



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

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. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: Before we begin, the honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville on an introduction.

MR. BEN JESSOME: I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like all members to direct their attention to the east gallery. Today we're joined by my Grade 7 homeroom teacher, volleyball coach, track and field coach. She is presently an administrator at Lockview High School. If we could all join each other in welcoming - it feels weird calling her by her first name - Ms. Cathy Burton to the House today. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1086

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

Whereas Cathy Burton has been selected as Nova Scotia's Chef de Mission for the 2019 Winter Games in Red Deer, Alberta; and

Whereas as Chef de Mission, Ms. Burton will lead a team of mission staff who will manage logistics, disseminate information, organize events, handle administrative tasks, troubleshoot, and liaise with the host society to support and promote Team Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Ms. Burton is a current high school vice-principal and volunteer, former physical education teacher, former assistant and head coach of the 2011 and 2015 Canada Games Provincial Ringette Team, and former manager of the 2017 Canada Games Provincial Women's Soccer Team;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cathy Burton on being selected as Nova Scotia's Chef de Mission for her extraordinary sports achievements and for contributing more than 20 years of coaching to her community.

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 Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I'd like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. COLWELL: I would like to introduce Keith Ramey, owner of Blomidon Estate Winery, his son Luke, and his grandson Gary. I would ask you to stand and receive a warm welcome from the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1087

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

Whereas Blomidon Estate Winery was named a silver medalist for their 2011 Late Pick Chardonnay and 2012 Cuvée L'Acadie traditional method sparkling wines, and a bronze medalist for their 2013 Crémant traditional method sparkling wine at the 2017 Decanter World Wine Awards; and

Whereas they received a silver medal for the 2012 Cuvée L'Acadie traditional method sparkling wine at the 2017 National Wine Awards of Canada; and

Whereas Blomidon Estate Winery was named the joint winner for Best Sparkling Wine for the 2011 Late Pick Chardonnay traditional method sparkling at the 2017 Atlantic Wine Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Blomidon Estate Winery on their record of achievement as a winemaker, and wish them continued success as they help to build a reputation for Nova Scotia's quality wine industry.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March is National Social Work Month, and today in the east gallery we're joined by a group of community social services social workers from around the province. I would ask that when one of our guests hears their name called - I can't say the word "you," so that's why I'm doing this - when one of our guests hears their name called, if they would please stand up.

Nicole Hynes, adoption social worker from New Glasgow; Susan Simpson, adoption casework supervisor from New Glasgow; Bev Schneider, foster care social worker from Truro; Tracy Crosby, foster care social worker from Truro; Nancy Neil, disability support program care coordinator from Halifax - our guests can stay standing - Scott Patterson, disability support program care coordinator from Halifax; Ashley Vallee, child welfare intake supervisor from Halifax; Anne Simmons, long-term protection social worker from Halifax; Jessica Kressebuch, adoption social worker from Dartmouth; Dawn Sherry, clinical director from Wood Street campus; and Glen Stewart, protection social worker from Windsor. They're joined today by our executive director of service delivery at DCS, Sandy Graves.

I would ask the members to give them the warm welcome of the House. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1088

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

Whereas March is National Social Work Month, a time to recognize the many women and men who do this important work on behalf of vulnerable Nova Scotians every day; and

Whereas social workers are patient, adaptable, flexible, and ready at a moment's notice to help someone in need; and

Whereas social workers work for social justice and social change by walking with people who are in really tough places in their lives and often give vulnerable Nova Scotians a chance to restore their dignity by helping them overcome barriers;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize and thank social workers for the important work they do every day for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, with your permission again, I would like to make another introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. COLWELL: In our east gallery, we have David Jollimore, Director of Marketing for IMO Foods in Yarmouth. Welcome to the House, and give him a warm round of applause.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1089

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

Whereas the hard work of Nova Scotia's seafood harvesters and processors and exporters have contributed to make our province Canada's number one and largest seafood exporter, with \$2 billion sold to a global market in 2017; and

Whereas IMO Foods Ltd. in Yarmouth has focused on a strategic partnership, product innovation, and process efficiencies to position themselves as Canada's last independently-owned fish cannery, competing against the large multinational brands, and was recognized for their achievement with an Award of Excellence at the 20th Annual Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture Conference in February; and

Whereas active participation in trade shows has enabled IMO Foods Ltd. to better understand the needs of their customers and has positioned them to adapt and expand their product line and their international markets;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in thanking IMO Foods Ltd. for the hard work and determination to grow their business and for ensuring jobs for their community, and wishing them continued success as a leading exporter of seafood from 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.

[1:15 p.m.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 103 - Entitled an Act Respecting Collaborative Emergency Centres.
(Ms. Tammy Martin)

Bill No. 104 - Entitled an Act to Establish the Research Nova Scotia Corporation. (Hon. Labi Kousoulis)

Bill No. 105 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 2006. The Midwifery Act. (Ms. Tammy Martin)

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 Pictou West.

FERGUSON FAM. FARMS: MODERNIZATION - RECOGNIZE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize Ferguson Farm of Bayview, Pictou County, which recently underwent a massive modernization project to their dairy operation.

Construction began on a new 265' x 75' barn last year. This new facility includes state-of-the-art automated milking stations, which the cows are quickly learning to use with a little guidance. These automated milking stations are more efficient, maximize productivity, and reduce the labour needed for the farm's operation. The automated milker includes a computer system which is being used to analyze various forms of data.

The Fergusons and their ancestors have been farming since the 1800s, and with the addition of this modern equipment and facilities, I am certain their family will be farming for generations to come. Thank you.

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

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me particular pleasure today to introduce to the House a former member of this House, a former Minister of Justice, Attorney General, and Minister of Labour, my brother-in-law - a fine brother-in-law indeed - Mr. Jay Abbass. Jay, if you would stand. (Applause)

At this time I'm also pleased to welcome to this House Jay's son Nathan, or Nate, Campbell. (Applause) Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

It's a real pleasure. Welcome. I hope we see you again here.

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

**CHESTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT.:
PROV. CURLING CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.**

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to congratulate the Chester Volunteer Fire Department's curling club, who will represent Nova Scotia in the 59th Canadian Firefighting Curling Championships, to be held in Thunder Bay, Ontario, starting tomorrow and running until April 7th. This firefighters' curling tournament is held annually to support the important work of Muscular Dystrophy Canada.

The members of the Chester Volunteer Fire Department's curling team are skip Chad Stevens, 5th Mike Grist, 3rd Dennis Stevens, 2nd Daniel Jessome, lead Dave Richardson, and director Mike Hennessy. This same Chester foursome won gold in 2016 in the Canadian nationals, held in our own Truro, Nova Scotia, and won a bronze at last year's nationals in Mississauga, Ontario, so we have high hopes for them again this year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating and providing best wishes to the Chester Volunteer Fire Department's curling club in winning the 2018 Nova Scotia Firefighters Championship, and wishing them the best in representing Nova Scotia and beautiful Chester-St. Margaret's at the Canadian Firefighting Curling Championships.

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

SMITH, TARA - DIR. REC. SERV.: RETIRMENT - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I wish to honour a dynamic lady who is retiring today after 36 years of service at Queens Manor Home for Special Care in Liverpool.

Tara Smith, director of recreation and volunteer services, has been called a pathfinder and a progressive trailblazer, helping to establish the role of activities directors in care homes. She has been instrumental in developing programming that sees every resident as an individual, with the aim of bringing out the very best in all and promoting stimulation and engagement. Respected and loved by the residents and her co-workers, she has always gone above and beyond. It goes without saying that she will be keenly missed.

I offer sincere appreciation for Tara and for her years of dedicated service. I ask all members of this House to join me in wishing her all the best in her well-earned retirement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PLEASANT ST. DINER: SERV. TO VETERANS - THANKS

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise today to recognize the generosity and respect of the Pleasant Street Diner in Dartmouth.

Last week, Ben Broome and Gus Cameron, representatives for the Veterans UN NATO Group of Canada, held a gathering for a dying member of the forces, Phil Janes. They asked for 60 orders of fish and chips with seafood chowder from the Pleasant Street Diner for the event.

On March 23rd not only did the diner staff help carry the food for Mr. Broome, but they didn't charge for the order. The owners reasoned it was an honour to help veterans. Mr. Janes died peacefully yesterday in the company of family and friends.

Mr. Broome and Mr. Cameron took to social media to publicly thank the diner for their extreme generosity, courtesy, and good food, and I would like to follow their lead.

Please join me in thanking the Pleasant Street Diner for this generous act. They'll be celebrating their one-year anniversary this April, and they have become a crucial and generous fixture in the Dartmouth South community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

RENNIE, MARCUS: MEDALLIST, N.S. SKILLS COMPETITION - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, 2018 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Skills Competition.

For 20 years, this not-for-profit organization has been providing youth in our province the opportunity to explore skilled trades. Their signature event, the Skills Competition, is held annually.

At the Skills Competition held at the NSCC Strait Area Campus on March 21, 2018, Marcus Rennie, a student at Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School, earned a bronze medal in Electrical Installations. The purpose of the Electrical Installation competition is to assess the contestant's skills and abilities performing various installation tasks in the field of residential and commercial electrical wiring.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my congratulations to Marcus Rennie on his third-place finish, and to wish him luck with the rest of his school year and future endeavours.

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

COLCHESTER COM. WORKSHOPS: EXPANSION - CONGRATS.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I ask that members join me today in congratulating Colchester Community Workshops on their recent expansion through the purchase of property adjacent to their existing facility in Truro.

The workshop, which provides individual programs and training to adults with learning disabilities, was initially established in the late 1960s. Three years ago, a collapsed roof forced the closure of a separate storage facility and workshop-run variety store. The recent purchase will replace lost space and allow additional programs that capitalize on the strengths of its clients and provide valuable services to Colchester.

I am proud to thank Colchester Community Workshops and similar organizations across the province for recognizing and enabling the contributions their clients can make in their communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

CCOS: COM. SERV. - RECOGNIZE

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on the same theme, I would like to recognize a wonderful organization in Enfield that deserves such recognition.

The Corridor Community Options Society, CCOS, began in the 1970s serving people living with intellectual disabilities in Hants East. The non-profit society now operates three residential facilities, and in the former Enfield Elementary School, it provides a variety of vocational training and programs for people in the community.

The facility is also the home of Rick's Riches Thrift Store. It has become a popular destination for everyone in the area. They offer a catering program, allowing clients to learn cooking skills, and cater to the community, and the Sunshine Café is at the thrift store.

Woodworking skills are part of the program - many hand-crafted wooden products, like the giant lawn chairs used by Sobeys for the Canada 150 Celebration. They also make wine racks, coffee and end tables, washer toss games, and all are hand-crafted for resale at local stores.

East Hants is a better place to live for everyone, Mr. Speaker, because of the vision at CCOS. I'd like to offer them our gratitude and wish them continued success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MACLELLAN, JOHN: VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER - THANKS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of the 110th Anniversary of the Inverness Volunteer Fire Department, Firefighter John MacLellan was recognized for his 30 years of service. This is a remarkable commitment to one's community, and something he will always be remembered for.

So much has changed over the years, with fire alarms in every home, safer building materials, and with all of the new technology used by these brave volunteers. Today, they are expected to do a lot as a firefighter, whether it be as a first responder, or with other training they have acquired.

How often Nova Scotians depend on people like John when they face danger, when they're experiencing great pain, when they fear for their lives. Let us thank John for his charity for being there for 30 years, and for his compassion to those in need.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**COLLABORATIVE FAM. PRACTICE, SPRINGHILL:
EXPANSION - ACKNOWLEDGE**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to you about a new family practice nurse being hired at the collaborative care clinic in Springhill. This new addition to the clinic will provide necessary support to members of the pre-existing team, and will provide additional care to the residents of Springhill.

This builds on our government's work to create and strengthen collaborative care teams across the province. New primary health care professionals being hired across the province include 15 nurse practitioners, 17 family practice nurses, six social workers, and a part-time physiotherapist.

The people of Springhill need better access to collaborative primary health care, and this investment will do just that.

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

MACDONALD, JOHNNY: SENATE MEDAL - ACKNOWLEDGE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mr. Johnny MacDonald from Louisbourg, on recently being presented with a Senate Medal from Senator Michael MacDonald.

The presentation to several veterans on this occasion was held at the Louisbourg Legion. Johnny MacDonald was honoured here for his dedication to the community. He has been, and still is, very active in Louisbourg. At one time, when the ballfield in the town was very busy, Johnny spend many hours there helping, and teaching baseball. He has also been very active in helping out with hockey.

I stand today, Mr. Speaker, to thank Johnny MacDonald for his dedication over the years.

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

HORNE, BILL - BIRTHDAY WISHES

MR. GORDON WILSON: It's a privilege to stand here today on behalf of the Liberal Party, and I believe all people in this House, and celebrate a birthday wish to a member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

Today, and it was announced on Facebook, so I can say it out loud, on his 70th birthday, I would like to congratulate one of the hardest working people that we have. He has a passion for the environment, he's well-respected in this House, well-recognized as a good constituent MLA, certainly a friend, and lastly, an avid boater.

On this special day, I hope he get's a chance to do a little bit of that, but unfortunately, I don't think he will. Anyway, Happy Birthday Bill. (Standing Ovation)

[Happy Birthday was sung.]

MR. SPEAKER: There you go. Happy Birthday, my friend.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

BRADLEY, ERIC: COM. SERV. - TRIBUTE

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how to top that one.

Today, I would like to recognize my cousin Eric Bradley, who is no longer with us. His outstanding generosity through volunteer work did not go unnoticed. Eric involved his entire family, cousins included, in his volunteer endeavours.

Eric gladly volunteered both his time and money to many organizations. For many years, together with his family, Eric was heavily involved with supporting the Bust a Move and Relay for Life events.

In 2017, Eric's family gathered 25 people to form Team Eric, in the 2017 Canada Games Centre Food Run, supporting Feed Nova Scotia. It marks the first year running without Eric by their side. Eric's strong desire to help the community and those in need continues to inspire all who knew him.

In Eric's spirit, the team contributed over \$600 and four large boxes of food to Feed Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**SOCIAL WORKERS, HFX. NEEDHAM:
CONTRIB. TO SOC. JUSTICE - RECOGNIZE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in honour of National Social Work Month, I want to recognize the contributions of a network of social workers who I consider a team of superheroes in Halifax Needham. They include Megan MacBride at the North End Community Health Centre, Crystal John at the Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre, Lynn MacDonald at the Halifax Regional School Board and Eric Jonsson with Metro Non-Profit Housing.

I literally would not have enough time in one member's statement to name all the social workers who work in Halifax Needham, which seems unique in the number of non-profits that are headquartered there. I count social workers among my friends and most frequent collaborators. While they generally do not seek or require attention or thanks, on this occasion I do sincerely wish to thank them for their dedication and their contribution to social justice and well-being.

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

WHITEHEAD COM. ASSOC.: 300th ANNIV. PLANNING - COMMEND

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment the Whitehead Community Association on the planning of the 300th Anniversary of Whitehead. Whitehead is a small fishing community in Guysborough County with roughly 120 people who are best known for their tenacity and remarkable community spirit.

Over 300 years ago the land was lush with moose, caribou, and bear, and the deep harbour was full of herring and other fish. This attracted permanent settlers whose family names of Munro, Spears, and Feltmate are still thriving in the area today. The harbour was also a notorious rest point for pirates who were smuggling rum from New England and there are many stories of buried treasure still lingering there today, and the ocean still provides extensive bounty.

The Whitehead Community Association has planned a great celebration of their beloved community on August 6th to 12th, complete with darts, card plays, parades, a concert by the Sons of Maxwell and, to kick it all off, a special visit from *Bluenose II*.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure it will be a grand occasion with such a dedicated and hardworking group of community members, and I wish them 300 more years of that wonderful Whitehead community spirit.

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

CABOT EDUC. CTR. WRESTLING TEAM: MEDALLISTS - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place today to recognize and congratulate the Cabot Education Centre Wrestling team. At the NSSAF 2018 Provincial Wrestling Championships held March 4th and March 5th in Chester, the Cabot wrestlers were successful in bringing home two gold and one silver medal.

Congratulations go out to Jade Willke on winning the gold in the senior female 56kg division, Eamonn Dudley-Chubbs for gold in the senior male 69kg division and Austin MacKinnon for silver in the junior male 46kg division, as well as the proud coach Tommy Chubbs.

It's a pleasure to congratulate these athletes on a job well done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

WHITE, CASSIA/DASILVA, WILLIAM: WEDDING - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send a congratulatory message to a young couple engaged to be married this summer across the seas. Cassia White and

William DaSilva are tying the knot and have invited their families and friends. Both are natives of Bermuda.

Cassia came to Nova Scotia as an international student and completed Bachelor of Science at Saint Mary's University, and played varsity soccer with my daughter for a number of years, so I got to know her well. She went on to do her master's in marine biology at Dalhousie.

William works for Bermuda Power and he came to Nova Scotia, enrolling at the Nova Scotia Community College, taking a number of courses relative to his employment. I want to assure Cassia and William that if they decide to leave their native land, that Nova Scotia is ready to welcome them with open arms and warm hearts.

I ask all members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Cassia and William and wish them good health and future success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

PICTOU CO. SPORTS H. HALL OF FAME - COM. PRIDE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a quarter of a century since the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame became a reality. The facility is a lasting tribute to the numerous athletes, coaches, officials, teams, and organizations that helped the county build an outstanding and proud sports history.

It is a remarkable focal point that shines a bright spotlight on everyone who participated in the sports domain of the region. Residents of Pictou County can be extremely proud of their facility, a real gem at the heart of the county sports community.

I would like all members of this Legislature to join me in congratulating curator Barry Trenholm and all members of the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame.

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

HAVERSTOCK, BELLA: COURAGE - COMMEND

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a courageous young girl from Timberlea named Bella Haverstock. Bella has suffered from a very serious dog bite and has already had two plastic surgeries to her face, one of which included a skin graft, and she has one more to go.

Through it all, Bella has remained brave and even gained confidence. Her family and friends were of great support to young Bella during this challenging time. Bella is a free spirit, she dances competitively with Elle Dance Academy and on March 21st she went

on stage at Limelight Dance Competition and won a gold medal performing her very first solo.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in commending Bella and her loving family for all they have been through and wish them the very best with the final surgery.

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

GILLIS, JIM/ALLAN: SEAFOOD INGENUITY - RECOGNIZE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jim and Allan Gillis of North Sydney who are partnering with LIG Assets of Tennessee to build and operate two live lobster holding facilities, each capable of handling a million pound live holding system.

They also have the Traystor System for transporting live seafood at sea, in air, or on land without affecting the quality. It mimics the natural habitat of lobster and crab. Better quality and supply to world markets will be the end result of this Cape Breton ingenuity.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the Gillis brothers for thinking outside the box and revolutionizing the storage and transportation of lobster and crab around the world.

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

FIRST RESPONDERS: HOUSE FIRE, RESCUE - THANKS

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, a family of five and their pets are safe following an early morning fire that destroyed the garage attached to their Fall River home. The family managed to get out of the home with an adult woman requiring care for smoke inhalation.

The charred, burned half of the house is a sober illustration of devastation that fire can cause, and the amazing lengths that our firefighters will go to battle the blaze. More than 30 firefighters with eight stations rushed to the scene to arrive to a working fire in a garage with an extension to the second floor.

All first responders live with the uncertainty of what can happen on a call. Thank you to the firefighters who battled the blaze and to all firefighters who answer the call and rush to protect us. Please join me in expressing my appreciation to our first responders.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

SPONAGLE, MATTHEW - ANGLICAN PASTOR: COM. SERV. - RECOGNIZE

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Reverend Matthew Sponagle. Matthew has shown time and time again that he has a deep desire to help others and improve his community.

Always available to take a call, offer advice, or answer a question, he has become both a friend and an ally. When Matthew saw that his church was struggling financially, he sought out a solution that would not only benefit his congregation and our community, he found a solution that would benefit people far outside our constituency of Dartmouth East.

I'm always inspired by individuals who work hard to improve the world around them and Reverend Matthew Sponagle has never failed to impress me.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

CHEBUCTO FAM. CTR.: SPRY CAFÉ - THANKS

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce everyone to a special event that happens monthly in my community called the Spry Café at the Chebucto Family Resource Centre. Every month, a business organization donates their time and food to host dinner for up to 40 people. The group hosting works with the staff at the Chebucto Family Resource Centre to prepare a meal and serve it to the community members attending the dinner.

It is up to the hosting group to plan the menu, including a main course and a dessert. Last month, we were able to serve a huge pot of beef stew for the main course and of course, my constituency assistant Kelly Gomes - she wrote this - made several gingerbreads for dessert. We had a great time cooking and serving dinner and had many conversations and laughs with the people attending.

I would like to thank Chebucto Family Resource Centre, Tammy Turple, the whole group for providing the community dinner every month and also thank them for all the free services and support they provide the families and community members. I'd also like to thank all of the businesses and organizations that have stepped up to host Spry Café.

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

HARNISH, MAKAYLA: CURLING TALENT - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a talented curler from Liverpool who practices at the Lakeshore Curling Club in Lower Sackville. Makayla

Harnish throws lead stone as part of Team Ladouceur, the youngest-ever team to qualify for the Scotties provincial curling championship, held in January this year.

