



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker**

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### Second Session

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2010**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:</b>	
Sewage Sludge (Biosolids): Use - Moratorium Declare, Mr. G. Burrill .....	2802
TIR - So. Berwick Intersection: Traffic Lights - Install, Mr. L. Glavine .....	2802
Health: Angioplasty (MS) - Provide, Mr. A. MacLeod .....	2803
<b>GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:</b>	
Res. 1821, Dale, Karen/Gray, George - Easter Seals Fundraising, The Premier .....	2803
Vote - Affirmative .....	2804
Res. 1822, Cdn. Patient Safety Wk. (11/01-11/05/10) - Recognize, Hon. Maureen MacDonald .....	2804
Vote - Affirmative .....	2805
Res. 1823, Crohn's & Colitis Awareness Mo. (11/10) - Recognize, Hon. Maureen MacDonald .....	2805
Vote - Affirmative .....	2806
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:</b>	
No. 80, Multiple Sclerosis Liberation Therapy Act, Mr. A. MacLeod .....	2806
No. 81, Oak Island Treasure Act, Hon. J. MacDonell .....	2806
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION:</b>	
Res. 1824, March of Dimes: Conductive Educ. - Demonstration, Hon. S. McNeil .....	2806
Vote - Affirmative .....	2807

Res. 1825, Justice System - Destruction: NDP - Condemn, Hon. C. Clarke (by Hon. C. d'Entremont) . . . . .	2807
Res. 1826, NDP - Services: Protection - Importance Recognize, Mr. D. Wilson . . . . .	2808
Res. 1827, Brydon, Beth/Weilgard, Sonja: Conductive Educ. Prog. - Appreciation Extend, Ms. D. Whalen . . . . .	2809
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2809
Res. 1828, Holy Angels HS - Future: All-Party Comm. - Convene, Mr. K. Bain . . . . .	2809
Res. 1829, Jeffrey, Coach Kelly/Mt. A. Mounties/Alumni: Football - Dedication, Hon. W. Estabrooks . . . . .	2810
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2811
Res. 1830, Stone, Darlene & Jack (Deceased) - Conservation Contributions, Mr. L. Glavine . . . . .	2811
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2812
Res. 1831, Baillie, Jamie: PC Party - Leadership Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont . . . . .	2812
Res. 1832, World Tuna Flat Races (Anniv. 28 <sup>th</sup> ): Participants/ Organizers/Winners - Congrats., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse . . . . .	2813
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2813
Res. 1833, Angel Stitches: Members - IWK Commun. Excellence Award, Hon. W. Gaudet . . . . .	2814
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2814
Res. 1834, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. Fund, Mr. A. MacLeod . . . . .	2815
Res. 1835, Nickerson, Dale: Natl. Summer Games - Participation, Hon. S. Belliveau . . . . .	2815
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2816
Res. 1836, Dart. Seniors' Serv. Ctr. - Commun. Leadership Awards: Recipients - Congrats., Mr. A. Younger . . . . .	2816
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2817
Res. 1837, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund, Hon. K. Casey (by Mr. C. Porter) . . . . .	2817
Res. 1838, RCL: Patterson Br. (Caledonia) - Accessibility Renovations, Ms. V. Conrad . . . . .	2818
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2819
Res. 1839, Colley, Spencer - Commun. Contributions, Hon. K. Colwell . . . . .	2819
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2819
Res. 1840, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund, Mr. A. MacMaster . . . . .	2820

Res. 1841, SMU - Hearts & Minds Campaign: Vols./Donors/Staff	
- Congrats., Mr. L. Preyra .....	2820
Vote - Affirmative .....	2821
Res. 1842, Condon, Dr. Keith: Dal. - Hon. Degree,	
Mr. Z. Churchill .....	2821
Vote - Affirmative .....	2822
Res. 1843, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Mr. C. Porter .....	2822
Res. 1844, Tanner, Adam: Prov. Skills Comp. - Congrats.,	
Mr. G. Burrill .....	2823
Vote - Affirmative .....	2823
Res. 1845, Glace Bay Women's Softball League: Efforts - Congrats.,	
Mr. G. MacLellan .....	2823
Vote - Affirmative .....	2824
Res. 1846, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Hon. C. Clarke .....	2824
Res. 1847, So. Queens Junior High: Gov't./Commun. - Co-operation,	
Ms. V. Conrad .....	2825
Res. 1848, MacNutt, Scott: Death of - Tribute,	
Hon. S. McNeil .....	2826
Vote - Affirmative .....	2826
Res. 1849, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Mr. K. Bain .....	2827
Res. 1850, Saulnier, Alexis: ChitoRyu Championships - Congrats.,	
Hon. W. Gaudet .....	2827
Vote - Affirmative .....	2828
Res. 1851, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Hon. C. d'Entremont .....	2828
Res. 1852, Dart. Moosehead Dry: Championship - Congrats.,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2829
Vote - Affirmative .....	2829
Res. 1853, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Mr. C. Porter .....	2830
Res. 1854, Muise, Randy/Muise Tae Kwon Do	
- Commun. Contribution, Mr. Z. Churchill .....	2830
Vote - Affirmative .....	2831
Res. 1855, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Mr. A. MacMaster .....	2831
Res. 1856, Liberation Therapy: NDP Gov't. - Fund,	
Mr. A. MacLeod .....	2832

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:

No. 326, Health - Liberation Treatment: Gov't. Discussions - Details, Hon. S. McNeil . . . . .	2833
No. 327, Health - Liberation Therapy: Clinical Trials - Fund, Mr. A. MacLeod . . . . .	2835
No. 328, Justice: Jails (Springhill & Amherst) - Business Case, Hon. S. McNeil . . . . .	2836
No. 329, Justice: Two-Jail Plan - Business Case, Hon. M. Samson . . . . .	2838
No. 330, Prem.: MS Clinical Trials - Time Frame, Hon. C. d'Entremont . . . . .	2840
No. 331, Educ. - Sch. Bds: Budget Cuts - Genesis, Ms. K. Regan . . . . .	2841
No. 332, Prem. - ERs: Services - Ensure, Mr. C. Porter . . . . .	2842
No. 333, Energy: Mercury Emissions - Regs., Mr. A. Younger . . . . .	2844
No. 334, Health: DHAs - Cuts Explain, Hon. C. d'Entremont . . . . .	2846
No. 335, Nat. Res.: Clear-Cutting - Definition, Mr. L. Glavine . . . . .	2847
No. 336, Educ.: Holy Angels HS - Purchase Price, Hon. Manning MacDonald . . . . .	2849
No. 337, Health - Highland Manor: Repairs - Details, Mr. K. Bain . . . . .	2850

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 76, Credit Union Act, Hon. G. Steele . . . . .	2852
Mr. L. Glavine . . . . .	2854
Mr. A. MacMaster . . . . .	2855
Hon. F. Corbett . . . . .	2856
Mr. C. MacKinnon . . . . .	2859
Hon. C. Clarke . . . . .	2862
The Premier . . . . .	2866
Mr. M. Smith . . . . .	2867
Mr. J. Morton . . . . .	2869
Mr. J. Boudreau . . . . .	2871
Mr. G. Ramey . . . . .	2872
Hon. M. MacDonald . . . . .	2872
Hon. G. Steele . . . . .	2873
Vote - Affirmative . . . . .	2873

No. 78, Public Utilities Act,	
Hon. G. Steele .....	2874
Mr. L. Glavine .....	2875
Mr. A. MacMaster .....	2877
Ms. B. Kent .....	2877
Adjourned debate .....	2879
ADJOURNMENT MOTION:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
Educ. - Holy Angels HS: Value - Recognize,	
Mr. K. Bain .....	2880
Hon. Manning MacDonald .....	2881
Hon. M. More .....	2884
Hon. C. Clarke .....	2886
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Nov. 3 <sup>rd</sup> at 2 p.m. . .	2888
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 1857, Knox, Danny -	
Kings Co. Male Special Olympics Athlete of Yr. (2010),	
Mr. L. Glavine .....	2889
Res. 1858, McCluskey, Gloria - Commun. Leadership Award,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2889
Res. 1859, Lill, Wendy - Commun. Leadership Award,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2890
Res. 1860, Hart, Bernard - Commun. Leadership Award,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2890
Res. 1861, Brownlow, Daniel - Commun. Leadership Award,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2891
Res. 1862, Chater, George - Commun. Leadership Award,	
Mr. A. Younger .....	2891



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2010**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**2:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Charlie Parker

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Mr. Gordon Gosse, Mr. Leo Glavine, Mr. Alfie MacLeod

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll get today's proceedings underway, but before we go to the daily routine, I want to recognize the honourable Minister of Education.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker. I'd like to correct some information that I provided to the House recently and offer the honourable members an apology, if I may.

Last evening the honourable Opposition House Leader brought to my attention an inaccurate comment that I made during my answer to a question from the honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove, in which I stated that the Department of Education did not have the authority to buy a private building. When this was brought to my attention I checked in my file and I also checked with staff and I had misunderstood some information provided to me, and I just feel it is important to acknowledge that mistake here for the record and offer my very sincere apology. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We'll begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, may I say a word of introduction before presenting a petition?

MR. CHAIRMAN: An introduction in the House, certainly.

