



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 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 PETITONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 99 - House of Assembly Act.

Bill No. 114 - Gaelic College Foundation Act.

Bill No. 116 - Financial Measures (2018) Act.

Bill No. 118 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 65 - Psychologists Act.

Bill No. 107 - Labour Standards Code.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1285

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Premier, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas yesterday at sundown the observance of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, began, a time for remembrance of the Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust; and

Whereas six million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered as part of one of the most heinous crimes ever committed in human history; and

Whereas such unforgiveable acts must never be forgotten so that these terrible events in our world's history may never be repeated;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing today as Holocaust Remembrance Day, as we reflect on the tragedies of the Holocaust and the responsibilities we all must share in ensuring that such atrocities will never occur again.

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 African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: In the gallery opposite, in the east gallery, I would like Inspector Dean Simmonds to stand and have the House recognize him as the first African Nova Scotian inspector for the Halifax Regional Police. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1286

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

Whereas Inspector Dean Simmonds is the first African Nova Scotian from the East Preston-North Preston-Cherry Brook area to receive a promotion to the rank of inspector with the Halifax Regional Police; and

Whereas the rank of inspector is the highest rank any officer from the community of North Preston has ever achieved; and

Whereas Inspector Simmonds continues to have a major leadership role in developing and implementing various workshops and training programs on diversity, workplace equity, human rights, and leadership;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Inspector Dean Simmonds on his promotion and for continuing to provide mentorship programs and community-led initiatives focusing on diversity and leadership in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1287

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

Whereas this past February, all of us at the Department of Justice received devastating news of the passing of a former colleague and friend, Sheriff Steve Brown; and

Whereas Steve Brown worked with the Department of Justice for more than 32 years as a deputy sheriff and sheriff of Lunenburg, Queens, and Kings Counties and is remembered by his colleagues as a dependable leader and a loyal friend; and

Whereas Steve Brown was also a well-respected public servant who was dedicated to serving the people of Nova Scotia and who received the Peace Officer Exemplary Service Medal in recognition of his dedication;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend condolences to his family and sincere gratitude for his contributions as a public servant, a friend, and a remarkable Nova Scotian.

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 Environment.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. RANKIN: Thank you. I'd like to draw the members' attention to the east gallery, where we have with us Gina Patterson. She's been working with Clean Nova Scotia for the last 10 years, and she's moving on to a new career with Venture for Canada - unfortunately for Clean Nova Scotia. Nonetheless, I'd like the members to give her a warm welcome in the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1288

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

Whereas Gina Patterson has worked tirelessly to protect our environment over the past 10 years in her role as Director of Policy and Strategic Relations with the Clean Foundation; and

Whereas she has poured her passion, dedication, and experience into this work, helping lead the organization through periods of significant change and growth, and contributing to many successful programs and projects, including the transition of the Youth Conservation Corps to the Clean Leadership Program; and

Whereas Ms. Patterson will soon be leaving the Clean Foundation for a new position with Venture for Canada, where she will inspire young people to develop entrepreneurial skills and apply them to grow our economy, particularly for the green economy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly thank Ms. Patterson for her service to Nova Scotia and wish her well in the new role.

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 African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make another introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: With us in the east gallery today is a gentleman who has broken down barriers in the National Hockey League. His name is Mr. Bill Riley, and he is accompanied by his friends, Mr. Jim Bottomley and Mr. Jim Doherty. I ask them please to stand up and accept the welcome from the House. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 2189

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

Whereas Mr. Bill Riley from Amherst is a retired ice hockey player, coach, and was the third Black player in the National Hockey League, who appeared in 139 NHL games, notching 31 goals and 30 assists, while establishing the reputation as a combative winger who could fight and effectively muck in the corners to set up his line mates; and

Whereas Mr. Riley stuck with the hockey, despite the many obstacles of racism, discrimination, intolerance, and judgement that he had faced from hockey fans, fellow players, and some of his community members; and

Whereas Mr. Riley created a tribute in Amherst for the Humboldt Broncos to honour those impacted by the unimaginable tragedy that occurred near Tisdale, Saskatchewan, on April 6, 2018;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Mr. Bill Riley for his compassion and leadership in honouring his Humboldt Bronco hockey brothers, as well as his outstanding hockey career, breaking the race barrier for the NHL, and for being an exceptional inspiration and role model in the African Nova Scotian and hockey communities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The Honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make another introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: With us in the east gallery, I have six people in the gallery who have come here to see our proceedings today, five of whom are American, strong, passionate, leadership women who are here to see us and how we conduct business, as compared to - never mind, I won't go there.

I would ask them to rise as I call their names, please: Mr. Corey Adams from Nova Scotia, who is an entrepreneur and a musician; Barbara Burgess, senior program management analyst for the U.S. Department of Defense at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Maryland; Stephanie Flagg, MD, radiologist from Seattle, Washington; Pamela Lewis Bridges, retired educator and board president of Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Centre in Seattle, Washington; and Carlene Hughes, contract administrator of procurement for a major trauma hospital in Denver, Colorado.

Last but not least, who brought all those ladies to the beautiful Chester area to stay is a good friend: Evelyn Lewis, MD, M.A., FAAFP, BABDA, Chief Medical Officer, Warrior Centric Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia. (Standing Ovation)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 121 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018. The Education Act, Respecting the Provincial Advisory Council on Education. (Ms. Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 122 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1993. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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 Argyle Barrington.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: LOSS OF LIFE - REFLECT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today is Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. The solemn day commemorates the approximately 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust between 1933 and 1945.

On this day, we look back at one of the darkest chapters of our history, and we honour and remember the lives of so many who were lost. It is also a time to marvel at the strength of the human spirit. Despite the devastation visited among European Jews during the war, the Jewish people have persevered with bravery, dignity, and hope.

Tonight, as members of the Nova Scotia's Jewish Community will gather at Pier 21 to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, we should all be mindful of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust, and resolve that they should never be forgotten or repeated.

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

CHRISTIE, LIAH: PERFORMER, NEPTUNE THEATRE - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize 14-year-old Liah Christie of Hammonds Plains. Leah's been on stage as a dancer since a young age, has taken part in Symphony Nova Scotia's production of *The Nutcracker*, and has become

increasingly fond of musicals and plays. So, being selected to portray one of the youth in *My Side of the Country*, that was staged in November by Neptune Theatre's Youth Performance Company, was a wonderful opportunity.

My Side of the Country is a musical about youth from all over the country attending a conference to gather to ponder, what does it mean to be Canadian, and the issues arising from asking that question.

Liah said that she found a lot of joy in being a part of this production and she has a place in heart for theatre, which is growing bigger all the time.

I would ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Liah Christie on being chosen to be amongst the cast of *My Side of the Country*, and wish her well as she continues doing what she loves.

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

CAPE BRETON-RICHMOND - FUNDRAISING FOR SASKATCHEWAN

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been struck with a tragic accident that has resulted in 16 deaths in Saskatchewan. The country mourns with the communities as well as the families and friends of those involved in the accident.

Mr. Speaker, in honour and memory of those affected by this tragedy, school children and staff throughout the Strait Regional Centre for Education, as well as the broader community, are wearing hockey jerseys throughout Cape Breton-Richmond today. Donations are being accepted in the schools and these funds will be forwarded to Saskatchewan to support the grieving families.

It is in these times where we pull together, support each other and give of ourselves to let those who are struggling know that we love them and care for them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my deepest condolences and extend the love and support on behalf of my fellow constituents of Cape Breton-Richmond to our Canadian families in Saskatchewan.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

DENNY, JOHN, JR.: GRAND CHIEF - CELEBRATING HIS LIFE

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago today a very important leader in Mi'kma'ki, which extends throughout the Maritimes and into Newfoundland and Labrador, New England, and the Gaspe, passed away at the age of 77.

Grand Chief John Denny, Jr., was from Eskasoni and served as Grand Chief from 1881 until 1918. He inherited the title from his father Grand Chief John Denny and was the last hereditary Grand Chief of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council. The Grand Chief is the ceremonial, spiritual, political, and cultural leader of the Mi'kmaq, based on Aboriginal and treaty Rights for the Mi'kmaq.

Denny Jr.'s great, great grandchildren, John R. Sylliboy and Trevor Sanipass are collaborating together knowledge about his life and times and are planning more commemorative events for this summer.

Today the Si Denny, descendants of the Grand Chief, will celebrate the life of John Denny, Jr. today with a feast at the Gabriel Centre in Eskasoni. Please join me in wishing them well on this significant anniversary.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LUNENBURG ART GALLERY: NEW LOCATION - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, on March 27th, the grand opening for the new location of the Lunenburg Art Gallery took place at 194 B Lincoln Street. The Lunenburg Art Gallery, a staple on the Lunenburg arts scene for the past 46 years, has found a new home. The not-for-profit organization's new location includes more hanging space for art work and will encourage more foot traffic. The two-room gallery has one room designated for members to display their art and another room designated for invited guests or artists who have their artwork on display.

President Penny Maloney Ridley said the mission of the gallery will not change. The gallery focuses on community engagement, they encourage youth to consider a career in art as they increase their children's programming, and the facility also hosts seminars for adults.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating the Lunenburg Art Gallery on the opening of their new location. I look forward to visiting the art gallery in the very near future.

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

**QUEEN'S CO. COUGARS:
HOCKEY N.S. PROV. DAY OF CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.**

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise today and congratulate the Queen's County Midget A Cougars hockey team. The Cougars topped off a very successful season by recently claiming the banner at the Hockey Nova Scotia Provincial Day of Champions.

This group personified teamwork with players from a variety of rural communities on the South Shore coming together for one common goal. Coaches say that the success of the team came from three very balanced lines, strong defence, and goaltending. The team also had a good mix of first-, second-, and third-year players that gelled as a team early on in the year. Adrian Deveau, Hunter Brown, Tyler Lawson, Zack Levy, Josh Levy, James Warrington, and Aaron Wilcox are now finished their minor hockey careers, and we wish them the best.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the entire team and coaching staff - hockey truly brings us all together.

[1:30 p.m.]

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

HUMBOLDT TRAGEDY - CONDOLENCES

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Humboldt tragedy, and all those Canadians who wear jerseys in solidarity and support. I, too, have travelled those Saskatchewan highways not that long ago, have driven on the roads where the terrible tragedy actually occurred and, believe me, those highways go on and on for miles on end.

My time in Saskatchewan is remembered with fond memories of those I worked with and others whose paths I crossed. I had the honour of working in the communities of Tisdale and Melfort. They are tight-knit communities that undoubtedly are suffering but will come through this tragedy together. Both communities welcomed me without question and, although I have never driven through the community of Humboldt, I remember the entire province with good memories.

Even though my journey in the West has come to an end, my heart is with all of the residents who I had the pleasure of getting to know and work with. To those I didn't, may you feel strength and solidarity not only from myself but all Canadians today and through the tough days ahead.

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

SALDANHA, MARK: GREATER LOVE, HOMELESS OUTREACH - COMMEND

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize an exceptional young man in Clayton Park West who is helping our province's most vulnerable populations.

Mark Saldanha, who is in his third year of neuroscience at Dalhousie, was struck by what he calls “throwaway culture.” Those who are most in need are often pushed to the side in society and forgotten about. He decided that he needed to do something about it.

Mark started Greater Love, a youth-led organization that aims to reach out and serve the vulnerable population in Nova Scotia. Greater Love doesn’t simply distribute material items to the homeless. They sit down with them, listen to them, and treat them with the respect that they deserve.

Over four months, the organization grew from 17 youth volunteers to 80 who visit with the homeless every day. Mark hopes to reach out to other vulnerable members of our society, including refugees and the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of this House join me in commending Mark for his dedication to those in need and for fostering a culture of service among his generation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ADVENTURE EARTH: NEW LOCATION, SHUBIE PARK - CONGRATS.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the new location of HRM’s Adventure Earth Centre in beautiful Shubie Park.

The Adventure Earth Centre has been offering second-to-none outdoor recreation and earth education programs for over 35 years at their Halifax location. I’m excited for the people of Dartmouth to now have access to these programs in our own backyard. Connecting with nature, developing leadership skills, and promoting healthy lifestyles are just a few of the many opportunities presented by the Adventure Earth Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to congratulate HRM and the Adventure Earth Centre on their second location and warmly welcome them to Dartmouth East.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DOWNEY, JOSEPHINE: COM. LEADERSHIP - RECOGNIZE

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible contributions that Ms. Josephine Downey makes to the community in Dartmouth North. Josephine Downey has been a community organizer in Dartmouth North for well over 30 years.

Currently, she sits as the president of the Demetreous Lane Tenants Association, a group that provides a voice to residents of the community through public meetings aimed at improving services for the residents, especially the youth. Programming at the Demetreous Lane Tenants Association includes cooking programs, teen girl support programs, Christmas parties, and neighbourhood barbecues, all made possible through the leadership of Josephine.

I want to recognize that it's the tireless efforts of women like Josephine Downey that help make our community a better place to live. She is strong and quiet and knows what needs to be done to help her neighbours.

I ask the members of this House to join me in recognizing Ms. Josephine Downey for her selfless commitment to the Dartmouth North community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

PYNCH, CHRISTINE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Christine Pynch on her retirement after an exemplary social work career. Those of us at the political level of government know just how important it is to have hard-working, compassionate, and dedicated civil servants like Christine.

For over three decades, Christine provided care and support to some of the most vulnerable citizens through her roles with Evergreen Nursing Home, the Municipality of Kings, and the Department of Community Services. She always put the needs of her clients first and treated everyone with compassion and the respect that they deserve. Her efforts have had significant long-lasting impacts on the lives of so many of the people that she has come in contact with, clients and co-workers alike.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Christine Pynch for all that she has done throughout her career to improve the lives of her fellow citizens and in wishing her the very best in this next chapter of her life.

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

PETERS, CHRIS: VOLUNTEER OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Today, I would like to recognize an incredible constituent and real estate agent, Mr. Chris Peters with Royal LePage Atlantic.

Chris was recently elected to take on the vice-president position within the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors. For Chris, this means working alongside likeminded

passionate and driven people like himself. The sky's the limit when you apply determination and perseverance to attain personal goals.

I personally want to thank Chris for offering so much to the community of Eastern Passage and surrounding area. Chris is currently a member of the Island View High School enhancement committee and serves on the board of directors of the Eastern Passage and Area Business Association. He also works with the United DFC soccer association, and last night I was also honoured to watch as Chris was awarded an HRM Volunteer of the Year Award.

I would like to ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Chris on his new position, as well as for his deep commitment to his community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: LOSS OF LIFE - REFLECT

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Holocaust Remembrance Day.

I awoke to a headline today that 41 per cent of Americans do not know what Auschwitz is. In my family, we know all too well. Auschwitz was the place where my grandmother's beloved aunt, Esther Rohr, paid the price for securing her orphan niece's safe passage to New York City, where she would go on to meet my grandfather, also a Holocaust survivor, and live a long and healthy life.

If we forget the lessons of the past, Mr. Speaker, we are condemned to repeat them.

I ask all members of this House to take a moment today to reflect on this massive loss of life, and the lessons it leaves us with.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

COMEAU, PAUL: VETERAN OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, Yarmouth's Veteran Firefighters Association recently held their annual banquet and named Paul Comeau the association's Veteran of the Year for 2018.

Paul Comeau was born and raised in Yarmouth and spent 30 years in the Yarmouth Fire Department as a member of the Salvage Corps. Paul Comeau was honoured for not only his service to the Yarmouth Fire Department, but also for his assistance and dedication to the Veteran Firefighters Association.

I ask this House to join me in congratulating Yarmouth's Paul Comeau on being named the Veteran Firefighters Association 2018 Veteran of the Year, and thanking him for his many years of service and bravery in keeping his community safe.

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

MACDONALD, CYRIL: VOLUNTEER OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cyril MacDonald of Albert Bridge, who was recognized as Volunteer of the Year during the 44th Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony here in Halifax on Monday.

Cyril was nominated by the CBRM. Cyril is very well known for his involvement with building healthy communities through his coaching with Special Olympics and managing Learn to Run programs all over the CBRM.

I stand today, Mr. Speaker, to thank Cyril MacDonald for his many acts of kindness and all his contributions to his community, and congratulate him on this well-earned recognition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MELANSON, ELAINE & STEPHEN: BEDFORD PLAYERS - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell this House about a couple who are helping Bedford Players Community Theatre create performing magic.

Elaine Melanson has been active since she joined Bedford Players in 2012. She has served as front of house manager, newsletter editor, a board member, actor, and part of the overall crew. She quietly and efficiently lends her hand to all aspects of the theatre activity on stage, back stage, administration, and even on-the-road jaunts. Elaine's role in the production of *The Fork on the Left*, was singled out by the adjudicator at the 2016 Liverpool International Theatre Festival as a performance worthy of note.

She introduced her husband, Stephen, to Bedford Players and since then he has assisted with audio, video, and technical expertise. Last year, the Bedford Players Community Theatre honoured Elaine and Stephen.

I would ask members to join me in congratulating the Melansons for their volunteer services.

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

FIRE GEAR: DONATION TO MEXICO - COMMEND

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to provide an update on an amazing gesture of goodwill I had spoken to previously.

Shaun Burke, of the Brookfield Fire and Emergency Services, partnered with Cory MacAusland of P.E.I, drove a U-Haul truck carrying 291 full sets of fire gear to Laredo, Texas. The gear was then reloaded onto a fire truck and they drove another two days to deliver the donated gear to Querétaro, Mexico.

The donation was readily received with a symbolic presentation conducted in Spanish. The visiting firefighters also worked a full day by going on 13 calls with the local brigade, which consisted of 65 paid firefighters and 400 volunteers. The 16-day whirlwind mission provided Shaun and Cory a learning experience and cultural exchange.

I wish to commend these two on the successful completion of this goodwill endeavour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

MACKENZIE, AMELIA: BARTLETT MEM. BURSARY - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The Holly E. Bartlett Memorial Bursary was established in honour of a remarkable young woman who tragically passed away in 2010. Holly was born with an eye condition that caused her to lose sight at the age of 13, but she never let her disability define who she was.

