

# REES' Pieces

## Unlevel playing field for Atlantic Canada

Before starting into my rant for the month, I want to make it clear; I am not trying to upset the environmentalists. However, I am trying to encourage, those who prefer a level playing field to sit up take notice, and maybe, just maybe take some action even if it's just calling one of the 32-MP's serving as a member of Trudeau's team.

There are numerous, probably 100's of examples of how Atlantic Canada has faced an unlevel playing field in Ottawa. The National Energy Board implemented new measures exclusive to TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline application, by announcing the pipeline needed to take into account all the Greenhouse gases created by the Oil Sands product from the time it was taken out of the ground until it was used.

Two recent pipeline projects recently approved, but not yet built... One to British Columbia and the contentious Keystone XL pipeline refused by President Obama, but permitted by President Trump did not carry such a burden. They were only accountable for Greenhouse Gas created from construction and maintenance.

Granted Energy East project might have been the least competitive of the three, but it should have been treated the same as the others. Only with level playing fields can each area of Canada feel treated appropriately. It is understandable if the decision to abandon the project was simply economic, because oil prices have dropped from \$110, when first suggested to now hovering in the \$50 range.

However, it will be most difficult for MP's to maintain having our trust, because not one of them have mentioned the additional Green House Gas being expected of Energy East was a slight against Atlantic Canada.

Knowing that TransCanada Pipeline had invested over \$1-Billion into the project, it is hard to believe their decision was based on previous economics and the recent regulations had nothing to do with their final decision.

I am not saying Atlantic Canadians should be upset because the pipeline is not going forward. However, we should be critical of our MP's because they permitted Atlantic Canada to be treated unfairly. This is just another example of how Atlantic Canada continues to be treated unfairly with regulations and expectations exclusive to us and does not apply to others.

Here are my cynical thoughts as to why all of this happened. It's really all about the 2019 Federal Election and keeping as many seats as possible in each province. There are 139 Liberal MP's in Alberta (3), British Columbia (17), Ontario (79) and Quebec (40). Alberta is happy because the pipeline to BC and Keystone XL to deliver oil to the USA. British Columbia is happy because of the additional boost to its economy, although there are many groups within BC still fighting the project.

The political territory which needs protection is Quebec. With the province adamantly against the project, keeping them happy might have been a very important component to the NEB decision. Keeping as many of the 40 existing Liberal Quebec MP's to battle against the NDP's 16; Conservative, 11 and Bloc Quebec's 10 rivals might have been part of the long-distance planning.

Ontario, certainly would benefit from Energy East expressed some opposition, but it wasn't voicing a strong opposition to the project. Ontario's 120 seats is certainly the other battle ground. It's doubtful the Liberals can hold onto the existing 79 seats and expect the NDP (8) and Conservatives (33) to remain at the same level.

By having the National Energy Board (NEB) implement new rules part way through the process many pundits will feel Quebec ruled the roost, as part of an invisible process, to ensure in 2019, the Liberals can come as close as possible to 167 seats to win a second majority government.

Interesting to note Alberta's Premier Rachel Notley, voiced an opinion the NEB treated the Energy East pipeline unfairly, but will focus her efforts on completion of the two recently approved projects.

I feel all Atlantic Canadians should be upset not because Energy East has been cancelled, but because other restrictions were implemented that did not apply elsewhere. Is it time for us to stand up and say, "Pease level the playing field and treat us as equals".

Maurice

# Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

MAIL TO: The South Cumberland News, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, NS, B0M 1B0

(902) 647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Email: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

Dear Editor:

Comment: Councillor Taggart a racist? Nab!

My wife is Kenyan and black, her cousin Kevin is also Kenyan and black, and my son Jake is brown. On one fine summer day five years ago we were swimming under the Highway 2 bridge over the Economy River. We had been to that swimming spot a few times earlier that year as it is not too deep for little Jake to wade in. On that fine summer day in question my wife Milly pointed out some new graffiti on the underside of the bridge. It said "Economy nigger-free!". Milly and Kevin were quite surprised and, yes, hurt a little. They received this message as a voice out of the darkness, from the underside of the bridge. Knowing their neighbours in the area have been so welcoming and kind, this was quickly let go as just a lonely howl of some lost individual.