MR. BURRILL: Thank you. We have as guests with us today Marilyn Cameron and Fred Blois from the Biosolids and Wastewater Caucus of the Nova Scotia Environmental Network. They are visiting today in connection with a petition to be presented on this subject. I wonder, Fred and Marilyn, if you would be good enough just to stand and receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, this petition bears the signatures of 1,056 Nova Scotians, and I have also affixed my signature to it. The operative clause is as follows:

“We the undersigned, residents of Nova Scotia, respectfully petition the Government of Nova Scotia to declare an immediate moratorium on the use of sewage sludge (biosolids) on Nova Scotia lands and to adopt with minimum delay safe options for sewage sludge disposal or destruction.”

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a petition from the residents of South Berwick and area. The operative clause reads:

“We, the undersigned, will not rest until traffic lights to control the movement through the dangerous South Berwick intersection are installed. Enough is enough! We pray concrete action is taken before a fatality occurs.”

The petition has 2,722 names and I’ve affixed my name to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

[2:15 p.m.]

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table the following petition:

**“This is a petition to ask the Provincial Government to make available angioplasty to repair blood flow problems (CCSVI) for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Sufferers in Nova Scotia.”** The operative clause reads:

“**NOW** is the time to save lives and prevent severe disability. **NOW** is the time to allow the disabled to choose a form of health care that is available to everyone else in Canada except for people who have MS. It is not the time to say that rules are rules, that rules cannot be broken, or that there is not enough money in the budget! Many Nova Scotians have received treatment in different countries, and have come back with amazing results such as reduced fatigue, ability to walk, use of hands, improved balance, and over all [sic] improved quality of life. You know some of them and have helped many of them through your generosity! There are still many more who want this treatment but are unable to make the long trip or do not have the funds.”

Mr. Speaker, this petition has 10,283 names, that’s 10,283 names of individuals in this province who support this. I have signed and affixed my name to it as required by the House but also because I believe in this petition. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

#### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

#### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

#### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1821**

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas every year Canadians donate their time and energy to raise thousands of dollars for Easter Seals, a national organization dedicated to fully enhancing the quality of life, self-esteem and self-determination of Canadians with disabilities; and



Whereas this year Nova Scotians raised money by rappelling from the top of the office building at 1801 Hollis Street and the Angus L. Macdonald Bridge, both in Halifax; and

Whereas Karen Dale, principal at Eric Graves Junior High School, and George Gray, principal of Ellenvale Junior High School, both in Dartmouth, teamed up to raise more than \$3,500 in pledges for Easter Seals by rappelling down those two structures;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House recognize the efforts of Karen Dale, George Gray and all Nova Scotians who bravely rappelled from staggering heights to raise money for those in need in their community, and thank them for giving their time to this important initiative.

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 Health.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1822**

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

Whereas November 1<sup>st</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup> is Canadian Patient Safety Week with a goal of increasing awareness of patient safety issues and sharing information about best practice in patient safety at national, regional, and local levels; and

Whereas there are between 9,000 and 24,000 Canadians who die each year as a result of otherwise preventable causes; and

Whereas one of the province's priorities for better health care is to improve quality and safety and support the thousands of health care professionals, patients, clients, and residents and their families who are helping to make this happen;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in recognizing Canadian Patient Safety Week and show leadership by encouraging all Nova Scotians to embrace this week's motto, "Don't just think it, Say it," when it comes to voicing questions and concerns about their health care.

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 Health Promotion and Protection.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1823**

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

Whereas November is Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month; and

Whereas Canada has among the highest rates of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis in the world and Nova Scotia has the highest rate in the country; and

Whereas 200,000 Canadians suffer from these inflammatory bowel diseases that have no known cause, no cure, and limited public understanding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize November as Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month and commend the organizations that support efforts to raise awareness and find a cure.

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.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 80 - Entitled an Act to Require Clinical Trials Respecting Multiple Sclerosis Liberation Therapy. (Mr. Alfie MacLeod)**

**Bill No. 81 - Entitled an Act to Regulate the Searching for Treasure on Oak Island in Lunenburg County and to Repeal Chapter 477 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Treasure Trove Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Do you mind if I do an introduction before I do my resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. MCNEIL: I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where we have with us today Beth Brydon, a conductor with the March of Dimes; Vari Watson, who is a senior conductor with the March of Dimes; and Donna Mackay, who is an associate director with the March of Dimes. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have Sonja Weilgart, who has benefited from conductive education that has been supported by the March of Dimes. I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome, and also to Sonja, who is going to be 16 on Sunday, acknowledge an early birthday. (Applause)

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1824**

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

Whereas, established in 1951, the March of Dimes became a household name for its work in eliminating polio and then expanding its mission to serve individuals with physical disabilities who require community supports and have limited financial resources; and

Whereas the March of Dimes provided a continuum of services for children, youth, and adults regardless of the nature of their physical disability; and

Whereas today all MLAs were invited to see the benefits of conductive education, an innovative learning system that merges education and rehabilitation to help people of all ages with neurological conditions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House extend our appreciation to the March of Dimes for their demonstration today in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, which serves to highlight the immense benefits of this program to persons with physical disabilities.

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 Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1825**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Cape Breton North, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the NDP has yet again broken another election promise; and

Whereas the NDP could have done the right thing by honouring a commitment to build jails, based on solid business plans and not political expediency; and

Whereas Nova Scotians' safety and security is being compromised by NDP political vindictiveness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly condemn this NDP socialist government for continuing to destroy public confidence in our justice system.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1826**

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Nova Scotia NDP Government is making the right decisions for today's families; and

Whereas ensuring the future success of our province and our people means living within our means, while protecting services and helping people who need it; and

Whereas this government is saving millions of taxpayers' dollars by making a decision like building one jail instead of two and taking care of Nova Scotians by working toward fair drug prices and making changes to the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of living within our means, while protecting Nova Scotians and the services we have come to appreciate and rely on.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1827**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the March of Dimes Conductive Education Program offers independence, life skills and hope to Nova Scotians with physical disabilities; and

Whereas since 2006 the Conductive Education Program has helped children and adults with neuro-motor disabilities, with programs offered in Halifax, Antigonish and the Annapolis Valley, to improve their mobility, independence and self confidence; and

Whereas today, Beth Brydon, a March of Dimes conductor, along with Sonja Weilgard, a 15-year old resident of Halifax, demonstrated the program and highlighted the difference conductive education makes in the lives of individuals living with cerebral palsy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House extend our appreciation to Beth Brydon and Sonja Weilgard for joining us here in the legislature today to highlight the benefits of this innovative program and wish the conductors and the participants in Nova Scotia all the best as they continue to offer hope and independence to those with neuro-motor disabilities.

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 member for Victoria-The Lakes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1828**

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

Whereas Holy Angels High School in Sydney was established in 1885 and is the only all-girls high school east of Montreal and was singled out in the Atlantic Institute for Market

Studies Annual Report Card on Canadian high schools as one of the province's most improved schools over the last five years; and

Whereas this government is not willing to purchase the building and invest in the renovations that would bring the Sydney institution up to code; and

Whereas last Thursday's news from the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board that the Holy Angels High School could close was met with tears from students and teachers alike;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly agree to do the right thing and urge the government to convene an all-Party meeting with the school board as soon as possible, to discuss the future of Holy Angels High School.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1829**

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

Whereas Mount Alison University has a long and proud tradition of playing the game of Canadian football; and

Why are you laughing? May I start over again, Mr. Speaker?

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Start again, please.

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

Whereas Mount Allison University has a long and proud tradition of playing the game of Canadian football; and

Whereas for the first time in 12 years, the football Mounties have captured a playoff spot in the AUS Football Conference; and

Whereas this Saturday at MacAulay Field in Sackville, New Brunswick, Mount Allison's football Mounties, coached by Kelly Jeffrey, will host the Acadia Axemen;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates Coach Kelly Jeffrey, this year's Mount Allison Mounties and football alumni for their continuing dedication to university football with best wishes on Saturday.

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 member for Kings West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1830**

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

Whereas on October 28<sup>th</sup>, Nova Scotia Nature Trust held their 13<sup>th</sup> annual dinner and fundraiser for protecting private land conservation; and

Whereas in 1992 the Nature Trust Conservation Award was established to recognize individuals, organizations and businesses committed to conserving Nova Scotia's natural heritage and conserving private land; and

Whereas the 2010 recipients are Darlene and the late Jack Stone, in recognition of the incredible contributions they had made to the Trust not only as volunteers but donors as well, pioneering the "trade lands" concept and championing the planned giving program;



Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize the remarkable contributions that Darlene and Jack Stone have made to conserving Nova Scotia's natural habitats and congratulate them for receiving this distinguished honour.

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 Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1831**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas this past Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of Tories gathered at a convention that dwarfed the Liberals' contested leadership convention to elect Jamie Baillie as their leader; and

Whereas Saturday also marked the 54<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Premier Robert Stanfield's 1956 election as Premier; and

Whereas just as October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1956 marked the birth of the modern Progressive Conservative Party in Nova Scotia, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010 will go down in history as the day Jamie Baillie began his journey to the Premier's Office;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jamie Baillie on becoming Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and the next Premier of 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?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1832**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas July 24<sup>th</sup> marked the 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Tuna Flat Races on the shores of Hubbards Cove; and

Whereas hundreds turned out to line the waterfront as amateur teams competed in the quarter mile course; and

Whereas the winning teams included Krista Strowbridge, Courtney Whynot, Rebecca Bell, Jenna MacDonald, Keith Parker, Alex Fraser, Kim Schwartz, Evan Sims, Susan Ross, Taryl Melanson, Susan Lavoie and Karen Flemming;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate all the participants, organizers and winners Krista Strowbridge, Courtney Whynot, Rebecca Bell, Jenna MacDonald, Keith Parker, Alex Fraser, Kim Schwartz, Evan Sims, Susan Ross, Taryl Melanson, Susan Lavoie and Karen Flemming on the success of their event and extend a wish of calm waters and a gentle breeze as they prepare for next year's event.