Holly had a long list of academic achievements but was also a humorous and adventurous soul, who left all who knew her with fond memories.

The bursary was established by Holly's family and friends. It is available to a full-time undergraduate female St. Francis Xavier student from Atlantic Canada who has a minimum average of 75, demonstrates financial need, and a commitment to community service, as well as student activities.

The recipient of this year's bursary for 2018 is Amelia MacKenzie. Amelia graduated from St. F.X. with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 2017 and is now completing the two-year Bachelor of Science Nursing Program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Amelia on winning the 2018 Holly E. Bartlett Memorial Bursary and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

EMBREE, KENNETH: COM. SERV. - RECOGNIZE

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Mr. Kenneth Embree from Amherst. He grew up in Cumberland County and moved to Toronto and worked there as a registered nurse for 52 years.

Thankfully, he moved back to Cumberland County and is now volunteering his time in many ways. He goes above and beyond, and is a great example of our community's character. He has been a great friend to me, and volunteers many hours a week at my local constituency office. He also helps with local jamborees and sings in men's choirs in nursing homes and he is an encouragement to anyone he meets.

Kenneth is a great example of a volunteer who gives his time freely, without complaints. We would all do well to have more people in our lives like Kenneth. He is appreciated and loved.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth on an introduction.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I'd like to bring the members' attention to the east gallery and bring greetings today to my former seat colleague, former Minister of Community Services, the honourable and indomitable Joanne Bernard, who is here with us today. (Applause)

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

FIRTH, MALCOLM: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Malcolm Firth of Lake Echo, who passed away on April 5, 2018. He was, prior to his retirement, employed at Canada Food and Drug Association and the Nova Scotia Research Foundation.

Malcolm was a community leader who gave selflessly of his talents and time through his support of the Orenda Canoe Club, provided leadership in the construction of the canoe club building and many fundraising activities. He also led the construction of St. David's United Church Hall in Lake Echo.

He could always be counted on for support of many community activities. He started and ran the annual Orenda Canoe Club Fishing Derby as a way to introduce sportfishing to young people.

I applaud and recognize Malcolm Firth as an example of someone who had a vision for his community, and did what was necessary to make it a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MEDIA LADDER: EXPERIENCEPICTOU.COM

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that Pictou is home to an exciting new tourism development.

Louise Dixon and Andrew Loscher of Media Ladder, a digital media marketing company based in town, have launched a new website called experiencepictou.com. The website will promote all things Pictou, including the town's proximity to the warmest waters north of the Carolinas, overall Scottish heritage, architecture, cultural, and hosted businesses.

Media Ladder hopes this website will provide a space for tourism-related business to showcase their offerings to visitors and create a thorough, one-stop shop for those looking to find information about, and visit Pictou. There are also other plans in the works to increase the town's promotion online by purchasing advertisements on various social media platforms.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

CASWELL, CATHY: PROMOTING COM. HEALTH - RECOGNIZE

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Today I'd like to recognize an outstanding member of our business community. Cathy Caswell, along with her husband David Caswell, owns the PharmaChoice store in Enfield. Cathy has an MBA and a background in dietetics, sales, and marketing.

In her own quest to reduce stress in her daily life, she was inspired to research techniques in the field of behavioural change. That led her to the practice of Logosynthesis, a simple and innovative system for personal development, enabling people to live a happier, healthier life.

Cathy is founder of The Healthy Living Plan and has written a successful book on her study and experience. Her book, *Logosynthesis: Enjoying Life More Fully*, offers readers guidance to create a more productive environment at work, at home, and in the community.

It is with great pride that we have this intuitive, knowledge-seeking individual in our community, and I encourage all members of this House to congratulate her for all she does.

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

[1:45 p.m.]

MACDONALD, TIM: QUEENS CO. HISTORY - THANKS

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honour Queens County historian Tim McDonald.

Tim credits his love for history to his grandmother's storytelling, which instilled in him the desire to trace his family roots and learn about his community. He started as a teenager and never looked back. Collecting postcards and photos of Queens County for over 20 years, he has acquired over 1,500 images.

He began sharing his photos and was encouraged to publish the 2014 book *Queens County: Photos from the Past and Present*, showing then-and-now images with the accompanying history. This past November, Tim launched his fourth book, *Remembering Queens County, Nova Scotia*.

No value can be placed on Tim's contributions to the collection and preservation of the history of the places and people of Queens County. From all of us, thanks, Tim.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

DOLSEN FAM.: RCAF SERV. - COMMEND

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I rise today to commend the Dolsen family for a combined 101 years of service to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The RCAF annual mess dinner was held on March 28th, and the special guest at the event was Warrant Officer (retired) Erle Dolsen, the former base band master who, at 95 years of age, conducted the 14 Wing band during the evening's performance. Erle was joined at the mess dinner by his son, Sergeant (retired) Craig Dolsen, and his two grandsons, Captain Derek Dolsen of CFB Borden and Master Corporal Everet Dolsen of 8 Wing Trenton.

On behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, I would like to express my gratitude to the Dolsen family for their generations of service with the Royal Canadian Air Force and wish them all the best for health and happiness in the years ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

GROPRO GROCERY DELIVERY: 5th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a very happy 5th birthday to GROPRO Grocery Delivery.

Not to be confused with the camera, this locally owned and operated grocery delivery company is helping hundreds of customers across HRM save time while promoting local vendors and allowing their customers to support those local vendors. Five years is a big milestone for a small business, and I look forward to having them around our community for many years to come.

This past summer, GROPRO opened a fruit stand in Dartmouth East, bringing fresh produce and life to an otherwise abandoned industrial lot in our community. I was so proud to see this local business expand and especially happy to see them set up right behind my constituency office.

I want to wish GROPRO Grocery Delivery a very happy 5th birthday.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

COMMON ROOTS URBAN FARM: PUBLIC WORKSHOP - SUCCESS

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I would like to report back to the House on the phenomenal turnout last night at Common Roots Urban Farm's public workshop titled, Where Will Our Garden Grow?

Hundreds of people gathered to dream up answers to that question as the farm enters its last growing season next to the Halifax Infirmary. I urge any and all politicians and public servants to support the farm for a successful transition.

I want to particularly shout out to two constituents, market farm coordinator Sara Burgess and project coordinator Jayme Melrose, who have worked tirelessly and with grace to support new gardeners, volunteers, and really all comers to grow food, build skills, and together create a farm in the city where people, soil, food security, community, and a sense of belonging are nurtured.

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

ROOF HOUND BREWERY CO.: AWARD-WINNING IPA - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: I would like to congratulate Les and Jen Barr of the Roof Hound Brewing Company whose India Pale Ale, called Big Stink IPA, placed first at the 4th Annual Atlantic Canadian Beer Awards last October. Some 50 breweries competed in a number of beer categories including 45 entries in the India Pale Ale category. For the Barrs and the brewery employees, this was particularly exciting given that their brewery and restaurant opened just two years ago.

Opening the brewery and restaurant has been the dream of Les, who enjoyed brewing beer all of his life as well as cooking for his family and friends. He named his

restaurant and his brewery after a bit of family folklore about the time his grandfather's hound had gotten into some fermented raisins and kept the family awake all night howling from the roof.

Happy for the support that they received since opening and being recognized at the Canadian Beer Awards, the Barrs continued to tinker with their beer recipes. They are always trying to improve their product and develop something new for their clients. Thank you very much, Les and Jen Barr and Roof Hound employees.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

SON, HEE YEON: CDN. LANG. BENCHMARK TEST - RECOGNIZE

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I'd like to recognize Hee Yeon Son of Amherst. Together with Maggie's Place, she has helped bring the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test to Amherst.

She began this project for new citizens to Canada who had to travel to Halifax to take the test. She wanted to do this to help the community to be more diverse, welcoming, and open to new residents. She was an immigrant herself, and wanted to make the transition to a new country more comfortable. Cumberland has many new families who would benefit from this new service.

I am very proud of Hee Yeon Son, and applaud her efforts to improve our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SMITH, TAMARA: DART. PLAYERS PROD. - BEST WISHES

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Last week, Dartmouth Players opened its much-anticipated production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Written by the great British playwright Tom Stoppard, the play follows two lesser characters - although I would wholly support the adage that there are no small parts - from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as they bumble through Elsinore obliviously while the events of *Hamlet* unfold around them. It's a much-loved play, and I am sure it's a wonderful project for the cast and crew in the Dartmouth Players community.

The Dartmouth Players have been producing excellent community theatre for over 25 years, and attending the productions is a favourite cultural experience of many people in Dartmouth, including me. Each year, hundreds of people take part in acting, directing, designing, building, lighting, producing, and watching many shows, all for the love of it. It is very inspiring.

This production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is directed by my neighbour Tamara Smith, and I wish her and the whole team of cast and crew members a belated happy opening and best wishes for a fun and successful run.

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

CANSO ATOM BLUEFINS: GOLD MEDAL - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I rise today to congratulate the Canso Atom Bluefins for bringing home gold after winning the final game of the Atom C Northern League. This team of skilled girls and boys deserve high praise for their triumphant efforts in securing the championship title.

In true Canso form, the young hockey players were welcomed home with a celebratory parade of firetrucks, RCMP cruisers, and dozens of local vehicles. Well-wishers cheered wildly while toting congratulatory signs of support. It was quite a jubilant expression of pride for Canso's future NHLers.

These same tireless supporters have organized a telethon for the Canso Arena, home of the Bluefin champions and many other great programs, on Saturday, April 14th for much-needed renovations. One of the acts will be Kyle Delorey, who is both an accomplished musician and a Canso Atom Bluefins champion.

I wish them much success in their event and commend them on their strong community spirit, for which Canso is known.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

UNDERWOOD, NICOLE: DROP ZONE FUNDRAISER - RECOGNIZE

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to recognize an extraordinary young constituent of mine, Nicole Underwood. Many of us here know Nicole as a Page in this Legislature. What some of us might not know is that Nicole has come to us through the New Leaf skills training program under the auspice of Easter Seals Nova Scotia.

Over the past few years, Nicole has been living with tuberous sclerosis complex, a rare multi-system genetic disease that causes benign tumours to grow in the brain and other vital organs such as kidneys, heart, liver, eyes, lungs, and skin.

This diagnosis has not stopped Nicole. She has competed with the Special Olympics and has worked with Easter Seals for many years learning new skills and building her resumé. Nicole also works part-time at the Department of Natural Resources.

On September 21st, Nicole will be rappelling 23 storeys down 1801 Hollis Street to raise money for Easter Seals. This is an amazing young woman who exemplifies the spirit of so many people living with differing abilities. I encourage all my colleagues to seek Nicole out and offer her a donation towards her Drop Zone pursuit. I certainly will.

I ask all members to give her the loud applause of the House. (Standing Ovation)

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

CARLTON, KELLY: COM. SERV. - RECOGNIZE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize Kelly Carlton of Hatchet Lake. Kelly is an active volunteer in the Prospect Road area. She has provided volunteer leadership in the kitchen at the Prospect Road Community Centre for the past few years, organizing barbecues, Friday feasts, and seniors' luncheons. Meals range from mac and cheese to Chinese food and everything in between, offering residents the chance to take the night off from cooking and come together for good food and fellowship with their neighbours and friends.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Kelly for her hard work in making the Prospect communities welcoming for all, and I wish her well in the future.

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

RUSSELL, DARREN: PROV. VOLUNTEER AWARD - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Darren Russell, a resident of New Ross, in Chester-St. Margaret's, who is the recipient of this year's Provincial Volunteer Award representing the Municipality of the District of Chester.

When Darren was only 21, the New Ross Volunteer Fire Department put out a call for volunteers. He wanted to help his community so he signed up and continued to be an active member for 25 years, eventually holding both the captain and deputy chief positions.

An avid sportsman, Darren has instructed, mentored, and inspired hundreds of youth in various sports including basketball, softball, baseball, badminton, track and field, cross-country, and T-Ball. He coached teams at the New Ross and Forest Heights schools, as well as the Chester Basin Recreation Park.

Among his many accomplishments, he is an historical interpreter at the Ross Farm Museum, and a first aid instructor for St. John Ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Darren Russell on receiving the Provincial Volunteer Award and to wish him well in his future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

CORKUM, MACKENZIE: AWARD-WINNING MARKSMAN - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Mackenzie Corkum is a shining example of discipline, determination, and dedication.

Mackenzie joined the 2688 Bridgewater Kinsmen Army Cadets in Fall 2012. With her grandfather's guidance, Mackenzie worked hard developing her skills as a cadet, including target practice at the family cottage. Throughout the next several years, Mackenzie participated in several training programs for marksmanship in New Brunswick and Ontario, eventually securing her an invitation as a member of the Royal Canadian Army Cadet National Rifle Team who would compete in and tour England for the summer months of 2017. Mackenzie earned the top Canadian gold medal in one of the matches that took place, an amazing achievement and reward for her hard work.

Mr. Speaker, Mackenzie Corkum has shattered the glass ceiling. I would like to recognize and congratulate Mackenzie Corkum on penetrating a male-dominated sport, for her amazing achievements, and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavours.

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

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: LOSS OF LIFE - REFLECT

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, the Holocaust is undoubtedly one of the most horrific events this world has ever seen.

Today marks the completion of Yom HaShoah, a day specific to the Jewish community, where those lost in the Holocaust are mourned. Educating future generations about the tragedies that took place during this era is critical, and taking the time for reflection ensures that family and ancestors who were lost are not forgotten.

I want to ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in paying our respect to our Jewish brothers and sisters, and to take the time for quiet reflection to remind ourselves that we can all play a role in ensuring that those lost will not be forgotten.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

SMITH, BEN & ROXIE: PROV. VOLUNTEER AWARD - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ben and Roxie Smith on receiving the 2018 Provincial Volunteer Award for the Town of Lunenburg.

Roxie, 76, a retired X-ray technician, and my cousin, played an integral role in establishing the ambulatory care unit at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital in Lunenburg. She has helped with the hospital foundation board and the district health authority, and participated in a health-watch committee.

Ben, 82, a retired engineer - and taller than the Premier - has spent time volunteering with business groups, Boy Scouts, and the local golf club. He has also spent time with hockey and curling organizations. In 2001, a massive fire destroyed much of St. John's Church in Lunenburg, and Ben played a large role in its restoration.

This couple has been married for over 50 years, and they both enjoy volunteering and giving back to their town. Roxie stays highly involved with the Lunenburg Academy, and Ben with the Lunenburg Swimming Pool Society.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Ben and Roxie Smith on their Provincial Volunteer Award and thank them for their contributions to the Town of Lunenburg.

[2:00 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We're going to delay the beginning of Question Period for a few minutes while we address a matter before the House.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 43(1), I am making a motion for emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, it has come to the attention of this House that a serious breach of privacy has occurred on the Government of Nova Scotia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act website, launched by this government.

It's serious enough to require the police, and yet citizens were not notified without delay. Nova Scotians must have confidence in their government. The confusion as to why the breach was not public seriously erodes that confidence.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after QP had concluded, when Halifax Regional Police informed the public about their investigation on this matter, we found out that contrary to

what the minister and the Premier had said in the House, that HRP did not instruct the government to not do a public release.

So, we believe we need to have extra opportunity to make sure that Nova Scotians get the straight answer on this breach of personal information.

I move that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing the government's failure to make the FOIPOP breach public, and the harm that that failure could have had on hundreds of Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Rule 43(4), I'm required to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed, but I'm going to defer that decision until later today, under Rule 43(5).

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will conclude at 2:52 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - FOIPOP WEBSITE BREACH: INFO. - ACCURACY

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, when asked why the Minister of Internal Services did not come clean with Nova Scotians about the breach in the government's FOIPOP website, the Premier said, "We're very proud that we were not going to undermine the work of the law enforcement agency no matter how much it might have been to the political advantage of our Party."

When the Minister of Internal Services was asked if the police told her to stay quiet, she claimed she was asked to hold off as long as possible in order for them to conduct their investigation. However, during the Halifax Regional Police press conference on this matter, Superintendent Perrin told reporters, "There was no conversation between us and the province about holding off and not telling anybody."

Will the Premier tell the House who was right, the Premier and the minister, who said telling Nova Scotians about the breach would hamper the police investigation, or Superintendent Perrin, who said no such conversation actually ever happened?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, there was a breach of the FOIPOP portal on April 5th that came to our attention. On April 5th, we closed that portal down. We realized there had been one breach, we had - what do they call it? - an IPF number. We called in the Halifax Regional Police, our senior security team

were talking to them many times over the weekend. It became the best that we realized we could contain this, if we could get the name that was associated with that.

We gave the police the opportunity to go to the courts. During that, they also had to get a search warrant, and they arrested somebody yesterday. It's our belief they've also picked up some of the equipment that would have been used, and it's our hope that not only will they be able to charge this individual, they will also know whether or not that individual sent that information to anyone, or to any group of people.

MS. MACFARLANE: They called the police 60 hours later, Mr. Speaker. Page 8 of the FOIPOP's office document entitled Key Steps to Responding to Privacy Breaches says, ". . . notification of affected individuals should occur if it is necessary to avoid or mitigate harm to them." I'll table that.

Among the considerations in determining whether to notify individuals affected by the breach is whether, "There is a risk of identity theft or fraud - usually because of the type of information lost, stolen, accessed or disclosed, such as a SIN, banking information, identification numbers . . ." In this unfortunate situation, there was almost certainly a high risk of fraud and identity theft by the government's own admission, 250 documents.

The protocol laid out by the FOIPOP Commissioner is clear.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. MACFARLANE: Government should have contacted people whose information was breached. Why did this government defy the commissioner's guidelines?

THE PREMIER: Again, I'll walk through it. When we realized there was a breach on April 5th, we pulled down that portal. We had one IP address. We ensured that there was only one breach of our system. That IP address was turned over to the Halifax Regional Police.