The team also became provincial under-18 women's champions in March and will now go on to represent Nova Scotia at the 2018 Canadian under-18 curling championship in Saint Andrews, New Brunswick, in April. To add to her successes this season, Makayla also curled lead stone for Team McEachren, winner of the Under-19 Mixed Provincial Championships.

I would like to congratulate Makayla and both teams, and wish Team Ladouceur success representing Nova Scotia at the nationals from April 9th to April 14th.

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

**HAMMONDS PLAINS COM. CTR. VOLUNTEER ASSOC.:
PANCAKE BREAKFAST - GOOD LUCK**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw attention to the Hammonds Plains Community Centre's annual pancake breakfast.

The event is being held this Saturday morning at the Hammonds Plains Community Centre by the Hammonds Plains community volunteer association. This breakfast is one of a number of events that is put on by the centre each year, helping to bring the Hammonds Plains community together.

The breakfast is made possible with the help of numerous community members. From donations of food to labour, the camaraderie of all involved makes for a great event. Not only is the food delicious and served with a smile, but it's free.

I would add that our Speaker of the House of Commons, District 13 Councillor, and I will be serving the pancakes. Mind you, Lyle Kennedy of Creative Gourmet will be the one making them.

I would like all members of the House of Assembly to join me in wishing Hammonds Plains Community Centre volunteer association a successful pancake breakfast, and to perhaps join us and thank them for their continued efforts to make Hammonds Plains-Lucasville a little brighter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ACCESS LABELS: EXPANSION - CONGRATS.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate entrepreneur Paul Carr. Mr. Carr owns and operates Access Labels, located in

Cumberland County. He recently added a 4,200-square-foot expansion and is hiring an additional four employees, bringing his workforce to 36 people.

I congratulate Mr. Paul Carr and emphasize the importance of business owners like him, who are willing to take on risk and work to grow our economy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

ROBITAILLE, MADELEINE: BELL SCHOLARSHIP - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, Madeleine Robitaille from Rhodes Corner graduated last year from Centre scolaire de la Rive-Sud, earning one of the top entrance scholarships from Mount Allison University. The Bell Scholarship awarded \$12,000 per year toward Madeleine's science degree, and comes with an additional support network of other scholarship recipients, as well as a mentor.

Madeleine is grateful for her scholarship and said that receiving it was a huge honour. She has managed to keep all of her grades above an A or an A- during her first year of studies. Madeleine is involved in S.M.I.L.E. - the Sensory Motor Instructional Leadership Experience - at the YMCA in Amherst, where she is paired with local youth with developmental disabilities. Madeleine's weekly synchronized swimming club and ME to WE group keep her busy when she isn't working on her academics.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Madeleine on her scholarship and continued success at Mount Allison as she continues to work on her undergraduate degree.

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

MEADOW BROOK STABLES: "LEG UP" YOUTH CLUB - COMMEND

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend Kaila Watters, owner of Meadow Brook Stables in Alton, and her friend Anna Briand for introducing a special program for children from five to 16.

The Leg Up youth group was designed to teach children about horse care and horseback riding, but it has done much more. In addition to teaching participants about horse grooming, first aid, and nutrition, along with opportunities for riding competition and communication with horses, the program, which has been operating since December, has proven to be a confidence builder, a journey in self-discovery, and a therapeutic tool.

Congratulations to Ms. Watters for turning something she loves into a program that will benefit children in such a positive, enjoyable way.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. LEBLANC: I'd like to welcome Keith Stevens, who's in the gallery opposite. Keith is a very active member of the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party, particularly in Cole Harbour. He has also recently become involved with the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre, which is near and dear to my heart. So welcome, Keith, to our House.

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SEIU LOCAL: SUPPORTING WORKERS - CONGRATS.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I rise today to celebrate SEIU Local 2, which, though it serves workers across the province, has its offices in Dartmouth North.

The Service Employees International Union is one that represents some of the lowest-paid workers in the province. It is well known for its Baristas Rise Up and Justice for Janitors campaigns. They are also part of the province-wide Fight for 15 campaign, calling for a \$15 minimum wage.

The workers in these industries are some of the lowest-paid workers in the province. Though their need for protection is not new, actions by some employers in Nova Scotia lately have been particularly concerning. Employees at the Smiling Goat coffee shop have had to resort to asking for bigger tips, as their paycheques have been bouncing. Janitors who work in Founders Square, a building that houses offices of the Department of Natural Resources, have filed a human rights complaint when, after a change in employer, they found that seven out of eight of them - all people of African descent - were losing their jobs.

I am so grateful for the work SEIU is doing in Dartmouth North and across the province. I ask the House to join me in congratulating them for standing up for workers.

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

MCCARRON, DOROTHY: COM. ARTS VOLUNTEER - RECOGNIZE

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize Dorothy McCarron, an active senior citizen in Clayton Park West.

For over 33 years, Dorothy has been active in the Halifax art community, with membership to various clubs since 1984, including the Dal Riada Art Group. Dorothy can be credited with establishing the Seniors' Art and Photo Gallery at the World Trade and Convention Centre, where she volunteered her time to run the gallery for over 15 years.

Dorothy has inspired many young artists not only locally but across the world. Dorothy is a bright light in our community. Not only is she active in the arts scene, but she is also always there to lend a helping hand to her neighbours with whatever they may need. Our community would not be the same without the presence of Dorothy McCarron.

Will the members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Dorothy McCarron and her contribution to our province?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**MARGAREE-LAKE AINSLIE H. RIVER SOC.:
20th ANNIV. - ACKNOWLEDGE**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Let us acknowledge the communities of Margaree-Lake Ainslie for their determination to preserve the Margaree-Lake Ainslie Heritage River.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Canadian Heritage River designation, one of only two rivers in our province to receive the distinction. The watershed of the lake and river system was recognized for its natural and environmental beauty and for the historical and cultural attributes of the communities along its banks.

The Margaree-Lake Ainslie system is indeed fortunate to have a citizenry that values the river and a number of community organizations that collaborate in monitoring and preserving its integrity. On this anniversary, the celebration will be marked with a number of interpretive programs. The future of the river is in good hands with the Margaree-Lake Ainslie Heritage River Society.

May we in this Legislature acknowledge the anniversary and those past and present who have preserved, protected, and valued this watershed for the ongoing enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HOUSE LEADERS: ELEVATING DEBATE - THANKS

MR. KEITH IRVING: I rose in this House perhaps 18 months ago and asked members to consider and give some thought to more meaningful debate and better decorum in the House. I was reflecting the other night, on Thursday, on the quality of the debate that

we had in this House on those two municipal bills. I recently also had a discussion with a member of the press corps who noticed the tone in the House being much better.

I thought I would just share that with the House and thank in particular the three House Leaders - the member for Glace Bay, the member for Sackville-Cobequid, and the member for Argyle-Barrington - for their work on that. As the Clerk in this House states, progress is being made.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Glace Bay.

ABBASS, SIMONE - DENTIST: FOUNDER, ISAIAH HOUSE - SALUTE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg. The member for Glace Bay is the fellow who just took the bow, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: My apologies.

MR. MACLEOD: It was good to hear the good news from the member about all the good work that is being done in this House.

Mr. Speaker, watching her brother Tommy struggle with mental illness inspired Dr. Simone Abbass to become an advocate for persons with disabilities and a dentist.

In the 1950s, the Abbass family had a very difficult time accessing health services for Tommy. When the family could no longer meet his needs, Tommy moved to an institutional care facility. He did not cope well with this change and his health quickly declined.

After a great deal of research, Dr. Abbass eventually discovered that there was a severe shortage of community living options for individuals with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Abbass approached the Department of Community Services in 1992 and in 1994, she opened Isaiah House in Dartmouth to serve the needs of not only her brother but of two other men with disabilities. She has been Chair and House Director of Isaiah House for 23 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in saluting Dr. Simone Abbass for her determination and her work to improve lives.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

PHINNEY, SANDRA: 4th BK. PUBL. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, Sandra Phinney is an award-winning journalist and photographer. She recently launched her fourth book, titled *Waking Up in My Own Backyard*, which details her month-long journey to discover all that is within the 100-kilometre radius of her home on the Tusket River.

Waking Up in My Own Backyard is Sandra's personal encounters with the people, culture and communities that make southwest Nova Scotia so unique, inspiring, and fascinating.

I ask this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Sandra Phinney on this remarkable accomplishment, and encourage everyone to pick up a copy of *Waking Up in My Own Backyard* to get a wonderfully-told glimpse of our beautiful Yarmouth County.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BIG BROS./SISTERS: BOWL FOR KIDS SAKE - BEST WISHES

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, a Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Sake will be held on Saturday, April 7th, at the Heather Bowling Lanes in New Glasgow. Money raised from this annual fundraiser, as it has in the past, goes to ensure that youth are matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister.

The organization assisted 298 youth in 2017, and they presently have a waiting list of 205. Demand continues to increase for all their programs, including in-school mentoring and peer mentoring in high schools.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Pictou County recently hired a youth outreach employee, who will assist 16-to-18-year-old youth who are in need of help with job searches, preparing resumés, experiencing crises or simply needing a drive to a medical appointment.

I join all members today and wish Big Brothers Big Sisters great success with their major fundraiser.

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

N.T.L. SOCIAL WORK MONTH: SOC. JUSTICE WORK - RECOGNIZE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the fact that March is National Social Work Month. It's a time to acknowledge and thank the many Canadians who do this important work on behalf of the many vulnerable Canadians who often don't have somebody to be able to help them through a challenging time.

Mr. Speaker, I like to see social workers as people who work for social justice, giving their time and their lives to working with people who really need somebody to help them get through extremely difficult personal challenges, and help them restore their dignity by overcoming barriers.

Therefore, as a member of the House of Assembly and MLA for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the social workers of my northern region, and all Nova Scotians, for the important work they do every day for the people of our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

NSSAF CURLING CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Provincial Curling Championships took place at the Bridgewater Curling Club from March 23rd to 25th, with six teams in each of the female, male, and mixed curling divisions. All who came out to watch and cheer those athletes on were treated to some very exciting curling.

The female division saw Park View Education Centre 3-0 after competition in Pool A where they then faced NKEC in the semi-finals and defeated Dartmouth for the banner.

The male division found Park View with a 2-1 result after Pool A play where they played Millwood in the semi-finals, and went on to defeat CEC to claim the banner and the championship game.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the female Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation curling champions from Park View Education Centre, Kaylee Nodding, Katelyn Nodding, Madison Dahl, and Carrie Wellman, as well as the male Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation curling champions from Parkview Education Centre, Mackenzie Nauss, Adam Currie, Connor Haines and Justin Arenburg on a very impressive tournament.

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

N. SYDNEY CREDIT UNION: 80th ANNIV. - SALUTE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to salute the North Sydney Credit Union as it celebrates its 80th Anniversary in North Sydney.

With a staff of eight employees and 1,800 members, the Credit Union is not profit-driven, and it returns 4 per cent of profits back to local communities where they are located.

The core founding principles are honesty and fairness, and you are a member, not a customer.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish your next 80 years to be as productive as your first 80.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

VEITH HOUSE: COM. HUB - THANKS

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I wish to congratulate Veith House, which had its AGM yesterday.

In the past year, Veith House has become an even more vibrant community hub, welcoming the Halifax Tool Library and the Halifax Association for Community Living to join the Dalhousie School of Social Work Clinic, Wee Care Developmental Centre, and Nova Scotia ACORN under its roof. With these tenants, Veith House staff and volunteers are able to support and connect community members in a host of different ways, from supportive counselling to yoga to cooking programs.

Thanks to the foresight of community leaders who protected the former Halifax Protestant Orphanage for community use.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

BEDFORD SCH. OF ART: ACCESSIBLE ART - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to tell the House about a new art school in my community.

Robin Haws trained in Ontario and at NSCAD. She opened the Bedford School of Art about a year and a half ago. She teaches adult and children's classes during the week. Her programs run eight weeks, and she plans to run summer camps as well. All of her students get a solid foundation in art - they learn the basics before they break the rules.

This is Ms. Haws' second art school. She teaches her students to look at an object, break it down into shapes, and then draw or paint it. Some people may be intimidated by the thought of creating art, but Robin says everyone can learn to draw and paint. She has her students start off by working on one piece for several weeks, and they progress from there, often forming fast friendships in the process.

I would like to congratulate Robin Haws on opening the Bedford School of Art, a place where art is for everyone. I wish her and her students a bright future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

SM. BUS. OWNERS: ROUND TABLE - THANKS

HON. KAREN CASEY: As a government, we are very aware that small businesses are very important to grow our economy. On February 26th, I was pleased to take part in two round table discussions, one with small business owners from Colchester North, the second with small business owners from Truro and Bible Hill.

The purpose of the round table was to provide an opportunity for business leaders to discuss local area concerns and their priorities for the Nova Scotia economy, and to tell me what they wanted us to continue and where we can improve. A wide variety of ideas and topics were raised. There was positive feedback for balancing the budget, living within our means, and to keep forging on the path to reach the desired goal of 30 per cent net debt to GDP. There was also praise for the START program, Business Navigation Services, and NSBI.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those small business owners who are the backbone of our rural economy. Their voice is important.

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

BABIN, ANTOINE: 100th BIRTHDAY - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I want to say a Happy Birthday to my wife's grandfather, who turns 100 years old today. (Applause) Antoine Babin of Sluice Point was a mailman for many years. He's residing at Saint-Joseph du Lac in Yarmouth today.

He was in *The Chronicle Herald* for the last couple of days asking for people to send him cards. He has received hundreds of cards from around the province to wish him a Happy 100th Birthday and I can say that the family is very happy with all the attention that he received for this 100th Birthday.

To grand-père Antoine, bonne anniversaire.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

THERAPY DOG PROG., GRAND VIEW MANOR - COMMEND

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I rise today to highlight the good work of Gloria Armstrong and Darcie, a four-year-old Newfoundland dog who provides therapeutic services to residents at Grand View Manor in Berwick. Darcie provides affection, a calming influence,

good company, and an invaluable service to residents by spreading cheer and comfort throughout her weekly visits to the manor.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kings West, I would like to commend Gloria, Darcie, and the team from the St. John's Ambulance Therapy Dog Program for the good work that they do in providing comfort, cheer, and companionship to the residents at Grand View Manor.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those statements by members. I just want to take this opportunity to say it's very inspiring every day to hear about all the great things that are going on across our province from members on all sides of the House.

Thank you very much for bringing those forth and drawing attention to all the good stuff that's happening in the province.

[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.: LOBBYIST MEETINGS - SCHEDULE PUBLICIZE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Premier if he would release his schedule so that the public could know when he was meeting with lobbyists. The Premier responded that Nova Scotians he spoke to didn't raise the issue of Mr. Chrétien lobbying the government. Of course, we don't know which Nova Scotians he met with because he won't release his schedule. Later in the lobby, however, he told reporters that he would tell the public what they need to know when he decides it's important. Unfortunately, Nova Scotians have a habit of wanting to decide for themselves what's important, and rightly so.

Again, I ask the Premier, will he release his schedule so that the people of Nova Scotia can decide for themselves which of his meetings are an important use of government time and money?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me correct the honourable member. Mr. Chrétien was not lobbying our government, but I appreciate the opportunity to go on to talk again about the fact that I'm very proud of the great work that we've been able to do to grow the economy of Nova Scotia by working with people - not only from this province but around the globe - who continue to see that Nova Scotia is on the right track financially. It's on the right track when it comes to starting a new life for

young people, it's on the right track in the start-up community, and I'm looking forward to continuing to embrace the opportunities that are out around the globe for Nova Scotians.

MS. MACFARLANE: It's about transparency and I draw the House's memory back to September 2016, when the Premier faced criticism from the province's Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The commissioner felt that the Premier was taking steps in his communications specifically to avoid having to disclose those communications to the public.

The Premier responded to the criticism by saying, and I will table this, "I need to be able to communicate to my staff, and there are certain things I want to be able to tell them that I don't believe should be out in the public domain." At least the Premier is transparent about the fact that he is keeping secrets.

Why does the Premier insist that he is sole arbiter of what the people of Nova Scotia need to hear?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to remind the honourable member that we were the government that all the loans that have been put out on behalf of Nova Scotians when the Progressive Conservatives were in power that were done behind closed doors in secret - we post all those. We're the government that put online MLAs' expenses and the first Premier in the Province of Nova Scotia to make it available for people to be able to look at our Executive Council and we're going to continue to make sure we're open and transparent.

I want to tell the honourable member that I'm also going to continue to work with my colleagues in our government and work with the private sector to continue to grow good jobs and good opportunities. Not only are we going to lead Atlantic Canada, we're leading the federation in continuing to move our province forward and we're doing so by working side by side with the private sector and we're going to continue to do it.

MS. MACFARLANE: Again, Mr. Speaker, I will say it's about being transparent. It's not about being successful and doing well - it's about being transparent. When the Information and Privacy Commissioner said that the government needed to do a better job of documenting its decision-making process, the Premier responded - and I've already tabled it - I don't agree with the commissioner.

Members of the media asserted that by refusing to release his schedule, the Premier was less transparent than any of his predecessors. The Premier naturally disagreed with them, too, and claimed that the people needed to be able to meet with the government free from scrutiny. Explaining yourself after you've been caught is not the same thing as being transparent.

Will the Premier accept the request of the Opposition, accept the criticism of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, face the cold, hard facts about his secrecy, and let go of the illusion that he is running a transparent government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to remind the honourable member that we are the government that has posted online my expenses, every expense on behalf of the province I have posted online, so every Nova Scotian can see it. We are continuing to make sure that the pieces of legislation that we have are out in public and people are able to assess those. We're the first government, quite frankly, where the Red Room comes live and we can see it outside this province.

I'm going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to continue to work with the private sector to grow good jobs and opportunities. The honourable member may not think it's important for this province to be successful, but I sure do.

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

PREM.: ER CLOSURES (C.B.) - IMPACTS

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Pages 6 and 7 from a recent edition of the *Cape Breton Post* which, on two facing pages, includes no less than five either official notices or news stories about the closing of emergency centres. Like this and down in one corner, an official notice of three closings of the Glace Bay Emergency room, and next to that two news stories about the Glace Bay closing above the one in New Waterford, and next to that a news story about the closing in Baddeck, and next to that an official notice of three closings taking place on the Northside.

I want to ask the Premier, now in the fifth year since this government has come to office, is this the best his government has to offer to the people of Cape Breton?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I continue to work with Doctors NS. We're proud of the work we've been able to do recently. We've attracted 100 new doctors in the province last year. We know there's more work to do and continue to do. The fact of the matter is, successive governments ignored the fact that the demographics are changing, they ignored the fact there was not a physician recruitment plan across the province. We continue to make those investments, and we're going to continue to make sure that every Nova Scotian has access to primary health care, which would include a doctor.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the annual accountability report on emergency departments makes very clear that the trajectory of emergency room closures since this government began has been like this: up, up, up, and up. So I want to ask the Premier, does the Premier acknowledge the fact or does he dodge, divert, or obscure it, that emergency room closures have gotten worse every year since he came to power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again I want to thank those health care professionals across the province for continuing to work with our government to ensure we have in place the appropriate infrastructure to provide the health care services people want. I'm very proud of the expansion we're doing at the QEII, the redevelopment here, the fact that we're going to have collaborative care centres across the province. We have in our budget an investment to make that happen.

We're going to continue to work with a team of health care providers to deliver health care services to Nova Scotia. At the same time, I'm very proud of the fact that we've been able to grow the economy, we've been able to keep more young people in the Province of Nova Scotia, more Nova Scotians are feeling optimistic about their future in this province. We're going to continue to deal with the challenges that have been ignored by successive governments, at the same time promoting this province globally.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, in the four years before this government came to power, the trajectory of emergency room closures in Nova Scotia was like this: down, down, down, down, down. The reason for this was the development of Collaborative Emergency Centres which turned the corner on rural emergency room closures in Nova Scotia in communities from Tatamagouche to Musquodoboit Harbour.

I want to ask the Premier, what is the justification he has to offer for the fact that in the budget which is presently before this House, there's not one Liberal loonie put toward collaborative care centres?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. In his diagrams, he forgot to acknowledge that in those four years, there was an exodus of young people from our province. In his demonstration to explain what happened to the economy of the Province of Nova Scotia under that watch, the fact of the matter is, quite frankly, the honourable member spent many loonies he didn't have when he was in power, and our government has put this province on a good fiscal track.

We're going to continue to move this province forward. Not only are we a leader in the federation, but the global community is looking to invest in this province and we're going to continue to work with them to make it happen.

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

JUSTICE: CENTRAL NOVA FACILITY INCIDENT - UPDATE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. We are receiving calls and learning that there is possibly a very serious incident that's happening at the Central Nova Correctional Facility. Words like "riot" and "people being harmed" are being used. It hasn't been completely confirmed yet, but it's obviously

frightening, and it's something we all know is very repetitive at this facility. Could the minister please give an update, confirm whether or not this incident at the Burnside jail is true and provide any details on it, please?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague. There was an incident at the Burnside facility this morning. The policies and practices of the facility were implemented, and the incident was brought to a quick end.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for that. We know that is a somewhat common incident that happens at this particular facility. Back in 2015, my wonderful colleague the member for Inverness laid out a convincing argument that a review should be undertaken at Burnside. Those updates certainly would be helpful.