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 member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1833**

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

Whereas Angel Stitches was founded over a decade ago by Anne LeBlanc and has now grown to over 175 volunteers throughout Clare; and

Whereas the “Angels” pool their creative talents making baby blankets, knitted finger puppets, comfort dolls, children’s clothing, books and toys in an effort to make the little ones at the IWK Health Centre feel more comfortable; and

Whereas at their recent annual meeting, the board of the IWK Health Centre awarded their Community Excellence Award to the Angel Stitches organization, recognizing the contribution they had made to the patients;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize the contribution Angel Stitches have made, congratulate the members for being honoured with a Community Excellence Award, and wish them continued success in future endeavours.

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 member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wonder, with your permission, if I could make some introductions?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today in your gallery here in the House we have a number of people who have received, or are about to receive, the liberation treatment. We have Keith Riles, Yvonne Andersen, Gary Greer, Crystal Bruce, Shirley MacLeod, Stephen Taylor, Maxine David, Darrell Foster and many, many others who are family support or are waiting for their opportunity. So I would ask the House to give all these fine individuals a large round of applause. (Applause)

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 1834**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Maxine David of Isle Madame was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1995, a disease that left her fatigued and unable to get around without a scooter; and

Whereas Maxine travelled to Bulgaria to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of about \$15,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy, Maxine is able to do everything she wants to do in a day, and has dedicated herself to promoting liberation therapy and helping others to get it;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the Nova Scotia NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1835**

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

Whereas Shelburne County Special Olympian Dale Nickerson competed at the National Summer Games in London, Ontario, July 12<sup>th</sup> to July 18<sup>th</sup> as a member of the Nova Scotia Five Pin Bowling Team; and

Whereas this was the first national competition for Dale Nickerson who has been a Special Olympian for 25 years; and

Whereas Dale Nickerson has competed in both Summer and Winter Special Olympics over the years in various sports and bringing home numerous medals;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne County Special Olympian Dale Nickerson who competed at the National Summer Games in London, Ontario, on July 12<sup>th</sup> to July 18<sup>th</sup>, as a member of the Nova Scotia Five Pin Bowling Team.

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 member for Dartmouth East.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1836**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to life in Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated Daniel Brownlow, George Chater, Bernie Hart, Wendy Lill, and Gloria McCluskey for their hard work and commitment to Dartmouth;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating these individuals on this special occasion and applaud their active participation for the betterment of Dartmouth.

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 member for Hants West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1837**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Colchester North, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Yvonne Anderson of Truro was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2008, a disease that caused her debilitating fatigue, vision disturbance, pain, and “brain fog” that led her to give up her job as an employment counsellor; and

Whereas in early July, Yvonne travelled to Albany, New York to undergo chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of \$8,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy, Yvonne’s vision has improved to the point that she feels as though she’s viewing the world in high definition, her fatigue has subsided, the brain fog is gone, and she feels as though she has her life back;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. In our gallery this afternoon we have the pleasure of members of the March of Dimes. The honourable member opposite did a resolution for them earlier. I would like to introduce Donna Mackay, the associate director of the national programs of the March of Dimes, who is with us this afternoon; Vari Watson, who is a senior conductor; and we have Beth Brydon, conductor with the March of Dimes.

The reason I'm honoured to stand and not only introduce these fine people for the fine work they're doing - I would like to also acknowledge that I have watched our Beth Brydon grow up from a very young child to be an absolutely magnificent young woman and I've watched her as she set off on this career path. I'm honoured she's here with us today and doing such good work for Nova Scotians. If I could have all three please rise and accept the warm welcome of this House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors here this afternoon and hope that you enjoy the proceedings here in the House.

The honourable member for Queens.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1838**

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Community ACCESS-ability Program has allowed the Royal Canadian Legion, A.L. Patterson Branch in Caledonia, Queens County to do a number of very necessary renovations; and

Whereas the program, funded through the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, allowed the legion to provide wheelchair-accessible washrooms and access to their building; and

Whereas Royal Canadian Legion members volunteered many hours of work to enable them to access these funds for a total grant of \$7,885;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the volunteers involved with the accessibility renovations to the Royal Canadian Legion, A.L. Patterson Branch in Caledonia, Queens County.

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 member for Preston.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1839**

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

Whereas Spencer Colley was born in the community of East Preston, where he and his wife Rose have spent their lives in the community raising two sons and one daughter; and

Whereas Mr. Colley joined the Dartmouth Police Department in 1972, being the second Black policeman hired by the force at that time; and

Whereas Mr. Colley has been involved in many community organizations such as the East Preston Board of Trade, the East Preston Boys and Girls Club, the East Preston Lions Club, the Gideon Society, and the East Preston Ratepayer's Society;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize Mr. Colley for the many contributions he has made to his community and wish him well in the future.

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

[2:45 p.m.]

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 member for Inverness.



**RESOLUTION NO. 1840**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas 28-year-old two-time junior provincial champion curler Kevin Saccary of Dartmouth was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in Fall 2008, a disease that took him off the ice and left him fatigued; and

Whereas in August, Kevin went to Albany, New York, to undergo chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), or liberation therapy, as a personal cost of about \$15,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy Kevin is feeling less tired, is curling at a competitive level, and reports that the MS fog has lifted and that he has a far more positive outlook on life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1841**

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Saint Mary's University is one of Nova Scotia's leading and largest post-secondary institutions, with more than 8,500 students from over 90 countries around the world; and

Whereas Saint Mary's University's Hearts and Minds Capital Campaign has been a five-year, \$40 million initiative to provide enhanced teaching and learning environments and opportunities for this diverse and vibrant student population; and

Whereas November 3<sup>rd</sup> marks the successful conclusion of the Hearts and Minds Capital Campaign with the official opening of the new Atrium complex and Global Learning Commons, both of which were made possible through campaign support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the volunteers, donors, staff, and friends of Saint Mary's University for their generosity and commitment to enhancing the educational experience of our students by supporting the Hearts and Minds Capital Campaign.

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 member for Yarmouth.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1842**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Keith Condon, President and CEO of Tri-Star Industries Limited of Yarmouth, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at Dalhousie University's recent Fall convocation; and

Whereas Dr. Condon was selected to deliver the convocation address; and

Whereas Dalhousie University President Tom Traves remarked about Dr. Condon, "Through his business success, Mr. Condon has been responsible for creating hundreds of jobs for Yarmouth families. He's combined that with considerable community volunteer work and leadership";

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Keith Condon on this impressive achievement, recognize his contributions to Yarmouth and surrounding area, and wish him continued success as a business and community leader in Yarmouth.

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 member for Hants West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1843**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Gary Greer of Dartmouth was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2000, a disease that prevented him from working and participating in baseball, hockey, and curling, forced him to quit playing in his weekend band, and meant that he needed to use a wheelchair; and

Whereas Gary travelled to Mexico to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of \$15,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy, Gary is stronger, more alert, less reliant on his wheelchair, and has gotten rid of “the MS hug”;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1844**

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas 16-year-old Adam Tanner of Brookfield, a Grade 11 student at South Colchester Academy, recently earned a gold medal in carpentry at the Nova Scotia Provincial Skills Competition, and as part of Team Nova Scotia was awarded a bronze medal at the 2010 Canadian Skills Competition in Ontario for construction of a playhouse built to residential standards and construction methods; and

Whereas Adam has taken part in the Building Futures for Youth program, which teaches high school students about the industrial construction industry, about safety and workplace readiness, and this program has earned him three high school co-operative credits and the potential to receive apprenticeship training; and

Whereas Adam has set his sights on becoming a certified carpenter and after that a journeyman carpenter, on working in the commercial side of the trade and on one day owning his own carpentry business;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature congratulate Adam Tanner on his accomplishments and wish him the best as he sets out on his adult career.

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 member for Glace Bay.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1845**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Glace Bay Women's Softball League recently completed its second season of competitive baseball and will host its annual banquet this Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> in the Bay; and

Whereas the league's 11 teams and 221 players are practising, improving and competing every day, believing in active living and promoting healthy lifestyles in our community throughout the summer; and

Whereas the women's league has reinvigorated Glace Bay's baseball community, the players are adding to our rich sports legacy and perhaps even more importantly, the girls of summer have created an energetic environment at ball diamonds in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate the Glace Bay Women's Softball League for making baseball fun for families from McKays Corner to South Street and wish them continued success in future seasons.

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 member for Cape Breton North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1846**

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

Whereas Crystal Bruce of Dartmouth was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis seven years ago and the disease has caused her great difficulty with her mobility; and

Whereas in order to raise funds to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, in New York, Crystal has held bottle drives, barbeques, yard sales and silent auctions; and

Whereas with most of her fundraising completed, Crystal is planning to travel to New York at the end of November at a personal cost of about \$15,000 to have the liberation therapy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge this NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West on an introduction.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Mr. Speaker, I call the attention of the House to the east gallery. We have two constituents of mine in the east gallery today, both members of the South Shore Regional School Board, Marg Forbes and Karen Reinhardt. I believe Marg is one of the longest-serving members of that board and carries the entire history of the board around in her head. I'd like the House to give a warm welcome to these two very fine ladies. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1847**

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas this NDP Government believes in working with communities to ensure top quality education in a safe environment remains accessible to our young people; and

Whereas the previous government went against the wishes of the people of South Queens when they did not agree to build a new junior high even though the current facility had been neglected for years by them and previous governments; and

Whereas this NDP Government listened to the community of South Queens and agreed to do what everyone in Queens County knew was the right thing to do by committing to a new junior high school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of listening and working with communities on their priorities, to ensure the future success of our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1848**

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

Whereas in September 2010 the residents of Dartmouth lost a steadfast and dedicated servant when Scott MacNutt passed away in the Dartmouth General Hospital; and

Whereas his dutiful service to our province included serving as Minister of Health and MLA in Dartmouth from 1970 until 1974; and

Whereas regardless of his involvement in public life, whether it be as a minister or MLA, Scott never forgot about the people and the importance of ensuring that the voice of Dartmouth was heard;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature extend sympathies to Scott MacNutt's family, his daughter Laura, his sons Jamie and Clive, and honour his memory by ensuring that our actions respect the best interest of the public at large.