They have to go through the due diligence of going to court to get a search warrant to be able to go to the service provider to get a name. Then they had to execute on that search warrant to go and ensure that they had that individual. We provided that opportunity. In fact, there was only one breach, Mr. Speaker.

We felt it was appropriate to try to contain that information as best we could, and we're looking forward to finding out whether or not this individual has shared that information with anyone.

MS. MACFARLANE: The police did not ask government to hold off on telling people their information was compromised. The deputy said yesterday that no one had

advised them to withhold the information. Privacy expert David Fraser said mandatory transparency around data breaches is the norm, and keeping it quiet is the exception.

The FOIPOP Commissioner's guidelines are clear that people should have been notified as soon as possible, yet this government chose to keep the breach a secret for almost a whole week, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't the police, and it wasn't the FOIPOP Commissioner. Whose decision was it to not tell Nova Scotians about a major breach of their sensitive information?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to walk the honourable member through this process. On April 5th, we identified there was a breach of protocol. (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, on April 5th, there was a breach. We identified that we had one IP address. We went on to make sure that our system had only been breached once. We had one IP address. We turned that over to the Halifax Regional Police. They went to the court to get an order to take to the service provider to get a name. They executed a search warrant. We have somebody in custody, today they do, to ensure that we can contain the breach. (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: We're very proud of the work of the Halifax Regional Police and our department, Mr. Speaker. We believe we have this breach contained. We are looking forward to the police continuing their investigation to make sure this information was not shared with anyone.

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

PREM. - FOIPOP WEBSITE BREACH: INFO. DISCREPANCY - EXPLAIN

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I want to question the Premier particularly about the delay between his government becoming aware of the breach in the security of this information and his government making the public aware that the breach had taken place. Yesterday, his minister said the explanation for this delay was that her department had received police advice to wait on informing the public, but Police Superintendent Perrin was very clear, "There was no conversation between us and the province about holding off and not telling anybody." Here's a tabled copy of his remarks.

Very naturally and very reasonably, Mr. Speaker, people find the discrepancy between these two accounts to be alarming. The Premier owes the public a full explanation of this discrepancy, and I ask him to provide it.

THE PREMIER: Again, we discovered there was a breach on April 5th. We identified an IP address associated with that. We realized when we looked at our system, there was actually one breach, so we now had the identity. We turned that over to the Halifax Regional Police. There have been ongoing conversations with our senior security people and the Halifax Regional Police over a period of time, a number of discussions associated with that. In the meantime, they went to their service provider to identify the name. They had to go and execute a search warrant to then go to the house to make the arrest.

My hope is that they have actually picked up the equipment that was used as part of that. Now that we have contained that breach, we will now hopefully be able to tell whether or not that individual has shared that with any other individuals or any group of people.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Internal Services was asked Monday if the freedom of information site had been hacked. The minister was asked the same question the next day. Both times her answers did not reveal the truth. On Wednesday, the reason given for this withholding of information by both the minister and the Premier was that secrecy was required to assist the police investigation, but we know now that this was not the case.

Mr. Speaker, since we know that the reason for the delay was not the police case, the public is owed an explanation of what the actual real reason was - I'm asking the Premier to provide it.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's exactly as the honourable member is describing. We knew we had one breach of our system. We had the IP address. We wanted to give police the opportunity to go to the service provider to get a name associated with that and execute a search warrant. We wanted to give them the best opportunity to secure the equipment that was used to ensure whether or not that information was shared.

I find it hard to believe that anyone in this House would not want to ensure that we contained that. We believe that declaring that early on would have given the perpetrator an opportunity to destroy the equipment that we believe will identify who they shared that information with.

MR. BURRILL: The government's own privacy breach protocol specifies that when a breach occurs, notification should happen as soon as possible.

My colleague has quoted privacy lawyer David Fraser, and I want to read some other remarks that he made. He said that anything that keeps it quiet ends up looking like a bit of a cover-up which has, I think, a significantly negative impact on trust. I'll table a copy of his comments.

The government's handling of this situation raises concerns that there may be other security breaches of which the government has not yet informed the public.

Mr. Speaker, a core matter of trustworthiness is at issue here. What does the Premier say to those whose confidence in the government's word has been shaken by the way this situation has been handled?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the confidence Nova Scotians have shown in our government; I look forward to continuing to work with them.

I want to assure the honourable member that when the breach took place, that site was brought down. We identified that there had been one breach. We had an IP address for that. We turned that over to Halifax Regional Police. They had an opportunity to go to the service provider to identify a name attached to that IP address, which in turn allowed them to go to the court to execute a search warrant to make sure that not only did we apprehend the individual but that also made the best chance of getting hold of the equipment to identify who that was shared with. We believe that was in the best interest of Nova Scotians.

We look forward to the police continuing their investigation to ensure that we know that we have contained this piece of information, and we're working with Nova Scotians whose information was breached. We're going to continue to make sure that we do everything we can to work with them.

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

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP BREACH: PRIVACY COMM'NER - NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services. The extent of this breach is a little rattling. (Interruption) I said "services" thank you very much, minister.

The breach occurred over three days at the beginning of March. It went undetected until a month later when a provincial employee stumbled upon it, noticing that they were able to access information that they shouldn't have. Seeing that the horses were all out, this government promptly closed the barn door and shut down the portal. The next day, Friday, April 6th, the province learned that there had been a breach of over 7,000 non-public documents, but didn't inform the Privacy Commissioner until the following Monday.

My question to the minister is, why was the Privacy Commissioner not notified as soon as the breach was detected?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: In following our protocols, we had to go through all 7,000 files to see what was breached and what was not - that did take some time. We

followed the steps and tried to find a balance between notifying those who were impacted and containing the information so that police were able to do their job. This is a very serious situation, and we have done our best to follow protocols to contain, and thankfully that has allowed police to do their job and name a suspect.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice was called in over that weekend, the police were called in over that weekend, but this government felt that the Privacy Commissioner could wait until the start of business on Monday - and the public could wait an additional 48 hours before they were told that their information may have been compromised.

My question to the minister is, if the protocol requires that the minister keep these details from the Privacy Commissioner and the public, will the minister admit that it's a bad protocol?

MS. ARAB: I would like to reiterate how important the advice and the counsel of the privacy officer is to us. Again, in dealing with our protocols, there were a number of steps that needed to take place, and we were trying to find a balance to make sure that we were able to contain this situation, contain the information that had gotten out, that had been breached, while still having a duty to notify those who were impacted by this.

Currently our focus at this moment is notifying those individuals who have been so gravely impacted, but it will be a continuing process and a continuing investigation to see how and what we do moving forward.

[1:15 p.m.]

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

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP BREACH: LACK OF COMMUNICATION - EXPLAIN

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, all hands on deck should have included the Privacy Commissioner.

My question is for the Minister of Internal Services. More than a month ago, an unauthorized user downloaded over 7,000 private documents. This is a serious privacy breach, Mr. Speaker, but Unisys - the company that manages the site - only told the province on April 5th, almost a month later. It took another three days for the department to contact the Privacy Commissioner, and the public was only informed yesterday.

The minister claims she withheld this information, as was noted already, from the public on advice from the Halifax Regional Police, but we know that that was not the conversation that they had with the police here in Halifax.

I would like to ask the minister if the minister could explain why she withheld notifying the Privacy Commissioner, and for that matter, those who have been affected by this breach?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: We began following protocols from the onset of our knowledge of this serious incident. Our security staff was in constant conversation with Halifax Police throughout the course of the weekend, and up until yesterday's apprehension of the suspect. Again, we were looking for a balance to see how we could contain the information that was out there, make sure that it didn't go any further than the one breach, while still reaching out and notifying those who have been impacted by this.

We found that balance. We were able to engage all of our partners and we are now focused on contacting those who have been impacted.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the information accessed in this breach includes birth dates, social insurance numbers, and addresses. Some of the individuals whose information may have been accessed include clients from the Department of Community Services, the Department of Justice. Some of these individuals are some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

I'd like to ask the minister, what support will she put in place to ensure these Nova Scotians are not harmed by this government's loss of their personal information?

MS. ARAB: I thank the member for the question. Absolutely, the gravity of this for those impacted is beyond comprehension, but we will be working with our partners in other departments to see the best ways to contact and to communicate with these individuals. One thing that our department has committed to is doing free credit checks on individuals to make sure that no credit information has gone out there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

INT. SERV. - DCS OFFICE: CYBER ATTACK - CONFIRM

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. We're hearing stories that two weeks ago, there was a cyber attack on a Department of Community Services Office. A staff member received an email, clicked on an attachment, and received a notice that the sender was looking for a ransom. Department computers were shut down for up to four hours, we're hearing.

I would just like to ask the minister, will the minister confirm that the computer system was shut down for four hours recently because of a cyber attack?

HON. KELLY REGAN: If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, then the Department of Internal Services would be best to answer that question.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Not to my knowledge.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, maybe the two ministers might want to investigate that. Cyber security is a huge issue in the world right now. The government is not exempt from it, as we've sadly learned here.

I guess what I'd like to know is, the Auditor General has reported numerous times on internal control weaknesses with various computer systems, and this government has taken very little action to address those weaknesses that have been defined by the Auditor General, and look what's happened. Look where we are today.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Community Services, is there any attempt by her department to close some of the barn doors before all the horses are out? Is the department doing any tests on the vulnerability of the systems that are within the Department of Community Services?

MS. ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I have to reiterate with the member how true it is, how cybersecurity is something that is in the forefront, and why we have made investments and continue to make investments. We made additional investments of \$1.2 million within this current budget for cybersecurity.

I can assure the member that the protection of privacy is at the forefront of all our minds. Before a breach happens, and especially after something like this has happened, we are going to be constantly running tests and looking at our systems and finding ways to do better.

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

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP BREACH: PUBLIC RELEASE DELAYED - EXPLAIN

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Minister of Internal Services. The minister has spoken at length about her desire to protect the investigation. It seems that her desire to protect the investigation outstripped her desire to protect Nova Scotians, their information, and their right to know what has happened to that information.

Upon understanding the nature of the vulnerability, the minister rightly shut down the FOI portal, but she chose not to disclose the breach for fear it would tip off the suspect. Surely the loss of access to this information would have tipped off the offender that the breach had been discovered.

My question to the minister is, why does the minister maintain that her silence on this issue was in the best interests of the investigation when her failure to disclose only hurts the victims?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Because that is honestly the process that took place, Mr. Speaker. As minister, I took this responsibility very seriously. Working on advice from my staff - they are a very capable team - who had been in constant conversations with the police, we tried to find a balance. The balance of trying to contain this breach to the best of our ability, to allow investigators to do their job, and now come to the point where we have to be bringing this - notifying those Nova Scotians who are (Interruptions)

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

MS. ARAB: This is a very serious situation and finding a balance was very difficult, but it was very important to not impede the police investigation. In doing so, it allowed police to name and identify a suspect, and now we move on to the next part, which is equally as hard: notifying those Nova Scotians who have had their information with us.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I am not a criminal mastermind, and maybe the suspect isn't either. It sounds like all the suspect had to do was little more than say "Hey, Alexa, download a bunch of confidential documents from the Nova Scotia servers."

The natural reaction for anyone who has committed a crime is to ditch the evidence if they think they are about to get caught. But if the minister is correct, her silence gave the suspect five more days believing that he had gotten away with it. That's five more days that he potentially distributed that information rather than deleting it. That's five days that didn't need to happen if the minister had simply informed the public as she should have done.

Will the minister admit that her decision to remain silent needlessly prolonged the amount of time that the suspect felt safe to retain and potentially distribute private information?

MS. ARAB: Mr. Speaker, our decision to work with police and to allow them to do their investigation was just that: to allow them the time they needed to identify the suspect and be able to apprehend them. That was the intent.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP BREACH: PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESS. - COMPLETE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Internal Services. There are very strict regulations surrounding the use of personal information by public bodies. I would like to remind the government that this wasn't one breach; this was up to 7,000 breaches of people's information.

Our privacy laws state that the government must “. . . protect the confidentiality of personal information, and the privacy of the individual who is the subject of that information” so that their information is protected. I will table that.

A crucial part of this law is a privacy impact assessment, which sets out risks and strategies for government’s use of personal information. Government recommends that all new systems, projects, programs, or activities complete a privacy impact assessment.

Was a privacy impact assessment completed by Internal Services prior to the introduction of the FOIPOP portal 15 months ago?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Yes, it was, and I can get further information to the member if he would like.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the response. That’s actually my next question because this privacy impact assessment includes technical safeguards, things like passwords, user ID, authentication, encryption firewalls and intrusion detection. It would appear in this case that one or more of these safeguards either failed or was never in place. The impact statement could give us insight into the government’s perception of the portal security in addition to who is accountable for what the government has admitted is a terrible thing that’s happened.

Will the minister table that privacy impact assessment and any related documentation for the FOIPOP portal today?

MS. ARAB: On advice from my IT staff, all of the tests and protocols on the software had been run. I will do my best to get those documents to you today if not tomorrow.

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

MUN. AFF. - CAPE BRETON: STIMULUS SPEND. - SUPPORT

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As the minister should be aware, the people of Cape Breton are fed up with the province’s continued inaction on the fiscal imbalance between Cape Breton and the HRM. It is unacceptable that in Cape Breton, more than one third of children are living in poverty, roads are falling apart, and as we learned this week, CBRM firefighters don’t have the proper training or equipment. Cape Breton needs more fiscal support from the province now.

Will the minister support the call for immediate economic stimulus spending for Cape Breton?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I'll start off by saying that it was actually that Party that tore up the MOU with municipalities and told them to do more with less.

We have taken a number of initiatives to support the CBRM. We have just granted hundreds of thousand of dollars to support volunteer fire departments across the CBRM to purchase that necessary equipment.

We're working with the CBRM on a charter at their request. We're looking at the legislative tools that they have in place. We're supporting major economic development opportunities with the construction of the second berth and the potential move of the Nova Scotia Community College to downtown Sydney.

Mr. Speaker, we're funding the viability study that they requested for the infrastructure and the future needs of the CBRM. We approved that a few weeks ago. I'll say this - there hasn't been a government in years that is investing as much as this government is in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

MS. MARTIN: If that's the case, then I wonder why Cape Breton is dying. The stimulus money is money we need to keep afloat. A viability study, Mr. Speaker, for the CBRM was recommended years ago in 2014, but the province has barely moved that forward, and the study the province is proposing is just focused on the tax system.

The challenges in Cape Breton are not going to be solved by just tinkering with the tax system, and Cape Breton shouldn't have to wait for the results of a study. Cape Breton needs stimulus funding now. Can the minister please table for this House the total amount of provincial budget that is spent in Cape Breton and where each dollar goes?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, Cape Breton is not dying. We continue to make millions of dollars in investments. We're launching a pre-Primary program to tackle poverty in our community. We're expanding our pre-Primary program. In an environment where we close schools, we continue to hire teachers, and we continue to invest in education.

Mr. Speaker, all the initiatives that I have taken since I have been minister of this department have been in partnership with the Cape Breton regional council. The viability study, their charter, the change to their legislation, looking at fiscal review, the construction of the second berth, the move of the Nova Scotia Community College, the support to arts and culture - that is all done at the request of the CBRM council and the members of that community.

I will say when they were in government, I was a councillor in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, and I saw first-hand the lack of support for social programs and the economy in Cape Breton. This government continues to invest millions of dollars . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for the minister's answer has expired. (Interruptions)

[2:30 p.m.]

The honourable member for Dartmouth East. (Interruptions)

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. (Interruptions) Maybe we should recess now to go take our pictures. (Laughter)

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP WEBSITE: RISK ASSESS. - CONFIRM

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services.

The province is not the only level of government grappling with privacy and data issues. Some governments are dealing with it more proactively than others. In February, HRM sought to hire an ethical hacker to test security vulnerabilities on its network and IT assets. This testing includes targeting exploitable defects in the design and implementation of applications systems and the network. It also includes assessment of web applications like a FOIPOP portal to determine if any vulnerabilities exist and how they might be exploited - and I'll table that.

My question is this, why doesn't the Department of Internal Services use periodic threat risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities and, if it does, what flaw prevented the assessment from finding the FOIPOP vulnerability?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I'd like to thank the honourable member through you, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with him. All levels of government need to be being proactive in terms of how we're dealing with cyber security, which is why we hired an executive director of cyber security just this past year, and why we've invested more money in this last budget for cyber security specifically.

As for our periodical testing, that is ongoing. Unfortunately, with the FOIPOP portal, the tests that we were running did not catch this, and that's unacceptable, but as part of our ongoing process we will look to see what else needs to be done and what more needs to be done.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear what we're talking about. This attack on a public website has raised very serious questions about the trust in the minister, in the government, and in the department. A government employee, an employee doing research, not threat assessment, tripped over a critical vulnerability that existed undetected on a government website for nearly two years. The department says it has tried to contain the loss of personal information including social insurance numbers, but they admit they are not yet investigating which other government websites could have similar vulnerabilities.

My question is, after her department's failure to safeguard private information, why should Nova Scotians trust the minister and the government when they state they are capable of directing a comprehensive threat risk assessment?

MS. ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify one of the points made by the member. We are constantly looking at different threats and testing all of our systems and, through our investigation in terms of this FOIPOP web portal, which is a unique system to any of the others and unconnected to the others in government, we will have to look forward to see what needs to be done, what needs to be changed, and how we can make this important portal that gives access to information freely, which is something that's important to us, but do it in a safe way that avoids a situation like this. That is something that our team will be continuing to investigate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP DATA BREACH: PROTOCOLS - OBSERVED

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services.

In cases of mass irretrievable data loss like the compromised FOIPOP portal, the managing the privacy breach protocol is enacted. Step one of this protocol is to contain the privacy breach and nothing, nothing in this step suggests that the minister should delay reporting a breach based on a high-risk assessment - and I'll table that - and every factor of this breach ranks as high risk in the protocol's risk-rating chart. Yet the minister took days to confirm the breach, and later suggested she was advised to do so by law enforcement. None of this is prescribed in the protocol that the minister claims she faithfully executed.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, why has the minister repeatedly said she properly executed the breach protocol when she clearly deviated from the protocol?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Our protocols very clearly state that containment of information is integral to the protocol process and, as I have said, through current conversations with the Halifax police department and our security team, through advisement and conversations with my senior staff, I had a very difficult job of finding the

right balance of when to move forward and how long to allow HRPD to perform their investigation.