The one-page explanation of the many incidents at the jail do not often provide enough information for Nova Scotians to understand what happened. After all, as the member for Inverness said, "One of the core responsibilities of government is to ensure the safety and security of all citizens. The citizens in our correctional facilities, staff and residents, are no exception."

I wonder if the minister will commit today to undertaking an independent review of Burnside to finally identify real solutions to the problems at this facility.

MR. FUREY: Again, I appreciate the question and the concerns my colleague has shared. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is construction and reorganization and a different model of supervision that is being applied in the Burnside facility. We're going through significant renovations there as we speak. This has led to some challenges, certainly, but we continue to work with the staff internally. The staff continues to work with the residents of the facility, and we're confident in moving forward that the model of supervision being provided will, in fact, enhance public safety within these facilities.

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

LBR. REL. - IWK SERV. AGREEMENT: BARGAINING - BAD FAITH

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday that the Council of Unions' health care bargaining unit has applied to have the labour board finalize the IWK essential services agreement. According to the NSGEU, the employer has continued to ignore important facts from the health care workers and is still bringing new proposals to the table rather than working with what's there.

Can the Minister of Health and Wellness tell us why, after two years at the bargaining table, the IWK continues to bargain in bad faith with our health care workers?

HON. MARK FUREY: I appreciate the question from my colleague. What the member has laid out specific to the IWK is the next stage in the labour negotiation process. I have met with both parties, representing labour and the employee. I've encouraged them to be diligent in their efforts to find solutions at the table. This is quite literally the next step, and we look forward to the outcomes of continued discussions.

MS. MARTIN: Actually, Mr. Speaker, to be clear, it's not the next logical step if the agreement could be reached at the table. There's no need to waste the resources of the Labour Board.

When questioned about this situation, the Premier said that no one is losing their benefits. Frankly, that simply isn't true. These health care workers are being asked to give up their short-term sick leave benefits and to give over control of their health and dental plans to the employer.

Can the minister clarify if the Premier misspoke? Do these workers really stand to lose their benefits?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague, there is a process that we follow. Within that process, it's important to recognize that employees have those opportunities to file those types of steps, to take advantage of those steps, within the process.

That's the process that is applied. That's the process that we're following. It is out of respect to labour. We continue to have that dialogue, and I'm optimistic that we will find outcomes at the end of the day.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - CDN. LOBSTER COUNCIL: FUNDING - ENDORSE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Last Friday in Estimates, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture said he would not endorse an application by the Lobster Council of Canada to secure funds to market Canadian lobster on the world stage.

The Lobster Council of Canada was formed eight years ago to lead generic marketing efforts for the Canadian lobster. It is the only organization that represents the entire lobster value chain in eastern Canada. All provincial governments and interested federal government departments have ex-officio status on the Lobster Council. I'll table that list.

At the moment, nine directors of the council are Nova Scotia-based. The council believes it can secure millions of federal dollars to support marketing efforts. My question

is, why is the minister opposed to the Lobster Council of Canada using federal money to market Nova Scotia lobster?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I thank the member for the question. Indeed, we have a very effective marketing process in Nova Scotia. We're leading the country in exports in fisheries. We were in third place five years ago. We're number one in Canada now.

[2:15 p.m.]

MR. LOHR: I think I heard a promotion there.

Mr. Speaker, the Lobster Council estimates that their members represent at least 80 per cent of the export value chain in Canadian lobster. It appears that the Canadian Fish and Seafood program is a perfect fit for the Lobster Council's mandate of marketing Canadian seafood. Even with the success the Nova Scotia brand of seafood has had, surely diversifying some of the marketing efforts would have tangible benefits for Nova Scotia harvesters. The Nova Scotia members of the council want this program. Nova Scotia harvesters want this program.

My question is, why does the minister insist that he knows better than 121 members of the Lobster Council of Canada?

MR. COLWELL: I'll repeat my answer to the member if he didn't hear it the first time. We're number one in Canada in the export of lobsters. We're number one in Canada in the export of seafoods in this province. It didn't happen by accident. We were third place five years ago. We're number one in the country now, with over \$2 billion worth of exports.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**AGRIC. - PROV. EXHIBITION/TRURO RACEWAY:
REORGANIZATION - VIABILITY**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. *Truro Daily News* reported last month that in December, the Minister of Agriculture met in a closed session with officials from the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission board and management, as well as area mayors and representatives to discuss plans on how the province would handle the operation of the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition and the Truro Raceway.

Later, the article stated that the province planned to split the provincial exhibition operations and the raceway. This is the second time this same minister has reorganized the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission. Last month, the news broke that the minister would be separating the exhibition and the raceway. As a result of that, 15 people will lose their jobs.

My question is, will the minister explain why he thinks his second reorganization of the Provincial Exhibition Commission will work when the first reorganization failed?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: The process with the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition is under review. In the past, with what the people on the board had to work with, the facility was not making financial sense and was virtually bankrupt.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, another report by the CBC on February 23, 2018, states that the minister said, "Separating the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition from the Truro Raceway is a necessary move to pull both operations out of their long-standing financial spiral . . . There has been not really solid financial management over a long period of time," the minister told the *Truro Daily News*.

The Minister of Agriculture has failed the community, Truro Raceway, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission, and the people of Nova Scotia by mishandling this file for four years.

My question is, does the minister have a viable plan for the Provincial Exhibition Property in Bible Hill, or is he simply reshuffling the cards?

MR. COLWELL: Indeed, we are moving on a path to put the Provincial Exhibition and Nova Scotia harness racing in the Truro area on solid ground, which we will hopefully have in the next year. We're working on that problem. It has been an ongoing problem for over 50 years. The facility has never made money. Indeed, it's time that the place started to break even, with a proper structure in place to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ENVIRON.: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS - REDUCTION COSTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. Electricity is the single greatest generator of greenhouse gas emissions in Nova Scotia. We learned that this morning at Public Accounts.

The Department of Environment pointed to caps placed on greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation as a critical piece of their climate change strategy. Under the cap, electricity sector emissions must be reduced by 55 per cent by 2030. That's certainly a bold target, Mr. Speaker, but sometimes we see that with this government's plans: there's really not a plan.

I would like to ask the minister, has there been any economic analysis done by the department to determine the cost of the reduction to meet the emissions caps?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: We're very pleased with the Auditors General Report that came out nationally, which includes our province. It puts Nova Scotia among the leaders in the whole country in terms of how we're reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In answering the question from the member opposite, we are well on our way to meet the targets for both renewable energy and our reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the answer, but the question is about the cost of meeting the reductions. There's an agreement in place that talks about the cap-and-trade regulations that are coming, and the agreement for coal-fired electricity generation stipulates that the electricity sector emission reductions must be achieved in the most cost-effective way for ratepayers, and that's certainly a nice sentiment, but what does it actually mean? Since the agreement is still just an agreement in principle, what certainty can taxpayers have that they won't end up paying significantly more for electricity?

My question for the minister is, who will ultimately determine that the emission reductions have been met in a cost-effective manner - will it be the department or Nova Scotia Power?

MR. RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, we're the only province in the federation that actually has hard caps in our electricity sector. We're going to continue to use that hard cap. We have our new cap-and-trade system that will complement the system well, but I will say that under previous governments, under the New Democratic Party Government, power rates rose by 30 per cent. The Progressive Conservative Government before that, they rose by 40 per cent, and since our government has come in, those rates have been stabilized.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD - INCLUSION REPT.: CUPE REPS. - MEET

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. During debates on Bill No. 72, the minister assured us that his government is completely committed to inclusion. We've all been hoping to see evidence of that. An inclusive thing to do - and I would say a basic thing to do, when preparing to respond to a report on inclusive education - would be to meet with the representatives of the 4,000 educational assistants, teaching assistants, and community outreach workers who are on the front lines of inclusion in our classrooms.

Sadly, we learned yesterday that the minister cancelled his meeting with CUPE representatives at the very last minute. Does the minister think that the implementation of the inclusion report can be valid or successful without the participation and expertise of educational assistants, community outreach workers, and teaching assistants?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in fact, that meeting was scheduled weeks in advance of the release of the inclusion commission. It wasn't about the report on inclusive education. That was not part of the agenda that was submitted to the department. We have indicated to all of those union leaders that we will follow up and reschedule that meeting, there was a scheduling conflict. When it comes to meeting with those front-line workers, we're actually going to be getting out on the road and meeting with them directly in each and every region of this province, and talk about this report and the impacts that it's going to have on the lives of our teachers and, more importantly, our students.

MS. CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, the meeting was scheduled for March 20th, and if it wasn't on the agenda to talk about inclusion, it should have been. When justifying the Glaze recommendations, at first the government said they would create cost savings. When they had to admit that there weren't a lot of savings, they said it was to make improvements in the classroom. Finally, when they couldn't explain to us how calling principals "managers" was going to improve classroom conditions, they argued it was a necessary step to implementing the recommendations of the inclusion report, and now we have that report.

I would like to ask the minister, can he point out for us precisely which inclusion recommendations required destroying our collegial teaching model and eliminating elected school boards?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'll actually point the member's attention to several pages in the report - Pages 9, 11, 12, 16, 23, 43, and 90 - and I'll read one of those quotes. All of these are very similar. "One obstacle to progress is the lack of clarity and consistency in how inclusive education is defined and implemented in Nova Scotia. For many years, the policies, procedures, and terminology for inclusive education have been interpreted and applied differently from school to school and region to region."

This is in the inclusion report: "In addition, inconsistency in how the program planning process is implemented across the province creates confusion and frustration for students, parents, and teachers." This inclusion report has actually validated the concerns that we've had in our fractured system so thank goodness we moved on those, because we would not be in a place to execute on this report in September had we not.

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

H&W - CARDIAC CARE: PROV. SYSTEM - UNFAIR

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. A study in the Canadian Journal of Cardiology recently showed that if you live outside the Halifax area, you are twice as likely to die after a heart attack. I'll table that report.

Halifax has the only centre for advanced cardiac care in the province, and patients in other parts of the province can wait as long as two weeks to get a procedure that people in the Halifax area can get the same day. Mr. Speaker, this is a frightening statistic, and it is another reason why so many of our towns and villages are shrinking.

My question to the minister is, does the minister believe a system that values the lives of some Nova Scotians over others is acceptable?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Indeed, establishing a single Health Authority in the Province of Nova Scotia is one of the first steps we took as a significant part of our previous mandate. It's through that step that we establish opportunities to ensure all Nova Scotians get fair and equitable health care services across the province, as opposed to the old model which had nine different organizations coming up with processes and prioritizing certain services very differently within those communities.

Indeed, to the member's question, we're working hard with our partners at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK to ensure we provide services across the province to all Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's very nice that the minister always thanks one for a question. I would like to be able at one point in my career to thank him for an answer. Today is not that day.

Cape Bretoners have high rates of diabetes and high smoking rates, which lead to high rates of vascular disease. Cape Breton is an aging population. With all these factors, it is shocking that vascular surgeries are not being done in Cape Breton.

When the minister gets up to answer, he's going to say, well, we actually have some services there. We have two part-time vascular surgeons. One of them is over 80. The other one has gone on a four-month cruise of the country. Then there's a part-time doctor who comes from Halifax for two days a month. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? We should all be excited about that.

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that Cape Bretoners are being denied access to vascular surgery?

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member again for the question. Mr. Speaker, the work that we do across the province to ensure that we provide health care services to all Nova Scotians - we recognize that there's more work to do in many areas of the health care system. That's why we're continuing that work.

We're working with our partners through the health authorities and also our partners who deliver the health care services - physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals like our paramedics, pharmacists, and others. We continue to do that work.

If the member wants to look at how these efforts have been paying off, he can look at the primary care results we have seen in the Sydney area. We're seeing significant improvements in the coverage of primary care access for the people in Sydney.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

H&W - ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERIES: WAIT TIMES - REDUCTION

MR. TIM HALMAN: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. My office has been working with a constituent who called us desperate for help after waiting for a year for an appointment to be assessed for a hip replacement. She knows that after she finally gets assessed, she will face at least a one-year wait until she receives her surgery. I was saddened to tell her that she was still well within the average wait time, so it was unlikely that her need for care would be heard.

The Premier indicated last week that he believes the province will get to a six-month wait time for orthopaedic surgery this year. My question is, why has this government failed in reducing wait times for orthopaedic surgery?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: First, I think I want to clarify one of the member's comments. I don't believe the Premier said that we would be achieving a six-month wait time this month.

The member may realize that in October, we announced a new strategy for orthopaedic surgeries, particularly targeting hips and knees. Through that multi-year commitment, the Government of Nova Scotia has increased our investment. We have worked with this plan that was developed. It was developed with the health care professionals, and the NSHA brought it to government. Government found the financial resources, the money, to support it. We're relying on our orthopaedic surgeons and other professionals within the NSHA to deliver on that.

We're seeing significant results - over 400 additional surgeries in orthopaedics since October. That's progress, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to invest more. We're going to see more progress going forward.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, chronic pain can be debilitating. A year ago, my constituent was an active member of society, working, participating in sports, and going on hikes. Now less than 18 months later, the pain has increased so much that she is facing having to leave her job.

[2:30 p.m.]

We don't need a solution tomorrow; we needed one yesterday. Wait times to see any specialist in this province are months long and, as a result, some Nova Scotians are going to the United States for surgery.

My question is this, will the minister admit that amalgamating health boards has created this catastrophe?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I would not make that statement; in fact, what I'd highlight is the success and the progress we've made as a result of having a single health authority. The member opposite talks about the wait times for orthopaedic surgeries, those wait times existed long before we established the single health authority. If the member were to look closely he'd recognize that one of the ways we're making reductions and getting more (Interruption)

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

MR. DELOREY: . . . by getting more surgeries completed, it's not just with the increased investment but by looking across the province and seeing where the opportunities exist so that we provide the services where the wait times are the lowest. Something that wasn't optional, wasn't available under the previous model.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

COM. SERV. - INCOME ASSIST. RECIPIENTS: FUNDING - INADEQUATE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services.

For the thousands of Nova Scotians who receive income assistance, the chance of a better life gets harder as the cost of living keeps rising. I hear far too often from my constituents in Pictou County that the current level of funding does not allow them to meet even a minimal living standard in our province. The current levels of funding to provide housing are extremely low. If you choose to live in a rooming house, it's approximately \$285 for a monthly rental. To put this in perspective, we can stay at a hotel in Halifax and it will cost over \$400.

My question to the minister is, does the minister believe the current level of funding provided to Nova Scotians is adequate to ensure a quality life Nova Scotians deserve?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question and I do want to assure him that we're in the process of making improvements to our income assistance program. For example, I've been talking about this, we're going

to introduce a standard household rate. That umbrella will come in next year but we actually were able to, under this budget, introduce later this year a new wage incentive program so that people who work will be able to keep more of the money.

In the past, there was a disincentive to work, quite frankly. Now they will get that. We've also exempted child maintenance payments from income as we calculated for income assistance payments. We've doubled the poverty reduction credit - and those are just a few of the things that we're doing in this budget to make it possible for more Nova Scotians to have a better life. Thank you.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, breaking the cycle of poverty requires the government to be a real champion of those who find themselves slipping through the cracks. Unfortunately, this government has been slow to address this segment of our population. There is not a day goes by that my office does not receive a call from someone who can't pay their light bill, heat their home, buy nutritional food, or have a roof to sleep under. It is these types of situations that add to the stress of daily living that these individuals face.

The minister keeps saying changes are coming this year and next year. However, when you're facing eviction or trying to keep the lights on, these words do nothing to alleviate the stress they feel.

My question to the minister, will the Minister of Community Services please provide the House with an accurate rollout date on a rejuvenated program?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated previously in this House there are a number of things that are rolling out over the next year, and I gave those dates at the time. I believe it's August or September for the recalculation of maintenance, for example; later this Fall we will see the wage incentive; I would also want to share with the honourable member that we do have grants going out to reduce poverty; and we're working with municipalities, with community groups and they're working on the thorny issues of poverty in their particular areas, to come up with innovative solutions so that we can make sure all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to succeed and thrive right here at home.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**BUS. - FILM TAX CREDIT CANCELLATION:
FILM IND. - WORK HOURS PLUMMET**

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Business.

The minister has pointed out that this government is investing just as much in film and television production now as it was before it cancelled the Film Tax Credit. He sees that fact as demonstrating the government's support for the industry, but many people in the industry see it as demonstrating the government's incomprehensible policy decisions.

Since the Premier broke his election promise and cancelled the Film Tax Credit, working hours in the industry have plummeted by 60 per cent, and I can table that.

Does the Minister of Business think spending the same money for 60 per cent fewer jobs makes good business sense?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I believe that our transition to the fund from the tax credit, first of all, created stability, and certainly that we would see with respect to how we fund the film industry.

Screen Nova Scotia has been a tremendous partner in the last year, for sure, with respect to how we communicate and how we've opened up dialogue in a number of different ways that we can help. Mike Volpe and his team have been open to talking about ways we can help, from infrastructure, capital investments, and help rejuvenating the communications that we provide from the province and in partnership with Screen Nova Scotia, so that we can continue to bring productions here.

Film is important to this government and it is important to Nova Scotians, and we will continue to keep that relationship strong.

MS. LEBLANC: Screen Nova Scotia is working double time to prove to the world that we have incentives competitive with other provinces, but the fact is we are not getting the same scale of productions we were when we had a tax credit, and that is costing us a lot of jobs.

There are productions shooting for two days here in Nova Scotia for exterior scenery shots, and then filming the rest in Ontario because it's cheaper and the incentives are better. Our scenery is not enough. The incentive fund is not working.

Will the minister work with Screen Nova Scotia, IATSE, the Directors Guild of Canada, and ACTRA to improve the incentives that we offer so film and television workers can get back to work?

MR. MACLELLAN: Without question, we are committed to work with Screen Nova Scotia, the film industry, the cultural industry. All the players who participated and contributed to this industry are important to us. I did make the commitment yesterday to the honourable member that I would have any meeting that she thinks is important for the industry and that she would be more than welcome to come along.

With respect to the incentive fund that we have - \$20 million which it is budgeted for now - we have a commitment through CCH to help on some of the writing perspectives and, of course, we fund Screen Nova Scotia directly to help them build our reputation and continue to be a strong industry. I will work with anyone, including the member, and we

would appreciate her support as we continue to strengthen the relationship with Screen Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

HUMAN RIGHTS - FED. FUNDING: ATTESTATION - UNFAIR

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: This is a question for the Minister responsible for the Human Rights Act. Many organizations across the province have been denied student employment funding by the federal government because they chose not to make an attestation, newly required by Prime Minister Trudeau, because they were not comfortable with it.

It has nothing to do with employment the students would be performing nor are the organizations breaking any laws, but unless they agree to the attestation, they do not get the grant. Organizations like the Cape Breton Bible Camp, Saint Patrick's CWL in North East Margaree, and other non-faith-based organizations are afraid to speak up in case other government funding will be cut off.

Does the minister agree with Prime Minister Trudeau that citizens are not allowed to have their own free conscience and that unless they think the way the Prime Minister thinks, they are not entitled to government benefits?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: I'd like to clarify some facts there. First of all, the organizations in question can have any beliefs they want. I will clarify that the individuals who are being paid under taxpayer dollars must not do any work that goes against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I'm sure the member supports the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

MR. MACMASTER: That's a very short answer, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you it will be no consolation to the number of groups that have contacted me.

I'll give you an example. Some of the people who contacted me believe that an unborn child is a person. The attestation requires them to make an oath to say they agree with something they do not agree with. It is about their integrity, and credit to them for not compromising what they believe.

Two-thirds of the people who contacted me were women. Put the shoe on the other foot. Imagine the federal government denying student employment funding to organizations that support abortion. Why is it right for Trudeau to deny a government benefit to one set of believers, but not the other? And if the Prime Minister is wrong, will this government support a student employment program for those who are shut out?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I will clarify that those organizations, no matter what their beliefs, are still open to hiring those students.

I will also add to the member that this is a great opportunity for me to talk about the co-operative positions in the Province of Nova Scotia which we have actually had an expansion to. We're looking for more applications not only from students but from business leaders as well. To the member, if he would like more information on that, I would be more than happy to share it with him.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

LAE: STUDENT SUMMER SKILLS INCENTIVE PROG. - HIRING PRACTICE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. This year the federal Liberal Government has started implementing the values tests that tell people and organizations what they can and cannot believe if they want access to funding to hire a summer student. I have been hearing from many organizations in my area that they will no longer be able to employ as many summer students because of this attestation. A government treading on freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, or freedom of speech is completely unacceptable.

The province offers a similar jobs program through the Student Summer Skills Incentive program. My question for the minister is, can the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education confirm if this government is considering adopting the same discriminatory practice here in Nova Scotia?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, we have had no changes to our programs. If the honourable member has any issues with the way our programs are funded, any specific part of it, if he thinks there's any enhancements we can make to actually attract more of our youth with co-op positions - we know they are a great gateway to keeping them in the province, to giving them the important experience they need to transition into the workforce. Once they start their career earlier, they have greater income potential as their career progresses. That is the goal of our government, the goal of everybody in this House.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the answer, and I'm pleased to hear his answer.