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 member for Victoria-The Lakes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1849**

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

Whereas Shirley MacLeod of Gabarus Lake was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the Fall of 1995, a disease that left her tired, forced her to use a wheelchair and unable to walk with her first grandchild, Keigan; and

Whereas in mid-July, on her 33<sup>rd</sup> Wedding Anniversary, Shirley travelled to Mexico to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of almost \$15,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy Shirley has a better quality of life, is less tired, steadier on her feet and moving around with greater ease;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1850**

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

Whereas this past August, the 10<sup>th</sup> International Soke Cup ChitoRyu Championships took place in Kumamoto, Japan; and

Whereas of the 16 Nova Scotians who travelled to Japan to represent our province, six were from Clare; and

Whereas Alexis Saulnier won a gold medal in the individual Kata, age 12 to 13 black belt division, as well as a silver in the individual Kumite and bronze in the team Kata competition;



Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alexis Saulnier for her gold and silver medals at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Soke Cup ChitoRyu Championships and wish her continued success in all future endeavours.

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 Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1851**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Stephen Taylor of Halifax was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1998, a disease that forced him to leave his job as an air-conditioning and refrigeration technician and to use a scooter to get around; and

Whereas Stephen travelled to Costa Rica in September to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of about \$20,000; and

Whereas since having liberation therapy Stephen has a feeling of being alive, better mobility, less fatigue and is able to do 10 push-ups;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

[3:00 p.m.]

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1852**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Nova Scotia Senior Baseball League Championship game took place on Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at Beazley Field in Dartmouth; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Moosehead Dry team scored five runs to Halifax Pelham Molson Canadians' four; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Moosehead Dry team claimed their 16<sup>th</sup> Nova Scotia Senior Baseball League Championship title in the last 20 years;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Dartmouth Moosehead Dry on defending their championship title once again and wish the team well in seasons to come.

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 member for Hants West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1853**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nadine MacNeil was diagnosed with an aggressive form of multiple sclerosis in July 2009 and soon found her mobility was so poor she had to quit her job; and

Whereas in August Nadine travelled to Poland to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at great personal expense; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy Nadine is walking better, is far less fatigued and she feels that she is improving every week;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1854**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Muise Taekwon-Do club, under the leadership of Yarmouth resident Randy Muise, has been accepted into an International Ch'ang-Hon Taekwon-Do Federation; and

Whereas Muise Taekwon-Do is only the fifth provincial tae kwon do club to join this international federation; and

Whereas for many years Muise Taekwon-Do has provided countless members of the community with invaluable skills and discipline through tae kwon do;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Muise on the success of Muise Taekwon-Do, recognize his contributions to sports, recreation and health in Yarmouth, and wish the club much continued success.

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 member for Inverness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1855**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Graham MacCuspic of Grand River was diagnosed with MS 22 years ago, leaving him unsteady on his feet, fatigued and unable to work as a carpenter; and

Whereas in mid-July Graham travelled to Mexico to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at great personal expense; and

Whereas Graham says that this therapy is the first positive development he has had in the 22 years he has had MS and that the procedure has returned to him a greater quality of life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.  
The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1856**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Keith Riles of Louisbourg was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the Spring of 2008, a disease that robbed him of his ability to work and forced him to rely on a cane to walk; and

Whereas in mid-October Keith travelled to Bulgaria to undergo CCSVI, or liberation therapy, at a personal cost of almost \$20,000; and

Whereas since undergoing liberation therapy, Keith is walking without a cane, has the energy to repair his backyard fence, and was able to take his young son, Glen, trick-or-treating on Sunday;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to fund clinical trials into liberation therapy and provide hope to MS sufferers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I know I can't ask for a recorded vote but I would request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

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

Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The notice is tabled.

Before we go to Question Period, there are just a couple of items I want to bring to your attention. I forgot to mention the late debate will be held at the moment of interruption and it reads as follows:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge government to recognize the value of Holy Angels High School to its students and to the community and keep this school open.

That was submitted by the honourable member for Argyle and again, that will be debated at the moment of interruption at 6:00 p.m.

Secondly, I just wanted to mention that some of you may have noticed that on my dais here and on the Clerk's Table, we have an iPad and that information has procedural information contained therein and is helping us to have a smoother operation here in the

House. It basically includes information respecting a number of things, including the Oral Question Period.

Now I know I've asked during Question Period that no electronic devices beyond BlackBerries, computers and any other wireless devices. That's still true, I would ask that that not be done. But this particular iPad, I feel, is not in that requirement and is certainly not - I guess the purpose of not having electronic equipment on is that it basically doesn't help the speaker who is asking the question or answering the question. So just to bring you up-to-date on what that is and why it's here.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The time now is 3:07 p.m. and Question Period will go to 4:07 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **HEALTH - LIBERATION TREATMENT: GOV'T. DISCUSSIONS - DETAILS**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In August and September of this year, Premiers and federal and provincial Health Ministers met. One of the more dominating topics on both agendas was the MS liberation treatment and the leadership role each of the respective levels of government would take with respect to an issue that affects many people suffering from MS. My question to the Premier is, what specific discussions has your government had since September to address this issue for the MS liberation treatment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member may recall that our Minister of Health, in fact, participated in a national meeting of Health Ministers. If I understand it, the agreement was that they would encourage the federal government to look for clinical trials and would participate in that after the research was established. The literature was reviewed so that it could move properly on to the clinical trial stage. I believe that at that time there was also an agreement among the Health Ministers that they would look for an expediting of the analysis and compilation of the research so that could be done as quickly as possible.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, other provinces have played a leadership role. On October 19<sup>th</sup>, Saskatchewan announced \$5 million for their own provincial clinical trial. Manitoba ear-marked \$500,000 on October 15<sup>th</sup> for clinical trials with the scientific evidence demonstrating the trials would be safe and appropriate. My question for the Premier is, why has your government not yet announced its specific commitment, which would ensure Nova Scotians have access to a clinical trial here in Canada?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think if the member was to review what has actually happened in this province, they have said that they would make commitments to clinical trials after the research was compiled and an analysis was done that could, in fact, justify them going ahead with clinical trials. What we have said here is that we have made a very similar commitment. We have said that we are prepared to participate in national clinical trials. We would do that, of course, on a commensurate basis with our population, that we're prepared to participate in any research that provides a benefit.

I think - as the member opposite said a few times - hope to people who are suffering from these health difficulties. We have every bit of compassion and every bit of understanding of the need for hope but we also understand that there is a process that needs to be followed.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier's words but other provinces were at those meetings, other Health Ministers were at those meetings and they have taken a leadership role for their citizens. Newfoundland and Labrador has just set aside \$320,000 to provide MRIs for patients who go abroad, also to track those patients as they come home, to make sure that the decision that is being made around this treatment is being based on fact and sound evidence, to see what is happening with the residents.

We, as a province, have the highest per capita of MS in the entire country so my question to the Premier is, why is your government leaving it to other provinces to address this issue?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the matter of fact is that we're not. The Minister of Health has played a leadership role, in fact spoke on behalf of the conference in relation to many of the very issues that the member has set out. We have said that we will participate in clinical trials once the analysis and research is appropriately done.

Mr. Speaker, of course there are the patients who come home to Nova Scotia who are, in fact, monitored by their individual physicians. That would be a normal part of treatment that patients would receive.

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

#### **HEALTH - LIBERATION THERAPY: CLINICAL TRIALS - FUND**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the prevalence of MS in Atlantic Canada is the highest in the country. I know that the Premier and the Minister of Health are aware of the toll this disease takes on many families in this province. I also know how proud the Premier and his government are, and they should be, of the many talented and innovative

medical researchers and clinicians in Nova Scotia who lead the way in many areas of medical research.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I'm asking the Premier if he will give hope to the people in the gallery today, and hundreds of others, by funding clinical trials into liberation therapy and encouraging medical researchers in our province to find out, one way or the other, if liberation therapy is as effective as many believe it is.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we are prepared to participate on the terms that I set out in answer to the question asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition. There is the necessity to go through and do an analysis of the literature that already exists. The clinical trials, of course are based first, on having the scientific research done so I think this is the appropriate course, and I don't think that members opposite would suggest that we should do something that isn't based on good science and on good research.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I might point out to the honourable Premier, that over 10,000 people have put their names on a petition saying that they believe in this position. We have people in this gallery today who have said they've had the procedure and it has worked for them.

I live with a person who has had this treatment and there is a significant difference in her life. What we are asking of you, what we are asking of our province is to make this easier for them. Many have raised funding through bottle drives and auctions and yard sales.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health, I want to know if you will ease the financial burden on MS sufferers in this province by funding the clinical trials right here at home and not sending them off to countries unknown.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I might remind those in the gallery that you can show neither your pleasure nor your displeasure while here in the House and I hope you can live by that.