Thankfully, we have a suspect. They have named a suspect. We have realized that the breach has not gone further than that one person. They are doing more investigation. Now our focus is on notifying those people who have been impacted by this breach directly.

MR. LOHR: Part of managing the privacy breach protocol deals with how to notify affected individuals. Yesterday, the minister indicated that government staff would be contacting those individuals to offer their sincere apologies. Section 3 in the protocol, entitled "What to Include," does not mention anything about sincere apologies. What it does prescribe is including specific information about the risks to the individuals involved, and steps planned to prevent future breaches. I will able that.

Since the department is beginning to contact the affected individuals, it must have some sense of what they plan to report about the personal risk and avoiding future breaches. I will ask the minister, if someone's personal information has been compromised, what is the department telling them about their personal risks, and what specific steps are they taking to prevent future breaches?

MS. ARAB: This will be an ongoing part of our investigation. We have started to contact individuals, notifying them that there was a breach. We will be working with other departments to see the best ways to contact them. I understand that there is a lot of sensitive information that has gotten out there.

As we move forward, the investigation that we do on our protocols will continue, and we will endeavour to make sure that we get this right.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

INT. SERV. - FOIPOP DATA BREACH: POLICE ADVICE - CONFIRM

MR. TIM HOUSTON: The government puts very personal private information on display for somebody to find, and somebody found it. Now the government is saying that they want to try to contain the issue.

The fact of the matter is, after the breach was found and the system analyzed, all relevant police file data would have been captured in what they call in the IT world a tombstone. It couldn't have been changed by anyone. The stamps were already there. It was already time-stamped and could not have been changed. At that point, there was zero risk to any police investigation - zero risk. The government can say they were trying to contain it, but what they were doing is creating opportunities for those who had the information to do something with it.

I would like to ask the minister to tell this House clearly: Did the police really tell the government to stay quiet or not?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: As I said yesterday in the House and numerous times today, my senior security team and Halifax Regional Police were in constant conversation, once this breach was identified. Through those conversations and upon advice from my senior staff, we decided to allow the police investigation to move forward, which allowed HRPD to apprehend a suspect.

MR. HOUSTON: The logs, the IP addresses, and everything - they would have been there. They would have been there for the police to look at in subsequent investigations. There was no way that this would have hampered the investigation into finding out how the breach was done. To say that it would is disingenuous. Disingenuous to the people whose information was captured and in the hands of people's hands it shouldn't have been in.

I would like to ask the minister, what does this government say to the people whose information has been out there for days, for weeks, and for a month in some cases? What help are they going to provide to those people to protect their own personal data?

MS. ARAB: As I said earlier, our focus right now is contacting those individuals who have been impacted by this incident. We will be working and investigating to see what protocols need to be in place and what needs to be done with the specific software for this specific program, which is a unique program to others within government.

I also want to clarify something that the member had said. We would never want to impede a police investigation. Anyone that I have spoken to about this understands that hardware is just as important as any software or anything that would be done cloud-based. If IP addresses were there, there's also the possibility that a piece of equipment, a computer, whether it be a laptop or a desktop, could have been destroyed in some capacity.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

TIR - ISTHMUS OF CHIGNECTO: VULNERABILITY - ADDRESS

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Fifty million dollars in trade crosses the Isthmus of Chignecto daily. It's a crucial link for our whole province to the mainland, and every day it is at an increasing risk of being flooded by the severe storms and rising seas that climate change is bringing.

Given that the highway, railway and electrical lines are only getting more vulnerable, does the minister think that the province spending less than \$200,000 for a study is doing enough?

HON. LLOYD HINES: We'd like to thank our municipal partners in the area there who forcefully brought this matter to our attention and to the attention of the federal government, because this is a very vital link in our transportation and all of our travel arrangements in the province and there is a vulnerability, Mr. Speaker.

What we have elected to do is investigate that in a thorough manner by enlisting the significant assistance from the consulting community to help us with that evaluation.

MS. LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the province needs to start improving protections for the isthmus as soon as possible. A Memorial University study shows that the area has been flooded before, and the odds of it flooding again are increasing as sea levels rise. Within 20 years, it won't even take a storm to flood the current dikes, the sea will have risen above them.

We need to show New Brunswick and the federal government that this is urgent and that we are investing a significant amount of funding, and they need to be prepared to match that. How much money in this year's budget is allocated towards coastal protection for the Isthmus of Chignecto?

MR. HINES: The great co-operation that we have among the three levels of government - municipal, provincial and federal - will result in a thorough analysis on an ongoing basis as to what the remedy is for this vulnerability.

The member mentioned a value around a study which is inaccurate, and we are committed to producing a significant document that will determine what the direction is that we should go together with our great partners that we have in the province of New Brunswick.

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

PREM.: FOIPOP DATA BREACH - FILE RECOVERY

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I like every other Nova Scotian was appalled to read that the Premier and the Minister of Internal Services were throwing the Superintendent of Police, Mr. Perrin, under the bus - now they are maintaining that it's senior staff. So, we're not clear as to whether it's the Premier, the minister or senior staff, but the superintendent is clear that it wasn't him who did that.

The police have arrested a young man in connection with the FOIPOP breach. The police have indicated that they have seized certain articles, but have not disclosed which

articles were seized. The public are concerned, as am I, that it might have been their data that has been accessed and it may still be floating out there because of the delays.

Can the minister say if all the 7,000 files, which may contain hundreds of thousands of pages of personal information lifted from the FOIPOP site, have been recovered?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I doubt that anybody in this House would dare throw anyone, any HPD officer under the bus, Mr. Speaker, least of all me. I do want to assure the honourable member what I said outside of this House, that no, Halifax Regional Police did not specifically tell us not to release that information. What we said, we've said that to the media. The matter of fact, what happened was, our senior staff was in contact (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Our senior staff was in contact with the Halifax Regional Police over the entire weekend Mr. Speaker, on advice from our senior staff, the best way for us to contain the very information the honourable member is concerned about, was to try to make sure that we allowed them to go and get the name associated with that IP address, then to execute that search warrant, to ensure that we had the equipment that was used to breach our equipment to make sure that we know who that information has been sent to. We look forward to them continuing their investigation.

MS. ADAMS: Well, I'm glad that you cleared that up. It wasn't the Premier or the Minister of Internal Services, or the senior staff - it was the reporters who wrote what the Superintendent of Police said. The reporters, and what we all read in the paper, quoted what the Premier said, quoted what the Minister of Internal Services said, and then quoted that the Superintendent disagreed with what they said he said. I am going to choose to believe what the Superintendent of Police said.

[2:45 p.m.]

My supplemental question to the Premier, we can all hope that the files went from the department to the private computer of the suspect only. The question is, can the Premier share with us if he knows that that FOIPOP information has not been spread around, and that Nova Scotians don't have to have any further disruption in their personal information?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The fact of the matter is that the very reason the steps were taken was to ensure that we could identify and make sure we got - the Halifax Regional Police had access to that hardware, which would actually answer the question. What we know for certain is that our portal was breached on April 5th. We have an IP address. We know that our system was

breached once. That would make it simple for us to contain that issue around making sure that we could get that hardware, to find out whether or not this information has been shared with anyone, or groups of people.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

SERV. N.S. - BUS. REG.: UNAUTHORIZED USERS - INFO.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia. A lot of people don't understand what we're talking about today. A lot of people find this stuff complicated - it flies over their heads - but at the end of the day, I think what we're talking about here is trust. People trust the government with their personal information. They expect the information will be protected. Why? Because there are risks when it's not protected, and 7,000 Nova Scotians may be about to find out what those risks are.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this AMANDA software includes the business registry. It's all interconnected. I've run out of time already - can the minister say if the Nova Scotia Business Registry has ever been compromised by unauthorized users?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I thank the member for the question. The FOIPOP portal is a unique system that is not connected to any of the others. It is important to understand that this breach occurred on a system that is not functioning like the other operating systems, like AMANDA and others.

I'd be happy to get examples of the testing we do, as I believe I stated already to this member, examples and testing that we do on our different systems to assure him of how things work.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we would very much be interested in seeing that information, because I have some information that would suggest otherwise. Maybe it's wrong, but AMANDA stores all the business registry and licence data in a single location rather than in multiple silo databases. I'll table that information.

Mr. Speaker, that information can be used to apply for an update GST/HST, corporate income tax, and payroll accounts with Canada Revenue Agency. In the wrong hands, it can also be used to misrepresent, breach contracts and obtain personal data without authorization. I will ask the minister again for clarification. I'll go to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia, if he wishes, to confirm if the Business Registry of Nova Scotia has ever been compromised by unauthorized users.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member for the question. To answer specifically, no, I am not aware of any time that any of our four

registries under the Department of Service Nova Scotia has been breached. Certainly, that's something where we can dig for more detail.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this, we're embarked now on a multi-year, multi-million-dollar transformation of all our four registries, and the licence question, which that Party has asked many times, for the very reason of security. That's what this is all about. That's what we're trying to do.

I know this topic is a subject of attention for Nova Scotians. They want to know that their information is safe, Mr. Speaker. No one on this side of the House - no one in any of our departments - wants to have any situation where Nova Scotians are worried about their information that we have. We strive every day, we make a lot of investments, and we do our very best to make sure their data is safe.

The members opposite can continue to make these attacks about what's happening with our province. We don't want to hurt anybody. We don't want their information breached. We want to make sure that Nova Scotians' data is protected and we'll continue to do that in every department in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to inform the government but we have two extra minutes today in Question Period - and the pain is not over yet.

Mr. Speaker, Service Nova Scotia won an Innovation Award from CSDC for its use of the AMANDA system. The government's innovation extends to linking the Nova Scotia Business Registry Database to the point of sales system for Service Nova Scotia. That includes transaction details, payment methods, and personally identifiable information.

Mr. Speaker, that means - and we'll await confirmation - it means possibly even more personal and business information is connected to a framework that this government has admitted, and we now have proof of, is vulnerable.

How many businesses would be affected if these same CSDC vulnerabilities were found in Service Nova Scotia's implementation of AMANDA?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I did forget about those two additional minutes.

Mr. Speaker, look, again, and I can provide the House with more detail, what we're doing and it's a subject of multiple years and a major investment in transforming our systems, our four key registries for this exact thing, it's about identity, it's about payment, it's about communication with Nova Scotians, and it's about security.

These are the things that every government across the federation and across the globe strive to do. These security threats, these potential breaches, the perpetrators who are

out there are trying to get access to our system illegally, it's unacceptable. That's why on behalf of Nova Scotians, we'll do everything we can to make those investments and protect their information.

None of this would ever be intentional, Mr. Speaker, we come each and every day to make sure that we do everything in the best interest of Nova Scotians.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, if the government felt that they didn't . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put By Members To Ministers has expired.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I know you'll be ruling in a few moments about our request for an emergency debate. Again, it's predicated upon the discrepancy between the minister and the Premier and the police and how they made their decision.

Mr. Speaker, we find through this Question Period . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. There's no further debate on the topic that's already been submitted. So, I do appreciate the effort.

The House will now recess for a few minutes.

[2:52 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:20 p.m. the House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We will now move to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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 House on Bills.

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

[3:21 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[4:58 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 79 - Property Valuation Services Corporation Act.

Bill No. 82 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 84 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 87 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

Bill No. 104 - Research Nova Scotia Corporation Act.

Bill No. 106 - Insurance Act.

Bill No. 108 - Cannabis Control Act.

without amendments; and

Bill No. 52 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 66 - Volunteer Services Act.

which were reported with certain amendments by the Law Amendments Committee to the Committee of the Whole House without further amendments;

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

Before we go back to the Government House Leader for Government Business, I'll bring my decision on the request for emergency debate as brought forth by the Official Opposition House Leader earlier today.

I received more than two hours notice of the matter required under Rule 43(2). Under Rule 43(4), I am required to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed. I have considered all the factors set out in Rule 43(4)(a). This is a matter of grave concern

to Nova Scotians and which concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government and could come within the scope of ministerial action.

I took some extra time. Obviously, we were deliberating, I was deliberating on the bill introduced by the Opposition and took great care to consider the contents of that bill versus the contents of the request for emergency debate, and I am satisfied that the contents are different.

I do not believe that it is likely that this will be debated within a reasonable time by other means, so I will read the motion and ask whether the Official Opposition House Leader has the leave of the House for the debate to take place.

The motion is that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance. The subject of the issue has been described by the Official Opposition House Leader as a discussion of the government's failure to make a breach of privacy on the government's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act website, and the harm and the failure to make the breach of privacy on the government's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act website, and the harm and the failure it could have on hundreds of Nova Scotians.

Does the House agree to give leave for the motion to be debated?

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[5:00 p.m.]

The leave has been given. This debate will take place today at the time of adjournment as provided under Rule 43(11).

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, April 13, 2018, between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period we will move to the third reading of Bill Nos. 52, 66, 79, 82, 84, 87, 104, 106, 108, and with time permitting, we will move to Committee of the Whole House on Bills to consider Bill Nos. 65, 99, 107, 114, 116, and 118.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House adjourn to rise tomorrow, Friday, April 13th, between the hours of 9:00 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 until tomorrow, Friday, April 13th, at 9:00 a.m.

We have now reached the moment of adjournment and we will move over to the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, who is deferring to the honourable member for Pictou East. Each member will have a maximum of 15 minutes to speak on the topic of the emergency debate.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 43

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

GOV'T. (N.S.) - FOIPOP BREACH

MR. TIM HOUSTON: This is a serious issue before the House today, and really, there's no reason for us to be in this situation. In fact, the actual breach itself was completely preventable. Totally preventable, if the government had taken proper actions, but the fact that it happened in this day and age - we talk about the importance of cyber security, and the awareness of cyber security. We see things like Facebook and Equifax, and all kinds of instances where there's security breaches. Governments are not exempt. Governments are not exempt from that, and this government has unfortunately acted as if it were exempt.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the calling-card came today - proof that we're not exempt. A breach of personal, private data of Nova Scotians. Once it happened - oftentimes, it's the reaction to the event that will define the memory of it. In this case here, we had a government that said they didn't want to make the event public because the police had asked them not to. They were working with the police department, and that's the reason it wasn't made public. Then we know that the police said, well, that wasn't their understanding of it. We've seen the description of the events kind of morph a little bit. In Question Period today, we heard the Premier say: well, it wasn't actually the elected officials that had this instruction from the police that nothing should be said, it was senior staff.

So it smells of a cover-up. We start off with, well, we couldn't say it because the police didn't want us to, but when the jig is up on that one, it becomes, well, we couldn't say it because somebody else told us that maybe the police said that we shouldn't disclose the information.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd just like to remind the honourable member for Pictou East that I'm going to be very stringent on the language here, and the context. So, in fact, the word cover-up in this context, is in fact, unparliamentary. So, I'd just ask you to rephrase that, and I'm going to be listening very carefully to all members as they talk, as we move on.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll retract the use of that phrase.

It strikes me as odd that we've seen so many stories in such a short period of time. The first story we heard was, working with the police, couldn't say anything. We heard that story to resounding applause in the House yesterday. At numerous times, the Liberal caucus erupted into applause over how great it was that they were working with the police. Unfortunately, the working with the police part had a bit of a different interpretation when we got down to the facts, and we've kind of moved.

Through it all there are three things that are important here. One is personal, private information got into the hands of the public, and real people will pay a real price for that. Real people should be concerned and will be concerned about what may have happened to their data once the government failed to keep it protected.

The second thing is that it shouldn't have happened. It is shockingly unsophisticated, is the way that IT people have described to me the government's actions to protect this data - shockingly unsophisticated. It is amazing to people that the government had basically put this information out on display for somebody to find. It is shocking.

The third thing is the reaction, so you have the real people who are impacted, you have the fact that the government didn't take proper steps to make sure this didn't happen and then you have the response to it. This will shatter Nova Scotians' confidence in government.

Why are we here? If you think of the different courses of action, the steps that could have been taken to secure the data over the last months - over the last years, over a certain time frame - if you think of the steps that could have been taken to secure the data that weren't taken, but then when the breach actually happened, to have the government keep it quiet and not immediately inform people that they were at risk; what is the word for somebody who sees something happen, and knows it can cause harm to somebody else, but does nothing? What is the word for that, Mr. Speaker?

What has happened here is our government saw something happen, is aware of something that happened, and chose not to tell people that they could take steps to protect themselves, and there are steps that could have been taken. The people could have informed

their financial institutions, they could subscribe to services like LifeLock, which would protect their identity, but they weren't afforded that opportunity until many days had passed.

There's really no explanation for that. Maybe we'll hear some explanation. The first explanation was co-operation with a police investigation, insinuating that the police investigation may have somehow failed, I guess, if they would have told the people that their data had been breached. I guess that's the insinuation, that had this government told Nova Scotians that it failed to protect their very personal information, if it had told the people about their own failure, that it somehow could have jeopardized the police investigation. Is that the insinuation? Is that what we're led to believe by the sequence of events?

I don't believe that notifying people about the breach would have jeopardized this police investigation. I don't believe that for one second, and I question why that was said.

When we think about the information that was in the files, we are only left to speculate on what may have been received in those 7,000 documents. We've been told that hundreds of them contained personal information, and the rest contained other information, I guess.

We can't lose sight of the fact that the information that was in those files, somebody may have been requesting that for a court case. They could have been requesting it for a custody case. We don't really know. It could have been people who have different motives for requesting information.

If the Nova Scotia Teachers Union is mounting a legal action against the government, well, that may have emerged from the patterns of information that it had requested. It's nobody's business, but the failure to protect that information jeopardized some of that strategy, for sure.

There could be detailed medical information about people in there that was requested. That's the level of privacy that could've been invaded here.