However, that doesn't seem to line up with the Community ACCESS-Ability Program guidelines, as was pointed out to me by a local church. I will table those guidelines. They are Communities, Culture and Heritage guidelines. Church sanctuaries are singled out as the only type of charity or not-for-profit organization that isn't eligible for government funding to make their buildings more accessible to people with physical disabilities.

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Will he confirm today that he will remove this discriminatory provision in the Community ACCESS-Ability Program that blocks churches from receiving these funds?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: We have provided accessibility grants to churches and community halls over the years. We look at every individual application. If there is something in the wording in the application that needs a review, we'll certainly take that on.

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

**H&W - HOSPICE/PALLIATIVE CARE:
VICTORIA CO./CBRM - WORKLOAD DISCREPANCY**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Those providing hospice and palliative care in Victoria County cover 1,700 square kilometres of territory. For a territory this size, there's only one part-time hospice nurse and one doctor for one day a week, with no backup for vacation or sick time. The caseload remains steady at 22 patients while CBRM, which has a caseload of this size, has a full-time nurse assigned to manage the work involved.

As this government can appreciate, most of the patients are remaining at home, as per their final wishes, requiring extensive travel by our nurse and doctor.

My question to the minister, could the minister explain why there's such a discrepancy between two municipalities with the same caseload numbers?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Indeed, I would like to advise the member that in addition to the services that he has referenced, there's some innovative work in the palliative area. We're leveraging our emergency responders, paramedics, to help with providing some of those services. There's an ability for Nova Scotians to register for that service as well. So again, the services are being offered for palliative in a number of ways and to help manage the caseload in our communities across the province.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, that may be the case, but along with this workload, it must be noted that other services that used to assist cancer patients, such as a chemo nurse and a patient navigator, are gone as well. As a result, it falls upon this part-time nurse and the one-day-a-week palliative doctor to spend time on the education component for the hospital nursing home local doctors and nurses. The result of these staff shortages is causing unnecessary hardship and stress for those patients and their families that rely on these services.

[2:45 p.m.]

My question is, if the government believes in and truly supports Nova Scotians receiving treatment at home, will the minister rise and commit today to making the hospice care nurse position at Victoria County a full-time position, the same as in other areas with the same caseload, and increase the palliative care doctor by at least one more day per week?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the member referenced specifically cancer patients. I'm pleased to remind the member of the steps that we've taken around cancer care, particularly respecting people who require oral cancer drug therapy. We've worked with our partners at Cancer Care Nova Scotia to establish a fund to ensure that these catastrophic medications do not burden Nova Scotians unnecessarily, or to too great an extent.

We got that fund announced as part of our platform commitments, and we delivered that program earlier this year, retroactive to April 1st. These are the types of steps we're taking to support cancer patients in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ENERGY: BP DRILLING PROPOSAL - CONCERN

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Last week, Nova Scotians gathered at different events around the province to discuss the federal approval of British Petroleum's plans for exploratory ultra-deep drilling off Sable Island.

The technologies BP is proposing to use have not been tried in waters this rough. Tide patterns would bring a spill into key lobster fishing grounds and right whale areas, and could endanger Georges Bank. The equipment to cap the spill would take over a week to get here from Norway, and the dispersants BP proposes to use on any spill could in fact increase risk to lobster.

Mr. Speaker, what makes the minister so confident that the considerable risks posed by offshore drilling are being adequately mitigated?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: The CNSOPB makes me confident. The experience, the wealth, the history, the knowledge, and the commitment to Nova Scotia is what makes that board so important for the Department of Energy, for the government, and for all Nova Scotians. They know this industry. They understand that they can't ever avoid complete diligence on safety, on environmental protection, on environmental stewardship, and on the responsibility of BP or any company.

They're going to do the diligence. They operate at arm's-length from government. They're going to make sure they get this right, and they won't give any approvals for anything until our people are safe and our environment will not be impacted.

I have full confidence in the CNSOPB. They'll continue to do very good work on behalf of the people in this province.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Attorneys General of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have all spoken out to say that they consider drilling an unacceptable threat to their tourism, fisheries, and prosperity. I'll table that.

Australia just recently rejected a proposal by BP very similar to the proposal here, because it didn't meet their standards. In Norway, capping stacks need to be onsite within hours of a spill, not over a week like we allow here.

Mr. Speaker, why should Nova Scotians accept lower standards than all those other jurisdictions?

MR. MACLELLAN: I reject the premise that Nova Scotians are accepting lowered standards with respect to the safety of the workforce that would be offshore, that have been offshore, and that will be offshore potentially for BP, should this project go ahead by way of approval, and by way of viability.

Again, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board - they understand what the concerns are. This isn't about BP. It's about the industry. It's about oil and gas and what practices are in place, what the conditions are of the environment by which they'll be operating. They take in all factors, all considerations, all public reactions in any jurisdiction, in the world, with respect to Australia, the U.S., and other places.

I don't have to have faith or any particular issue with companies. This is about our safety platform, and that is the CNSOPB.

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture, and Heritage on an introduction.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: In the east gallery today we have along to observe the proceedings, Steve Gallant, who is the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation director, formerly worked in the Department of Health and Wellness while I was there with him. I used to call him "Mr. Grant" because he looked after our grant program.

I know how hard he is working to have programs to keep all our students in our schools active and fit, so would the House give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: 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 Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 102.

Bill No. 102 - Cancer Survivors Day Act.

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

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour today to speak on the Act to Establish Cancer Survivors Day. Of all the things I might talk about in the Legislature, there's probably nothing more personal to me than this. As many of you have already heard, when I was 25 years old, I got a call from my father to tell me that he had been diagnosed with leukemia. The first thing I did was go and look up the statistics on leukemia in this country and they were not too bad, so I didn't become afraid right away.

I called my mother and said okay, what's the reality, because Dad minimized the significance of this. She said oh, it's going to be good, don't worry about it, Barb.

I flew home, I visited with my dad - he looked great - he came home from the hospital and I flew back to Ontario, relieved. Then four weeks later I had a call to my dad and he said, I'm back in the hospital. He told me his bloodwork but he said, don't worry, I'll be okay. I went to a friend of mine who was a physician at the hospital I was working at, and I told her that my dad had been diagnosed with leukemia and I told her his bloodwork. She said oh, Barb, I'm so sorry, when did your Dad die? I said, he's not dead, and she said oh, I think you should go home.

I got on a plane and I flew home. I saw him on a Thursday afternoon, and he had been used to going for a walk with two people, so we went for a walk, him and my mom, one on either side. This was a man who was over six feet tall, who was a very big guy, and he was wasting down to very little. This was just 30 days after diagnosis.

The last night, which was the next night, that I saw him alive, he said he wanted to go for one final walk, and he used those words. I said okay, and I got up to go with him and mom and he said no, just your mother this time.

It was something about the way he said it that I knew that it was going to be the last walk. I watched him walk down the hallway with her. When he came back into his room he hugged me and he said the same thing he had told my sister: Look after your mother for me.

We left at about 10:30 that night, we went home. We got the call shortly after midnight that he had passed away. I remember thinking, my life has changed forever, as has my mother's, and has everyone else's in my family. My second thought was that now we have to tell everyone else. I can tell you, those are the worst calls I have ever made in my life.

We are fortunate that we had 30 days to say goodbye. Not everyone is that fortunate. I do know that his life and his legacy are going to live on in me and my children and their children. But he did live for 30 days, and we celebrated those 30 days.

One of the funniest stories is that he never went to church, but he was a Christian in every other way. When the minister of our church came by he said, Jack, would you like me to say a few prayers for you? Dad said, well, I'd better hedge my bets, so you had better say something for me, just in case. I'm quite sure I know where he's gone.

The other thing that gave me comfort is that my father was an accountant and he died on April 30th which is Tax Day, and he had said to my mother I don't want you to have to do taxes for two years in a row. I take great comfort in the fact that God knew when he wanted him and he took him on a day that would let me know that it was his time.

I have a huge, huge family and I can't tell you how many times we have gotten a phone call saying somebody was diagnosed with cancer and, unfortunately, if you look in this room and just look at one other person, one of you is going to get cancer in your lifetime. Fifty per cent of all of us are going to get cancer, so that's 25 of us in this Chamber minus the non-MLA staff. Not everybody is going to pass away though - only 30 per cent of deaths in Canada are from cancer. It's still too high and it's very high from lung cancer, but there are an awful lot of people who live with this condition despite the terror and trauma that it brings to them.

Yesterday, when I introduced the bill, there were several people up in the gallery, all of whom are friends of mine, one of whom is newly diagnosed with breast cancer and is now fighting for her life. She was a woman who 43 years ago started the Upward Bound program at the YMCA in Dartmouth, Janet Landry. She took 50 or 60 crazy teenagers and had us come every Saturday to look after children with special needs and it was the first time these kids had gotten out of the house and their parents had had a break. She was a

nursing student doing a school project that she went on to do for almost 10 years and those of us in that group are all still friends today, 43 years later. She has been looking after people with cancer her whole life and, now, it's her turn to battle this and I am confident that she is going to beat this and I'm confident for all of those who have been diagnosed who are living with this that we need to celebrate their lives.

The inspiration for the bill came from a lady named Judie Edgar. She called my office up one day and said, I want to put together a cancer survivor park. I'm trying to get the municipality to give me some land and I'm looking for some guidance on how we can go about funding this. So, of course, I met with her and she's doing all the legwork and, fortunately, the municipality just gave her the land in Dartmouth right down by Alderney Landing. So, that will become a reality but it is the place to go and celebrate life.

My father - we lived in Dartmouth and if there's something my father loved it was McDonald's, and if there's something my father hated it was waiting in traffic to get across the bridge every day to work in the building next door. So it's kind of ironic that he is buried right next to a McDonald's, and when I drive over the bridge every day I see his gravesite - there is someplace for me to go to celebrate his life. What we are looking for is a place and a day to celebrate those who are surviving because they are the ones carrying the burden of the journey and their families who want to support them.

It is a difficult illness to have. It's often carried in isolation and silence and, once somebody's had it and had some kind of treatment, we tend to forget that they will live with the fear of recurrence probably the rest of their days. So we want to celebrate this. There is a National Cancer Survivors Day; it is the first Sunday of June. It is not celebrated as much as we would like to see it, and so by bringing this forward, it would become a formal notice to everyone with cancer that we see you and we want to celebrate that you are fighting to be here with us.

My mother also had a form of cancer and we waited anxiously for her diagnosis and we were fortunate that the kind she had was not going to take her life. My mother-in-law who had the exact same name as me, Barbara Ann Adams, she waited to get in to see a gynaecologist and didn't get in in time and her kidneys shut down from an ovarian tumour that took her life about four or five months later - and I cannot begin to tell you how her diagnosis and the loss of her affected my family. But I do know that for the six months that she lived, we celebrated every day. The first time I ever had anybody ask me if I had any access to marijuana. I didn't, but I would be able to do something about that in six months' time.

What this does is, it says to people, we want to celebrate your life. But the other thing I want to celebrate is - I worked on the palliative care ward for many years. I sat at the bedside of many courageous people who were dying. There's a saying that nobody ever gets to the Pearly Gates and says, I wish I worked more. They always say, I wish I had spent more time with my family. I have always remembered that.

There are care workers out there who work in palliative care. They take a very special place in my heart because of when my mother's brother Uncle Allen died of lung cancer. He was only with us about three months after the diagnosis, but he wanted to be at home because he wanted to spend the time he was surviving with his family. My Aunt Shirley kept him at home, and the palliative care team put every service in place that they could to see that he could do that. They celebrated, and when he was ready to pass on, the entire family was brought together. We were all there with him at that time because we were celebrating every minute he had to give us.

All those health care workers out there who are helping somebody cope with this condition and live with it as long as they can need to be celebrated as well. Every single person who donates to the Canadian Cancer Society is contributing to the research that is extending people's lives. The rate of survival continues to grow, not nearly fast enough. I think over the last 15 to 20 years, it has improved about 7 per cent. We still have one of the highest rates of cancer in the country, especially in lung cancer - we do have the highest there. We need to watch what people are inhaling into their lungs especially.

There are all the employers who work with people who have this condition who are making concessions to them for their treatments. To family who are going out of their way to drive people to their chemotherapy and radiation, to everyone who works in a hospital who takes care of those with a cancer diagnosis - this would be a celebration of everyone who has been impacted by somebody who had cancer. I will be bold in saying I do not believe there's any single person in Canada who has not been affected by this condition.

Sadly, there is a significant number of children who get diagnosed as well. Having worked as a supervisor in a neurologic department in Ontario, I can tell you about the particular hell that comes when you're telling a family member that their child has brain cancer, and it's inoperable, or if we operate, they won't be able to see or speak or swallow. I will always encourage greater research into this condition.

For those who are still with us, we need a place to celebrate. We need a day to recognize them as we recognize so many other conditions. I'm asking this House to pass this bill unanimously.

In terms of those who have not yet been diagnosed, we know that the statistics tell us that half of us are going to get something. I have had a mammogram, and I know the terror of waiting for that test result. I know that people who get diagnosed and find out it's bad but aren't sure how bad live with that same terror. I'm encouraging our government to move forward with any changes that they can make in terms of speed of testing so that we can increase speed of treatment as well and for us to embrace new treatments that have proven to be effective.

I would be remiss if I didn't say that we all have a responsibility to reduce our own risk. It's not on the government whether you smoke or eat things you shouldn't or don't

get enough exercise or take care of yourself. It's on all of us. We want to reduce the rate of cancer, not just celebrate those who are surviving it. I'm going to encourage everybody to take a look at what they're doing in their own lives.

I can tell you, when I tell my children stories about my father, I wish with all my heart he was here to tell those stories.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to encourage everyone to have a look at the bill. It is simply to acknowledge a day that demonstrates that a life with cancer is a full life and worth celebrating, and that a diagnosis of cancer is something that you learn to live with and to cope with and to fight against with everything you have. If we, as a society, celebrate along with them and learn to talk to them about it, instead of keeping it a secret or in silence and just trying to keep a stiff upper lip, we will be able to celebrate as a whole country.

In conclusion, I'm going to encourage everyone in this House to vote yes on Bill No. 102, an Act to Establish Cancer Survivors Day. Thank you very much.

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

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I thank the honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage for bringing this bill and for the information she just shared with us. I totally agree with her. We are grateful for her bringing such a bill on a very important subject.

One of the things I would like to start with is that, on average, 221 Canadians will die from cancer every day. That is a huge number. There are also multiple figures.

But I really wanted to start with the word "cancer," what it meant to me as a girl from Iraq. This disease is never spoken of. It is a hidden thing; it is a taboo. If somebody had cancer, it was like you were not allowed to visit, you were afraid - we weren't even informed that it is not contagious at the time.

Hearing about my neighbour who had cancer, it was a death sentence at the time. That was the only thing I heard until I got into medical podiatry in England and I started to learn more about cancer and the effect of it. What I found is that the difficulty is the mentality of people hiding the word "cancer." To me, hiding diseases contributes to the isolation of the people being able to receive treatment. People help each other in disease. It's a very difficult thing.

The hardest thing I have as an interpreter is when I work with the Arabic culture who do not pronounce the word "cancer." So here I am interpreting for a lovely young lady who is in her 20s with bone marrow cancer, which is a very severe thing. The father would take me aside and say, "Just don't use the word 'cancer.' Remember that." But my duty as

an interpreter is to say that word. I was torn between what the family wanted, because if I used the word “cancer,” that means “you are dying.”

That is what cancer meant in Arabic. It was a very difficult time for me most of the time interpreting, using that word. I know what it means to them, but I had to say it. I would get very angry, dirty looks, but this is my job and I had to do it here.

I would try and encourage them and say, no, you need to speak about it, you need to hear others because you learn from what other people have gone through. You are not alone. There is so much help here and so much advancement.

I’m thankful that there are a couple of cancers - prostate cancer or breast cancer - that nowadays, after 10 years, are not as scary as they used to be.

My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer about 10 years ago. I was very afraid for her. They weren’t actually sure - it was just at the start, so they weren’t 100 per cent sure from the mammogram. They gave her the choice of getting treatment or not at the time. She struggled for about a month making a decision, and then she went for the treatment.

The treatment was very hard, the radiation and the effects she has had since she had the treatment. I’ve always thought, well, if she hadn’t – which, maybe it was never going to develop into cancer, maybe with our technology nowadays - how much of those diagnoses, and there is a lot of studies now that a lot of these diagnoses are premature, and we’re treating people prematurely for them. So, my mother was a case of that, and we will never know. But as a result, she lost her hair, she had a lot of pain from it, she’s had many other complications, but she’s a survivor. It has been 15 years and everything has gone beautifully, so maybe I was wrong. I truly had a hard time deciding whether to encourage her to go for the treatment or not. I’ve seen it in my own eyes what it does, how much damage the cancer treatment is to people. So, it is a very difficult thing.

I have also seen my uncle, who had lung cancer. So, here’s one family - I’ve got about five or six people that have gone through cancer one way or the other, and lung cancer was a horrible death. Truly a horrible death where you lose so much, but that one - he was a heavy smoker, and it’s been related to that. I hope that what we’re doing here, especially in Canada, the number of people who are smoking has declined a great deal, and hopefully we continue doing that, and encourage cessation of smoking programs that help people to stop smoking. I see it from anybody who is coming from outside of the country, they smoke a lot more than us. So, I just feel that, hopefully we will be that influence on them to stop while they’re still young.

I also wanted to bring a little passage that was handed to me just recently, in the last few minutes, about Brigadoon Village. When Dave McKeage was first diagnosed with cancer at the age of 11, which resulted in his summer being spent in the hospital undergoing

a series of operations and chemotherapy, this experience led him to pursue a volunteer opportunity at the Canadian Cancer Society at the age of 15. This is when Dave had his “lightbulb moment,” in which he came to realize that Brigadoon Village was needed.

Several years later, while working at Canadian Cancer Society's Camp Goodtime as Summer Director, McKeage had an epiphany. He explains, “I wanted to build a camp for people living with chronic disease and I knew it could be done.” Since then, his drive only grew stronger and set out to turn his large and complex dream of creating a camp that allows children leading extraordinary lives, to feel ordinary again.

[3:15 p.m.]

These are the stories that we should celebrate and encourage, because it is people who go through experiences in life, they contribute the most, because when you've gone through it, you know how the other side is feeling. I also - not only in cancer, but in mental health, and in any other diseases - the encouragement that I see here in Canada of groups, whether it's the Cancer Society, or the Mental Health Society, or the others, they become the go-to for resources, sometimes more than doctors, and it's uplifting.

It's very encouraging for me as a newcomer to Canada, how advanced Canada has become in those fields, and we don't appreciate it until you see it from the eyes of the refugees, who have never gone through these. I have received so many compliments from this family, and other families who have been treated here recently, at how wonderful our service is, and how wonderful our treatment, and how trusting they are with the doctors here. They just know that these doctors are doing their best.

In many countries, it's all about money, it's all about selling a product, or selling an operation for a doctor to make money. We are so fortunate here in Canada, especially in Nova Scotia, we have very dedicated and very honest doctors. I think that having free health makes us an envy of many countries, even in the United States. I know people living there who are Canadian would send their information to a doctor here to make sure that what they were told is true and it is not just for money.

I can't tell you enough about the things I see, and I appreciate living in Canada, having this free health care. I know that we are having a few struggles but there is so much more that is going beautifully. We are renowned for what we are doing and our nurses, our doctors, are truly like members of the family. They have become so close with the patients that they do everything for them.

I have a couple of young children that I was with. The doctor would take them with their mother outside to get an ice cream, just to give them a little bit outside of the hospital. They make celebrations, they do things to lift up the spirit because it is so important when people are sick to be lifted up and encouraged.

I can go on and on but I'm really - they just asked me to do this 10 minutes ago and I've never spoken, so I'm terrified that I actually spoke for that long. I really would like to hear it here - I know that we're very negative about our health system but that is really hurting the people who are doing it, so we can't, we have to stop doing that. (Applause)

If I can bring you a couple of the refugees in to see from their perspective how good we are - we are the best trainers. We go to all our appointments and there are always so many students with the doctor. So as Canadians, we are renowned to be the best educated, the most patient, the most polite, the most everything - so let's celebrate that.

I am so proud of being a Canadian, and when I travel I just can't say enough about our medical system here and how people are treated. I've seen it for 20 years and it's going to get better, whatever we're missing. We have a lot of baby boomers with their huge needs and slowly we'll figure it out, but we have to work together. We'll all work together to figure it out for the sake of ourselves and our children and hopefully many generations to come. Thank you. (Applause)

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

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Today I will gladly rise to offer my support and our Party's support to this celebratory bill, piece of legislation, although I think we should celebrate survivors' lives every day. But having something recognized publicly is definitely a step in the right direction.

A couple of instances I'd like to speak about - one was the invitation that we as MLAs received to go to the Lodge That Gives. Honestly, I was truly moved. I had no idea that that facility existed and it offered what it does. A former colleague of ours has used it quite frequently. To think that it takes the financial pressure off those cancer survivors and patients to go and be able to eat and sleep for free because as we all know, from outside of HRM, cancer costs a lot of money. It really costs a lot of money and it's sad that you have to think about money versus cancer treatment.

I was so moved and pleased to see the Lodge That Gives that it actually pushed me and my constituency office to have a fundraiser with some of the proceeds going towards The Lodge That Gives this coming August.