The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you. I had an opportunity today to meet with many of the people in the gallery on this important issue. I certainly would like nothing better than to be able to provide safe, effective treatment for people who have MS. In terms of clinical trials, I and the other Health Ministers in this country have said, when the medical doctors tell us that it is safe and we are able to move forward with clinical trials, we will participate in a pan-Canadian clinical trial. (Applause)

[3:15 p.m.]

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, time is probably the most dangerous part of MS, because for people who have MS, time is running out. The disease is disabling. For the



minister to say she is willing to move forward when she gets medical advice - all she has to do is look up at the people who she met with earlier today, who have had the procedure and who have shown that there is, indeed, improvement. We know this is a non-invasive process. We know that angioplasty is done on a daily basis at the hospitals here in Halifax. We know that if a person has a blockage in a vein, by removing that, it has to improve their health regardless if they have MS or not.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I ask the Premier, why are he and his government afraid of finding out one way or the other about the clinical trials and what the benefits of the liberation therapy really are for these people who are in the House, who signed the petitions and the many, many others who haven't the ability or aren't able to travel because of this disability? Make it happen. That's what this government said they were going to do, show leadership, better quality for families in Nova Scotia, here's his opportunity. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, thank you. The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are going to do. We're going to make sure that we observe what is in the best interest of all the patients in this province, that there is an appropriate analysis of the medical research, that these decisions are made on the basis of the advice of medical professionals. Once that is complete, then we will participate, as all the other provinces will, in the national clinical trials.

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

**JUSTICE: JAILS (SPRINGHILL & AMHERST)  
- BUSINESS CASE**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Last year, Department of Justice officials decided that a jail in Springhill and a jail in Antigonish was the best deal for Nova Scotia taxpayers. Supposedly this decision was based on sound evidence. My question to the minister is, will the minister table the business case, which his department made for the previous decision, which has now been reversed?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for his question. I've lost sight of part of what he was saying, it was a bit confusing, but anyway I think what I'm hearing him saying is that he'd like a copy of the business case with regard to that matter and I will table it.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, you can't even be nice to some people. They won't even accept it. What I was asking the minister about, your department made a decision, before you were minister, about putting two jails in the Province of Nova Scotia. I wanted the business case that was used by that government. So, today, you presented the business case. If you actually read it, which I'm sure you have, at the beginning it says the government has determined that a 100-cell jail is what's required. What did you base that on? There's nothing based on that. The only thing that's in this document we're reviewing

is three sites - somehow you threw a dot at a map and had it land in Pictou County where the three NDP people are.

What did you base that decision on? Why have all of a sudden the same people who made the decision saying we needed two jails, now all of a sudden say we need one? What did you base that on?

MR. LANDRY: Now I have some better understanding. The assumption made is that there was a business case for two jails. I'm not aware from the previous government that there was and I've seen no such document to that case. On the issue of why did we go to one versus two? Because if we built two facilities - and we'll use the example of two, 50-cell facilities, the savings to this province is \$5.5 million and it's \$1.7 million per year (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor.

MR. LANDRY: We'd be glad to get that information for them. The business case that we have for making the decision that was announced yesterday is there and I'll table it if you'd like, but I'll wait for your question to ask that.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the document that the minister is waving around is not the business case of why we now have one jail in the Province of Nova Scotia. He is throwing out a figure of savings that are going to be to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, based on what? Where did that come from? Mr. Minister, did you pick that out of the air? The people that you oversee, your department, had made a decision that we would have two jails in the Province of Nova Scotia, apparently based on some sound evidence. We want to see what that was. You have now changed that decision based on what? Most Nova Scotians believe it was based on nothing other than pure politics, old-style politics that they said they were going to do away with, but what he did was he put it right in his own area where there are three New Democrats.

What we're asking for is to have a review of that, allow Nova Scotians to see it, be open and transparent. At the very least they should be open and transparent. Since the minister is unwilling to put that information in front of the House of the elected people of Nova Scotia, perhaps he would forward all of the information to Auditor General, so the Auditor General could do an independent analysis to find out whether we are getting real value for our money.

MR. LANDRY: Very good speech, not much meat in it, not much substance and I'm not surprised. The issue that's on the table is, was there a business case for two jails and I'm not aware of any business case substantiating any business case. I do not believe that my staff provided any such business case. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor. Anything further?

The honourable member for Richmond.

### **JUSTICE: TWO-JAIL PLAN - BUSINESS CASE**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians were told in the last election that they'd be getting a better deal and old-time, Nova Scotia politics were going to be gone. Yet, the people of Antigonish are now wondering what kind of a better deal they got on October 22, 2009, when they had previously been promised a replacement to their existing jail, only to be told by the new minister that there would only be one jail rather than two jails built. The minister has repeatedly told Nova Scotians that the decision to go from two jails to one jail was based on a business plan that he did and again today he has quoted figures as to the savings to the Nova Scotian taxpayers.

My question to the minister very simply is, will you table the business plan that you used in order to justify renegeing on the commitment for two new jails and instead going with one jail in your backyard?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, we didn't renege on anything about two jails, there's absolutely no decision from the previous government that went through any type of substance that produced a business case. There was discussion, rumours and some innuendoes that there were going to be two facilities and we took it a step beyond that.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of Justice should go meet with municipal officials in Springhill and Antigonish and ask them exactly what their understanding is, and maybe even by going to ask his colleague, the MLA for Antigonish, as to what the expectations were for that area because in a letter sent to the member for Antigonish from Warden Herb Delorey from the County of Antigonish, he wrote: Municipal council itself questions what you have done on behalf of the residents of Antigonish County to secure the jobs and tax base that would be derived from this new facility.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the people of Antigonish are the real losers here because not only did they have a correctional facility, they're now going to lose it while the facility goes down the road to the NDP ridings in Pictou. So my question again to the minister is, will you table in this House the financial reasoning that you used to renege on the commitment of two jails and go to one jail in your backyard?

MR. LANDRY: If I'm understanding his question, there is no business case from the previous government that says that there were two jails. (Interruptions) There was discussion and rumour.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor.

MR. LANDRY: There was discussion and rumour and based on that, and if you had built the facility in Springhill which I stand by that would have been a bad decision for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. The action that we took was to look at that because we would have had to build a second facility based on the proposal of building one in Springhill. This government analyzed the situation and realized the significant savings in building one building and the operating costs of that, and that information will be provided.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate because there really are still Nova Scotians who thought that an NDP Government would be doing things differently in this province. Unfortunately, they are still under that fallacy of believing that. You have the member for Pictou East, I believe, read a resolution in this House stating that there would be savings of \$5.5 million and annual operating savings of \$1.7 million. Now, our Leader has questioned whether those numbers were pulled just out of the air. Maybe the member for Pictou East would be able to show us exactly where those numbers come from but that's exactly what we're asking for.

But the other point is, Mr. Speaker, we see the problems at the Burnside facility of having too many inmates under one roof and double bunking. I'm curious if the Minister of Justice would tell us what analysis was done by his department, rather than going with two separate facilities, putting 100 cells double bunked under one roof and how that's going to be different from the problems we see at Burnside today?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. The idea behind building a single facility is to reduce costs to make the system more efficient and take the advice of the Corrections Department. In addition, if you're able to reduce the capacity at the Burnside facility, it should reduce pressures. We are designing the new building to take into account some of the issues that were raised in the present situation at the Burnside facility. We know there are gaps. The Opposition Party and the Third Party were both in government and had plenty of opportunity to address those. This government is taking positive action to get results.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

#### **PREM.: MS CLINICAL TRIALS - TIME FRAME**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: My question through you is to the Premier. Multiple Sclerosis is a debilitating disease. It really impacts the person's quality of life and affects the loved ones around them. There has been much discussion surrounding the recent breakthrough in the treatment of this disease.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, on May 5, 2010, the Minister of Health said, "... a very experimental therapy that requires more research and clinical testing before

we could have this therapy adopted for treating MS in Nova Scotia.” I’ll table that excerpt from Hansard. So when will your government make good upon that statement?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken directly with the Leader of the Official Opposition and with the member for Cape Breton West. There is a national analysis going on of the research that has been done, of the medical literature that exists, in order to determine whether or not there is a foundation for national clinical trials. Once that research is done, then - well, it depends on the amount of research that is there. I understand there is a working group that is currently in place, that they are looking at this, they are trying to move through it in an expedited fashion.

[3:30 p.m.]

MR. D’ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Really what I’ve been saying over here is when? When is this going to happen? Is it two weeks down the road? Is it two months down the road? Is it two years down the road?

Over 2,000 Nova Scotians are afflicted with MS. The Premier of Saskatchewan has provided leadership, committing to clinical trials of the liberation treatment, which is said to begin in early 2011, so there is a date there and we’re knowing when it is going to get going. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier - will you show leadership for today’s families who are suffering from MS and fund clinical trials in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite of course can rephrase the questions in as many ways as they like and we can continue to say that we agree that clinical trials should be funded, they should be done in accordance with accepted scientific procedures. There should be a review of the literature that provides the foundation for clinical trials. As soon as that is done, we are prepared and we are committed to participating in national clinical trials.

MR. D’ENTREMONT: You know, Mr. Speaker, this topic is a very emotional one, especially for our caucus and I’m sure every caucus is represented here today. Today in our gallery we have, of course, Shirley MacLeod of Gabarus, we have Maxine David of Isle Madame, we have Yvonne Andersen of Truro and other people in our gallery who have had great successes with liberation treatment. However, there is Crystal Bruce of Dartmouth who is here today seeking liberation treatment. This is a very costly procedure and, unfortunately, not everyone can afford this.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier, what kind of leadership or hope can you offer people like Crystal Bruce and hundreds of other Nova Scotians who are afflicted with MS and who want their government to stand up for them?