If the situation was - if the case is still to be made that the police investigation could have been jeopardized - and again, I've heard different versions of that. On one hand, today in Question Period it was said, well, the government made the decision not to inform people of the breach because they wanted to contain the breach.

I do believe they wanted to contain it, but I have a different interpretation of "contain" in this case. They've made the case that they wanted to contain it so that maybe the person who accessed the information didn't know that they had been discovered, because I guess if they had known, they might have destroyed the hardware. There's a lot of dots to connect there, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think those are this government's dots to

try and connect. If the police wanted those dots connected, they would've asked for them to be connected, but they weren't.

After the breach was found, after the breach was identified and the system was analyzed, all the data relevant to the police file would've been captured, and it would've been tomb-stoned. It would have been locked down right at that moment in time. It couldn't have been changed by anyone who even wanted to.

So the implication that, well, something may have changed - it's just not true. But if it had been true, the police would've asked for it. I don't believe that they did. There was zero risk to the police investigation at that stage once it was locked down. Zero risk.

Yet the risk to the victims is exponential. The risk to the victims was very, very large. People should've been informed that this had happened. The victims had the right to be told what information of theirs had been breached.

It leads to a larger question of the seriousness of this government to protecting data. Today, it's a specific cohort of 7,000 documents, hundreds of which were people's private information and social insurance numbers. Mr. Speaker, imagine what you can do with somebody's social insurance number. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada said, "Your social insurance number is important to privacy protection because it can open the door to your personal information and put you at risk of fraud and identity theft." If somebody has your social insurance number and your birthdate and your full name, there's a lot of things they can do, all the way from apply for a credit card to rent out a property to rent a car. There are a number of things they could do.

Imagine how fast the world moves. Why would the government wait? Why wouldn't the government tell people that this had happened? The answer may have been disclosed by the Premier in his response to a question in Question Period, when the Premier referred to working with the police as opposed to - I forget the exact words - using this situation to the benefit of our Party, for his Party.

In other words, the reference to the governing Party, including that reference in his statement, gives a bit of a glimpse into the mindset. How do Party politics play into the fact that hundreds of people had their personal information - who even thinks that way? Who even thinks that way, Mr. Speaker? I think we may have got a bit of a glimpse into why people weren't informed, in that one statement.

[5:15 p.m.]

The insinuation that telling people, giving people the opportunity to protect themselves against identity fraud, would have somehow jeopardized the police investigation in some way, shape, or form is a little hard to take. When I couple those things

with the reference to Party politics, it makes me think that there's some other reason why people weren't informed. It wasn't to do with the police investigation.

If you think about the amount of data that the government holds on each of us, whether it be an application for our driver's licence, birth certificate, marriage certificate, passport, or any type of application that you have made to the government for any type of grant - imagine the type of information that the government holds on each of us. Imagine if that was at risk, somebody else had it, and the government didn't tell you, didn't tell us. It's not right, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: It's my pleasure to rise to speak on the very serious matter of the breach of some data within the Province of Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by saying that I'm very proud of the work that the Department of Internal Services - the professionals there, our cybersecurity experts - have done in this process. I'm amazed that within six days, somebody has been arrested, and we have recovered the computer. I think it's just phenomenal.

I will get to why, and I'll give the data behind it in terms of, if we followed the Opposition's approach, we could have had all this data put on WikiLeaks. We could have had all this data sold (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, if we had tipped off the individual, who knows what they could have done with this data. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about some of the data breaches that have happened throughout North America. In the state of Texas, 3.5 million people had their social security numbers breached; in South Carolina, 3.6 million; Georgia, 6.2 million people's social security numbers were breached (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. This is the last time I'm going to call order on this debate. There will be turns for other members to speak, so I would encourage all to reserve your comments for when it's your turn to speak.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

MR. KOUSOULIS: At Virginia Health, it was 8.3 million health records, and the individual actually taunted the FBI and demanded a \$10 million ransom; the U.S. Office of Personal Management, 8.3 million records; Veterans' Affairs, 26.5 million social

security numbers; National Archives, 76 million data breaches. The U.S. voter database was actually completely wide open for the whole world to take all the information that they capture.

That last one, they call it a low-tech data breach. That's what we faced here in the province. This wasn't a typical cybersecurity attack that was trying to come through . . .

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Did they cover it up?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou East will come to order. If I have to speak to you one more time, I'll have to ask you to excuse yourself.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, thank you for extending me the same courtesy we extended the honourable member when he was speaking.

What I would also like to add is Equifax 143 million records of SIN numbers, credit card numbers. Yahoo had a breach of every single password.

This is common, these breaches. What is less common is protecting yourself, and this province has done an excellent job, and the staff at Internal Services does an incredible job protecting the data of our citizens. It's not known to people in this House, or to the general public, that we have over 1 million knocks on our door of people trying to access our data in an unauthorized manner, 1 million a month. Microsoft actually faces 1.5 million data breach attempts per day. In 2015, there were 1,000 Malware ransoms per day. Within one year, it went up to 4,000, by 2016. I'm not sure where it stands today.

If you go to the Norse Attacks map, map.norsecorp.com, you will see all the data attacks happening in the world. This is common. Most individuals are not even aware of the data attacks happening on their own personal computers, let alone large databases such as the government.

When I was the Minister of the Department of Internal Services, I had a chance to go to a Gartner conference, and a big part of that conference was cybersecurity. This was two years ago. One thing the individuals from Gartner said - and they had no reason to share this - they said we were light years ahead of every other province in terms of cybersecurity and protecting our data. The other thing they said is that in terms of how we have our database set up, and our cloud strategy, also protected individuals' data. What we had here in a data breach within six days, we had an arrest and we had the computer in our custody. To me, it's phenomenal.

The Opposition has been trying to paint a narrative that six days was too long; it should have been made public. Maybe it should have been made public after one day in

their view, maybe after two. You know what? I don't know that answer, but what I do know is that if it was made public too soon, without all the right information, the anxiety the individuals would have felt would have been much greater. At this point today, every individual whose data was breached is getting a letter, and they will have the information they need. It's factual and it has the complete investigation behind it. Before we deliver those letters, we had to have the facts, and we had to deliver the consistent message to those individuals.

I'm also going to talk about what the leading U.S. cybersecurity organization says about notification on breaches of data, ". . . issuing flawed information that must be corrected later exacerbates trust issues If law enforcement becomes involved with this process, the investigation will understandably take longer." This organization says that without law enforcement, notification to individuals should happen in less than 30 days - without law enforcement.

What we did here in the Province of Nova Scotia - I'm still amazed that we were able to get the IP address, how we were able to go to the courts. We were able to then have a search and seizure, go to the individual's house, arrest the individual, and take their computer in six days, Mr. Speaker. It's phenomenal.

When I actually looked at U.S. laws in terms of notification, no law in the U.S. says that notification happens in less than 15 days, and laws are generally between 15 and 60 days. We don't have such laws in this province. I think it's something that we should consider in the future. I'm pretty sure that law would not say, notify people and give them misinformation, and create a whole lot of anxiety within two days of knowing that there is a cybersecurity breach.

Again, I will go to the timelines. We became aware of this cybersecurity breach on April 5th, less than one week ago. Yesterday, the individual was arrested, and we have the computer in our hands, in the police's hands, for the investigation.

I said earlier - and I truly believe it - if we did what the Progressive Conservative caucus is saying that we should have done, the individual would have been tipped off and then what could the individual have done? They could have copied the data on a memory stick. They could have e-mailed it around the world. It could have most definitely resulted in identity theft. We're not even sure if the individual has done those things, but what we do know is the likelihood of those things happening now is less because the individual was not tipped off, in terms of us being on to the fact that the individual was being looked for and being investigated.

Now, it is true that the individual, if they went back to the data portal, would have seen that the portal was down, and it might have raised their concerns. If the individual was following Twitter, he would have seen the discussion around this matter yesterday, the day before, and that might have tripped him off as well.

When you look at these types of situations within the cybersecurity world, the way you try to contain them is you know the individual is going to do one of two things, and this loops right back to where I started.

It will be fight or it will be flight, and either situation is not good, because if it's flight, what they're going to do is they're going to wipe out their hard drive or they're going to take the hard drive and throw it over the bridge in the harbour, and we're never going to retrieve it. Then we have no actual, concrete data that the individual captured that record other than what's on our end and then we have no case against the individual in a court of law.

Now, flight would be okay, but what if they decided to fight? What if they said, the police are on to me, I've seen in the news that they're coming after me, and now you know what, I'm going to fight this? What could they do at that point? Take 7,000 people's records - some of it SIN numbers - and throw it on WikiLeaks to sit there for eternity, for the world to access those records. Now, if something like that had happened, what kind of conversation would we be having today?

Let's wrap our heads around that. It would be the most awful thing that could happen to those 7,000 individuals. Now I pray for them because having your identity stolen, having someone take a credit card out in your name or do various other things - that would be an awful thing to have to go through. What I do hope is that none of those individuals' data has been breached beyond the computers that we've already seized.

The individual from Argyle-Barrington said we don't know, and he's right. We don't know because it's so easy to put a memory stick into a computer and copy data, and that's something we won't know for a while and that's why we're notifying the 7,000 individuals, so they can be aware of the exact information that was breached.

This is a very serious matter. I think what we should all do in this House is actually not only thank the Halifax Regional Police Department, because the response that they took in this matter was absolutely incredible, but we should also be thanking our senior experts who are in CIO - part of Internal Services - for the great work they did.

None of us in here are security experts, and what we do have here and we talk about - the opposition has said the minister should have done this, or the minister should have done that. Well, what the minister did is listen to the experts, and I would hope if the Progressive Conservatives or the New Democratic Party ever go into government, that they're going to listen to the advice of the civil servants who are subject matter experts.

Mr. Speaker, we had 7,000 documents breached and hopefully it was contained. I do know that if we followed what the Progressive Conservatives have said, it might have tipped the individual off, it might have ended up on WikiLeaks. It might not have, but I sit here with amazement and go back to what the story is here.

Six days after a breach, an individual is arrested, and we brought the computer into custody. I don't think that's ever happened anywhere in North America. I'd be interested in somebody Googling that and seeing if there has ever been such a response and an arrest to any breach of security.

I will also go back to the way we compartmentalize our data to give people in the public a sense of assurance. Having visited our data centre, it's a remarkable place. I asked the question, if somebody does get in, what can they see or where can they get to? In the data centre, everything is compartmentalized.

So, if you do actually breach the firewall, they would know about it immediately and, in this situation, there was no firewall breach - as I said earlier, this was a low-tech breach. The high-tech ones are easier to identify. It's the low-tech ones that are worrisome. When you do get behind that firewall, they have redundancy placed in there, they have walls placed so you can't jump around. All of our data is not in one database, or on one hard drive. It is separate. So, if an individual can access part of data, they're not getting all the personal information of an individual, they're getting a fragment of it. Within a database, there are firewalls that keep people out.

[5:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, we sit here and we talk about how this is our first serious data breach, and it is, but we also should recognize that there are over a million attempts per month, and the individuals in Internal Services are holding off these attempts. I will also add, part of Internal Services was bringing all of this expertise together because prior to the department amalgamating there were other areas of government that had their own servers, and they didn't have the proper protocols in place and now they do.

When we take a look at bringing everything together, we brought resources together for cyber security, a director was hired. In this year's budget, it was mentioned earlier, over \$1 million was put in for cyber security because we had recognized, even before this breach had happened, that this is a serious issue. We know there are people knocking on our doors every day, not only our doors, every government door, every computer we all own. As we sit at home there are people trying to get into our computers. We all get the emails: reply to this link and I'll give you a million dollars; I'm a prince somewhere; all you have to do is reply and I will give you this; just send me your full address and then we'll go from there.

That was the old way, now people are getting a lot more sophisticated. You get the emails now and you kind of look at it sideways and you're like, this doesn't really seem kosher to me because the emails are a lot more sophisticated. That's one of the ways cyber security breaches happen.

One thing I do think everyone should do is be very careful with your own personal computers, be very careful with your own data. But I can tell everybody, Mr. Speaker, through you, the Province of Nova Scotia is protecting people's data and they are doing a fantastic job at it.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: I couldn't agree with the minister's last comments on that, Mr. Speaker. We're here having an emergency debate about a sensitive issue and the government is trying to downplay the seriousness of this issue.

The government wasn't even aware of this for over a month. What's going on there? We didn't hear anything from the government on why it took a month for a third-party company to identify or to acknowledge that there was a breach of sensitive information. I don't really give a hoot about what's going on in the U.S, it could be 10 billion accessed information in the U.S. What we're concerned about and what we're debating here today is access to information about Nova Scotians.

It could be one, it could be two, it could be one million, Mr. Speaker. This is extremely serious and we want to know - I think Nova Scotians will want to know what has transpired to get us to this point that we're here having an emergency debate on breach of data on a government server. Why did it take a month for the company to indicate to government that there had been an issue with a portal on information that only a select few should have when they apply through that portal to get information?

We're trying to get information from the government when we ask questions, when the media asks questions over the last number of days, Mr. Speaker, and we haven't gotten straight answers, I don't believe. That's why there's confusion sometimes. The minister just mentioned that there are 7,000 Nova Scotians whose information has been accessed, but I was at the technical briefing and I heard there were 7,000 documents that were accessed and that we don't really know how many, or the government doesn't really know how many Nova Scotians have been affected. I thought it was around the 200-to-300 range, but we don't know that.

Of course, we have more unanswered questions now after the minister spoke, Mr. Speaker, on how many people were affected by this, and we don't have the answers for why it took a month for the company to indicate that there had been a breach. As was stated in the media, and I think in the House, over the last couple of days, somebody stumbled across this portal being open and the access to this information being open. It was a public servant who was doing some research on the portal, is my understanding from the technical briefing, some of the comments from government, from the minister, and from the Premier, there was a typo and then, all of a sudden, a bunch of information was there that they didn't request, and they alerted whoever within government about that.

I don't think anybody is saying they want to jeopardize the ability of the police department to do their work by engaging and reaching out to those who may be affected by this. By no means do I think the government should have gone out immediately and told the public there's a breach, but I don't feel that if the government went out and tried to engage with those people whose information had been breached they would be running out to the media saying, here we go, we're not going to catch somebody who might be behind this.

I do want to commend the Halifax police department for their quick action - their quick action - on this case. Even then, through Superintendent Jim Perrin's comments, there are more unanswered questions. We thought the government had indicated to us and to Nova Scotians that because of discussions with the police department they needed to hold off on making this public. Superintendent Perrin indicated that that wasn't the case; they had no discussion, no discussion at all, with anybody in government that the government should hold this information close to their heart. So, of course, it leaves unanswered questions and concerns for not only MLAs here in the House but for Nova Scotians.

People impacted by the personal files, Mr. Speaker, are people who are engaged through the Department of Community Services and the Department of Justice. Often these are low-income individuals and marginalized Nova Scotians who are engaging in getting services from those departments.

I am concerned. I know the minister has indicated, I think it was through a question that I asked today and maybe through the media, that they will be covering the cost of credit checks, but it might not be just tomorrow or once. I hope the government is there for an ongoing period for Nova Scotians once we get the true number of how many may be impacted by this information. I think the government should have done a better job of engaging on that level with those affected.

I'm sure if someone from the government or the Department of Internal Services called Nova Scotians and said, listen, this is what's going on, we need you to help us ensure that we catch whoever is doing this, please don't report this, don't get on social media - I don't think there would be one person who would say, no, I'm going to report this on my social media page and hinder any kind of investigation on this.

I know through the technical briefing that they were asked if there are some checks and balances about the safety of this program and the portal by Unisys, which is the third-party company that oversees the running of this. It was indicated that about 15 months ago, when this came alive, there was a rigour test to make sure that it was protected. But I don't believe there was any ongoing testing to see if someone could hack the system.

I know that that word "hack" has been used over the last few days, but I don't believe that may be the case; the system just had an open door to this information. You

didn't need to hack it. I'm not a computer guru, Mr. Speaker, but I think if I was on that site I would have been able to gain access to that information, not knowing how to hack anything. It was a flaw in the system; it was a flaw in the ability of Unisys to keep that information protected.

I would think, because I recall being in government, that protecting sensitive information is important, extremely important. I know as Minister of Health and Wellness, when there's any breach in health care from people gaining access to health care information, it's serious. There are lawsuits; there are people going to court. It's a serious, serious matter. Some of the things that I saw and heard and dealt with - it was one episode of someone accessing one file, and here we're talking about 7,000 documents. It's a serious, serious issue. I would have thought there was an overarching contract, maybe, or agreement with some kind of IT cyber security company that oversees everything, because you don't leave the monitoring of a program up to the people who are delivering it.

The whole purpose is for some third party to oversee the third party, if that's really how it goes, but really that's what it is. You would want an external cyber security organization or some kind of contract or company overseeing the protection of our information from all the different providers that we have.

I would agree, the government mentioned that Unisys doesn't have access to every single file and data portal that we have. There are a multiple number of companies and duly respected on that because it's important stuff for having access to these services, but I would think there would be an overarching company or something monitoring that. We haven't heard anything from the government about that. Where does that stand? Do we have somebody overseeing this? It's a question that I have.

We know that the breach occurred around March 3rd or March 5th, and it wasn't discovered until April 5th - as I said, about a month later. As I said, the vulnerability was discovered by an employee accidentally. It wasn't someone going in trying to test the site, trying to see if all those checks and balances are in play, and that should be concerning to all Nova Scotians. The thing is that government has failed to put basic security measures in place to protect highly sensitive information of hundreds of Nova Scotians.

They have failed in this, Mr. Speaker, and we know that we need better controls. If the government doesn't even know about it - if that public servant didn't do what they did, who knows how long it would have been before someone had realized that that information was available, that portal was open, and how many more people would be affected? Maybe, we would see 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000. As I said in my opening statement, it doesn't matter if it's one million or if it's one, one is too many, and the government has a responsibility to make sure that those protections are in place.