Sadly, one of the closest people in my life passed away, just about a year ago, and he was diagnosed with cancer. He was like my big brother, my uncle, and my dad all rolled into one. His birthday was on election day, so I knew it was a good omen right from the day the election was called. However, he passed away 11 days later from cancer and it just came up and it just ate him alive. There was no stopping it, there was no healing him. He was intubated for 14 days and then subsequently passed. I guess it is better than the suffering but it doesn't leave those behind very good.

Having said that, it's now opened my eyes and the eyes of my family to this disease. Thankfully, we haven't had a lot of experience with it. We think about him and miss him every day and to think we could have a day to celebrate him, aside from the day of his death, is a wonderful idea. We think about him and celebrate him every day, but I think to make it public is a wonderful tribute to those who are fighting and have fought the disease. It's sad, but every day that you walk around you hear the word "cancer" by somebody. Somebody has either gotten cancer, their mother has gotten cancer, they died, or they're going through cancer treatment.

When I worked in the regional hospital, I always said I could never work in the cancer centre because I just couldn't see that every day. Believe it or not, I'm just too soft to see that every day. From what I hear from so many staff members, it's one of the most rewarding jobs in health care because you're helping them to deal with one of the worst experiences of their lives as well as hopefully healing them. Albeit, I never took that chance because I just didn't have it in me.

But today, a complete flip side of the sadness, I can say I can celebrate my partner's five years cancer free this coming May. He had a total nephrectomy and they say once you get five years free, you're cancer free. This May will be his 5th Anniversary and we celebrate life as often as we can. The scar is a reminder that he did knock on that door, he was faced with a very serious, possibly fatal illness, and he turned the other cheek. We live life and we enjoy life to the fullest. I think people need to take that on and celebrate life and enjoy when the outcome is not always detrimental. As the member opposite said, we need to celebrate more often and we need to recognize that it's not always a life sentence.

With those few words, I would take my seat and say that I'm proud to support this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill No. 102, the Cancer Survivors Day Act. There are many parents and grandparents in this Chamber and I know for parents and grandparents we relish in the opportunity to take great pride in our kids or grandkids. Oftentimes that happens at a sporting event or when our children receive an academic accolade.

Two years ago, when my youngest child was in Primary, I received a phone call from her teacher. It was a very powerful phone call indicating there had been an incident in class. I asked, what are you talking about, what's the incident you're referring to? I was told that the kids in class were talking about people losing their hair - immediately I thought maybe they were talking about me, but that was not the case.

The discussion was talking about different diseases and treatments for diseases and they were talking about chemotherapy. When they talked about how people lose their hair

as a result of chemotherapy the kids started to laugh, and my five-year-old daughter stood up and said to the class, my mommy is beautiful. It was one of the proudest moments of my life, where my child demonstrated the strength of character to remind her classmates that we all carry crosses. I suppose that's an appropriate term as we move into the Easter season, that we all recognize that those who battle cancer have a support network around them, I believe, that needs to be acknowledged, and my daughter in that moment reminded me how important it is to recognize that we, as a society, have all been impacted by cancer.

Life takes its toll on all of us, Mr. Speaker, in its own way, and I want to thank in a very profound way the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and the colleagues in this House who have spoken on this bill because this bill acknowledges the journey, the fight for survival. It recognizes the determination and grit required to battle this insidious disease. I believe this bill recognizes the resiliency of those fighting cancer. It recognizes the love and determination and strength of character of the families and friends and the community that offers support to those when they have been diagnosed with what is to be a very, very powerful fight.

I'd like to take a moment and talk about what I witnessed to be resiliency and determination. To see that determination in a person's eyes, to see that desire to live, that desire to defeat this, to defeat this insidious disease now and for future generations, and I see that in my own children. When I was bestowed this great honour to represent my community, when I asked by daughters what's the first thing you want to put into that constituency office - paintings of Terry Fox went up in the Dartmouth East office. A reminder of the legacy of that great Canadian who reminds each and every one of us - his story reminds us that it is a fight, it is a struggle, and it is something we all must be in together with those who have been diagnosed with cancer. It reminds us that we must devote our time, talent, and treasure to research to ensure that future generations are not impacted by cancer.

This bill, I believe, not only reflects the desire to recognize the desire to survive but to also thrive, to beat cancer, and to live a life that is cancer-free and, if one is living with cancer, I want those families to know they are not alone. I know all members of this Chamber support them, that all Nova Scotians support them. It is my hope one day that we beat cancer into submission and obliteration. I know as a husband to someone who went through this - I think the medical term is "scanxiety" - every few months going and the uneasiness that used to be around the scans after treatments. This bill, I believe, pays recognition to those individuals.

The first Sunday in June is being asked to be set aside to remember those who are battling this and those who are supporting them. Let's be clear what we mean about support. This is a day where we reflect and honour those and their families and all the support networks who fight cancer every day.

[3:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, I think about one of my constituents who just last week rang that bell at the Nova Scotia Cancer Care Centre. Her name is Sonia Rideout. Sonia is an amazing individual, as all fighters of cancer are. I think about her daughter, Courtney Mackenzie, who was with her all the way. It is Sonia and Courtney, and the thousands of others that this bill asks, let us recognize, let us reflect, let us take some time to recognize that this is an insidious disease, a disease that we must always continue to fight and challenge and offer support.

Mr. Speaker, this bill honours those support networks. It honours the village that must come forward to offer those who are fighting this - the family, the friends, the specialists, the advocates, the researchers, the oncologists - oncologists like Dr. Daniel Rayson. His professionalism, his compassion, my family will never forget. All those oncologists who are with our patients from beginning to when they beat this, when they learn to live with it and, unfortunately, at times, at the end.

Mr. Speaker, we have amazing doctors in this province. We know it, we recognize it, and this bill acknowledges that.

Over the past 24 hours I've been thinking of the most appropriate term that I think this bill is trying to get at and I couldn't help but think of former U.S. President John F. Kennedy's book *Profiles in Courage*. I believe that title captures what it is that we are talking about for this day: to profile courage, those, when death is facing them, stare it down with tenacity and grit. This bill reminds us that even in those depths, even in those moments of treatment where it is very challenging, you do find moments of joy.

My late wife and I were determined, Mr. Speaker, to give our children, as much as possible, a normal upbringing. I recall taking my family to Prince Edward Island, to Cavendish in August, just to get away. This was a few days after a chemo treatment. One of the side effects of chemo for some patients is they lose their ability to taste. My late wife loved to cook and I remember her making us some strawberry shortcake, but because her taste had gone, she accidentally put salt instead of sugar. Of course, as we are eating, my reaction was just ugh, and my children were like, Mommy, this is the best strawberry shortcake we've ever had. I believe it is those tender moments that we remember and that we recognize.

To me, a bill such as this encourages Nova Scotian citizens to remember that in our daily rush to get things done, to just live. There are thousands of us in our province, thousands in our country, who require our thoughts, require our encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion that this bill is in the public good. I believe it will give Nova Scotians an opportunity to pause and reflect, to use a term from John F. Kennedy, in *Profiles in Courage*, to remember that life is precious, that our families and

friends are precious, and that all of us, as we know, have a responsibility to support those with cancer, to honour their grit, to honour their determination, to honour their resiliency, to honour those who have been impacted by the consequences of cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly ask this House of Assembly to pass this bill in order to recognize the many people who now live with cancer and have survived cancer and all those who support those with cancer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank members for all those interventions on such an important bill.

I know sometimes on Opposition Day, we look at opportunities to maybe sneak one past the goalpost and get us all to vote on a bill such as this one. But I don't want to do the sneaky thing, so don't worry about it. What we are going to do is, I am going to the Government House Leader if, at a later date, we could maybe consider this one again to truly make it a day to commemorate those people who have survived cancer and, of course, who have supported those individuals.

The mechanisms during Opposition Day aren't quite such that we can actually call for the vote. We can try, and it's a whole bunch of fun, but we're not going to do that today. Again, I will call on the government to consider this one as the days go on in this House of Assembly on something that is so important to each and every one of us in this House of Assembly.

With that, Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 94.

Bill No. 94 - Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise today to speak to Bill No. 94, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act. It's disappointing that we're here to have to introduce a bill of this nature in this Legislature, which is going to require the government to make payments to universities transparent so the people of Nova Scotia know when a payment is being made to a university, what it's being made for, and where it's being made from.

Mr. Speaker, we heard in Question Period today how open and transparent this government has intended to be, wanted to be. When they were elected, I think it was in the election before this one, we heard the Premier say they were going to be the most open and transparent government in all of the country. We don't see this in some of the things that happen on the other side of this House.

This bill is meant to be sure that when our taxpayers' dollars are spent, people know where they're going and where they're coming from. We as taxpayers, and all the other taxpayers out there, work hard for our money. They pay their taxes every time they buy something. At income tax time, they pay their taxes. They pay their property taxes. You know what? They do their best to get ahead, Mr. Speaker. They spend their money wisely, and they hope that there's enough at the end of the month to go around. But sometimes, there is not, and we have to go for a little extra.

In return, we expect our government to spend their money wisely as well. We expect the government to spend the money wisely as well. We expect all our people to spend their money wisely so they have enough to go around, so there's enough to pay everything, cover all the cost of everything at the end of the month, and maybe have a little bit for a vacation or something in the summer. But in order for this system to work, the government must tell the taxpayer where that money is going.

Right now, we are in Budget Estimates, where we get a chance to sit down and speak with the minister face to face to ask questions about what's going on, where the money is going, what program it's for, how much that program costs, and how the government is spending the money in each of the departments of the government. We get to ask questions in Question Period.

A couple of years back, we asked questions about certain parts of this university funding, and we were told certain answers. When it comes to university funding, the system has broken down a little bit. Not all that funding was fully disclosed about every payment that was made to all the universities. Payments and loans have been made in secrecy or in a roundabout fashion.

This bill, Bill No. 94, is designed to remedy that. It's a very easy bill. It's very easy to understand. If anyone's ever picked up a bill in this Legislature and tried to go through it and decipher what the bill has to say, it's very difficult to understand - the whereas-es and the to-ises and all that goes with it.

But this is a pretty simple bill. It makes sure the government discloses where the money is spent, that it's open about how the money is spent, and that it's transparent that the money is spent where it needs to be spent. It's not a hard bill for the government to get behind. It's pretty simple. Account for where the money goes, tell the province and the people of the province where they're spending their money. It says that the minister must publicly announce decisions made about grants and loans made to a university. It's not a difficult concept: just tell us where the money is going and what department and where it's coming from.

Simply put, the minister must tell taxpayers how they're spending the taxpayers' money.

I know in my house, if I'm going to make a big purchase, it's something we discuss amongst the family members. If I just go out and make that purchase without telling my wife or my family, there's "as they so call" to pay for it.

We expect our government to be the same way. Tell us where they're spending the money, what they're spending this money on. It's a simple concept.

Some say that we should be doing this as a matter of course, as a matter of being a public figure. We do this with our expenses. We post our expenses online every month. I can't spend the taxpayers' money on certain things and certain parts of government. There are limits and rules around that, and in our position, rightfully so. We're paid by the taxpayers. They want to know where they're spending their money and what we're spending their money on.

Recent history shows us this legislation is necessary. We recently heard of some areas where we've strayed in this needing this legislation, where we may have run afoul a little bit. It's almost like the government was trying to hide something when they did this. We didn't get answers to the questions at the time, but we found out that this is what was going on.

Just last summer, Nova Scotians learned the province provided a type of bailout to Acadia University. Not that that's a bad thing, if it's necessary. But other universities in the province were calling for the same type of funding, and they were denied it. That bailout wasn't offered to others such as the university in my area, CBU. They were told there would be no more funding, so they trimmed the fat, they cut costs, and they started to try to live within their means. That wasn't the same for the other university. If they had been open and transparent about where that money was going and why it was going there, CBU might have been afforded the same type of payout - buyout, bailout, whatever you want to call it.

The opportunity just wasn't there for the other universities. It was a \$7 million loan from 2011 and a \$3.5 million operating grant from 2012-13 up to 2015-16 for a total of \$24.5 million. That may not mean a lot to a lot of people in a \$9 billion budget, but if you look at the budget this year, that's almost as much as the government is forecasting to have as a surplus. They're forecasting revenue from cannabis, from the Securities Commission joining, and that is a lot of money.

That loan was kept secret for six years. Why? Why was it kept secret? We asked, and we didn't get a good answer on it. What we found out in the coming days that other university presidents were just as surprised as the taxpayers were. They didn't know about this. If this bill was in place, each and every university would know about it, each and every university president would know about it, and everybody would be able to maybe access the same type of funding.

[3:45 p.m.]

Cape Breton University reached out to us. They cried foul. They also had financial difficulties, as we talked about, and had asked for extensions, but that didn't happen. Then what happens? A game of pass the political hot potato happens. They did give, eventually, some money to CBU, but it took a little bit to go around to get it, but it wasn't what they asked for. Now, the accounting side of it, Mr. Speaker, I'm not an accountant but I was told through different questions in here that they got more than they asked for. Back home they said they didn't get what they asked for, so that's where the hot potato starts to come around.

So, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was asked and they were told to ask the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. The staff at the department pointed the finger at Acadia University and around and around and around we go. It passed around like something that may be passed around here in the future when new legislation gets introduced here in the summertime.

We were never given a clear answer, but if Bill No. 94 had been in place we would have had that answer. We wouldn't have to ask the question because we would have known the answer and we would have been able to understand why this money was given to a certain university and not the other universities. We would have known where it went, where it came from, and who provided that funding. If Bill No. 94 had been in place, the minister in 2011 would have announced the loan and answered any questions that arose from that announcement.

It's pretty simple - why are you giving them that money, and where is that money going? They needed it, with certain special circumstances; they need it for whatever reason. Problem solved, questions answered, no more story. It would have been very transparent, and for the government that campaigned on being the most open, or claimed to be the most open and transparent government in the country - what's the big deal? Tell us where it's going.

But, Mr. Speaker, in February, February of this year, taxpayers got another surprise. They learned that in 2012 another \$2.7 million had been loaned to Acadia University to renovate a residence. Well, while the news release from that day left the impression the money was to renovate 300 rooms for more students in Cutten House and the money was coming from the department's budget, that was not the case; in fact, the money came from the housing budget from the Department of Community Services. What was disguising the funding was funding from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's no way to run a government. That's no way to run a department and this bill will allow that not to happen. It will allow the government to be open and transparent of where they put their money and who they gave their money to. This is the way the government should be accounted for, a way for government to give up

and live up to their promise, the promise they made when they came to power, and leave no doubt in the minds of the people of this province where the money is being spent and how the money is being spent. You can't hide answers then. You don't have to. If the people know, they know. It's not picking winners and losers and it will allow the government to put the money where they need to put it.

Our universities are one of the brightest assets we have here in this province, and for government or any other department or any other people to pick winners and losers - let these people get this money on merit, on merit of the need. The universities are big employers but what they are doing is they are educating our children, an education that we say they need, that we know they need in order for our province to be successful, for our kids to be successful, to stay home here, contribute to our province, and contribute to our economy.

So, it's a pretty easy bill. It just provides the government to be open and transparent on what, where, when, and how they spend their money, and how they dole money out to our universities. It allows the government to live up to the promise of being the most open and transparent government. It allows the government to live up to the promise of being the most open and transparent government. It allows the government not to have to face this scrutiny down the road. Four, five, six, seven, eight years later, when maybe we're not here, and it might start happening again. It's a simple bill, Mr. Speaker, it's something that we can all get behind, I'm sure it wouldn't take much for everybody in the Chamber to realize that this is something that we all would like to live up to. We do it in our own personal lives, why can't we do it in our public lives?

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to consider this bill. I know it's tough when we hear good ideas from this side of the House, to allow that to happen. We just had a conversation about an excellent bill, an emotional speech from one of our members that's lived this, everyone in this Chamber has lived this in one way or another. We've all gone to university and had to pay, or we all have kids that went to university and had to pay, and we as taxpayers would like to know that our money is not going into areas that are playing unfair ball.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this go through to the next session, to the next reading. I'd like to hear the comments from the members opposite, and the member from the other Party, and if it would so to be, go to Law Amendments Committee and see what the Law Amendments Committee people think if that's the case. With those few words, I will take my seat.

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

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to speak to this Private Member's Bill, introduced by the member for Northside-Westmount. As this House knows, the improvement of all aspects at all levels of the Nova Scotia education system are of the

highest priority to this government, and as evidenced by our activity, we view it as a process of continuous improvement. Therefore, we on this side of the House, and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, have given serious consideration to the member's proposal.

This government has made great advances in strengthening the financial position of Nova Scotia. We've delivered three consecutive budgets, balanced budgets. Our employment set record levels, our nominal and real GDP continues to grow. The result, Mr. Speaker, is a positive and sustained impact on the economic and social well-being of our people, and of our province. Under the leadership of this Premier, of this Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and of this Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, this government will continue to invest in and to enhance the outstanding advanced education institutions of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, there is a reason that Nova Scotia is considered the advanced education destination of Canada. With 10 universities, and our extensive community college system, you can find diverse post-secondary options in all corners of this province. Now, higher education in Nova Scotia refers to education provided by institutions of higher learning, our colleges, and our universities. In Canada, education is the responsibility of the provinces, there is no federal Canadian ministry governing education. In Nova Scotia, the universities fall under the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Nova Scotia has a population of less than one million people, but it is home to 10 public universities, and the renowned Nova Scotia Community College, which is also offering programs at 13 locations around the province. It's a richness of educational opportunities, of advanced educational opportunities. Six of these universities - the Atlantic School of Theology, Dalhousie University, Mount St. Vincent University, NSCAD, Saint Mary's University, and the University of Kings College - are located in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The others though, are representing vast regions across the expanse of Nova Scotia.

The oldest university in the province, is the University of Kings College, established in 1789 - applause is always accepted. The newest university is Cape Breton University, established in 1974. Doesn't prompt any applause at all, does it? Several universities in Nova Scotia have strong religious connections. The University of Kings College first founded in Windsor holds the distinction of being the first college with university powers in all of British North America, at a time when Upper Canada - now known as Ontario - had no government of its own and the University of Kings College has always remained under the control of the Church of England.

Dalhousie University, my alma mater, was first known as Dartmouth College. It was established in Halifax in 1820 with the help of the Presbyterian Church. Acadia University was founded by Baptists. Roman Catholics formed Saint Mary's University,

Saint Francis Xavier University, and Mount Saint Vincent - the Motherhouse, the Mother University.

I'll take a moment just to briefly review some of those schools before I come back to the matter at hand. Acadia, as we know, has an outstanding reputation as a leading liberal arts institution, blending tradition with innovation, excellence with a strong community spirit. At Acadia education is more than books and studying, it's about discovering who you are. When you determine your path to success, Acadia University is noted for helping you to achieve it.

Cape Breton University, whether students are looking for undergraduate, graduate, online or pre-professional programs, students will find a range of diverse educational opportunities at Cape Breton University - or as we know it, CBU. Choosing from fascinating courses in liberal arts, business, science and technology, education or health and wellness, students can study everything from ethnomusicology to economics, engineering to English and much more. At CBU, students have an ample opportunity to get to know their profs who will challenge them to problem solve creatively, think critically and communicate effectively. Students will see the world in a different way and learn from top experts and scholars.

Cape Breton University students rate the quality of student faculty interaction as tops in Canada, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement. The Nova Scotia students make up about 60 per cent of CBU's enrolment and international students make up about 30 per cent - I guess that leaves mainlanders at 10 per cent.

CBU is considered Atlantic Canada's leader in Aboriginal post-secondary education with the highest percentage of Aboriginal student enrolment of any institution in this region. It balances exceptional academic programs with work, study, co-op programs in many disciplines, excellent academic and international support services and more than 70 student societies.

Dalhousie University blends excellence in the academics with world-class research and innovation. Established 200 years ago this year, Dalhousie is one of North America's oldest and most welcoming universities with campuses in Halifax and Truro. Dalhousie offers more than 180 programs at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels. It is a leading research university in fields like ocean studies, health and wellness, clean technology, governance, society and culture and much more.

Dalhousie's professors are strong mentors who challenge and inspire their students. It has a thriving and dynamic community with a rich tradition of leadership and community service. Over 450 clubs and societies are available, in addition to volunteerism, on-campus employment and leadership development programs.

Mount Saint Vincent University, the university on Bedford Basin, which has a diverse mix now of 4,000 women and men from across Canada and more than 50 countries taking advantage of the Mount's programs and unique sense of community. Located, as we know, just minutes from downtown Halifax, the Mount's campus offers the benefits of a country-like setting with proximity to city amenities.

The Mount is committed to fostering socially responsible, global citizens. They want students to aim to achieve high personal goals and to take what they learn and go forward and make a difference in the world.

The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, NSCAD, where tradition meets innovation, the university of choice for emerging, creative professionals. Founded in 1887, NSCAD is an extraordinary art institution where imaginative minds are free to explore, question, and create. NSCAD's rich history is complemented by its latest innovations, including its unique Port Campus, which in its own self is a stunning architectural achievement.

[4:00 p.m.]