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All patients in our medical system, regardless of the health difficulties they find themselves in, can be assured that their government will ensure that there is the appropriate medical care, based on scientific and

medical research, in order to provide them with the best possible care. That is what we are committed to, it is what I think patients reasonably expect their government to do, in terms of medical care - good science, good medical care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

### **EDUC. - SCH. BDS: BUDGET CUTS - GENESIS**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. This week school boards across this province were asked to figure out how they would cut 20 per cent from their budgets. My question is for the Minister of Education, who directed you to find those cuts, the Premier or the Minister of Finance?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have been brought into the process very early and had the advantage last year to take part in the consultations that were hosted by the Minister of Finance. We've had a number of economic reports outlining the structural deficit that this province is in and that we inherited when we came in as government. We certainly appreciate and understand the anxiety and apprehension out there but all departments are doing what they can to see if there are cost savings, if there are different ways of delivering services in this province.

At the moment we're in a very preliminary stage of having discussions between the staff of the department and the staff of the school boards, to look at where the opportunities might be for cost savings. This is a very preliminary discussion. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it interesting that the Minister of Finance is the same minister who stood up in this House and said they wouldn't cut teachers and they wouldn't close schools. Twenty per cent is a big, big number.

Mr. Speaker, today the minister announced her response to the report on absenteeism and she accepted 10 of the 13 recommendations. Now only one of those recommendations came with any money attached - \$4.5 million for a student information system, and that's \$4.5 million that's already in this year's budget. My question to the minister is, how much will implementing the other nine recommendations cost?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I was very up front today during questions from both students and media that there is no additional money being allocated for these recommendations. That's one of the reasons that I actually didn't move forward on a couple of them, because we can't ensure the alternative programming that should be in place before some of them are enforced.

I just want to say that no matter what the outcome of these early budget planning scenarios - and no one in this Chamber could possibly know the outcome, because there have not been any decisions nor are we asking boards to make decisions - this province will still be investing, no matter what the outcome is, nearly \$1 billion to support public education in this province. We're working with the other education partners to make sure that keeping

students engaged and learning in school is a priority. The educators have asked for this study. It's a very complicated issue and we are working with them to move forward as fast as possible. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, let's take the example of in-school suspensions. I commend the minister. It's a good idea. Students will no longer serve those suspensions at home; they're going to be in school, learning. The panel, in making its recommendation, said there should be additional funding to support in-school suspensions. Someone will have to work with those students. We will have to pay that someone. My question to the minister is, since some of these recommendations will, in fact, cost money, will that money be yet another cost that school boards will have to absorb in addition to this 5 to 20 per cent cut?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I think the announcements this morning are a way of helping school boards, educators, the department, everyone involved - parents, students - refocus on a priority, which is to encourage students to attend class, to stay in school, and have the most successful learning experience that they can. One billion dollars will continue to be spent on education no matter what the outcome. That's the minimum. We just want to encourage boards to ensure that the supports are in place so that those students who are not as engaged in their own learning as they could be have supports. As the financial situation of this province improves, this will be an area that we will certainly look at. It's a top priority. Public education is very important to this government and we will continue to support it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable for Hants West.

#### **PREM. - ERs: SERVICES - ENSURE**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, do you believe that election promises made by politicians are crucial to people having faith in our democratic system?

THE PREMIER: Of course.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, that's the answer that I assumed would be put forward. The Premier's words and actions are often contradictory, however. The Premier made a promise that all emergency rooms would be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and I will table that in his election document from 2009.

My question through you to the Premier is, you have not stopped emergency room closures in this province and Dr. Ross has recommended closing small, rural ERs. If you intend to go back on your election promise, will you ensure parents have a place to take their sick children? Will you ensure children have a place to take their sick parents for the quality care they so rightly deserve?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's too bad he hadn't taken an opportunity to read it during the campaign. I know he was a little bit busy in his riding, but it was a good document then and it's an even better document today.

The reality is that included in this was the promise that was kept to appoint an ER advisor who, as you know, has just completed his report. Included in this was the Emergency Department Protection Fund, which is also there and the report does not say we're going to close small emergency rooms, it points to a new model for care that will make sure that the doors are open and the lights are on for the services that people need in this province. (Applause)

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's not me that needs to review it, perhaps it's him that needs to review what he wrote last year. (Applause).

Mr. Speaker, it's a given that the Premier has misled Nova Scotians during the last election. Our province is riddled with NDP carnage and broken promises. We must now move forward for the sake of providing quality health care to Nova Scotians. My question to the Premier is, what is your government's plan to consult with communities and DHAs to ensure quality emergency room services are provided to the people of this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, after years of watching the health community in this province put up with what can only be construed as some of the worst examples of planning we've ever seen, a failure for 10 years to address what was going on in emergency rooms, closures that took place that were chronic . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order.

THE PREMIER: We finally have a government that is actually going to make sure that the lights are on, the doors are open and people in those communities are going to get the care they deserve. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **ENERGY: MERCURY EMISSIONS - REGS.**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. On July 22<sup>nd</sup> the Premier and the Minister of Energy announced they would put the health of Nova Scotians at risk by making Nova Scotia the only province in Canada to relax mercury emissions for power generation, limits put in place by ministers of all political stripes from across Canada because of the high risk this substance presents to human health and the environment. The Ministers of the Environment said at the time, "Human exposure to mercury . . . may cause neurological and developmental damage. Low exposure to



mercury may cause problems, such as learning disabilities in children. Women of childbearing age, pregnant women, children, . . . are most at risk.” I’ll table that document.

Why did the minister put the wants of Nova Scotia Power ahead of the health of Nova Scotians?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. As a Cabinet Minister, of course, we have the opportunity on many occasions to listen to people in our constituency, to listen to Nova Scotians - whether they are business people or whether they are people we happen to meet in various other roles as we take on our jobs as Cabinet Ministers.

When we were looking at this important topic, let me assure you that on many occasions I’ve had the opportunity to sit and talk to Rob Bennett and listen to his particular point of view when it comes to Nova Scotia Power. This is a perfect example when you have to make a balanced decision based on information you receive from average, ordinary Nova Scotians. That’s why I took that recommendation forward. We had the opportunity to listen, we want to make sure we listened to average Nova Scotians on this issue and therefore we made the decision as you see it.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, this minister talks about a balanced decision yet this minister and this government had options and the option they chose was to put the health of Nova Scotians at risk. This minister talks about power rates and reducing them but his government was the one that introduced an added tax on electrical bills which all Nova Scotians will see double on January 1<sup>st</sup>. As well, they had other options to reduce power bills such as having Nova Scotia Power return the \$5 million incentive it received for underestimating fuel costs last year.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Power knew about the mercury regulations back in 2006. Yet this NDP Government caved to Nova Scotia Power at the first opportunity. Every other province in Canada will meet these targets, we will not. That is unacceptable.

[3:45 p.m.]

Since the minister has in one year now relaxed both the renewable energy targets and the mercury emission regulations . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. YOUNGER: . . . what environmental safeguard does he plan to gut next?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, the concern comes down to the fact if you were talking about inflammatory language like “caving” to Nova Scotia Power - is that the sort of question that deserves an answer, that I’m supposed to stand here in this House and reflect

some parliamentary process? Is that the sort of question I'm supposed to react to and say I'm caving to Nova Scotia Power? I would like the member opposite to perhaps review that sort of question when he looks at it in the future. I'm not caving to Nova Scotia Power, I'm listening to Nova Scotians.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, maybe we should have a day in the Legislature where we pull out all the old Hansards of the minister's days in Opposition and see what he thinks.

The fact of the matter is, listening to Nova Scotians, it's too bad the minister didn't join me as an intervener down at the Utility and Review Board hearings on this, because the interveners there certainly had a different opinion than the minister does on that. They presented other options to reduce the rate increase that Nova Scotia Power had suggested and many of them indicated that we'll just have to make up for that rate later. It's a fairy tale for this government to suggest that reducing mercury emissions in the future will make up for it now because it accumulates and builds up in the environment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since the Minister of Energy has no issue with putting our health at risk in the environment, my final supplementary to the Minister of the Environment is, why did you remain silent while the Premier and government caved in, relaxed mercury regulations instead of fighting to protect the environment and for other options to reduce power rates?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the question was to myself and I can tell you that we have not been silent. Once thing that we have done is taken the understanding of this particular issue and addressing it, addressing it early and we are not going to miss the targets. We understand when this is going to have the financial burden on all Nova Scotians. We made the right decision and we'll meet that goal.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

### **HEALTH: DHAs - CUTS EXPLAIN**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. Recently the Department of Health has issued a decree to the district health authorities to reduce their budgets by 3 per cent next year, an additional 5 per cent the following year, and an additional 10 per cent the year after that, for a total reduction of 18 per cent. My question is, the blanket cuts you are imposing on district health authorities will negatively impact patient care, so why, Madam Minister, are you going to be making blanket cuts instead of strategic reductions?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there has been no decree to district health authorities to make blanket cuts. As we all know, we have to live within our means in Nova Scotia. The Health budget has pretty much doubled over the past 10 years, so we're

in the process of looking at how we can do things better, provide better health care, but do it within a fiscally reasonable way. We're working with the district health authorities to identify ways that we can work smarter, we can do things differently, we can reorganize, we can reduce administration, for example. We will continue to work with our DHAs to look at providing good-quality, high-quality health care to people in Nova Scotia.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that would mean that the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority would be facing a \$16 million cut. Does this mean families won't have access to a family doctor when they need one, that people cannot receive a potentially life-saving MRI when they need one, wait times for surgery will increase, or that women might not be able to access breast cancer screening centres? My question to the minister is, with these deep cuts being imposed on the DHAs across Nova Scotia, how is this a better deal for today's families, and improve health care for all Nova Scotians?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, one of the first things this government did was improve access to breast cancer screening with the introduction of digital mammography in all of the centres across the province.(Applause)

