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DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS
Speaker: Honourable Cecil Clarke

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Second Session
FRIDAY MAY 12, 2006

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

MR. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, it's always a tough act to follow, when you stand in your place after the good member for Dartmouth North. The recognition that we just gave this member - and I want you to know that probably in the years that I have been a member of this Party, prior to being elected and of course having the pleasure of serving as an MLA - there is no more passionate voice of the communities of Dartmouth than Jerry Pye. I congratulate him and thank him. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it's always a shock when you pick up the morning paper and you see your community on the front page. Recently, in the community that I've been privileged to represent, we were front-page news. It's of course with some huge regret that I bring this to the attention of the House, that we have been enduring as a community, in Beechville-Lakeside-**Timberlea**, the terribly tragedy of the loss of a popular schoolteacher, a wonderful young mother, and of course a person who is sadly missed each and every day, not only at BLT Elementary but also in the community that I represent, **Timberlea**-Prospect. **Paula Gallant** was a special young woman, she taught in a school where I often visited and I had the opportunity to be in her classroom on numerous occasions.

Paula's tragic death is a perfect example that it can happen in your community. It's not Detroit, it's not Los Angeles, it's not New York, it's **Timberlea**, it happened right in our community, this terrible tragedy and her unfortunate death. Mr. Speaker, I want to, if I may at this time, express again to the family, and of course to the teachers and the students that Paula taught so well, our deepest sympathies.

I had the opportunity, with my good friend, the member for Cape Breton Centre, to be at a social event in Cape Breton recently - and you know there's nothing better than a good social event in Cape Breton - and I was approached by an older lady who came towards me and introduced herself as Paula's grandmother. Needless to say we shared a few laughs and tears as we looked at the fact that this outstanding young teacher was no longer with us. In the community that I represent, Beechville - Lakeside - **Timberlea**, or the community where Paula grew up, in Glace Bay and through the New Waterford area, we are always questioning, why these things happen? Why do they happen here? It's of course a reflection on the fact that it's a need each and every day and each and every evening to look around in our communities and to make sure that they are safe.

When your community is front page news, you begin to question some of the things that you sort of take for granted, you take for the normal, and I think it has been a very tough, very hard lesson for the people that I am fortunate enough to represent - as we have been looking over our shoulder, to be quite truthful with you, Mr. Speaker, we've been making sure that our kids get to and from school safely, we've been making sure that if there are suspicious vehicles moving around in our community that we bring them to the attention of the Citizens on Patrol, a volunteer organization in the communities that I represent, or we've been calling the police and informing them of the fact that perhaps we should be a little bit more vigilant about events that are happening in our community. That's the positive of such a tragedy that took place in the schoolyard at BLT over the holiday this past year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the current Minister of Justice, I want to compliment the Justice Critic for our Party for bringing forth a piece of legislation that makes such good common sense, and I also want to address another issue that's a real concern to me as a schoolteacher.

In the community that I represent, many of the young people unfortunately are targeted because of the fact that they have caused issues in our community, whether we consider them violent, out of control or really very difficult to deal with. I want to put this on the record for all involved - let's be very clear, the huge majority of young people, the huge majority of teenagers that we all know, are respectful, they are obedient, they understand the law and they will respect the law, whether it's a school principal dealing with a student who is not a regular attender or a police officer who is dealing with a student, or a person of whatever age, who has been out in the community too late and is making his or her way home. The huge majority of teenagers will listen to the law, but as we see in recent findings with the Theresa McEvoy hearing, there are many young people in various communities who have to be reminded of the consequences of not paying attention to the laws and regulations of our province.

[10:00 a.m.]

I want to compliment some of the members of my caucus, in particular the member for Cape Breton Nova who has given many long years of his life to the Boys and Girls Club, to the activities in his community to provide alternatives for teenagers so that they will have the opportunity to be involved in something positive.

I want to point to the young member for Sackville-Cobequid who's involved in his community and is concerned about some of the very things that we've heard about, particularly what I know from first-hand experience as a vice-principal at Sackville High, a community that grew very fast and had recreational needs, that needed things to keep young people busy, and the good member for Sackville-Cobequid is attending to those matters.