Saint Mary's University, with an approach to learning involving the nurturing of each student's potential in a small and close-knit, yet international environment, was established in 1802 and located in the heart of Halifax. It is sometimes known as the world within one city block. The Sobey School of Business at SMU is the largest business school in the Atlantic Region, with a full range of business programs. It is internationally recognized with a prestigious AACSB Accreditation. Saint Mary's offers a truly international campus, with more than a quarter of its students coming from 106 countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with discussions of St. Frances Xavier, St. F.X. I'm sure some people would like that more than others (Interruption) Okay, I'll say a few words about St. F.X.

Students come to St. Francis Xavier University to lay the groundwork for their future. They leave ready to challenge to the world. St. F.X. is known for the quality of its teaching, class sizes, student-faculty interaction, research, community leadership, and a reputation amongst employers.

Université Sainte-Anne, the pride of Church Point, is the only French post-secondary institution in Nova Scotia. Celebrating its 125th Anniversary in 2015, the university was recognized as an essential institution of the Acadian and francophone population of Nova Scotia. Headquartered in Church Point, but with five campuses across Nova Scotia, students can choose to study on or off campus, through distance education. They can immerse themselves in Acadian and French culture, and the university's French immersion program is recognized as one of the best in North America.

Mr. Speaker, returning to the point at hand, in Nova Scotia universities are autonomous entities, incorporated under legislative Acts. Our higher education institutions have a common bicameral model of institutional governance, including a corporate board of governors responsible for the institution's financial and administrative matters and a senate with responsibilities for academic matters. The specific composition and authority of these two bodies is specified in their individual institutional charters.

As we have heard, the member opposite has introduced a private member's bill to amend Bill No. 100, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act. The proposed amendment would require the minister to publicly announce decisions made respecting grants and loans made by the government to a university. For the benefit of the members, I'll remind them that Bill No. 100, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act, was introduced by the previous Minister of Labour and Advanced Education on April 22, 2015, receiving Royal Assent on May 11th of that same year. The minister said at that time that the province was well aware that the funding and reporting models at the time were inadequate, and that's why Bill No. 100 was passed - to require more accountability and to ensure the likelihood of long-term sustainability.

The Act was aimed at creating an early warning system by requiring the submission of financial reports and updated forecasts each year. It also gave the government power to withhold grants and set conditions for grants when schools get into financial trouble. Department officials at the time told the Auditor General's Office that the new Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act would lead to a new level of financial accountability. Mr. Speaker, that has been proven correct. These universities are providing us with more accountability, and these universities have greater security in their sustainability due to the Act. The Act has worked.

Mr. Speaker, let me state that it is a governing tenet of the utmost primacy that this government is committed to public accountability, and it does operate all its functions in an open and transparent manner. But I must raise some serious concerns about the proposed bill, as brought forward by the member opposite. To announce that the minister shall publicly announce any decisions made respecting government grants to universities. The proposed amendment would require that any granting to the universities must be publicly announced. This would include any emergency funds provided to universities.

Any funding provided to universities for operating or capital purposes are already publicly announced through the budget being tabled, and through the various forecasting and Estimate processes. Universities will not be in favour of this amendment if it includes emergency funding, as the universities requesting such emergency assistance would obviously already be in a precarious financial position regarding sustainability, and a public announcement may result in brand damage, further weakening their precarious position.

With regard to announcing any loans or guarantees made to any university in the province, this information is already publicly available. We will not support further

damaging the reputation of a university as it works to re-establish long-term sustainability. Thank you for the attention of this House and I will take my seat.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to rise to speak to Bill No. 94 today. A key feature of democratic government is being accountable to the public. In order to have that accountability and maintain public trust, the public must know what the government is doing on their behalf with their money.

This NDP caucus has pushed for greater transparency from this government. We've put forward proposals to require more ongoing public reporting by the Nova Scotia Health Authority. We have said that the Nova Scotia Health Authority should meet in public and publish agendas and minutes, so this information is available to all Nova Scotians and not done behind closed doors. We put forward amendments to require the new Public Advisory Committee on Education to hold public meetings, and despite their repeated affirmations of their commitment to transparency, this government has refused to take any of these steps. I have to say, this does not build public trust.

Details came out just this week of David Dingwall's contract to be president of Cape Breton University. It turns out, we find out, that he'll be getting up to \$310,000 in annual payments, and thousands more in one-time payments, and the memorandum of understanding that the minister negotiates with universities is what allows for these huge compensation deals.

In addition to the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year that will be coming out of students' pockets to go into David Dingwall's pocket, students will also have to pay Mr. Dingwall's full salary for a full year after he's stopped working. I worked it out and that is about nine years' salary for a regular, ordinary Nova Scotian. That's in one year. Meanwhile, our students are eating out of food banks and working on two or three minimum wage jobs just to be able to try and afford to pay their tuition.

Well, that's just simply not appropriate, especially when our students are struggling. This is a practice, actually, that the current Minister of Community Services called "unacceptable" a year and a half ago when she was Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. At the time, when she was Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, she actually vowed to stop that behaviour. Yet here we are, and nothing's changed.

The government has a responsibility to make universities accountable for these extraordinarily costly administrative salaries and benefits. Especially in this day and age when so many Nova Scotians are struggling. Publicly-funded institutions must be

transparent and accountable for the ways in which they operate. I would say that is only fair.

Nova Scotia had the highest increase in undergraduate tuition fees in Canada last year - the highest, while students in Newfoundland and Labrador are paying less than \$3,000 a year in tuition, students in Nova Scotia are out of pocket almost \$7,000. That's more than double what the Newfoundland students have to pay.

The public has a right to know how money is being given to universities, and they have a right to know how the universities are making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible to our young people, because I would say that taking a look at all of this, it's not. In fact, just very recently, I introduced a bill for the NDP on behalf of my colleagues that would make Nova Scotia Community College tuition free in Nova Scotia. That would cost only approximately \$30 million, Mr. Speaker.

Now when the NDP was in government before, we had a graduate retention rebate program which helped students pay for their tuition. We paid half of college tuition - half of university tuition - if they stayed in the province. That program cost \$50 million.

When the Liberals came in, they canned that program and they have not replaced it with anything comparable. So \$30 million to pay for post-secondary education for every student in Nova Scotia who wants to attend the Nova Scotia Community College would be a big step forward, I would say, and would be a big help to the millennials of our province.

The other item we were trying to help the students with recently was that we introduced a bill recently about sexual violence on campus. Actually, I received a letter from the Canadian Federation of Students on March 26th. It was to the Minister, Labi Kousoulis - sorry, to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The member would know she is not allowed to refer to the members by name.

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

MS. ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I did catch that, sorry about that. Anyway, the letter says to the minister, "We, the Provincial Executive of the Canadian Federation of Students Nova Scotia (CFS-NS), are writing this open letter to condemn your government's response to our outspoken support for sexual violence legislation in Nova Scotia. We stand with the survivors of sexualized violence and will not be silenced in our advocacy."

They say on International Women's Day I and the NDP "... introduced The Safer Universities and Colleges Act in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly" and that this marked the third time since 2015 that our bill had actually been introduced, Mr. Speaker.

However, the bill has never been moved forward, due to lack of support from the Liberal Party. They say on March 15th *The Coast* published an op-ed written by their chairperson, Aidan McNally, “Liberals pay lip service to feminism while failing survivors on campus, again.” I have that document, Mr. Speaker, which I can table.

This article “. . . expressed students’ outrage at the government’s ongoing refusal to answer students’ and survivors’ calls to pass legislation to combat sexual violence on campus.” Mr. Speaker, this is a very important, vital issue that we cannot ignore.

However, the bill has never been moved forward, due to lack of support from the Liberal Party. They say on March 15th *The Coast* published an op-ed written by their chairperson, Aidan McNally, “Liberals pay lip service to feminism while failing survivors on campus again.” I have that document, Mr. Speaker, which I can table.

This article expressed students’ outrage at the government’s ongoing refusal to answer students’ and survivors’ calls to pass legislation to combat sexual violence on campus. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important, vital issue that we cannot ignore.

After this publication, in the days following, apparently, there have been numerous repercussions for these students and these advocates for students. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education immediately cancelled their scheduled meeting with the department. The department stated they were unhappy with the op-ed, and that there would be consequences.

The last I looked, we lived in Canada, not the United States, and we don’t have some emperor with no clothes on, trying to tell us that we can’t say anything that we want. We have freedom of speech in this country, and I would say that these students are being intimidated into silence.

Apparently, the next day after that, they were told that a meeting with the Liberal Caucus that was to happen as part of their provincial lobby week would not be scheduled. Then, finally, on Friday, March 23rd, they were again contacted by the department staff and informed that neither their chairperson nor members of the CFSNS staff would be permitted in meetings with the department.

They’re being banned from meetings with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education? This is ridiculous.

What kind of lesson are we trying to teach our students and the millennials of Nova Scotia? That freedom of speech is to be punished? That freedom of speech is to be disallowed in Nova Scotia? This is hardly the kind of calling card that Nova Scotia needs to attract young people to our province and keep them here.

[4:15 p.m.]

As the Critic for Labour and Advanced Education, I have to say that I am shocked and appalled. I would certainly want to see the minister address this immediately and send a letter of apology to the Canadian Federation of Students, and immediately make some arrangements for them to meet with the department and whomever else they want to meet with.

For every dollar that we would invest in eliminating tuition at the Nova Scotia Community College, we would see a return of \$7.20. What is the return on investment for the \$310,000 annually being paid to Mr. Dingwall, I would like to ask? Could somebody please give us those numbers? I would love to see those.

If the government seriously wants to build public trust, and if they want to uphold democratic principles like freedom of speech, then they need to be accountable to the people they serve: the people of Nova Scotia, the students of Nova Scotia, and the millennials who are the future of our province. They deserve investment. They deserve to be heard. They deserve to be able to speak their minds freely and clearly. They deserve to be able to come out of post-secondary education, if they can afford to go in the first place, not drowning in debt.

In conclusion, the spending of public money should be open to public scrutiny and the government should be able to make the case for how these expenses actually advance the public good. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take this opportunity to speak for a few minutes on Bill No. 94, an Act to Amend Chapter 11 of the Acts of 2015, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.

We are very rich and blessed to have so many great post-secondary schools in Nova Scotia. As the member for Chester-St. Margaret's mentioned earlier, for a province with a population of less than one million people, we are so fortunate that our students have so many choices to further their post-secondary education. As the member mentioned earlier, we have 10 public universities and about 13 locations for Nova Scotia Community College campuses.

To be accountable and gain public trust is the underlying theme of this particular bill. Transparency in aspects of government funding of university is lacking. We need clear, direct explanations about where public money is being spent on campuses.

Explanations need to be upfront, not months or years after the fact, and not on the fly when secret funding decisions are caught by the media or the Opposition. It is not enough to say that it won't happen again.

The Act makes clear that outcome agreements link institutional sustainability to the significant investment of public funding. Clarity around this relationship should be legislated and not backed by verbal assurances of the minister of the day.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are troubled by recent revelations surrounding university funding. A previous government authorized a Strategic Opportunities Fund Incorporated loan to Acadia University that was used for operating expenses rather than the intended use, for infrastructure expenses. Acadia's operating grant was also increased by \$3.5 million over several years, outside of the public university funding agreements and considered emergency funding.

Mr. Speaker, funding was characterized as a bailout in the media; all \$24.5 million was forgiven by this Liberal Government. The bailout included the SOFI loan balance. No other universities were granted forgiveness of such a loan.

Earlier this year we learned that still more money was granted to Acadia without full disclosure. A previous government characterized a loan to renovate a residence as Labour and Advanced Education funding when, in fact, the funds were drawn from Housing Nova Scotia's budget under the Department of Community Services. It was the only such instance of affordable housing funding being directed to renovate university housing.

Mr. Speaker, Acadia repaid the loan in 2017, but the department and this Liberal Government have yet to offer a full explanation of the funding discrepancy. This string of unclear, poorly-explained funding decisions should not be happening, should not be tolerated where taxpayer funds are concerned. The lax approach to university funding clarity risks eroding the trust of crucial public institutions; it risks confusing accounting situations for current and future governments; and it could potentially damage the important, long-term development and innovation roles that universities play in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the department should not resist upfront transparency and scrutiny when it comes to grants and loans to universities. This is an essential, common-sense piece of good governance. There is no reason that a government so committed to openness and transparency should resist this bill. Explanations given around the SOFI loan to Acadia were contradictory and consistently unclear.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has deflected all blame to the previous government, but we have no legislative assurance that this won't happen again - this bill aims to fix that oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping the government will examine this bill, approach it in a reasonable manner, because it is a very important bill, a great step in the right direction to ensure government funding of universities is always transparent.

Following an examination of this bill, it is our expectation that the government will send it to Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes our debate on Bill No. 94.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 1.

Bill No. 1 - Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Appreciation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: It's always great to stand in my place and have a few moments to speak, in particular to be able to move second reading of Bill No. 1, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Appreciation Act.

What I would like to begin with is to provide a little bit of history on how the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Maritimes evolved and the reason for introducing this bill.

With hundreds of thousands of miles of coastline around Canada and a limited number of government search and rescue facilities, there has been a steady reliance upon volunteer services to assist those in distress at sea. Often, in the past, those coordinating a search wasted valuable time attempting to contact willing volunteers who were properly equipped or knowledgeable to assist in search and rescue, also known as SAR.

No mechanism was available to compensate these volunteers for expended fuel and wear and tear to their vehicles or vessels, or to basically insure their boats while rendering assistance to others on the sea. To address some of these shortcomings, in 1978 concerned mariners in various parts of Canada met with the Canadian Coast Guard and agreed to form themselves into five associations, one in each Coast Guard region. Each association, or Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, then signed a contract in the Fall of that year, with the CCG Maritime signing in December.

This concept of an independent corporate body, with a contract to provide search and rescue services, allows the Canadian Coast Guard to provide training, insurance, and compensation to CMRA members without losing their volunteer status. Auxiliary members are not government employees and are under no more compulsion than any other vessel

owner to assist in search and rescue as required under the Canadian Shipping Act. But, because of their participation in the CMRA, details such as names, phone numbers, types of vessels, and locations are readily available to the research centre.

This, Mr. Speaker, greatly reduces response times to CAR incidents in areas far removed from other rescue sources, at a cost far below that of deploying a full-time SAR vessel and crew at the many locations served by the CMRA. With the signing of the contract among the CMRA Maritimes and the Coast Guard in December 1978, the newly incorporated auxiliary, often referred to informally as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, existed only on paper. Times have changed, and these local groups, now called units, are made up of fishers and/or yachtsmen from one or more local communities, who organize themselves in areas for volunteer rescue work with their own vessels. They choose a leader, and they go into SAR training, first aid courses, and exercises, and then decide on how to best put themselves at the disposal of the rescue centre.

[4:30 p.m.]

In May 1983, Mr. Charles Clarke of Pictou was the president and, by this time, the auxiliary embraced 25 units operating out of 50 fishing wharves, marinas, yacht clubs, and private docks around the Maritimes. So, over 200 fishers and yachtsmen actively assisted, providing SAR coverage for their fellow mariners in distress. In that season, Mr. Speaker, the auxiliary was composed of 68 per cent fishers and 32 per cent pleasure boaters, and they responded to 160 calls for assistance from people on the water. A number of these were credited to the CMR for having saved lives in those distress situations.

By the Spring of 1984, the auxiliaries' numbers had expanded to over 300 with over 40 units sailing out of more than 60 wharves. A committee of unit leaders was formed, and their recommendations approved to divide the region into approximately 15 zones, enabling improved membership representation on the board as well. By the end of 1984, the membership in the Maritime region increased to over 450, with 359 vessels based at 98 different wharves in the province. Of those, 81 per cent are fishing vessels, reflecting the characteristics of the mariners around the coastal waters of the Maritime Provinces.

The prevention program was greatly enhanced and in 1997, the first full-time employee position was created. Funding was applied for and received under the new SAR initiative program for SAR equipment of which first-aid kits, strobe lights, floater suits, and SAR pumps were received. A business plan was created and implemented putting project managers in charge of different aspects of the auxiliary. The Canadian Coast Guard, also known as the CCGAM, is a non-profit organization, and is a registered charity made up of approximately 800 volunteers and 462 privately-owned vessels throughout New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and it provides assistance to the Canadian Coast Guard and National Defence with search and rescue and safe-boating programs.

The Canadian Coast Guard's auxiliary is an organization that is dedicated to on-water search and rescue and safe boating activities. Their mission is to provide permanent day and night search and rescue services to cover marine requirements in the Maritime region, and prevent the loss of life and injury. Their mission statement is simple, Mr. Speaker: Save 100 per cent of lives at risk, reduce the number and severity of SAR incidents, promote marine safety, support the Canadian Coast Guard, provide a humanitarian service, maintain the highest professional standards, promote dedication and pride in membership.

Like many volunteer organizations, CCGAM is experiencing difficulty in retaining new volunteers and attracting. This is in part due to an aging population of vessel owners in rural communities, and a shift of the younger demographics moving to major urban cities. Although another major challenge in the recruitment and retention of volunteers is the time pressures that are put on families today. Both parents are working, commuting further for employment and any effort to balance time between work, home, and volunteering is most difficult. With any volunteer organization, there is not a simple solution to the issue of recruiting and retaining volunteers. However, with our help, they might have a better chance of overcoming this issue.

The bill would enable the CCGAM members in Nova Scotia to receive free vehicle registration as a tool to attract and retain volunteers on water search and rescue and any financial incentive volunteers may receive would be most helpful to them. They alone, are not the reasons volunteers join the CCGAM, but a volunteer sometimes wants to join to just support the overall general mission, to give back to their community, for the social aspect of it, and the feeling of appreciation of the work they do, and the interest they have in our waterways and saving lives.

The Province of Prince Edward Island implemented this program with strict guidelines to its members, and has had great success recruiting members, and New Brunswick has followed suit as well. The number of volunteers that would receive free vehicle registration in Nova Scotia is approximately 125 people, and an approximate cost would be about \$27,000. What I would like to add is that when Swissair Flight 111 happened, that was the first rescue resource to approach this horrific crash. They were there first on site with all their volunteers, and these units were mostly privately-owned fishing vessels that actually departed from Peggy's Cove, Bayswater, and other harbours along the St. Margaret's Bay. We should be very proud of them. We should thank them. As we know, not long after, they were obviously joined by dedicated Canadian Coast Guard vessels.

We can never underestimate the value these male and female volunteers play in our communities. My hope is that we never, ever take these brave men and women for granted, and that we never lose sight of the risks and sacrifices that these volunteers make on a daily basis. This bill would simply serve as a token of appreciation for the great work that they do and would align themselves with those who are firefighters and those who work with search and rescue.

As you can well imagine, it is a huge commitment. Supporting our local CCGA members in any way we can is the least we can do to give thanks and recognition for all that they do to keep our communities safe.

At this time, I want to personally thank the members for allowing me to enjoy many water activities with my friends and family. I want to thank them for answering the call in the middle of the night, in the middle of supper, in the middle of playing with their own children, or whatever they are doing, to help us.

Before having the privilege to be MLA for Pictou West, I was on the water a lot. My grandfather was a fisher. I was at one time an avid kayaker - haven't been for five years. We grew up on the beach, and I think many members in the Chamber have. We are surrounded by water.

The last time I spoke on this bill, the first time I introduced it, it was amazingly accepted by the other members in this Chamber. I know, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, that you took to your place and had a lot of favourable comments and support towards this bill. I want to thank you for that. I want to thank the past member for Queens-Shelburne, Sterling Belliveau - I can say Sterling Belliveau because he's the past member. Sterling was amazing. He was very aware of the need for such a bill and spoke very well in support of this bill. My colleague to the left of me also spoke very much in favour of this bill and sees a great need for it.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby also stood in his place and supported the bill. Actually, it was disappointing that, when he did stand in his place, he ran out of time. He was in the middle of telling one of the most interesting stories about him and his son and friends who were actually caught in a miserable storm, I believe. I can't remember all the details, but I remember wanting to hear the rest of the details, and his time was up. I know that afterwards he mentioned that he was quite frightened with his son and his friends. If it wasn't for volunteers and the Canadian Coast Guard coming out - many of the vessels that were participating in a race that day with the member had to be rescued. The member obviously arrived safely to land, but I'm not sure of all the details in getting from 100 miles, I believe he was, off land and arriving back home safely with his son. I'm glad that he arrived home safely.

I know there is a financial attachment to this bill. Like I said, two years ago, we did the numbers, and it was about \$27,000. Because of Nova Scotians being so great and kind and assisting in their communities, I'm most certain that the volunteers have increased, and it probably has gone up a bit. Given inflation, it's probably gone up to about \$32,000 or \$33,000, but it definitely is something that is needed.

It's something that I think all of us in this Chamber could be proud of and could leave behind as a legacy of knowing that we are surrounded by water and we look forward to everyone playing safe on our playground which is the ocean.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I rise in my place today to speak on this bill. Unfortunately, we are not going to hear the end of the story from the member for Clare-Digby. The member for Pictou West and the member of the Official Opposition is right. She is right that this is an important thing for us to do to show the support for our Coast Guard Auxiliary.