The one thing definitely, Mr. Speaker, is that this breach is embarrassing to the government. Did that play any role in a delay? I believe there has been a delay in getting

this information out. The minister was asked directly on the floor of this Legislature about what was going on with the website. I learned on Friday evening that the website was down and that I may be called upon as critic to talk about it, but later in the day on a Friday evening, I think most people were trying to get out of here and move on with business.

But the media asked the minister and asked the Premier. I know there's a level of frustration with them on trying to get some straight answers and getting information. There's nothing worse than being given information that's not correct, Mr. Speaker, or that we find out later on didn't really happen, in the matter of the police department saying that the government shouldn't release any information about this. Government needed to go into damage control, I guess, before transparency.

I think the previous speaker missed the point, Mr. Speaker. They missed the point that sensitive information needs to be protected and Nova Scotians need to have confidence in the government that they have the security in place, that they have the checks and balances in place, and that they're willing to admit there are issues, there are deficiencies, and tell the full story.

We're not going to have all the information in front of us today, but I sure hope over the next coming days and weeks that Nova Scotians hear more from the government on exactly what did transpire and how they're going to ensure that this doesn't happen again.

[5:45 p.m.]

Of course there's always going to be attempts to obtain personal information. Identity theft is something we all know is very real now. Interesting enough, even though with the advances in technology, how quickly someone can get that information - I mean everything from the tap watches that I know some of my colleagues have to pay things. Everything is on our electronic devices these days and it can really cause trouble for those Nova Scotians who might have their identity stolen and we don't know.

Maybe the minister knows a little bit more information. He probably does, he's in Cabinet, there are discussions there. But he hasn't delivered enough, I think, to us and Nova Scotians to say okay, alright, we're confident that the government has a handle on this, no worries, no problem, let's go back to normal.

That's just not going to happen. There needs to be a serious look at what our cybersecurity looks like in the province and make sure that we have the protections in place and that if we are using third party companies to provide this service, there's someone looking over their shoulders to make sure that there's controls in place. You just look at what's going on down in the U.S. right now with Facebook, Mr. Speaker. They are in charge of a lot of information and they are in front of a Senate Committee in the U.S. government.

This is serious. I think people are concerned with that and I hope that over the coming days the government is more transparent on answering those unanswered questions and addressing the concerns that many Nova Scotians have.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk on this. What I find really frustrating in this whole thing is this whole concept of trying to cloud the issue and a sleight of hand that the government seems to be . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Honourable member, I want to remind you that the phrase “sleight of hand” used in that context is unparliamentary.

The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

MR. JOHNS: I apologize. Is misdirection an appropriate word?

MR. SPEAKER: I have to hear how you’re going to use it.

MR. JOHNS: If I can, Mr. Speaker, I guess there seems to be a lot of emphasis being placed on the person who accessed the site here. I don’t want to say “hacker” here because I guess I would use the terminology of perhaps a hack hacker because I think this was something that somebody stumbled on. I don’t think this was an attempt to breach the site or the information. Even the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education did say - he brought up that it was a low-class data breach and I would agree with that.

What I would say is thank goodness it was a low-class data breach because if somebody really wanted to know what they were doing and get in - I don’t feel secure that the checks and balances have been put in place. Ultimately the responsibility to give that assurance not only to the Opposition Parties but to Nova Scotians in general rests with the government to ensure that the checks and balances are in place. I don’t feel they are when somebody can access information this easily.

Obviously anybody who knows anything, I mean the police tracked this down based on following an IP address. Anybody who knows anything would run it through a VPN and say they are in some other country. This was a mistake that somebody happened to find the information but I am really not confident in what would happen. I know that when the minister spoke, he said a million hits or a million attempts to get in. I really don’t know because I’m beginning to think that if somebody really wanted to get into the site, they’d be able to. The responsibility to ensure they don’t rests with the government and I don’t see where the checks and balances have been put in place.

We’ve hired a company and we’re suggesting - or the government has hired Unisys. The checks and balances we assume are in that contract, we assume they are going to hire.

There are people that you actually hire - I believe the layman's term would be a white hat hacker. What they do is, they are hired by an association to try to see where the vulnerabilities in a system rest.

In this case, this low-breach data security breach – this is low class; it didn't take a high-level hacker, and I'm concerned what a high-level hacker would be able to do.

I go back to the fact that not only are Nova Scotians encouraged by the government to utilize on-site Internet and on-line delivery services such as the one that's used here for FOIPOP, they are encouraged or redirected to use those, and it's our responsibility to ensure that that information is secure and that there are no breaches.

I certainly do commend the HRPD Cyber Unit for how quickly they were able to turn it around, but I'll tell you, if I access somebody's credit information and had an ill intent, within two days - a month - within two days, in two hours, the damage that can be done to somebody's credit rating, literally the effects will go on for years and years in people's lives.

People just do not understand what the implications are of having that information out there, when somebody creates a false identity, how long that can follow you through your life. That can follow you for the rest of your life - every time you apply for a passport, credit cards, or you go for security and criminal record checks. Once that information is out, that can follow you, but what isn't being talked about is also the impact that information - who made those requests?

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there have been FOIPOPs that I have personally put through when I was a member of Halifax Regional Council, that I would not want the general public or anybody to know that I put that FOIPOP in.

Whether it's through media, whether it's members of government, or whether it's environmentalist groups, people put in FOIPOPs all the time with the expectation that the information will be provided for them. Nobody puts in a FOIPOP request with the expectation that the world is going to know you put in a FOIPOP for a request.

It's not just the financial implications we are talking about here. That information gets out and it can have an impact on people, whether it be an individual or even - we talk about the reporters - I'm sure there have been FOIPOPs that reporters have put through that they don't necessarily want to be out there.

I think, you know, to talk to that - and I do understand that it was not 7,000 people and I do understand it was 7,000 documents, but of that 7,000, what really highlighted to me was that it was said that 250 of those were highly sensitive, personal information. That is what really concerns me - it's that wording.

I did have an opportunity to attend the press briefing across the street when it happened, and one of the questions that one of the media members asked at the time was whether or not this was the only time that this has ever happened. I believe, and I would defer to the following speaker from our caucus who was also in the room, that the deputy minister at the time or the tech person who was there said, no, this isn't the first time.

Even if this is not the first time, we'd like to know. We need a clarification around this, and not be trying to focus on some 19-year-old kid who was goofing around and happened to come across this stuff. Even to download the documents - you can go on the Internet and find the script that he used in probably five minutes.

I think what's happening is that there is a lot of focus being put on the person who accessed the information, but the reality is that coming across information is not illegal; it's what you do with it - it's the illicit act that you do with it. If I took that information and did something illegal with it, that's another thing, but if I stumble across a website that wasn't secure, the onus of security is on the owner of the website - it's on the owner of the data, not on the person who stumbled across it.

I really think we need to stop talking about that and start talking about why, and what data checks were done, and what companies were hired to go in and try to hack these systems, and what assurance was the government provided by Unisys that that information is safe? At the end of the day, that is what Nova Scotians expect. They utilize these services, they expect that their government services - I use Facebook. I know that if I search for headlights for my Jeep, that information is going to get out there. I mean, I just assume. It's Facebook; it's social media. But when I'm using a government site, the expectation is at a higher standard than when using other things. In this case, it's our responsibility - it's the government's responsibility - to ensure that services provided are at that higher standard, and I don't feel that that's what's happened here.

Like I said, I do echo what the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education said in regard to how the police dealt with this. I think the cyber unit and HRP should be commended on how quickly they dealt with this. But I'll tell you, if my credit card or any personal information was accessed and something bad happened because there was a two-day delay on somebody calling me and saying, "Brad Johns, your information's out there. You'd better cancel your credit card and get hold of people" - if I'm in a mall and I lose my wallet, I have all that information copied at home. The first thing I do, if I can't find my wallet, is go home and start making phone calls - cancelling cards, putting holds on stuff. Two days can make a huge difference.

When we talk about why there was that delay, two days is a huge difference. It can change somebody's life for the rest of their lives through identity theft.

I will say, if a police officer called me and said, "Brad Johns, we have some information. We believe that your data's been leaked, that some information is out.

However, we don't want you to say anything, because we want to be able to catch the perpetrator. We're worried that if this gets out, we won't be" - you know what is Brad Johns doing? He's shutting up and letting the police deal with what he has to, Mr. Speaker. I'm saying nothing to nobody. I'm not putting it on social media. I'm not talking about it. I'm going to let the police do their job. But I would love to know, so that I can cancel my cards, so I can fix my ID, so that the impact on me is at a minimum.

Not only did the government have a responsibility to ensure that the information is secure and double check it, but they also had a responsibility to notify people so that they could have dealt with it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank all members of the House for indulging me here for a few minutes with respect to this debate on security and information and breaches that we have.

It's an important conversation. There's no doubt about it. As the world changes, obviously technology and the sharing of information are a big part of who we are. We all exist online and on the Internet and through IT platforms of various kinds, whether they be government or private sector or Facebook.

These things are real, and they affect all of us. For any government, for any lawmakers, as we say we are here in the Legislature, it's always a concern. It's always something that we have to take very seriously.

For many of us - I'm sure that many of my colleagues here, on all sides of the Legislature, are following the debacle around Facebook: 87 million pieces of information, 87 million people impacted by this. It's an incredible breach, in that sense, that someone as smart as the people at Facebook, the geniuses who developed such a revolutionary platform, could seemingly be hacked so easily. One analytics company went into their systems and mined that data and collected all kinds of information about people and about organizations and about how we interact.

The travesty of this information being shared is one that we all have to be concerned with. This isn't fun stuff. It's not novelty information. This is our lives. What we share, what people share on Facebook - it's everything that we are. When you start to mine these things, when you put it together the way Cambridge Analytica did, you begin to make profiles of voters. Obviously that information is very sensitive and critical - to be used illegally by organizations and by political Parties and by people who want to get an advantage over their opponents. That's what that was about.

[6:00 p.m.]

To listen to Mark Zuckerberg being before the U.S. Congress, to talk to the U.S. House on Capital Hill and discuss all these things that happened and how sorry he was - that didn't matter, because these breaches cannot happen.

I think everybody can appreciate how serious this issue is. For us, we're the government of the day. There's no doubt about it. Having the opportunity to be in Cabinet, to see what we spend on security, the conversations we have about how our information - as a government, as taxpayers, as Nova Scotia residents - is protected is critical. Nobody takes that lightly.

I think it's fair to say - and again, I'm sure the Opposition will respectfully disagree, but I believe that we've made good decisions on the fiscal management side. One of those pieces is that we make the required investments, the smart investments, in data security and in protecting Nova Scotians' vital information.

I think about my own Department of Service Nova Scotia. We have the four key registries: Joint Stocks, which cover businesses and non-profit organizations; Land Registry; Vital Statistics; and of course, Motor Vehicles. Think about the wealth of information that exists in those databases, Mr. Speaker. Think about how many Nova Scotians - everybody is impacted by one or several of those four registries.

We've got to make sure that that data is protected, and right now, I can honestly say that Nova Scotia, through the leadership in that department by the deputy minister and her team - I'm not taking credit for this - has done incredible work. We're national leaders in advancing those four registries. What that means is that it comes from the archaic systems that we have now of standard analog-type systems, databases, old school Excel spreadsheets, into a digitized format that can be used, that can overlap, that can be shared, that can be created as one profile. People can make payment, we can communicate with people, but most importantly, their identity exists through these four registries.

The member for Northside-Westmount questioned me a number of times about licences. The biggest aspect of that shared licence procurement is about the protection of identity for Nova Scotians. These things are what we do. It's a huge investment of time. It takes several years to transform these systems, and it's a massive investment of money, but we're going to do it, because it's important for Nova Scotians.

The key part of all of this is making sure that every step of the way we get it correct, that we do it right, because it's important to protect the data. That's what matters here. That's why we're here today.

So the theme of my comments is that nobody on this side of the House, nobody in any department in government, is downplaying the significance of this. The minister, the

Premier, all the government caucus members - this isn't something that we take lightly. We're not trying to brush it off. We don't pretend it didn't happen. We're debating the process - when we were informed, when it happened to prior to us being informed, what all went down with the police, the communication back and forth.

The bottom line is that this is very much regrettable. We did not want this to happen. We never want this to happen again. There's no amount of money - there's no way to ensure that this will never happen again. Ask Mark Zuckerberg.

The reality is that we've got to do our very best. The way this process was handled, again, we will defend it - we're here defending it tonight - but the reality is that this is part of who we are, because information and online data sharing is part of our system, government and private sector.

Part of the struggle for us is defending it and taking criticisms from the other side of the House as if they wouldn't be capable of this. As if, if they were government - so I'll take the Tory caucus, the member for Sackville-Beaver Bank who just spoke; my old buddy. He said that maybe people just fell upon this, they didn't try this on purpose.

I wish it was that simple. I wish that we could see the world in that way, that this was just an accident. The staff member who discovered it, it seemed to be they were doing other work and they encountered this - that's true. But I don't believe that anybody who's accessing thousands of pieces of file information just stumbled upon it.

The member said, well, if they stumbled upon it, I mean, it's not up to them. It's up to the people who should secure it. But if we find a wallet on the sidewalk, it's not up to the person who lost it to get that money back, and we can just take it and run. That's not how the system works. If there's a security breach, it doesn't mean people can have a free-for-all and this person can share and access and sell or steal this information. That's not how it works.

When these things happen, we have to take the steps not just to identify what went down and how it occurred but what we can do to ensure that, as we've been saying, we cornered that information. Whether it be hardware, a computer, or an IP address, we have to make sure that we have this information contained. That was part of this whole endeavour.

Again, to listen to the Opposition - I understand what the Opposition's job is, but to act as though this is something that was intentional because we're just an incompetent group of people over here is very strange. I know that no member of the PC caucus believes that if they were on this side, there's no way a breach would take place.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: It's the cover-up we're worried about.

MR. MACLELLAN: It's the cover-up, okay. Mr. Speaker, now we're in the cover-up. Again, that's the (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou East will excuse himself for the balance of the debate.

The honourable Government House Leader has the floor.

MR. MACLELLAN: Again, there's nothing that I'm suggesting here that's so inflammatory that someone from the other side has to suggest this is a cover-up. Is that the language that we're going to get used to here in the Nova Scotia Legislature? Is that as good as we can do? We called an emergency debate this evening to have this discussion, and now we're into heckling, using words like "cover-up." Is this the best we can offer? This is the Nova Scotia that people are striving to? This is what they're going for?

Mr. Speaker, I only mentioned that caucus because this will happen again. The investment and the things that we do will impact this for many years to come. Again, from the inside, understanding how we got here, we have made the investments, we have made the decisions, and we have understood the infrastructure around how this all works. This happens easily.

You know what? I do get the member for Sackville-Beaver Bank's point that it can be a random occurrence and it can be things that happen out of nowhere. Sometimes they're systemic, they're high level and they're high quality, high sophistication. Sometimes they're not. We're exposed to all those things, and again the biggest companies, the biggest countries, the largest organizations in the world are subject to hacks.

I'm using the PC caucus, and I know the NDP House Leader said some similar things, but I will only use the PC caucus because I would like to table a story from March 9, 2016. The title of this news article is, "Nova Scotia's PC caucus website hacked with erectile dysfunction ads." Did anyone on that side of the House think that was funny? Did anyone think that that's something that just happens and ha, ha, ha, you laugh it off? It's a funny subject, Mr. Speaker, no doubt about that. Everyone had a laugh and, at that time, there was a lot of humour around that particular breach.

That is a breach that is no different than any of the other things that we have to deal with on a daily basis, the hundreds of thousands of attempts to break into our own personal emails, to our constituency offices, to the Department of Internal Services, to Service Nova Scotia, the PC caucus, the NDP caucus, our grassroots organizations, the private sectors that operate in this beautiful province. We are all open to this, and when it happens you feel very defenceless.

Again, all of this is very regrettable for us. I think about the incredible work - again, this is not a sympathy speech - that the minister has done defending this in earnest. Ladies

and gentleman, and Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, none of what she's saying is false. There's no malintent here. She didn't try to mislead anybody on the opposite side, anybody in the public. The conversations, again, about the communications between the police back and forth - all of it was in earnest.

The members will talk about how this happened a month ago and we only found out about it last Thursday. I get it. That's very concerning for everybody. The fact that these things happened over very spaced-out, large amounts of time is a very concerning thing. Facebook didn't know that they exposed 87 million people to hackers for a very long time after it all took place. The election was over. The impact of that data, the way it was mined - it was already used; it was already in play.

This is a very tough situation. We're in the moment, and you're trying to decide what the best thing is. We did, without question, have people as part of the security group in the Province of Nova Scotia say, let's do our best to give as much time as we possibly can so we can catch this person, put him in jail, and collect his hardware. Again, that's a piece of this whole conversation that is subject to debate, and I get that. That absolutely makes sense.

The fact of the matter is that that was our best call. We got this person in six days - tremendous work and hats off to the Halifax Regional Police. They were the ones who led the charge. They were the ones who put their sophistication in place, and they got this done.

On the communication piece, and I know the minister has been talking about this and the Premier has, there was no malintent. If there was something that we were required to share immediately with Nova Scotians, I think we would do that. We would all do that, on all sides of the House. There would never be any reason for any of us to keep sensitive information, personal information, things that are part of a Nova Scotian's identity and not share that with them. But in this particular case, making the decision with people who have been through these things before giving advice that the longer you can provide to not scare this person into doing something with that hardware - that was a credible piece of this.

In closing, I'll say this. I want the members opposite and all Nova Scotians to know, Mr. Speaker, that this is not something we would ever want to happen. This is not something where, in my opinion - and I know there will be more conversation about this - there was lack of planning or lack of preparation or some oversight. I know that across all departments in the Province of Nova Scotia, led by Internal Services, we do our very best to understand what physical infrastructure pieces of the IT technologies that are out there are available to us and what software is available to us.

In fact, we have a number of companies here in the innovation sector on the peninsula that work on these things every single day - a number of companies. We have several in Sydney working out of New Dawn that focus on security. So if you have a number of cutting-edge companies working on data analytics, protecting security, avoiding

breaches, and building firewalls, all those things mean that this is a big problem. We recognize that it's a big problem.