We looked for a way to find a better way of providing Lucentis coverage and we're doing that through our DHAs. Sometimes adversity is a source of great creativity, and we do face adversity around our financial situation. I am very pleased to say that our DHAs are working hard to look at ways of working smarter, reducing administration, and providing better quality health care to Nova Scotians within a financially fiscal responsible mode.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I like it when she takes credit for previous programs that this Progressive Conservative Government did, like digital mammography, like cancer treatment at our cancer centre, many of the programs that are just being finished up now that were started by our government. If she wants to take credit for them, I'm okay because I'm here for the patients and the patients have received the best services that they can.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that back in the 1990s the Liberal Government crippled the health care system when it balanced the books by cutting transfer payments to the provinces; the provincial Liberals then froze wages, eliminating nursing positions, amongst other cuts. What this government is doing to the district health authorities is no different from what Paul Martin and the Savage Liberals did to hard-working Nova Scotians in the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, are your cuts to health care services and workers an effort to help the Minister of Finance balance his books after 16 months of reckless spending and over-taxation?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government are working very hard to make health care better for the people of Nova Scotia. Health care is one of our core priorities. Our district health authorities deliver the health care services

and they are our partners in this process. I have confidence that they will be able to find innovative ways to develop and deliver health care services while living within our means. That's our priority.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **NAT. RES.: CLEAR-CUTTING - DEFINITION**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, clear-cutting, and more specifically the amount of clear-cutting in our province, remains a major concern, and this was once again made very clear at the forestry rally on Friday. While you will be announcing a reduction, Mr. Minister, can you tell the House of Assembly what the definition of a clear-cut will be when you bring forward your regulations?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. A clear-cut is a final harvest of a stand of trees that removes most of or the entire overstorey and occurs when either of the following two conditions occur: the basal area of a stand is reduced to a stalking level below a seed line threshold of acceptable growing stock, or 10 metres square per hectare; or an opening in the canopy is created that is greater than twice the height of surrounding trees, measured at the diameter of a circle or the narrow side of a rectangular cut block. I'll ask the Page to make a photocopy and then I can table that.

To get to the other part of the question, I'm not sure there will be a definition in the regulations, there may be. The point, and I've had this question before, which I take it as a trick question, the issue is not how you define a clear-cut, the issue is whether they are necessary at all and whether or not the - other people go to the size of them. We'd like to see clear-cutting reduced to a treatment. There are stands that it would be appropriate to clear-cut, and if the stand requires it then do the clear-cut, otherwise don't. There is too much of it in the province, it's not necessary for the majority of forest-stand types that we have and therefore we're going to move away from the amount that's being done.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I never asked my students trick questions, nor would I ask the minister trick questions.

Earlier this summer the NDP Government released Phase 2, the Natural Resources Strategy to Nova Scotians. The House of Assembly and concerned private woodlot owners, await the government's regulations on forestry practices. My question to the minister is when will we see your government's entire list of regulations and public policy on forestry in Nova Scotia?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping by next Thursday or Friday to give a pretty clear indication to Nova Scotians, the industry, stakeholders, where we're going around clear-cutting and some other issues related to the forest. The issue around regulation, some of that can be done that applies to the role of the department, that can be done through policy. Some of it, as far as imposing changes on harvesting practices, can probably be done

through change in the code of forest practices and through regulation. I'm not expecting that will happen - I'm saying by Spring, I'm hopeful, if there's change in regulation.

The document around the strategy as it relates to forests, parks, mines, biodiversity, is supposed to be ready by the end of the year, and that's still the target we're on, but I'm hoping by the end of the week to clearly articulate to the industry the major points around clear-cutting and some other aspects of forest . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'll forgo my preamble, with those long answers. My question to the minister is, why have you refused to engage in further consultations with Nova Scotians and get their feedback on the recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. There is far too much noise in the Chamber to hear the question or the answer.

MR. MACDONELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Look, the member should know that this process started in 2008 with the voluntary planning process. There were, I think, 27 consultations around the province - I don't have the number on the tip of my tongue as to how many presentations and opportunities for engagement. We put together the four panels of expertise. There were still industry and private sector groups who made presentations to the panels of expertise. There has been no issue on which any government, I think, has allowed for more consultation. The point to this was that they were supposed to - the steering panel and the panels of expertise - deliver recommendations to the government for us to write the policy, which they did.

I made a commitment that from what I deliver at the end of the week - if it's possible to do that - that there be some time for stakeholders to have a look at that, give some feedback. It's not going to be a long consultation. But I said that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

### **EDUC.: HOLY ANGELS HS - PURCHASE PRICE**

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Education. Last Thursday the minister provided inaccurate information when answering a question on Holy Angels School and I'd like to clarify some of the minister's comments, but first I'd like to thank the minister for her apologizing to the House on the matter of authority for purchase of schools.

Now that we've established that the government can purchase Holy Angels, my question to the minister is, what is the asking price of the school?

[4:00 p.m.]

HON. MARILYN MORE: I actually do know the asking price, but I'm not sure in my own mind if that's confidential information (Interruptions) so I'll just say that I believe it's close to \$800,000 as a purchase price.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the price that has been asked for the school is \$750,000 and I would suggest that that number is probably open for negotiation - not a great deal of money concerning the school purchase and considering what might happen to that school if it's not purchased.

The minister claimed her department would need to invest \$10 million in the school. The sources that I've been talking to say the school is in reasonably good shape and the issue about renovations needed hadn't really been a question until this whole matter of closure rose with the school board last week. Of course, as we all know, any high school will need renovations over the long term. This would be something that the government wouldn't have to put in the school board's budget immediately, but over a period of years to bring the school up to standards, in the same way that Sydney Academy in my area and the area of Cape Breton Nova and the school in Coxheath, Riverview High, is being renovated. This would be no different than that.

My question to the minister is, can the minister please explain the \$10 million investment she claims is necessary?

MS. MORE: The board is only provided a range of between \$8 million and \$10 million over the next number of years as the possible amount that would be needed to upgrade that building to make it a modern educational facility. That range of figures was given to us and apparently was provided to the board by a committee that they set up in the early days when they found out that the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame were going to sell the complex. So those are the board's figures and I've only been given that broad range.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we've heard the minister state that it could be \$10 million. The only time I've heard the \$10 million figure is from the minister. I haven't heard it from anybody else, and the board will not confirm that figure with me or anybody else who has asked them, at the present time. It seems to me that this is a good idea for the Department of Education to save some money, probably on instructions from the Minister of Finance - if you can get rid of that school, get rid of it. So let's not spend any more money on the board.

My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker - I hope the minister would agree with me that Holy Angels High School is indeed a unique learning experience and providing excellent educational opportunities for young women. Will the minister commit to find a way to have Holy Angels continue with its mandate, that is to provide proven quality education like they've been doing in the Sydney area since 1885?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the honourable member that Holy Angels has a very rich history and does a wonderful job of educating young women. That is why senior staff with the Department of Education have committed and continue to work with the staff of the school board to investigate what options are available to continue that school in whatever setting might be appropriate, as chosen by the school board.

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

### **HEALTH - HIGHLAND MANOR: REPAIRS - DETAILS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. In the mid-July edition of The Victoria Standard it was reported that Highland Manor in Neils Harbour would not have its operating licence renewed unless there was a commitment in writing from the Department of Health to repair deficiencies identified in the Fire Marshal's Office. In an August 13<sup>th</sup> visit to the manor, the minister's deputy assured residents the home would not be closing.

Since that day a few minor issues from the Fire Marshal's report have been addressed, but critical issues such as space for a common room being limited to 10 - a spot, Mr. Speaker, where church services are held - have not been addressed. My question through you to the minister is, what is your government doing to address both the immediate and long-term concerns and challenges facing Highland Manor?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. All of our homes for special care are very important to us because they provide services to the people we care most about in our province and that's our seniors. The residents of Highland Manor are certainly no different. This is why when the fire marshal had concerns about the health and safety for residents, my department was involved, my deputy minister took time and met with the residents and with members of the board and staff in that facility. We will continue to work with the administration and the board of that facility, as well as the district health authority, to ensure that there are good quality standards for the residents of that facility.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, in the Spring of 2009 the NDP Government committed to provide more restorative care to address mobility concerns and medication issues for seniors. Now the seniors in Neils Harbour are being held hostage. You have delayed expansion for the Nakile Home for Special Care in my honourable House Leader's constituency of Argyle. You've cut back on a 22-bed residential facility in the western part of Sutherland, Cumberland County. You've also cancelled six additional beds for homes in Parrsboro and Advocate Harbour. My question to the minister is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the Oral Question Period has expired.

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce a couple of constituents from my constituency of Hants West who are here with us this afternoon. Pat Post who is the executive director - she's making her way across the gallery there now - of the Windsor Day Care Centre and my wife, Leslie Porter. It's good to have them both in the crowd this afternoon. (Applause)

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 76.

#### **Bill No. 76 - Credit Union Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise as Minister responsible for the Credit Union Act to move second reading of some very important amendments to the credit union system not only in Nova Scotia, but throughout Atlantic Canada. I join all members of the House in marking the extent to which we value credit unions in our province and in our communities, credit union members and the role they play in our provincial economy.