It's a great idea. After the member for Pictou West first introduced the bill, I approached her, and we had some conversations in the Legislature and offline about how to proceed with this and how to honour our Coast Guard Auxiliary. We have the "mayor of Sambro," we call him - Paddy Gray - who is part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Sambro. Paddy Gray - I think a few members here are shaking their heads because they've heard of him or run into him or definitely heard from him. Paddy has lived his entire life on the ocean. He'll get mad at me for saying this, but he's getting up there in age and he's still out there. Not only is he making a living lobster fishing and halibut fishing, he's also now part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. He really is the person to go to in Sambro when there's issues on the government wharf, when there's issues with the fishermen.

The truth is, this is something that is extremely important and has been brought forward to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and we are more than willing to move this forward. But this is regulation change, so this is what it's all about. My conversation with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has been that this is something that can be done outside of legislation, like they've done for the volunteer fire department. They're definitely working on it, and my understanding is it's in the final phases before it gets done. I don't know what the holdup is, but I'll gladly speak to the member for Pictou West and we can work together to figure this out.

I think it really is something important for those of us who live in an ocean community. You talked about Swissair - I had some friends who were part of the Coast Guard, part of the military, and part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary who responded to that, and how quickly they would respond. The Coast Guard Auxiliary would respond to such a disaster like the Swissair, and then to see all these years later how it's impacted their lives and how they've been unable to get past - and truthfully, they have PTSD from those situations. But at the time they don't think about it. They rush in.

A licence plate and a waiver of fee is the least we could do for these individuals. This is already in motion and, as I said, the appropriate approach would be through regulation changes. I would say we could have a conversation, but the conversation also needs to go to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to see where we're at on this process. They are working to include the development and approval of a Nova Scotia Coast Guard Auxiliary licence plate and registration waiver, similar to - which I said earlier - the volunteer fire department. The volunteer fire department was accomplished

through regulation, not legislation. I'm pleased to affirm that we're going through that process.

As for the Coast Guard, I would like just to do a little bit of history, and then there's something I would like to say at the end, because this year marks the 30-year anniversary of the *Bonnie Lou II* that went down and devastated the community of Sambro. When I finish this, I would like to finish it off with something that, before each and every time we go out, the men and women go out on the shore, what they say.

As most people know - a little bit of history around the Coast Guard. It was formed in 1962. It was tasked with marine search and rescue, communications and traffic control, and navigation and transportation issues in Canadian waters. If you've never been down to a government wharf and seen the impact the Coast Guard has and the respect that our fisher people have for our Canadian Coast Guard - it's something to behold.

As someone who grew up in a fishing village, sometimes we can be a little rough around the edges. I'm sure people in this Legislature have experienced that. When it comes to the respect and the decency that they show toward the Coast Guard, it really is second to none.

Their responsibilities include navigational aid, icebreaking, marine pollution response, and support to other government agencies. It is important to note that the Coast Guard is the primary marine component of the Canadian Search and Rescue, which is under the control of the Minister of National Defence.

I also would like to note that the support we recently received with the CCGS *Pennant Bay* was just delivered about three months ago to the community of Sambro and I was honoured to be on board.

[4:45 p.m.]

I will admit that I have tried to fish in the past, I didn't have my sea legs. (Interruption) That's right, that's right. I did bait trawl, you know we used to bait trawl as a kid. (Interruption) What's that?

AN HON. MEMBER: You were a bad greenhorn.

MR. MAGUIRE: I was bad greenhorn, that's for sure.

Talking to fisher people, it really is something they say is in their blood, but it is also something that you need to get used to. The amount of support that they show each other - and I know I'm cutting all over the place on this, but there are a lot of people who have had an important role in my life who come from that industry but, also, they proudly support our community, and they support other communities.

I think of the *Miss Ally*, when the *Miss Ally* happened, the community of Sambro - it was one of the first times that I had ever seen a community come together like that. They raised thousands and thousands of dollars for people's families that they didn't even know, but they all felt like they were their own brothers and sisters. They needed to make sure that those families were supported, and they knew that - I mean, the truth is, they're not in control. When they are out there on the ocean, they're not in control, and that's why it's important. That's why it's important that we support our Coast Guard and our Coast Guard Auxiliary, not just financially, but show them that we support them - no, we respect them.

We emotionally support them, these aren't easy jobs and we see someone like Paddy Gray, who goes out there and makes a living on the ocean, I think, like we come into this Legislature, we do our job, we go home, but when it comes to our fisher people, they go out onto the ocean, they put their lives at risk, and then for someone like Paddy to come home, and say you know what, I'm also going to be in the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and I'm going to go back out onto the water. I'm going to go back out onto the water during some of the most dangerous times - that says a lot about their character, and I think a licence plate and a waiver of fee is the least we can do for these individuals, it really is.

You know, there was always something in the back of my mind like, what could we do - what could we do for the Coast Guard Auxiliary and for the Coast Guard? And it really was the member for Pictou West who kind of rang that bell. When she stood up and she said, you know, it's a licence plate. It might not mean much to me or you, but it means a lot to them.

There was a gentleman I actually spoke to from the Pictou West member's community, and he really got the ball rolling on this stuff. I know one of the lessons that I've learned since I've done this job is that things can move very slowly, but I know that the former Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, this was something that I had long discussions with him about, and he recognized the importance of this, and the current Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I suspect that we'll see this relatively soon.

I hope, I really do hope, that this is a non-partisan thing, where the member for Pictou West can stand there with someone from the government side, and they can stand there with someone from the NDP side, and they can say, this is what happens. This is what happens when we work together, this is what happens when we put our beliefs aside, our goals and our ambitions, we put it aside and we do what's right for individuals in Nova Scotia - I think this is going to be a perfect example of that.

I'll be the first one to say to the people of Sambro, and Paddy Gray, even though he calls me every couple of days asking about these licence plates, I'm not even joking, but I'll be the first to say, you need to make a phone call to the member opposite, and then he'll have her phone number, and she'll get upset because he'll call her every day.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to recognize not just the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Coast Guard, but I also want to recognize everybody who goes out on the water, everybody who puts their life at risk. I think most people love halibut, haddock, lobster, and scallops - oh, I'm getting hungry now - but I don't think most people stop to realize what it takes to get them. I don't think most people realize when we're sitting at home and there's a storm, or there are high winds, and we decide that I'm going to drive down to the look-off in Herring Cove and take a look at the waves coming in because they are beautiful. You don't realize that there are men and women out on the ocean, putting their lives at risk to feed their families and to feed our families, so I have a deep appreciation for the risks to which they put themselves. It's very difficult now to attract youth into that industry.

A couple of years ago Mr. Henneberry passed away at the young age of 101 and, up until the year he died, at age 100, he was still out spearing swordfish. That is the kind of dedication that the people in Sambro and the people in all our fishing communities have to this great industry. It really is like a collective - we need them, they need us, but we also need to make sure that our Coast Guard Auxiliary are firmly supported.

Like I said earlier, I wanted to end with 30 years ago when the *Bonnie Lou II* disaster rocked the community of Sambro. If you allow me, I want to repeat what our community says. It says, "A boat she left Sambro with a captain and crew to fish east of Sable, she was the Bonnie Lou II. The boat she was old and the men they were new. We're trying to make a living aboard the Bonnie Lou II. The seas they were rough, the men they knew what to do. We'll wait out the storm on the Bonnie Lou II. On Tuesday evening the waves they were high. They worked around the hour on the sea to survive. If only they knew what they had to go through, watching and waiting aboard the Bonnie Lou II. Next day on the ocean a boat it did call. There wasn't an answer, only strings of the trawl. The boat it was missing the captain crew, searching and watching for the Bonnie Lou II."

I'm going to keep going. It's not a poem; it's a song. I've been cut off, that's fine. Mr. Speaker, those brave men lost their lives that day. They lost their lives doing what they loved, they lost their lives supporting their families. That is something that in our time of need, in those brave men and women's time of need - let's be honest, it is not an easy job; most men and women I know who fish for a living are strong, not just in body but in mind - when they need help, we need to make sure that the people who go out to help them in the worst of weather, when some of the bravest people you will ever meet need it the most, they are supported. I think the member for Pictou West and the member for Clare-Digby and Sterling Belliveau - he and I had many conversations on this, being a former fisherman himself - I think this is the right thing to do.

As I said, this isn't a rejection of the idea. It's saying this will not go through legislation; it will be a policy change. I think where we need to direct our focus is the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, get a few timelines, and make sure that this thing goes through.

I want to thank the member for Pictou West and everybody in this Legislature, and I hope everybody supports this because it really is the right thing to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: I look forward to adding some comments to Bill No. 1. I appreciate that whenever we see a piece of legislation dealing with volunteers in this Chamber, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words to hopefully support that initiative.

I want to thank the member for Pictou West, the Interim Leader for the Progressive Conservatives for introducing Bill No. 1, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Appreciation Act. Just by the sheer number of the bill, Bill No. 1, it was the first bill introduced in this Chamber after the last election but it's not the first time we've seen this legislation. The member introduced it I believe in 2016.

I do appreciate the comments from the member opposite, from the government caucus, but I do think that the government has had ample opportunity to digest this legislation. I don't believe there are any significant changes from 2016 to the introduction in the Fall of 2017 to deal with.

I think this is an opportunity for government and for all members of the House to recognize the work of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary unit here in Nova Scotia - and for that matter, across Canada. It is a Maritime unit that is seen across the country. There are regional offices in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. Then of course, the Maritime office has a number of zones around New Brunswick, P.E.I., and Nova Scotia. I believe there are 16 zones that it kind of breaks down to, where they go out and encourage residents to be volunteers and join the auxiliary.

As I said, this is not new to government. This is something that has been talked about for some time. I believe the Premier has indicated some support for this.

I know that, as the member indicated, this can be addressed through regulations. But regulations are very much behind the scenes. It's in some office here in Halifax or wherever. It's an opportunity to change a policy. You do it, it's done, and you move forward.

Yes, I would agree that you can do this in regulations. By doing it in legislation, it really elevates it to the status of where I think it should be. That is to recognize the men and women who currently belong to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary but also to encourage Nova Scotians to maybe look at joining the auxiliary. I know that would be very much welcomed by those who currently participate in the auxiliary.

You just go to their web site. They have a vision, they have a mission, and they have values. Some of the vision, for example, is striving to save all lives at risk, educating water users about safe practices, and sustaining a Canada-wide service in partnership with the Canadian Coast Guard and other agencies.

That is why I think legislation is acceptable and warranted in this circumstance. I would hope that the government would reconsider just doing this in regulation if that is actually the end result.

We would welcome that. I'm sure the member for Pictou West would welcome that. But that is done behind closed doors. I don't think it gives the recognition that is due to the men and women who actually provide the service now, Mr. Speaker.

Volunteerism is so important. It's crucial for government to have volunteers in our province. If it's the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, fire service, police service, or the service groups that we all have in our community, the government cannot provide every service without support. I realized that many, many years ago. We depend heavily on volunteer services in this province to make sure that people are safe and that people gain access to services. It's no different with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Here is a group of men and women, and as was indicated earlier, most of them make their living on the water which is, in the first place, a very dangerous place. I think the member opposite mentioned that some of them are a little rough around the edges. I would say yes, I've met some who are. I have to say, those who work on the water might be rough around the edges, but most often, they are the salt of the earth. Through my experience, not only from former colleagues of mine but those I have engaged with, that definitely stands true.

I think we need to do everything we can and government needs to do everything it can to promote the volunteer units that we have in this province, to try to attract more residents to say, I can spare a little bit of time. We know the challenges that these organizations have to continue to have active members in their services. It's a broad statement, but it's so true, from seniors' groups to volunteer fire departments to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

It's interesting, they even put up some of the stats on their website, and of course they're a little bit outdated. I think the most recent stats they have are from 2010. Their stats indicate they have over - this is for the Maritime zone, so it includes New Brunswick, P.E.I., and Nova Scotia, and Magdalene Islands - they have over 458 vessels that engage in the Auxiliary. They have a membership of over 772, which is probably different because that's about eight years ago. The total tasks in 2010 were 227, so either a request for assistance from maybe the Coast Guard or emergency services, or whatever it may be, since their inception in 1979, there has been over 6,000 tasks. In 2010, as I said, 227 SAR

incidents that they supported, and not only that, they engage in training exercises. In 2010 they had 73 training exercises.

[5:00 p.m.]

It shows how active they are. I'm sure those numbers are relevant to what they do today. More importantly, I think by passing this legislation, it elevates the opportunity for us as MLAs, as a government, to say thank you to those current members for the work they do. I think it's long overdue.

I would hope the government would look at passing the legislation. It's a clean piece of legislation, it's not too complicated. There is a cost, which I know usually is the red flag for government when you introduce legislation, especially Opposition legislation. If it's going to cost the government money, it normally is, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, we have to evaluate that. But I've heard the figure for this legislation - \$27,000 - I think that's for the free vehicle registration for any member of the auxiliary. In a \$10 billion budget, \$27,000 shouldn't raise too many flags.

I hope the member from the government who just spoke - I respect his position here - but I hope some on the front benches agree with him, especially the member who represents the Treasury Board. It would need to be funded, but I can't see why \$27,000 would hold up passing this legislation. Do the right thing and get the recognition needed for our Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary here, not only in Nova Scotia but in the Maritimes.

When you have volunteers in the province, they often are a huge support system for services but more importantly, during times of crisis and emergencies. I know the member for Pictou West mentioned this one, but I want to mention it also because it's had a lasting effect, not only for first responders, for emergency personnel, but for people who have responded to the emergency.

It will be 20 years on September 2, 1998, where we had the unfortunate crash of Swissair Flight No. 111 that crashed just off Peggy's Cove, about eight kilometres off the coast of Peggy's Cove. That was a flight from New York City to Geneva, Switzerland, and the flight path takes those flights up across Nova Scotia, across Gander, Newfoundland, and then across the Atlantic. They had difficulties, there was smoke in the cabin, and I was working as a paramedic at the time, but I knew people who worked at the airport too. So many people were affected by that. The 229 passengers and crew who died that fateful morning, but so many people who were involved were affected by that.

I think of the air traffic controllers who instructed Flight No. 111. They were pretty close to the airport, but they were full of fuel, and the protocol is not to make an emergency landing with that much fuel. So they were instructed to head out towards Peggy's Cove, head out to the ocean, dump some fuel and then reconfigure into emergency landing at the airport. It was during that process when the flight went down.

We had so many people respond to that emergency at the time, and I recall I wasn't working - it was my shift off, we were working four-on, four-off at the time - and I was working out of Station 11, Millwood Fire Station, I lived just down the street. I remember getting a call from a dispatcher supervisor, who asked me if I would go to Station 11, and get a kit together and be prepared to respond to an emergency because all the units were being dispatched to potential survivors of an aircraft that had crashed. They didn't have all the full details.

Initially - he was a little bit of a prankster at times and I thought, maybe he's just pulling my leg to get me to get up in the middle of the night and go to work to see if I would do it, but you could tell in his voice that there was something serious happening. So I did that, and I spent the night at the station, ready to respond with the fire apparatus to any medical calls, and of course, I ended up finding out that there were no survivors.

There were so many who jumped into action during that incident, Mr. Speaker, and many of them, as the member for Pictou West indicated, were those who owned fishing boats - small crafts - and they went out to look for survivors. I'm just glad I wasn't participating in that part of it. That was probably part of the hardest recovery mission, I think that we've had in Nova Scotia, where people were not finding individuals, but they were finding body parts floating in the water. I know it's graphic, but that's what happened then. Many of them started to work with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and we still, to this day, call on them. I know many of the first responders, many of them who responded that night are still feeling the effects 20 years later.

I talk a lot about PTSD and the effects of that, and it doesn't happen overnight. Many of the medics that I know who have an issue today, have it because of that call some 20 years ago. It just shows that I think we need to do whatever we can in this Legislature, to protect those who protect us. I think this piece of legislation, Bill No. 1, would go a long way to just show how much we appreciate the work of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and those other volunteer organizations, and I think it's time we treat them like those other ones. We have a lot of initiatives over the last decade or so that have improved and supported volunteer firefighters, and EMS, and first responders, and I think it's time we should do it for the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

So, I hope the government is genuine in their attempt to get this done. I see no better way to promote this, to make sure that Nova Scotians know how we stand as MLAs, and as a government, in the support of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary here in Nova Scotia, and I hope we see a piece of legislation pass, and Bill No. 1 could be that piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I am very happy today to be able to stand up and speak in favour of this bill, and not only because it's brought forward from my caucus - or my

colleague from Pictou West - but because fundamentally I do think it is a good bill. I do think it is something that we should be looking at, and I do think that when we look at value for dollars, and what the costing-out is, this seems to be something that makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, before we go into this, I do want to say I have a lot of respect for the many volunteer organizations across this province and what they do, what they enable, the monies that are saved because of volunteer organizations. Both from personally having had an opportunity to sit on many, as well as work with many over the years, I can certainly attest to that. When it comes to looking at the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, I think that we could certainly see value for money when we look at what they do, Mr. Speaker.

It's somewhat ironic, when we actually think about emergency response organizations, often our mind goes to the more traditional land-based ones, like St. John's Ambulance, or perhaps search and rescue, local volunteer firefighters, and EMSs. It's not really unless you're involved with nautical events that you actually start to recognize the role the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary actually plays and the huge hole that they fill in helping to assist in marine protection and coastal water safety.

Of course as has been pointed out, this is a non-profit organization. It provides assistance not to just the Canadian Coast Guard but also to National Defence. As was pointed out by my colleague for Pictou West, they have been doing that now since 1979. I did find it interesting that their motto is actually: Saving lives at sea.

When we look at it, daily there are over almost 9,000 commercial fishing boats, thousands of lives along the Nova Scotia coast, all the Canadian coast. It would almost be impossible and especially not cost efficient for the Canadian Coast Guard to look after all the coastline along the eastern coastal waters without the assistance of valuable volunteers such as this. It's a vast territory. This group is essential to ensuring that there's enough coverage available to provide best coverage whenever there are marine emergencies, and in those cases, a lot of times, fast reactions save lives.

I want to point out that many of the auxiliary members are very highly experienced boaters and navigators. They don't just have a passion for boating. They have become involved because they actually have a desire and a passion for helping others.

I do make some connections between the role that our volunteer firefighters play and the role that the CCGA volunteers also play. Volunteers are not paid, of course, for the work they do. They're only reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses when they're involved in an official search and rescue activity. I think the big thing for me is that they utilize and use their own personal vessels, whether those be commercial or recreational. They're responsible for keeping and maintaining those vessels up to a high standard which allows them to be a member of the auxiliary. There's a lot of personal commitment and, in some cases, financial that those volunteers are having to commit to be able to belong to the CCGA.

Not only is the role they play the traditional role of helping out the Coast Guard in rescues and stuff, but they also play a number of other roles as well in addition to search and rescue missions. They provide assistance to National Defence as I said. They conduct courtesy exams of pleasure craft and small fishing vessels. They assist in giving demonstrations on marine safety. They participate in thousands of hours of water and land-based training. They take part in safe boating courses. They help out with displays at boat shows. They're a very involved and committed group of people.

One thing that pops to mind for me is the role they have played over the last couple of years in regard to the Chester Race Week here in Nova Scotia. That's something we traditionally wouldn't think of as a role they would be involved in, but they have been over the last number of years.

As was touched on earlier, I do think when it comes to volunteering, we're starting to get into a bit of a crunch when people are trying to balance home, work, family, and volunteering. It's becoming harder and harder to get volunteers. I think that supporting a bill like the one that's before us now does come out and recognize a little bit what the volunteers are doing.

[5:15 p.m.]

When I was doing some research, I read something I thought was quite interesting. There was an article that I was reading, and it was an interview with one of the volunteers of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. He is a fisher and he was asked what would you do if you were out there in the middle of the ocean and your lines are down and you are in the middle of fishing and all of a sudden you get a distress call. Without hesitation, he turned around and said, I'd drop my lines without hesitation and immediately rush to assist. I think it's that kind of commitment that most of the people who are involved in the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary feel.

I also want to point out that - and I had said earlier around the value of money that we get, I think that the estimates that I showed it actually shows that Canada receives \$37 in volunteer service for every \$1 that is committed to the Coast Guard. They receive \$37, and I think that \$1 to \$37 is a pretty darn good investment in return on money, Mr. Speaker.

Although some people may say well you know traditionally the Coast Guard is more of a federal thing, what I've always said to people is there's only one taxpayer and whether it's federal, provincial, or municipal, all bills come out of that same pocket. So I certainly think that it could be shown that the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary is well worth their value in volunteer services.

I certainly would be somewhat remiss if I did not point out that the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary has been recognized as one of the best, safest, and most cost-efficient organizations in the world by the many national and international awards that they have

won. As was suggested earlier, I do think that this bill does bring us in line with other Maritime Provinces. It doesn't really have a significant impact in the overall budget, so I would certainly hope that members are able to support this.

I do want to say that I thank the member for Halifax Atlantic of course for his supportive discussions, but I do want to echo what the member for Sackville-Cobequid suggested and I do hope that the government not only supports the comments of the member but they'll also support it by supporting the bill as well.

With that, I'll sit down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the intervenors today on these bills. Do you know what? We have two positive bills out of three, so I guess that two out of three ain't bad at all.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes Opposition business for today. I'll turn it back over to the honourable Government House Leader to call further business.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Immigration.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to rise this afternoon to provide some comments and context in reply to the estimates, about what the budget means for the Office of Immigration and Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, portfolios that I am passionate about and proud about our achievements.