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I want to point out the member for Halifax Needham, who on so many occasions brings forward concerns in this House about the so-called stigma that's connected to certain parts of HRM. I want to congratulate her, in particular, for all the good work she has done for some of the streets that have that "reputation" because it's in the north end of Halifax. The revitalization of the North End, the good work that's being done there by the member for Halifax Needham and other councillors who are working with her, those are important indicators that these elected officials care about their community and want to make sure that it is a safe community, a safe community where young people can go to school safely and a safe community where seniors can go out in the evening for a loaf of bread, making sure that they are not in threatened positions, that they are safe, but they are also careful each and every day as they make their way to and from school.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that we have, of course, is young people and I want you to know that school teachers play a prominent role in informing and educating young people, not just about their rights, but also about making sure that they are vigilant and careful of certain situations they can put themselves in. I see this in a regular fashion as we see young people in elementary school making their way to and from school, making sure that they, on their own, are going to have a safe arrival which is a wonderful program in the schools in my community and that at the end of the day they're going to have a safe walk home, or when they're dropped off by the bus, that they're going to be received by either the person taking care of them, or they're going to a daycare arrangement, but they're in a safe environment. So those school teachers around this province, those school teachers in my community who continue to educate young people and make them aware of safer communities, that's an integral and important role in making sure that we live in a safe community.

Mr. Speaker, you've heard me stand in this House many times and say how proud I am to represent the people of **Timberlea**-Prospect. I want you to know, in particular, there's a volunteer organization called Citizens on Patrol. My office is located in the Lakeside Recreation Centre and in that building there is a Citizens on Patrol office. Citizens on Patrol are those volunteers who work carefully with my community, with the RCMP, who make sure that in the evenings, during the day, they are aware and they are out in our communities making sure that they are looking at things that just aren't quite right. There are various volunteers in this organization, I don't want to mention all their names, but I want to compliment them for their absolutely wonderful dedication, for their commitment to our community. I am sure that when we look back, they in their own way are making a much safer community, whether it's in **Timberlea**-Prospect, Sackville-Cobequid, Dartmouth North or Halifax Needham.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the police. You know, I've had the opportunity over the years to encourage many young men and young women to look at this as a great career - not a job, a career - because when you become a policeman,

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whether it's with the federal RCMP, or whether it's with the municipal police force, you become part of a wonderful service in our community.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to be involved in the recruitment of young men and women and when they join a particular police force, it's with great privilege, I can tell you, that I've been on their resumé and I've given them personal references. In fact, I recently was made aware of the fact that one of the more promising students that I used to teach and coach has been accepted to the Police Academy and will be moving into an HRM position with the police here locally. I know that he will do well. He will be a young man who has a great deal of respect in the community that he grew up in and he will be a young man who will do well as a police officer wherever he serves.

In particular, the current police chief in the HRM, Chief Beazley has deep roots in the community I represent. Chief Beazley and the Beazleys from Whites Lake are always well received in the community, because Chief Beazley is aware of the many needs of not just the city in the urban core, he's also aware of the more rural parts of the HRM. So my compliments to Chief Beazley on the good work he has been doing.

I want you all to know that when it comes to police work, I think we should all look at it, and I know the member for Cumberland South would agree with me on it. We can always be critical of people in other professions, and then we have to look at it and say, would I want to walk a day in their shoes? I can tell you, in many cases, some of the tough situations the police officers have been in, I would not want to be in their shoes or their boots some late-night evening when they're

dealing with a domestic problem, when they are pulling over to the scene of a tragic accident. That's the ultimate compliment that we have to give police. It's a tough job, they're doing the best they can with the resources they have, and I compliment anyone who goes into that particular career and has served long and hard there.

Those would be my comments on this piece of legislation. I want to compliment both the Minister of Justice and the critic for the NDP for bringing similar legislation forward. I look forward to supporting it at a future time in this House. (Applause)