We did not want any of this data breach to take place. We followed the protocols that were in place. We did the very best we could to protect Nova Scotians' information. Mr. Speaker, we want to work with all our partners to make sure that this never happens again.

We'll make the decisions, and we'll learn from anything that happens with respect to data breaches. We'll make the investments because that's what we have been good at, in my opinion, to make sure that we make investments that protect Nova Scotians.

We don't ever want this to happen again, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to do our very best to protect information for all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I have been listening closely to my colleagues in the House from all sides. I have no doubt that the people who do this work, who protect this important information, do good work, but unfortunately these things happen.

We can talk about all the people in the States, the millions of people whose data has been breached, and they have become vulnerable to cyber attacks. We can talk about all of that stuff in terms of numbers. We can talk about it as though that's a more important problem because it's that many more people, or we can talk about this problem being fairly not so important because it's just 7,000.

I just don't think we can talk about such incidents in this way. If a person has become vulnerable because of a mistake made or because of lack of protocols or whatever, then that is a person who has become vulnerable. I think what this debate is missing so far is putting a face to what actually can happen in the life of somebody whose identity has been stolen.

We can talk about all this top-level stuff. We can use the words that are not allowed to be used. We can talk about how someone really messed up, and somebody's job should be on the line and all those things. We can get at this issue up there. But actually I think where we need to look is down here where we look at people who have to deal with the issue of identity theft.

For a moment imagine - hey, we're all busy people. We work very hard. We are here late hours or we work in our constituencies. We're hard workers. We have busy families. We have partners who work hard. Life sometimes feels like a bit of a treadmill or a rollercoaster. Imagine any one of us going home and finding out that our bank account was drained, or our credit cards were jammed up because of something like this, because

of some kind of cyber attack, because of some kind of identify theft. Or we're on our way out of the country and our passport is blocked, because somebody else has made a passport with our information.

[6:15 p.m.]

People who have privilege and people who have people who can help them, this would be a huge issue for any one of us. I would feel like - I would be pulling out my hair. I wouldn't know what to do. I would feel like it's just one more thing, it's just too much to deal with.

Then imagine people who are involved with the Department of Community Services and the Department of Justice for a moment. This is where we understand that most of the information that was taken, or that was exposed, has to do with people who are involved with those two departments. The most vulnerable people in the province, I think it's fair to say. Some of the lowest-income people, and some people who have unimaginable stress and pain in their lives, that we can't even grasp.

Now imagine that that same situation is happening to them. Think about that for a minute.

I have a constituent in my riding who is going through a terrible situation. She needs help from the Department of Community Services. She's been evicted. She has had to have all her teeth removed, which means she can't work at the job she was working at, because she needed to speak as part of that job. She's in incredible pain. The removal of her teeth has caused several infections. She can't get access to the drugs she needs because she has no money. She's had to borrow the money for the emergency surgery in the first place, and now she can't get access to dentures or to replacement teeth. She has said to me: I can't take it. I cannot take what is happening to me.

Imagine if the day that someone puts money in her bank account to pay for those dentures that she needs, she goes to pay for them and it's gone - which is actually a real possibility here. Again, we don't know what exactly the information that was taken was, but we have to talk about this issue and the situation in the what-ifs, because they are all actually real, or possible.

That's just one example of someone for whom it would just be unimaginable, a further beating on what she's already experiencing.

What about a family, for instance, whose children have been apprehended by the Department of Community Services? They do all kinds of work. They do all the parenting classes that they're supposed to do, they do all of the work, they meet with their counsellor several times over several months. They do all that good work, and then their children are returned to them. But of course, when children are returned to a family, there are lots of

stipulations. There are all kinds of checks that happen - for a good reason, of course, but that family is in a very vulnerable situation. If one thing goes off the rails, those children could be removed again.

One of the things that could go off the rails is that the money disappears from the bank account and they can't pay their rent, so those children are under-housed, and whoops, we need to put them back in foster care. (Interruption) Exactly. That's a very good point. My colleague just said we know how Community Services handles overpayments. We wouldn't want that situation happening.

Then, of course, there's the very basic situation of a mom with a couple of kids, a single mom who is on ESIA, who has just enough money to pay the rent, maybe, and then a little bit of money left over to buy the groceries. She's just keeping it together, and she's one of the people calling for massive rate hikes and is saying that it's difficult to make ends meet.

Again, one little imbalance, one little mess-up in her situation, an extra obstacle, is going to throw her into a tailspin.

Daily, people come into my office and they say things like, I can't take it anymore. They say things like, I'm going to give up. I hear that all the time. People who are involved with the Department of Justice and the Department of Community Services are under levels of stress that most people can't imagine. This is one more piece that could just be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

I also want to talk about identity theft and the breach of privacy for another marginalized population that I actually hear from a lot in Dartmouth North, and that's the transgender population. People have come to me with issues over their identity, they change their names and their gender markers on their ID, and then five years later they go to the doctor and boom, their former name comes up and their old gender marker comes up.

The issue with this, aside from being humiliating and frustrating and annoying, because you have to go through all those processes again, or figure out why that has happened, is that they can be outed in places that they don't want to be outed. That can be very dangerous for transgender people, like life-and-death dangerous.

There is a portion of the population of the transgender community that would be involved in the Department of Justice and the Department of Community Services, so these people are extra-vulnerable, and it's life-and-death vulnerable. If their information is released, and gets into the wrong hands, they could be the victim of a hate crime, or lots of other things. They could lose their job. We know that transgender people are discriminated against in their employment, they could lose their job, they might not get a job that they

were looking for, all kinds of different implications that we might not be thinking about when we're thinking about those thousands of people out there in cyberspace.

I also wanted to detail for the House, and maybe this is obvious information, but I actually looked it up, because I wanted to make sure I knew what I was talking about. I want to list some of the things that a person's personal information could be used for when it comes to identity theft. They include accessing bank accounts, so that's an obvious one, accounts being accessed and drained; opening new bank accounts, which is confusing and troubling, and makes it weird when you go back to the bank yourself; transferring bank balances; getting loans and credit cards, which ruins people's credit ratings if they're used improperly; making purchases; hiding criminal activity - oh great, I'm already involved with the justice system, and now my name is going to be connected to some other criminal activity, that's awesome for my parole or whatever; and obtaining passports, like I said.

I just wanted to highlight some of the personal things. I guess what I would like to ask the government in this case - and I'm sorry it's not Question Period - but I really want to know what the government is going to do for those people. Earlier in Question Period, the Minister of Internal Services talked about doing free credit checks to make sure that credit ratings are protected, but there are plenty of other vulnerabilities. We need to know if people have these situations that I've highlighted as possibilities, that this happens to them and they are in these situations where it could mean the difference between an apartment or an eviction, or it could mean the difference between putting food on the table or not putting food on the table, that they are going to be protected by the government - "compensated" is the word I was looking for.

In the last few minutes I have to speak, I would like to say that it appears from what we've heard, that this crime that has happened, this breach, it wasn't a high-tech breach. We know that it wasn't a cyber attacker who hacked into a highly-protected system. It was more along the lines of a filing cabinet with important files being left unlocked and then put out on the sidewalk.

No one should go into that filing cabinet. I mean, I might, because if I saw a filing cabinet on the sidewalk, I'd be like, oh, is that to take? I'd just take it to my office. I like a good deal. But if I was to open it up and saw private government documents in it, I'm going to close it up and call the police.

I would suggest that, yes, there is a crime of that person taking that information, but there is some onus on the government to lock that filing cabinet and then probably take it in from the sidewalk and put it into a locked room, perhaps, and maybe put an alarm system on that.

Let's take responsibility. I'd like the government to fully take responsibility for the seriousness - I think we've heard that from some members of the government, for this

problem, this breach - and make sure that the government commits to protecting the vulnerable people who this will affect in the worst way.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, this is my first time to speak to this and I want to thank you for your ruling allowing this emergency debate to happen.

One of the greatest sins that a public representative can commit is the release of personal information. We as MLAs are entrusted with tons of information. Lots of stories, lots of issues that we all have to protect. This is the greatest sin.

I can understand why the government is trying its best to, I think, trivialize some of the information that's gone forward, and some of the policies that they followed. But, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't one breach. This was 7,000 breaches. This is 7,000 documents that got out of the hands of this government.

I'm going to go to the document that was provided to the House on April 5th - kind of ironic that the managing of privacy-breach protocols and forms were tabled by the minister on April 5th at 2:22 p.m. in QP, so breaches were on her mind. I don't recall what the question was that got this released on Friday of last week, but here it is.

Let's talk about what a "breach" is. As defined by the Privacy Policy, a privacy breach occurs when there is an intentional or unintentional unauthorized collection, use, disclosure, disposal, modification, reproduction, access, or storage of personal information that is in violation of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or the Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act.

There's an explanation of what some kind of breaches are. I guess this one would maybe fit under snooping through files or database systems, looking at personal information that you have no need to know, and maybe downloading - I think it's actually in here somewhere.

So, it was on the mind of the government on Friday, April 5th. Why don't we maybe go through the timeline that was presented by the government?

Let's start way back. April 1, 2016, the government started using a system - or started designing the system - from Unisys and CSDC Systems to manage the FOI system. On January 6, 2017, a little over a year ago, the online portal was launched.

What's not in this list, I guess, is when the breach actually happened, but that was sort of towards the beginning of March. April 4, 2018, at 8:51 p.m., someone notices a problem with the portal and left a message with, I believe, the CITO's office or the

responsible office. It wasn't until the morning that staff received a message - I think it was at 6:27 a.m. At 8:15 a.m. on April 5th, the government tells Unisys to shut down the portal. It's kind of funny, because 8:15 p.m. on April 5th, they shut down the site because of a possible breach, and the minister did table this document at 2:22 p.m. on that same day.

At 9:15, Unisys tells the government that there was a breach between the 3rd and 5th of March. On April 7th, more user logs were reviewed and a cybersecurity team at Unisys and CSDC and other government review the incident; they called Department of Justice to discuss the issue. On April 7th at 9:00 p.m., HRPD was contacted. On April 8th at 2:00 a.m., the police assigned the Cyber Crime Unit to it.

On April 9th, the police executed a production order and then the Privacy Commissioner was contacted. As a matter of fact, I think April 9th is when I asked my question to the minister about what was going with the FOI portal, in which she gave me an answer of, it's down, we're going to put it back up; you can call the 1-800 number or send us a fax.

On April 11th, lo and behold, the public notification. So there's the timeline and I am sure the minister, when she gets up to speak after me, will reiterate some of these things, what policies were followed, when this happened.

The notification issue is one problem that we see the department, the minister, the government failed. We feel, and I think most people would feel, that there hadn't been a public notification earlier than Wednesday morning.

So, maybe it was in the policy that they shouldn't do a public disclosure at that time. The notification and report on the breach in the Managing a Privacy Breach document - notification to affected individuals may not be required for every breach. However, notification may allow affected individuals to reduce potential harm to themselves caused by the breach.

To determine if notification is necessary, the analysis of the nature of the breach, the amount and type of personal information involved and the potential for harm to the affected individuals are all factors to be considered. You have to look at contractual obligations; risk of identity theft, which I will cover in a few moments; risk of physical harm; risk of hurt, humiliation or damage of reputation to the people who might have been disclosed; risk of loss of business or employment opportunities; and legislation requires notification.

In effect on organization, is there a possibility of loss of confidence in the organization or, in fact, client relations? If so, a notification is most likely appropriate.

So, on the last dot, Mr. Speaker, on the bottom here, where they're supposed to look at the notification of the report on breach, effect on the organization - is there a

possibility of loss of confidence in the organization or impact on client relations? If so, then the notification is most likely appropriate.

Nowhere in here it really says that you need to make that public. Yet I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that it should be a public notification. Even to the point that when I had the opportunity to ask the minister about the shutdown of the FOI portal, that she would have been well within her rights to say, listen, there's a problem, there has been a breach, we are investigating it right now, and we'll get back to you tomorrow. I would have fully accepted that as a response from the minister, and I would suggest that maybe the media would have accepted as well. Instead, I got an answer and a tabling of a document, and basically, a denial that there had been a breach on the FOI website.

That is what the issue is, Mr. Speaker. I know the member for Glace Bay tried to protect his minister in talking about the breach on the Progressive Conservative caucus' website versus this privacy breach, but they are not the same thing. There were not 7,000 files downloaded. The files did not contain private information which could include social insurance numbers and birthdates, names, and addresses. There is a huge difference between those two.

You know, we are in a time - and I know when the minister spoke he talked about Cambridge Analytica and Facebook - we do have a heightened sense for these kinds of breaches and issues. We do have a heightened sense for these things and we know it does happen and the member for Halifax-Sable Island, did bring up the issue of these things happening around the globe. It doesn't make it any different that the information that we have accidentally released here through this breach is Nova Scotians' information, information that we are supposed to protect as public representatives. That is the difference, Mr. Speaker.

It does concern us in this information why it took more than a month for someone to find the possible breach and exactly what that person was doing when they were looking around and made apparently a typo which is how it was explained at the public release on Wednesday. It does concern me that, you know, regular checking of these websites did not pick this up, but I don't think that's necessarily an issue. I'm sure the minister has a response to that and they'll talk about the protocols that are followed, but, again, it's about the notification issue. Why did the government have to wait five days before they told the public?

The other challenge that we have is that there are other systems in this province that use a very similar kind of technology. Yes, they may be protected by firewalls and not in the same locations and those kinds of things but it doesn't mean that the technology is not similar and the possibility of typing an URL or writing a script to type in that URL that they can't get other information off the government website. I hope those holes are being filled.

Then we get into the issue - I know the minister is sincere when she apologizes to Nova Scotians for this happening, and I don't fault her for it. But I can tell you that she is going to have to answer some tough questions should this information get into other people's hands. Right now, I think the government feels that it's contained, that the HRP has the computers and that that information may not have gone public, but she's the one responsible for this and I can tell you, if one person is negatively affected by this, we'll be asking harder questions.

I don't really want to have to do that because I know she's sincere in her apology to this, but it does bring back the issue of transparency to this discussion and the one thing that bothers me the most about this issue. I know there are protocols and there's a lovely book and I quoted some pieces - I can table it again but I know it was tabled a few days ago. I'd like to keep it and read through some more pieces of it.

What isn't in here is, it never talks about when they notified the Premier's Office. Nowhere in here does it talk about the interventions or possible interventions of the Premier's Office, because I know what happens in the Premier's Office sometimes. Holy cow, let's not bother with this. Let's try to contain this and get beyond the House sitting so that we can't discuss it here. I'm not saying the minister did it, but I'm going to tell you people on the seventh floor at One Government Place probably did, and that's the part that pains me the most that the information coming before us is not here.

That brings me to the issue of the Halifax Regional Police saying that we should hold this close to our chests versus we didn't tell them that at all. That's the point that I think brings us more over here to this emergency debate. I took the minister's words and the Premier's words as they were presented, that they held on to these things because the HRP asked them to hold it until their investigation was done, or to a point that they felt comfortable in releasing the information. Then we found out, after Question Period yesterday, during their press conference, that they had had no conversations of the sort with the police department.

I'm just trying to figure out which person is correct. Is the minister correct - or was the superintendent from HRP correct? I think that is what I want to hear the most from the minister - who is correct in that debate, in that discussion of the release of this information?

Why did she hold on to it beyond my questioning a number of days ago? What was the involvement of the Premier's Office in trying to hold this back until the House rose either this Friday or into next week, when we all knew we were coming to the end of our debate on many of these bills?

All governments should learn from those kinds of mistakes that the first thing that we need to do when public confidence is in question is that we simply need to come clean on it, tell Nova Scotians what happened, and tell them that we're going to try to find ways to remedy it. That is what we should have done here.

The minister knows that's probably what she should have done here, but I know someone probably pushed her into doing something different, and I think that's what is at issue here today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, let me start off by saying how very sorry we as a government, and I personally, are for the breach that occurred. It's a terrible thing, and we are now fully investigating to reduce the chances of it happening again. But this is not a quick fix. There has been much debate in the House and outside of it on this topic.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk a little bit about why we as a government follow a breach protocol and how it facilitates end-to-end analysis and evaluation of the situation at hand. Recently government introduced a new privacy policy that follows a more consolidated corporate approach than was in place previously; it also modernized and consolidated the breach protocols to accompany this.

This protocol was thoroughly researched, which included cross-jurisdictional scans at the provincial and federal government levels as well as across all privacy commissions. The protocol in place today is based on best practices and is very similar to that set up by Nova Scotia's Privacy Commissioner. This protocol also consolidates best practices across government.

The protocol itself sets out four key stages or processes that will help to move through a privacy breach. They are: contain the breach; evaluate and assess the risk; notify and report details; and investigate the cause.

The first and most important step in this is containment. We need to stop the breach and ensure it does not continue as we review, step-by-step, what has happened. Containments include supervisors and IAP services staff, assessing the breach and gathering information, taking steps to prevent further breach of information, and establishing a team to respond to the breach.

In this instance, Mr. Speaker, all of these steps were followed; in fact, in very short order. Once the issue was raised, the portal access was taken down within a half-hour and the vendors were engaged in trying to find the cause and solution. Staff from IAP services and the cybersecurity unit, as well as IT experts, participated in ongoing discussions with the vendors to seek out various component issues and to identify exactly what happened. This prompted a thorough review of the site and user information. It was through this that the breach was identified and measures taken to manage the breach. IAP services have been on top of the issues and following the breach protocol every step of the way.

The first step, as I have mentioned, was to contain the information that was inappropriately accessed, as much as possible. We did this by working with police and

allowing them to proceed with their investigation while balancing the need to disclose as soon as possible. This was very difficult. It was very difficult to find the right balance between these two things - not wanting to hinder a police investigation, but still recognizing and understanding the importance of notifying those impacted.

