

## Atlantic Alert - Quick 5 Political Musings

**1.** Nova Scotia released its budget yesterday, one that will see it have a small surplus at the end of the year. Opposition parties question the surplus given many costs were moved up one year yet will be incurred in the current year. It looks like this may be another case of creative accounting. No doubt this is an election budget though with the Dexter NDP trying to improve their image given they are 7% behind the Liberals in the polls. Cancellation of the planned school closures and further review of other schools for closure indicates an election is imminent.

**2.** Are we witnessing the winds of change in Labrador? According to a recent Forum poll, former embattled Conservative cabinet minister Peter Penashue is a distant second (20% support) to Liberal Yvonne Jones (57% support). If Jones goes on to win the by-election, it would be a coup for the Liberals and could inject some much needed life into the party. For those unfamiliar with Jones, a formidable force and staunch defender of Labradorian interests, she is a provincial political veteran and former

leader of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland & Labrador. By most accounts, she is an extremely effective representative. Still, this is early days in the by-election.

**3.** Battles and wars. Health professionals won the battle to preserve the medical student internship program which was cut in last week's NB budget. But will they win the war on hospital restructuring that will likely occur after the next provincial election. With a population of 750,000 people, can New Brunswickers afford 24+ hospitals?

**4.** An interesting note from a colleague on the New Brunswick medical internship program. Given students are typically paid \$11/hour with most working in family clinics, why can't physicians pay half of their wages from their practice, a typical procedure in the business world?

**5.** Congratulations to Defence Minister Peter MacKay and his wife, Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay, on the birth of their first child, a healthy baby boy, Kian Alexander.