First, I'm pleased to highlight the work of the Office of Immigration and to speak about the year ahead. Mr. Speaker, over the years we have continued to welcome more immigrants, international students, and refugees to Nova Scotia. Immigration strengthens

our economy, grows our population, revitalizes our communities and adds to our province's diversity. It is key to building our province and keeping our communities dynamic, vibrant, and strong.

By bringing new people we are bringing new perspectives and ideas, people who will start and grow businesses and create more jobs for all Nova Scotians. These people, immigrants from around the world, are bringing new lifestyles, cultures, and languages to our communities. This is not accidental, Mr. Speaker. Growing our population and our economy through immigration is planned, supported, and invested in by our government.

We have been talking about Nova Scotia being friendly for a long time, and we have come a long way in terms of moving from being friendly to being welcoming. Now we need to think about and talk about how we move to the next level, how we wrap our arms around newcomers as communities, and how we ensure we are inclusive - how together, we can build a stronger Nova Scotia.

Last week, I had the pleasure of hosting the Office of Immigration's partners, stakeholders, and community leaders at the Room to Grow Summit on this very important topic. I can tell you the room was full of people from all across the province. We held this event at Pier 21, the Canadian Museum of Immigration, right here in Halifax. The room was energized, eager, and ready to support the next steps in immigration. We all recognize that we have to keep opening our communities, our homes, and our businesses to newcomers. That is how we grow our economy, and it is how we make Nova Scotia a more diverse, vibrant, and welcoming province.

Over the last four years, Nova Scotia has continued to welcome more immigrants. In the last two years alone, 2016 and 2017, we welcomed 9,998 permanent residents to our province - at least two of whom had babies in their wombs. That's 10,000 and more people to this province as permanent residents, and that does not include all of the international students and all of the people who are here on work permits.

In 2017, Nova Scotia reached its highest number of provincially-supported applications ever, with 1,652 through the Provincial Nominee Program and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot. This is the highest number ever for Nova Scotia. Those 1,652 people came here with their families, and will be coming with their families, because some have not come here yet. It takes time from when the process gets approved, and some of them have to, as we know - I'm a product of that - put their homes together or sell businesses or have their children settled where they are to actually arrive at our shores. But these people are choosing to make this beautiful province their home.

I want to stress that it is so important to focus on the full continuum of the number of all immigration pathways to Nova Scotia. Immigration is making a positive difference to the province. To help our new residents adapt to life in the province, we've invested

more in immigrant settlement services. In fact, funding for immigrant settlement has increased year over year since 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Immigration has the floor. Just for the benefit of all those in the room, there will be Question Period tomorrow.

The honourable Minister of Immigration.

MS. DIAB: In 2017-18, we invested nearly \$6.4 million in newcomer services, including training and employment support. Mr. Speaker, because of the budget, our office will receive a permanent increase of \$600,000 in funding for settlement services. This means we can continue to work with our network of service providers who are among the best in the world, including such things as language training and employment supports. Helping immigrants and their families integrate and become a connected part of the community is integral for our long-term retention.

We know that Nova Scotians, more than ever, see the positive impact of immigration. In Fall 2017, the Office of Immigration conducted omnibus research that tells us that 85 per cent of Nova Scotians believe immigration has a positive impact on our province. This is a huge step forward. A year earlier, in 2016, only 36 per cent of Nova Scotians believed increased immigration was positive.

This research also tells us that two out of three Nova Scotians believe that immigrants increase the number of jobs in the province and strengthen our economy. Nova Scotians are seeing the benefits of immigration on businesses and on the economy. They see that immigration is helping employers fill jobs they have not been able to fill locally, some of them for years. Moving forward, making sure employers have support in navigating the immigration system will continue to be a priority.

We will continue to make a real difference through initiatives such as the Atlantic Immigration Pilot. The pilot provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen our economy and grow our population by recruiting and retaining skilled workers to help address persistent labour gaps across the province.

For 2018 and beyond, we will continue to work together with employers, with our communities, with our partners, to spread the word about the benefits of the Atlantic Immigration pilot, and ensure Nova Scotia fully benefits from it and other immigration opportunities.

Staff from the office have responded to thousands of people. I personally have been travelling across the province. Just this Monday I was in Bridgewater for an information

session on the Pilot, hosted by the South Shore Regional Enterprise Network. In February I was in Amherst, and in January I was in Antigonish.

It is because of partners like the chambers of commerce, that we are able to increase immigration and grow the economy. Their support is critical in our work to connect with business, to help spread the word about how immigration can help the business grow and succeed, and fill their labour gaps.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the immigration system is responsive and meets the needs of the labour market of the province. That's why last month we launched another immigration option, working closely with the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority. The new physician stream will help with physician recruitment in the province, providing a streamlined immigration pathway for physicians hired by the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK. It is a new proactive, innovative, and strategic approach to bringing more general practitioners and specialty physicians to our province.

Attracting and retaining new physicians will help ensure that Nova Scotia has a health care system that meets their needs, will help grow our economy, and help our population.

We are the first and only province in Canada to take this approach, working collaboratively with our health authorities to develop an integrated and streamlined pathway dedicated solely to physician recruitment. The physician stream targets doctors from four countries, really, four main players - the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Ireland - because these countries have the recognized training equivalency with the College of Family Physicians of Canada. That means we can rely on the assessments that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, the Health Authority, and the IWK have already done around education, language ability, certification, credential recognition, and elimination of duplication. I am pleased to say that we processed our first applications through this new stream.

One of the key elements of meeting labour market need is ensuring that our office is promoting immigration to Nova Scotia to attract international talent. In 2018-19, we will be using a new international marketing brand: Room to Live. It will focus on marketing Nova Scotia as a destination of choice by highlighting all the unique qualities our province has to offer.

Because of the budget, we will be able to develop and implement a multi-year attraction plan, focused in key markets. The focus in year one will be on recruiting physicians, early childhood educators, French-speaking immigrants, and skilled workers that meet job market demands.

I want to speak for a moment about attracting francophone immigrants to our province. It is a priority for me, and being minister responsible for both the Office of Immigration and Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, means I am uniquely positioned to advance this priority. For instance, staff from both offices next month will participate in a mission called Destination Acadie. The objective is to highlight the opportunities to live and work in French in the Atlantic Region, and help connect francophone immigrants with employers.

Attracting more francophone immigrants to live and work in Nova Scotia is one of the key ways we will contribute to population growth, revitalize our communities, help employers fill their gaps, and grow the economy.

[5:30 p.m.]

As Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, I am committed to ensuring that our province's Acadian culture and francophone heritage as well as the French language are protected, celebrated, and strengthened.

En tant que ministre des Affaires acadiennes et de la Francophonie, je suis également engagée envers la protection, la célébration, et le renforcement de la culture acadienne et du patrimoine francophone de notre province ainsi que de la langue française. Notre gouvernement reconnaît l'importance de la communauté acadienne et francophone de notre province et apprécie la contribution de cette communauté à la culture et au patrimoine diversifié de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Our province recognizes the importance of our province's Acadian and francophone communities. A year ago, in our Culture Action Plan, we committed to strengthening our cultural offices. We have strengthened the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie by hiring a francophone communications officer and establishing a Ministerial Advisory Committee that provides me with advice and information on issues that are important to Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone community.

Mr. Speaker, the delivery of French language services has an essential role in the well-being of our Acadian and francophone community. We work very closely with the federal government to support the development, planning, and delivery of the French language services. Last year, a total of \$1.3 million in federal funding was invested towards French language service delivery. Currently, we're developing a five-year strategic plan for French language services to be submitted to the federal government, and we will be negotiating that through the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services.

The office continues its work to strengthen these services through active communications and increasing the capacity of the Public Service to offer services in French. We have helped to develop updated French-language communications guidelines. We've invested in French-language capacity across government departments by offering

572 seats over the year for French courses at Université Sainte-Anne. We continue to promote the Bonjour! visual identification program. Our agreement of co-operation and exchange with the Province of Québec has allowed us to jointly invest more than \$190,000 over the past two years in 23 projects to promote francophonie and support Acadian and francophone organizations in both provinces, and we have also offered grants from the Vive l'Acadie Community Fund to support Acadian-francophone culture.

Our office has also supported a number of initiatives towards the Acadian community radio station programming, Acadian youth sport, Jeux de l'Acadie, la Semaine de la promotion de l'éducation en français, and a joint cultural initiative between the Office of Acadian Affairs and the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

Also, marketing and development of Acadian products in partnership with the Commission du tourisme acadien du Canada atlantique. We are committed to growing our francophone immigration, and I just want to conclude by thanking the French language service coordinators and our team of translators.

In closing, our work in both of these offices is extremely important. It touches the lives of people across the province and across the world, and I'm very proud and excited about the plans that we have for the coming year. Thank you very much.

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

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased yesterday to have an opportunity to speak with the Minister of Health and Wellness about a number of issues that both my constituents, as well as the rest of those in province, are interested in and there was one topic that we brought up, just him and me, that I wanted to address tonight. We have talked about a lot of different strategies in the Legislature. We've talked about a dementia strategy, and we've talked about a seniors strategy, and we've talked about a housing strategy, and we've talked about a business creation strategy, but one of the things we never talked about here was a chronic pain strategy.

Yesterday, when I was talking to the Minister of Health and Wellness, I advised him that the longest wait times for health care in this province all stem from those with chronic pain. It doesn't matter which body part you talk about - whether it's your back, your neck, your knees, or your feet - those times that you're waiting for are somewhere between 300 and over 500 days. Of course, I'm not saying that we shouldn't prioritize those with critical, urgent, life-threatening conditions. They should obviously not be prioritized. But, having worked with patients with chronic pain my whole career, I can tell you that they are not a priority at all right now.

Dr. Mary Lynch, who heads the chronic pain program in Halifax, has often said that we give better training to veterinarians to look after pets with chronic pain than we do to physicians who treat those with chronic pain.

The impact on our income and the impact on our health care system for those with chronic pain is a double blow because, most of the time, it affects people between the ages of 30 and 60, which is, conveniently, the exact same time when we're working our hardest and contributing the most in tax dollars.

One of the issues that chronic pain patients face is the long wait times to get in to see specialists. They'll wait weeks, months, and sometimes years to get in to see a specialist. Then he will refer somebody for a test for which there is a wait of weeks, months, if not years to get the test. The person will get the test, and then they will wait more weeks, months, or years to go back to see the specialist. If they are fortunate enough to be recommended for surgery, they go on another wait-list. If you are ever wondering why so many people are turning towards opioids, we can look at the fact that there is not a chronic pain strategy in this province.

I have been part of that strategy but in private practice after I left work at Capital Health. If you didn't have private health coverage, or you weren't independently wealthy enough to afford my services, you were left without.

There was a time not too long ago, I think it was about five years ago, when there was talk about closing down or diminishing the outpatient physiotherapy practices in the hospitals around the province. That terrified my profession because, in most cases, for those with low income or no income, that is the only place they get physiotherapy care.

When we look at the chronic pain programs around the province, there is not a coordinated approach. It's a bit like trying to put collaborative care practices around the province but without a real strategic plan. I mentioned to the minister yesterday that they closed the Dartmouth pain clinic when the physicians there left. There's no replacement in sight. We are not even talking about it. It sort of closed with a whisper, except for those who have chronic pain.

I had a constituent call me up immediately after that happened and say, "I lost my family doctor. I know I got referred to a chronic pain specialist, but I don't know which one. The doctor's office where my chart is sitting won't give me my chart." I said, "Of course they have to give you your chart. All you have to do is ask for it." She said, "I did ask for it, and they won't give it to me." I said I would make the call. I called, and they said, "No, we can't give out those records." I said, "With all due respect, yes you can." She said, "She'll need to put it in writing," and I said that was fair enough.

So she put it in writing, took the request down to the doctor's office and they told her, "No, we're not allowed to give you a copy of your record." So I called the doctor's office back and I said who I was and that I had a constituent who wants her records. She said, "Just tell her to bring a letter down." I said, "I already did. She already came down, and you refused to give her her records." She said, "You mean that person. Okay, we'll give her her record."

I thought, why on earth would it take an MLA to have to make a phone call? So I said to the minister yesterday - I suggested it in the middle of a question, so I'm not sure what we're going to call that. A "suquestion" - there's a new word for us. Let's see Hansard deal with that one. My "suquestion" was, could we not give everyone who loses a family doctor an automatic copy of their chart as they have their last visit?

This person knew she had been referred to a chronic pain specialist but had no idea who it was, so we couldn't even call to find out if she was on the wait-list. I think that's a simple solution for those people without a family doctor. We're not charging the government \$36 a visit to the doctor. Without their family doctor charges, we are actually saving money in the long term because people are without a doctor, so they can't go. I think it's a simple solution, and I'm going to bring it up again, maybe more than once, because I think people need to have it.

In this case, for this particular person, we found out who the chronic pain specialist was. I called their office and I said, "So and so is on your list." They said, "We don't have a copy of it here." I said, "It's on her chart that it was sent." They said, "We don't have a copy. Can you get the doctor's office to send it again?" I said, "She doesn't have a family doctor." They said, "Then we can't see her."

So you can imagine how happy she was about that. I said, "How about if I send it over to you, would that be okay?" They said, "We'll take her because you sent her." That is so wrong, and I thought if you're going to take her because I'm an MLA, why could I not refer her because I'm a physiotherapist? I asked the minister about that yesterday, that was another "suquestion," and so I am imploring the government to look at the other allied health professionals being able to make referrals. People need to have Access-a-Bus passes filled out. They need to have other forms like the Disability Tax Credit filled out. I'm allowed to fill out part of that as a physiotherapist, but a doctor still has to sign off on it.

We have got to take that off of the doctor's plate because we need him to do more important things than filling out an Access-a-Bus pass. There are occupational therapists and physiotherapists who have Master's degrees who know more about that person's mobility status and their right to access Access-a-Bus than any doctor, so we don't need them to fill out these forms.

I've also been talking to a constituent who is on social assistance who was telling me that they needed clothing, they needed orthotics, and they needed sneakers. I understand why they needed to see a physician to get a referral for orthotics - although being an expert in assessing feet, I certainly could have made that same recommendation and, as a matter of fact, most doctors will refer a patient for orthotics because the physiotherapist suggested it. But this person told me that Community Services required a requisition from the doctor for sneakers. I'm thinking, we are now going to bill the government \$36 to write a requisition for sneakers. Right now, the same constituent had to get a requisition for a grab bar that costs \$12.

Community Services told him they wouldn't pay to have it installed, which costs - whatever you can get someone to come in and put it on the wall, they wouldn't pay for that. But the government is going to pay the doctor \$36 to write a prescription for a \$12 grab bar. I don't understand why we're requiring a doctor's prescription for so many things. I think it increases the cost of Community Services because this client's going to call over and over again about a \$12 grab bar, and we're costing the physicians valuable time that they need to be making diagnosis and treatment plans for people in need.

With respect to requiring a physician's signature on things that we shouldn't need, the insurance companies are having a field day with the fact that we have a doctor shortage. You'll notice they've been silent on this. There's not one of them - Blue Cross, Great-West Life, Sun Life, all the rest of them - I haven't heard one of them say this is outrageous, these poor people need to access their private health plan. Because they're not saying that. If I have a client who is injured in a car accident and he needs a disability report to say he was okay before the car accident and not okay afterwards, and there is nobody out there to write that disability report, guess who wins? The private health insurance company. There's nobody to write a report saying this person deserves their benefits.

As a physiotherapist, I can write a report, but I guarantee you when you hold up my report - which is probably 25 pages long - against an independent medical evaluator who may not have even met the person, they will take the physician's word over mine every time - not every time, I shouldn't say that but, too many times, it's the word of somebody who has expertise in evaluating functional disability over the word of somebody who might not.

We have insurance companies that require a prescription for everything. Every single thing. If you want a massage, go to the doctor. If you want physiotherapy, go to the doctor. I am in a self-regulated profession, you do not need a referral to come and see me but, if you want your private health insurance to kick in, you have to get a physician's referral. So we are costing the health care system millions of dollars every year by the insurance company requiring all of those referrals.

I have mentioned it before and I'm going to say it again, if an insurance company requires a physician's signature to access your benefits, the insurance company should be paying for that medical visit.

We, you and I, and every person in this province, are subsidizing the private health insurance companies. I know a lot of people who work in those companies, and they are paid bonuses to get people off their disability benefits. They will say people can work when they cannot. I know, in a couple of cases, the irony of me having to deal with caseworkers who refused benefits that were deserved, getting injured themselves and then they were on the other side of the coin and couldn't get their own benefits because the deck was stacked against them.

[5:45 p.m.]

I know it wouldn't be popular with the insurance companies but, as far as I'm concerned, if they require a referral from a doctor, they should be paying for that visit. We also need to move towards them not requiring that. If you have direct access to see a physiotherapist, you should not need a referral.

We talked a little bit yesterday with the Minister of Health and Wellness about expanding the scope of practice of all the allied health professionals. Because they are all standing right behind a closed door, they are more than willing to step up to the plate and to do more to help our health care system, especially in the area of home care. But right now, unless you are a CCA or a nurse, there is almost no funding to send any other allied health professional into someone's home.

I mentioned pharmacists yesterday, and I'll mention them again. There are some pharmacies, of course, who will deliver medications straight to your door. They take on that delivery charge, but that doesn't subsidize talking to a pharmacist.

I salute the pharmacists of this province because they are the only health profession who will take phone call after phone call after phone call, oftentimes from total strangers who didn't even buy their medication at their pharmacy, and they will give out advice over the phone - generic advice, in most cases. But we can't keep assuming that pharmacists are going to be willing to do this.

I ask the government to imagine if tomorrow the pharmacists said: I don't have the time or staff to take those phone calls; because of changes in my industry, I'm not going to take them anymore. Do you know what's going to happen to all the phone calls that are going to go to the physicians in this province?

I'm going to go back to my original statement about the chronic pain strategy in this province. We do have the Atlantic Mentorship Network-Pain & Addiction, of which I am a member and of which I am missing doing a lecture tonight because I'm sitting in the House. But this is more important because I'm advocating for all Nova Scotians who have chronic pain.

If we don't want any more deaths from opioid addiction, we have to treat people before they reach that point of desperation; if we want to reduce the number of suicides, we have to get people the help and care that they need.

Where we have a shortage of chronic pain specialists, we need to look at devoting extra funds in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: In the absence of more speakers, the motion is carried.

The House will now recess while it resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

[5:48 p.m. The House recessed.]

[5:53 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Chuck Porter in the Chair.]

[10:08 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg on an introduction.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would draw the attention of all members of the House to the gallery behind me.

I'd like to introduce to you a councillor from the CBRM who represents some of the same people I do - actually, for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, she comes from that beautiful place of Main-à-Dieu that you are going to come to visit - Amanda McDougall.

I would ask the House to give her a nice warm round of applause. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

The motion is carried.

We will have a short recess while the committee sets up.

[10:09 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Mr. Chuck Porter in the Chair.]

[10:21 p.m. The CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 70 - Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act.

Bill No. 76 - Mineral Resources Act.

Bill No. 85 – Municipal Government Act.

and the Chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read for a third time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, that concludes Government Business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, March 29, 2018, between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period we will move to resolve the House into Committee of the Whole on Supply and, with time permitting, we will move to third reading of Bill Nos. 70, 76, and 85.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House shall rise and meet again on Thursday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned.

[The House rose at 10:23 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1090**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas the Major Bantam Gulls defeated the ACA Rangers 4-2 in the gold medal game at Nova Scotia Major Bantam Hockey League Provincials in Liverpool; and

Whereas the Gulls won the 2018 NSMBHL Provincial Championship, adding to their 2012, 2014, and 2016 championship titles; and

Whereas the following Gulls won awards: Jake Goobie, for Top Goalie and All Star Team G; Cam Macdonald for Top Forward and All Star Team F; Ryan Dempster for All Star Team D; Leighton Carruthers for Rookie All Star Team F; and Jake Furlong for Rookie All Star Team D;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly offer their congratulations to Cameron MacDonald, Davis Cooper, Leighton Carruthers, Daniel Kline, Ryan Dempster, Adam MacDonald, Cael MacDonald, Justin Keating, Jake Furlong, Drew Maddigan, Connor McNamara, Stephen Purdy, Jacob Newcombe, Jacob Gagnon, Camden Pellerine, Cutter Devine, T.J Norris, Jacob Goobie, Noah Harvey; and the coaching staff: Logan Delaney, Ian Haverstock, T.J Heighton, Joshua Priest, Jamie Skinner, Kirk Tomlinson, Gord Duke, and Amanda Monk, and wish them luck as they represent Nova Scotia at Atlantics next month.

RESOLUTION NO. 1091

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Linda MacKay of Timberlea served as the elected representative for Clayton Park West-Beechville/Lakeside/Timberlea-Spryfield (District 6) of the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) from October 2016 until March 2018; and

Whereas Linda also served as vice-chairman of the HRSB and sat on a number of other HRSB committees, drawing on her professional and community volunteer experience; and

Whereas Linda, a mother of two school-aged children, has been an active, responsive and dedicated representative of the families and communities she has served because her strong belief that the children we are educating today will be the leaders of the future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Linda for her service and her investment in the education of the next generation.