Mr. Speaker, the next steps are already under way to notify the impacted individuals, and our top priority at this time is to contact those who are most impacted in the highly sensitive category. That has started, and we expect all of those letters to be sent by the end of the week. Those not classified in the highly sensitive category can anticipate their letters to be sent by the middle of next week. Our priority are those individuals who are highly impacted, particularly those that the member for Dartmouth North spoke of, our most vulnerable.

[6:45 p.m.]

It's also important to note that this breach of information could lead to unanticipated consequences related to the applicant's credit, as mentioned earlier. Government will be offering credit check services to those individuals whose highly sensitive information was unduly accessed. This will be through a third party, with government covering any associated costs. Staff are currently gathering information on the services offered by different providers and how to set up the process. We will continue to work with these individuals.

The FOIPOP portal is a unique system that operates separately from the other aspects of AMANDA, as pointed out by the member for Inverness. There's no indication of any compromise to our other systems, but staff are continuing their investigation, and the cyber team is on high alert.

So, Mr. Speaker, why didn't we know about the breach? All week Internal Services has been working with the vendors, Unisys and CSDC, our cybersecurity team, and an independent third vendor, who are conducting a comprehensive review of the system to identify and rectify any vulnerabilities. Government will also have a third party test the site to make sure it is safe before being brought back online. We are also working and co-operating with Nova Scotia's Privacy Commissioner and keeping her abreast of the work. This has been ongoing, and we will continue to do so.

In this day and age, when emerging technology is more sophisticated than ever, we must recognize the threats that accompany this. I'm talking about cyber threats. These are very real and serious threats to the delivery of public sector services, but also to the protection of data, data like that compromised through the FOIPOP portal. People are continually becoming more skilled in technology use, and their knowledge continues to grow in this area. We must be diligent and continue to keep our eye on cyber threats and keep advancing our protections in this area.

Nova Scotia's cybersecurity team is actively involved in the cybersecurity breach of our third party service provider. We follow a structured industry best-practice approach for cybersecurity incident response management. Mr. Speaker, cybersecurity risks represent a significant threat to the delivery of public sector services, the protection of data including privacy information, and ultimately the physical safety of people. No organization is immune to cyber attacks.

It is not just a question of preventing these attacks but also one of detecting attacks and being prepared to respond and recover from successful attacks in a timely manner. Nova Scotia understands this and has committed to investing in and augmenting our ability to protect against cyber threats, along with investing in our ability to detect, respond, and recover from cyber attacks.

We have made significant progress over the past several years, including the hiring of a Chief Information Security Officer, the establishment of a cybersecurity and risk management division, the realignment of government and health cybersecurity experts under the cybersecurity division, investments in modern cybersecurity tools, and a multi-year strategic plan to improve our cybersecurity capabilities and tools and increase the cybersecurity team.

Every department plays a critical role in managing cyber related business risks and the management of cybersecurity. It's a shared responsibility among all departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. Mr. Speaker, it is much more than an IT or technology issue. It's a business risk with shared responsibilities across employees at all levels. In this budget, there was an increase of \$1.2 million in the area of cybersecurity, along with an additional two positions to help combat this threat.

We will continue to find ways to do better. We know that the FOIPOP portal offers many benefits to citizens. We hear from many people looking for more and more access online, ways to make FOIPOP requests and have responses delivered at the touch of a button. This is the strength of the system. The system enhances accountability and transparency and allows completed responses to be shared for the benefit of all, not just the applicant. It offers better, faster service, and we want to be able to ensure that that will be the case again soon.

At the end of the day, government followed a protocol that is based on best practices from across the country, but let me assure all of the members here that we take the protection of privacy for our citizens extremely seriously. It is on the forefront of our minds, and we will strive every day to do better. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: I appreciate a few minutes to talk about this. I think we've heard in great detail from a number of members - the member for Sackville-

Cobequid and the member for Argyle-Barrington - about the facts of how this breach came to happen. We've heard the minister talk about it.

I want to talk about something a little bit different, which I think - to my colleague the member for Argyle-Barrington's point - is the real reason that we're discussing this. I think it has to do with the posture or the attitude or the response of the government at this moment.

As I was thinking about what to say here, I remembered the first day that I was ever in this House. It happened to be the day that the now-Minister of Health and Wellness introduced the budget that the government then ran on. I remember being - I think the only word I can use is "shocked" at the number of times that the government stood and applauded itself in the duration of presenting a single budget.

I see now, having been here for almost a year, that there is a way things are done in this Chamber. This is one of the ways that things are done: a member of the government says something, someone yells out "good, minister," and everyone else applauds. At this point, it's frequent enough that I don't notice it so much anymore, but I have to say that on that day I was so struck by it, partly because what had piqued my interest was the goings-on both with the Film Tax Credit and with education. Even though I disagreed with the government, I think there was a part of me that wanted an acknowledgement that in order to balance the budget, which they did, they had to make hard choices. I wanted to see the making of those hard choices reflected in the presentation of those choices.

I didn't see a single iota, Mr. Speaker, nor have I subsequently. What I really wanted to see, and what I think we all want to see now, is just a little bit of humility. Every once in a while in this House, you'll ask a question of a minister and the minister will say something like, "I'll look into it for you," or "I'm not really sure about that issue, but why don't you come and talk to me afterwards and I'll talk to your constituent." It's like a cool drink of water when that happens, because it's so refreshing and it's so out of the ordinary.

I'm sad to say that that did not happen in this case. In this case, in the last two or three days, we still just hear overwhelming applause by the government's own members every time someone gets up to speak about this. Frankly, it's somewhat shocking. Again, we are talking about something where - which I think the member for Dartmouth North very clearly pointed out - injury has been done to people. Whether or not the government believes that they've handled this appropriately - of course, we'd argue that they haven't - injury has been done. I think the minister has recognized that in her remarks, and I appreciate that, but with the exception of that and a couple of other remarks, again, I think we've heard what can only be described as a lack of humility.

I think this is the exact kind of situation when that lack of humility becomes a big problem. Frankly, I would argue that if this government had a little bit more humility, the choices made might have been different. I think the choices around whether to come clean

with the public might have been different. There would be less pride on the line. There would be less of a need to constantly, always, only be making the right decision.

We hear it all the time, Mr. Speaker. This government makes hard decisions. I'll be the first one to say it. They're balancing the budget. They're doing it in a way we don't approve of, but it's the choice that they've taken, and in taking that choice, they're making difficult decisions.

What I would like to hear, Mr. Speaker, is an acknowledgement that difficult decisions are being made, and a forthrightness which I've been searching for since I took my seat in this Chamber. I think that this is the perfect example of why that kind of forthrightness, that kind of humility is required, because I would argue that with that posture, with that attitude, I don't think things like this happen.

I understand that all governments do it. I'm not just picking on this government. I'm picking on the system as a whole, but I'm saying that if we could approach things in a different way, if we could have humility, if we could, in fact, take a moment when we hear bad news, and instead of filtering it through damage control, have the very first point of reference be who is impacted, and how are they hurt, and how can we help that. I submit a different decision would have been made.

Today, and in the days to come, we will continue, as will our colleagues, to press the government to do what they can to make this right. The minister has signalled that they're committed to doing that. I believe that they are, and I believe that they will, and if they don't, certainly, we'll hold them accountable.

Even today, we haven't heard contrition. We've heard contrition for the fact that it happened, but not for the steps that were taken, not for the fact that it took so long for this House, and the members of the public, to be alerted to this breach. I submit that that is simply not okay. It shows profound lack of humility, and I would say, a lack of judgment.

We know that there are hundreds of people, maybe more, who have had an injury done to them. So, step one is to remedy that. I suggest that there is another remedy required for the people of Nova Scotia, and it's one that's a lot harder, I suspect, and that's for a little humility from a government that's made a big mistake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I have about four minutes. I was giving this some thought, listening to everybody speak, and I don't know a lot about the person responsible for getting into the government's system. I know they're a young person. I know they're very young. We can't, you know - what they did was wrong, and I'm reminded of that movie, *Catch Me if You Can* - based on a real story, a true story - and that

individual was so good at what he was doing, I believe it was the FBI that ended up hiring him to help them to protect against fraud.

In this case - I'm not saying it's fraud at this point, because we don't know - but the point being, I wonder if the government is considering hiring this person to help them, because this person was successful in getting into the system.

What that person did was wrong, and I think the question that has to be asked, does the minister believe the department she is responsible for did anything wrong? The system failed. Is it just a mistake?

I think the question that then has to be asked is, how hard are the minister and the department trying to prevent these mistakes, and how well is it working, and what is the evidence behind that? Is there responsibility - we think about the police - the government was not asked to delay informing the public, yet we heard in the first responses in Question Period that the government buried this because the police wanted them to. We found out that that wasn't true. Is the minister responsible for that?

Why would they do that, Mr. Speaker? Was it to help the police? If the police didn't need the help, the only other thing we can think about is it wasn't breach control, it was damage control. The government was concerned about damage to the reputation of the government. The conclusion that I have is that the government seemed to be more worried about its image than it was about informing the public. If the police basically confirm that with their statement, it's pretty hard to argue against that.

I think that the minister and the government - and the Premier answered these questions too in Question Period - should be focused on the people's interest, on the public interest and not on controlling the impact that it has on the reputation of the government. The people's interest is what we should be focused on in this Chamber.

I think that the government needs to think about that. They can't just push this off as some mistake that can happen elsewhere in the world. They have given some examples, and that's fine, Mr. Speaker. But it wasn't just what happened. It was the government's reaction to what happened. I believe it was wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for the emergency debate has expired.

The House now stands adjourned.

[The House rose at 7:02 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1290**

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas Lynn MacDonald is a school social worker who has served schools in Halifax's North End for many years; and

Whereas she recognized the inequity in students' opportunities for new experiences, learning, and fun, especially during the summer; and

Whereas Lynn MacDonald spoke and organized tirelessly for years to enlist support and finally, in 2016, to help launch the North End Opportunities Fund, which has supported more than 100 children and youth;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature thank and congratulate Lynn MacDonald for her leadership and contribution to community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1291

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas Ifthikhar (Ifty) Illyas, Jemina Illyas, and Joey Bayers have volunteered for 13 years with Down Memory Lake Karaoke; and

Whereas at one time they visited as many as five different manors and now visit Joseph Howe Manor and Dr. Samuel Prince Manor on a monthly basis; and

Whereas along with 10,000 possible songs, Ifty, Jemina, and Joey also bring smiles and a social occasion to low-income seniors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature thank and congratulate Ifty and Jemina Illyas and Joey Bayers for their contribution to community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1292

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas Andrea Puszkas is a parent, an artist, and a volunteer at St. Joseph A. McKay School (SJAM); and

Whereas on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, Andrea devised an art project that allowed every student to create a tile to remember both the tragic event and the community response; and

Whereas Andrea spent a tremendous number of hours instructing and assisting students and then assembling the tiles into four commemorative murals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly do congratulate Andrea Puszkas on the completion of the Children of the Explosion project and thank her for her contribution to the SJAM school community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1293

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas in May 2018, Dawn MacFarlane will celebrate 25 years as Executive Director of Wee Care Developmental Centre, which provides inclusive care for children with special needs, as well as typical children, from ages six months to six years; and

Whereas Ms. MacFarlane coordinates Wee Care's constant fundraising initiatives, which are essential to the pursuit of its mission; and

Whereas Ms. MacFarlane's work contributes directly to the well-being of parents and the development of children as she strives to provide all necessary therapy onsite in an integrated fashion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Nova Scotia Legislature thank Dawn MacFarlane for her 25 years of service and leadership to families, children, and our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1294

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Communities, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas Sergeant Aaron Evans and Master Corporal Pam Evans have contributed their artistic talents to a mural at 14 Wing Greenwood, highlighting the history and heritage of the base; and

Whereas the Evans' artwork represents the tradition of service to our nation by the personnel of 14 Wing Greenwood, both past and present; and

Whereas this new piece of artwork will significantly improve the look of a renovated space for social gatherings at 14 Wing Greenwood;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Sergeant Aaron Evans and Master Corporal Pam Evans for their artistic talents, their commitment to military heritage, and their contribution to the community of 14 Wing Greenwood.

RESOLUTION NO. 1295

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Communities, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas after over 30 years of dedicated service at the Kingston Library, branch manager Andrea Leeson will transition to a new chapter in her life; and

Whereas throughout the course of her career, Andrea Leeson provided mentorship to other library professionals while demonstrating excellence in providing personal services to the public; and

Whereas through her dedication and commitment to the community, Andrea Leeson has made an incredible impact by enriching the lives of library patrons in the Kingston area;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Andrea Leeson on her dedicated years of service to the Kingston branch of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library and in extending best wishes as she transitions into the next chapter of her life.

RESOLUTION NO. 1296

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas Noah Berniquer, a student at Central Colchester Junior High, is an exceptional athlete and not only participates in numerous sports but excels at them, placing first in the long jump, triple jump, and javelin in district, regional, and provincial levels, and placing first in high jump at districts and regionals and fourth at provincials; and

Whereas he was the starting goalkeeper with an undefeated record all season in soccer, his team were the district and regional champions, and he was co-captain for his school's volleyball team, finishing second at the district/regional championships; and

Whereas Noah is also a left fielder for the Colchester Royal Under-18 Men's Softball Team and competed at the national championships, where the team placed 4th out of 12;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature congratulate Noah Berniquer for the 15 and Under Male Athlete of the Year Award at the 34th Truro Sports Heritage Awards ceremony, as well as his many other awards received during his years at Central Colchester Junior High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 1297

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Debert Fire Department has a yearly awards banquet to honour its volunteer members for their commitment, dedication, and level of professionalism as they have benefited their community and the surrounding areas; and

Whereas on March 3, 2018, I was pleased to attend this year's banquet celebrating the 46 years since the creation of the brigade, starting with eight members and currently having 24 active members; and

Whereas a special tribute was given to Randy Barnhill, who has been an actively-serving member of the Debert Fire Brigade for 34 years and holds the record for the longest

consecutive running executive officer since the brigade's inception, with an impressive 29 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature recognize Randy Barnhill for his willingness to give of his personal time to ensure the safety of others.

RESOLUTION NO. 1298

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas March 19, 2018, marked the official opening of Mary's Court and Martha Place at Parkland Antigonish; and

Whereas this a new home for the Sisters of St. Martha, built by Shannex, which is the first retirement home in the province of Nova Scotia to incorporate three levels of care under one roof; and

Whereas the relationship with the Sisters and Shannex is a great example of how creative solutions can be found by working together;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Sisters of St. Martha and Shannex on their successful partnership and collaboration, which has resulted in a new wonderful home.

RESOLUTION NO. 1299

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas every April, communities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a Provincial Volunteer Award; and

Whereas Mr. Len MacDonald was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the Town of Antigonish through his volunteerism with community groups and programs, such as the St. Ninian Refugee Committee as well as the Hot Meal Program at St. James United Church; and

Whereas he sets an incredible example to all residents of Antigonish through his work in the community and abroad, including projects like 50 Taps in India;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Len MacDonald for being recognized as the 2018 Volunteer of the Year for the Town of Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 1300

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas every April communities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a Provincial Volunteer Award; and

Whereas Mr. Glenn Terris was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the community of Lochaber; and

Whereas he sets an incredible example to all residents of Antigonish through his volunteerism with the Lochaber Community Development Association, the rowing clubs, and Big Brothers Big Sisters;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Glenn Terris for being recognized as the 2018 Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 1301

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas every April communities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a Provincial Volunteer Award; and

Whereas Diane Paul was recognized posthumously for her outstanding contributions to the youth of Paqtnkek First Nation; and

Whereas she set an incredible example to all residents in her community through her commitment, caring nature, and dedication;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize and pay tribute to Diane Paul for being recognized as the 2018 Volunteer of the Year for the Paqtnkek First Nation.

RESOLUTION NO. 1302

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 BLT Rails to Trails Association meets once per month to discuss maintenance, enforcement, special projects, grant application writing, and celebrating trail day; and

Whereas Carrie Ramsay, Kevin Cody, Rob Sutherland, Terry Ashdale, Jill Campbell-Miller, David Miller, and Karen Sullivan all re-offered to remain on board for the 2018-19 year; and

Whereas the April 11th meeting the board nominated new members Karen Jensen, Ron Josey, Ben Hovinga, Lorenda Estabrooks, and Michael Matthews;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly offer their thanks to these volunteers and offer a special congratulation to Catherine Klefenz who has served as Chairman of the Board for 18 years and is staying on the board to remain involved with the tremendous success of the BLT Rails to Trails.

RESOLUTION NO. 1303

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Communities, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas on April 9, 2018, the 44th annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Luncheon was held at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax to honour those who step forward to help others, and to show our collective appreciation for the efforts of volunteers throughout the province; and

Whereas over the course of the award ceremonies, over 70 volunteers from six regions throughout the province were honoured by His Honour Arthur J. LeBlanc, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Premier Stephen McNeil, and hundreds in attendance; and

Whereas John Morash was recognized for his long-standing volunteer service to causes such as the creation of community-friendly gardening space to provide a free community lunch, the provision of musical entertainment for numerous fundraising activities, the Upper Room Food Bank, restorative justice measures, and more;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating John Morash, the 2018 Provincial Volunteer Award recipient for the Municipality of the County of Kings, in recognition of his long-standing service and commitment to the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1304

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Communities, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas on April 9, 2018, the 44th annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Luncheon was held at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax to honour those who step forward to help others, and to show our collective appreciation for the efforts of volunteers throughout the province; and

Whereas over the course of the award ceremonies, over 70 volunteers from six regions throughout the province were honoured by His Honour Arthur J. LeBlanc, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Premier Stephen McNeil, and hundreds in attendance; and

Whereas Donna Conrad was recognized for her long-standing volunteer service to causes such as the Berwick Gala Days Association, the Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival, the Atlantic Theatre Festival, Campaign for Kids, in addition to various other fund-raisers for women and youth in the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Donna Conrad, the 2018 Provincial Volunteer Award recipient for the Town of Berwick, in recognition of her long-standing service and commitment to the community.