn't happen, I believe the rights of our workers and all employees in the province here have been violated. So, we don't need to do the hard work. We'll go to the bargaining table as a sign of good faith, or faith, not good faith, and we'll take what we want. We'll run extra hours. We'll keep everybody. We'll tire them all out. We have the bodies to keep enough of a majority in here to do our thing. You guys will get tired. Eventually you'll go away. Here's what your contract's going to be. It didn't work that way.

[5:15 p.m.]

We sat around the clock here. As a caucus over on this side, we sat in shifts. People were getting three or four hours sleep a day, a night, an evening - whatever. We were here to listen. We were here to hear what everybody in the building had to say and what people had to say outside. They weren't happy. This was enforced on our teachers.

Our doctors are now in a dispute with the government over what the government calls a slush fund, a surplus. We have heard from some of the doctors that Doctors Nova Scotia represents these people. The government says they don't, and they're not listening.

What's next, our nurses? You know, I worked in the hospital system. Nurses are what keeps that hospital system running. A good nurse can do so much in the health care system. But like everybody else in this Chamber, they like to be rewarded for the work they do.

Every one of us here wants to see the government live within its financial means. But to live within our financial means by enforcing contracts on people and then bragging about a surplus that we have, to me is just wrong. A financial plan that would actually work, and work for the people on both sides of the issue - the labour side and the government side - that's what we're looking for. We don't need legislation that we think and we hear is going to be challenged on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That challenge in B.C. is going to cost the government hundreds of millions of dollars. Upwards of \$300 million is what we're seeing. Do we want to put the people in the Province of Nova Scotia through that \$300 million Charter challenge?

What could we do with that money today in our health care system? We're losing doctors. We're not able to replace doctors. We're having a hard time recruiting doctors. We're having a hard time retaining doctors. How many hospitals could we build with that \$300 million? How many wings could we put on hospitals? What type of machinery could we put in these hospitals for diagnosis, testing, and then treatment of people who have problems? That in itself would save us a pile of money - the proper diagnosis, the proper equipment, the proper testing.

But no, we're going to spend that money to fight a bill that we assume breaks the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. You know what? We're going to be shackled to this legal battle for years. Most of us here in this Chamber won't be around when this battle is won or lost.

But the cost of that until then is money that we could put into our road systems, could put into our education system, could put into our health care system. You know what? Every Nova Scotian would be happy to see that.

Not every Nova Scotian is happy to see the hammer that has been thrown in the air to put a contract on a group of people who just want to bargain and bargain for the right reasons - to get what's available, or not get what's available. That's the idea of bargaining. You get what you can. Both sides don't always come away happy. I will say they would probably come away satisfied that that's the best deal they could get under the circumstances we're in.

Government wants to live within its means. Residents who have rising gas prices, oil prices, and food prices just want enough to cover the costs of living. As we heard earlier, a family living on \$30,000 a year doesn't get the basic essentials of life with that kind of money. That extra money that is negotiated in that contract, or not negotiated in the contract, people come away satisfied.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those thoughtful comments on late debate. Thank you to the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre for submitting the topic.

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve into a Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess for a few minutes while it resolves into the Committee of Whole on Supply.

[5:20 p.m. The House resolved into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Chuck Porter in the Chair.]

[9:30 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply will now report:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met and made some considerable progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. We'll meet again tomorrow, Thursday, October 12th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period, we'll transition to the Committee of the Whole on Supply. With the remaining time, we will call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 27, 29, and 33. If time permits, we will move to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment, for the House to rise to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, October 12th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, October 12th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 9:33 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 350**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas in 2004, Terry Langille of Brookside was diagnosed with a blood disorder called Polycythemia, which over time transitioned into Myelofibrosis, a rare form of leukemia; and

Whereas Terry's daughters, Amy Hockin and Dawn Langille, joined Terry as Team Blood, Sweat & Gears in this year's Ride for Cancer, held on September 30th, and, along with hundreds of other cyclists, Terry and Team Blood, Sweat & Gears cycled 100 kilometres from Mahone Bay to Halifax; and

Whereas the Ride for Cancer is an opportunity for Terry to get back on his bike, an activity he had enjoyed previously, and raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and the QEII Foundation, the hospital and unit where Terry receives treatment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Terry and Team Blood, Sweat & Gears on reaching their goal of riding 100 kilometres and raising \$5,559 for the cause.