When Milly casually men-

tioned the episode to a friend, it did not take long for word of mouth to make this community, regional, and even provincial news. The Gazette called it a "Summer Dip into Racism". The point is that the good people in our community quickly began to drop by our house to express their shock at this outrage (the offending graffiti had quickly been painted over by locals). One of the people who dropped by with perhaps the sincerest and most touching expression of regret and consolation was Councillor Taggart, who we had not met before. This gentleman went out of his way to assure us that this expression was not one shared by our neighbours and other Nova Scotians. We chose to believe him and certainly this has all faded away with no more such occurrences. Milly and Kevin and Jake are all very popular folks around here.

Mr. Taggart called for a conversation about racism. I agree

with him. Few people are completely free of racial feelings in that sense that they feel most comfortable with their own kind, with people who look and talk and think like them. I have traveled the world and seen that truth demonstrated everywhere. You can be sure that Blacks and indigenous peoples and Muslims and others crack lots of jabs at white folks, but mostly in good humour. The jabs that aren't set in good humour are the dangerous ones. Canada is one of the good examples of racial tolerance around the world, and Nova Scotia even more so. It all comes down to watching your mouth and assuming that these little tidbits will come back to you and kick you in the ass. Mr. Taggart has surely learned this, and we need him to move on from this and continue to represent us.

Larry Simpson  
Economy

Dear Editor:

Has the provincial government thought through the entire process?

Who will take care of 2, 3 year olds and infants now that the pre-primary program is causing the closure of privately operated childcare facilities?

Education Minister, Zach Churchill proudly announced 818 students were registered for 52 classrooms in 45 schools at a start-up cost of \$6.5-Million (\$125,000 per school). The initial costs are \$7,946 per registered student. It's been reported one childcare operator, who has been in business for two decades lost four students. Start up funding if passed along to her would have been nearly \$32,000.

Dear editor:

On Oct. 3, in a statement to the media and during Budget Estimates in the Legislature, the Honourable Randy Delorey, Minister of Health and Wellness, said to the people of Nova Scotia that he is not in a dispute with physicians, he is only in a dispute with Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS).

Let us be clear. Doctors Nova Scotia is the province's physicians.

Doctors Nova Scotia is 3,500 members; including practising and retired physicians, residents and medical students. The DNS Board of Directors is made up of 20 physicians and one medical student. The Board of Directors - a group of physicians acting on behalf of all physicians in the province - have served the provincial government with Notices of Intended Action to re-

solve two long-standing contract disputes in court.

Respectfully, the Minister is, in fact, in a dispute with physicians.

The province's doctors expect DNS to effectively represent us. We are the Board of Directors of DNS and we govern the organization to ensure it fulfils its purpose, which is to help physicians thrive and have a positive impact on their patients' lives, both at an individual and system level. We employ our CEO and staff to help us protect physicians' interests, all for the benefit of our patients.

Doctors Nova Scotia's role goes beyond negotiating physician's remuneration. It includes working with all partners in health-care delivery to ensure Nova Scotia is positioned to recruit and retain talented and skilled doctors, to introduce

and more efficient results could be delivered by investing upgrades and program expansion to existing facilities.

It's probable less money would provide more seats for all pre-school ages province-wide. The above listed problems might not exist in major urban areas, but there is more to this province than HRM and Sydney. Doing it this way would also keep four year olds off school buses.

Where is the "back-bone" of those who are upset, but sit idly by and say nothing? It's surprising MLA's haven't received an outburst of anger from constituents, who are parents, grandparents or just concerned.

Maurice Rees, Publisher

new and innovative ways to deliver health care, and to continuously look for ways to improve patient care and access.

The Minister's suggestion that DNS is not representative of physicians is one of the very reasons we find ourselves in this unfortunate situation. The government refuses to acknowledge and accept the fact that it is not only DNS's right, but also our obligation, to ensure physicians' interests are protected in contract matters. We do this so physicians can focus on what they do best, and that is to take care of Nova Scotians.

Let the record be corrected: Doctors Nova Scotia is the province's physicians. And we have each other's backs on these matters.

Dr. André Bernard  
Chair of the Board of Directors,  
Doctors Nova Scotia

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PHONE: 902-647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Toll Free 1-800-406-1426; Cell: 902-890-9850 • E-MAIL: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

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902-647-2968,

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