Credit union partnerships with the province, and I note in particular the small business loan program, are working to create and maintain thousands of jobs across the province and I'm pleased that very recently our government announced an expansion of that very successful program in partnership with our credit unions.

All members of the House understand the importance of ensuring that the credit union system is as efficient and as strong as it can be in order to serve its members as best as it can, because these customer-owned financial institutions support families and help to grow our economy through their support for small business and in the many ways they support community development.



Mr. Speaker, the banks of our country are regulated federally but credit unions are regulated provincially. The province, in association with the Credit Union Deposit Insurance Corporation, known as CUDIC, is the primary regulator of the credit union system and ensures the prudent management of the Nova Scotia credit union system. I am pleased to say that the credit union system in Nova Scotia today is strong and financially healthy. (Applause)

Et si vous me permettez M. le Président, j'aimerais ajouter quelques mots en français. Parce que le système des caisses populaires est une partie intégrale de nos communautés acadiennes, notamment dans la communauté de Chéticamp où le mouvement coopératif et le mouvement des caisses populaires est une partie de l'histoire de cette communauté forte et prospère parce que c'était une façon dans laquelle le peuple de Chéticamp a pu saisir dans leur propres mains leurs avenir et les fruits de leurs travaux, et je peux souligner aussi par exemple la contribution qui est faite chaque jour dans la communauté de la Baie Sainte-Marie où le système des caisses populaires est très fort et en parlant plus tôt aujourd'hui avec le député de Clare, il m'a indiqué qu'il y a plus de succursales des caisses populaires dans sa région qu'il y a des succursales des banques commerciales. C'est une, la caisse populaire de Clare est une partie très, très importante de l'économie de la Baie Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments represent a system-wide change, which provides member credit unions in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island with a benefit of a larger, more diverse and more cost-effective trade association. Something that a lot of people here in Nova Scotia don't realize is that we already have essentially a merged system between our credit unions and those in Newfoundland and Labrador. What this legislation will allow us to do is to join with our sister provinces in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to have a truly Atlantic Canada-wide credit union system.

These amendments were arrived at after extensive consultation with the member credit unions. These changes, if approved by this House, will enable Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia to acquire the assets of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Central, accept New Brunswick and P.E.I. credit unions as members, and provide services to these credit unions.

For those who are unfamiliar with the system, Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia is an umbrella organization that provides financial services and trade association services to local credit unions. Under the existing law, every credit union in Nova Scotia is required to be a member of the Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia. The Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia is a link to the national and international credit union network for our local credit unions.

To mark the expansion of the system, from one that covers Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, to one that covers the entire Atlantic Region, these amendments would change the name of Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia to Atlantic Central. This significant initiative, as I said, is the fruit of at least a couple of years work

between the government and the credit unions. It is important to underline that the initiative has been brought forward by the credit unions themselves. This is something that they want in order to be stronger and to continue to serve their members and their communities well into the future.

I'm pleased to note that New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, the governments of those provinces, are on board with this work. We are working collaboratively together and in order to make this system change, it will require similar legislation to be passed in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. If all goes well, we are hopeful that the mirror legislation in those two provinces will be passed by their Legislatures this Fall so that the deal can close effective January 1, 2011. If for any reason the legislation, either here or in the other provinces, did not pass according to that schedule, then we just hope to move forward with all deliberate speed in order that the strengthening of the credit union system can take place as soon as possible.

The goal, as I said, is to realize greater efficiencies and greater specialization in services. The combined Atlantic Central will service 63 credit unions, 340,000 members, with combined assets of \$3.5 billion. So, Mr. Speaker, not only does this improve and strengthen our credit union system, but it is just another contribution to growing our economy for the long term.

I look forward to the comments of other members of the House on this important initiative and will certainly take into account any suggestions or observations that they may have. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[4:15 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to speak on Bill No. 76, and just to kind of go back and take a look at the beginning, the genesis of this particular bill because these amendments were brought forward by the credit unions themselves.

As we know, Newfoundland and Labrador has already been acquired by Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia, so the bill will essentially allow Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia to acquire New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island - that is New Brunswick Central and P.E.I. Central. So Credit Union Central Atlantic, this new entity from the acquisition of New Brunswick and P.E.I. by Nova Scotia to accept New Brunswick and P.E.I. credit unions as members.

The acquisition of these entities into one single entity will enable them to benefit from the economics of scale. Larger pooling of resources should mean greater services for members. I know there are members in this House who are members of the credit union and definitely benefit from the kind of service and the broad services that they offer in many of their branches.

The bill was already in the works, as we know, before the NDP took office. Bernie O'Neil, president and CEO of Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia said in an answer to media questions on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, that it has been a process of over two years to put into place. The piece of legislation was nearly ready and identified on the government's legislative agenda, perhaps as early as about two years ago.

Both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island will have to pass mirror legislation for this to work; Newfoundland and Labrador already addressed this issue. All indications point to these two provinces passing mirror legislation in the near future, although New Brunswick, having just changed governments, we hope that it will be reasonably high on their agenda as they bring in their legislative slate.

The goal is to realize greater efficiencies, greater specialization in services for the Atlantic credit union system. However, one of the services that Bernie O'Neil pointed to in a small scrum after the bill briefing on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, was marketing. It would be good if marketing wasn't the only service that will be improved by this merger. As we all know, this is a very, very competitive business. The banks, of course, are always offering a new array of services, so we certainly hope that it will lead down that path.

This is, indeed, a significant realignment, as the minister has pointed out, of how credit unions are organized in Atlantic Canada. It is supposed to be aimed at the corporate and organizational level and the effect on members should be increased services, and hopefully that is the case. Combined Atlantic Central will service 63 credit unions, nearly 350,000 members, combined assets of \$3.5 billion. One of the services that this member actually gets from the credit union is the ability to actually rent from the credit union. That's possibly a little bit of a unique situation that this member enjoys, so if greater efficiencies lead to a reduction in my rent, I'm sure that will also be happy for the Minister of Finance to hear as well.

There are a few questions that do remain around the bill. Bernie O'Neil, again in the media scrum, said on Monday that this should not result in significant job consolidation. A question that I think we need to raise, and perhaps this will come out in the Law Amendments Committee, the economics of scale, of course, mean efficiencies, but efficiencies often mean sometimes fewer people. We hope this isn't the case and perhaps some questions around that will come forward at the Law Amendments Committee. So, that there could be some job relocation over time was one of the other references that Bernie O'Neil did make. However, all credit union employees will be offered the chance to serve the organization, just maybe not in their present location. So a question to raise would be if there would be any impact on rural services. We all know that credit unions have had a very significant central place in rural Nova Scotia and we would hope that everything would stay intact in that regard and that this would not impact any of the branches.

So if job relocation is to follow, there could be branches affected by this change, maybe not. I certainly hope not, and we as a caucus look forward to this bill going before the

Law Amendments Committee and hearing from credit unions and others who engage in the services of the credit union. With that, Mr. Speaker, are the few words I have to say on Bill No. 76.

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

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Michael Vickers, president of the Young Liberal Association of Saint Mary's, who is with us in the west gallery. Mr. Vickers, please rise and be recognized by this House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this bill represents years of work by the credit unions. Thirty years ago there were 300 credit unions throughout Nova Scotia. Today there are 35, mostly due to mergers. For example, in the area that I represent we have the East Coast Credit Union where we have seven credit unions now forming one. If we look back into the area that I represent, the area that I represent owes a tremendous amount of credit to the credit unions and the achievements that were made in communities were largely due to the work of people like Father Moses Coady and the clergy, and the individuals he inspired to take a real interest in people. They saw credit unions as advisers and helpers to individual small-business people like fishermen, woodlot owners, farmers and merchants.

As a result, Nova Scotians right around the province came to realize that credit unions were their friends. They were there to help them achieve some degree of economic success for themselves and their communities and, Mr. Speaker, as Nova Scotians we owe a tremendous amount to the credit union movement and the economic and social leadership within the credit union movement.

Each province has a central credit union and with the changes they're going to have a larger, almost central, bank. It's going to mean stronger, more efficient operations and it's going to enable the credit union to compete with other financial institutions. As we know, competition improves service and that is important for Nova Scotian consumers and Nova Scotia business. It helps to drive transaction costs down because there are economies of scale when you have provinces like New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia working together and in Nova Scotia here, this province has 165,000 credit union members.

One of the areas where it will help strengthen is in a smaller credit union perhaps, let's say if we took the area of Yarmouth where there might be a lot of loans outstanding to fishermen. Well there's a great dependence within that portfolio on the success of the fishery. So with expanded operations those loan portfolios can be diversified with other areas of the province that might have a base in another sector of our economy. So with the credit union expanding into those other areas and partnering with other credit unions, they're going to improve their operations.

Mr. Speaker, as everybody in this House knows, we are soon going to have a new member sitting in the Legislature - the member for Cumberland South. He will be our new Leader, Jamie Baillie, and as CEO of the credit union, he knows how hard the credit union has worked for communities and business people throughout our region and we look forward to him joining us here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, we are supportive of this bill and on closing I would like to say that sometimes government can do things to help business and the economy without spending money and this is just one of those times that government has the chance to do that and that's another reason why we are supportive of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand and say a few words in support of Bill No. 76, the Credit Union Bill. The idea of amalgamating credit unions throughout Atlantic Canada is a very positive move forward for our credit unions, not just for the mere fact of the amount of strength it gives them but through that strength is a great deal of stability. If we ever needed stability in our financial markets, it has been realized in the last few years, especially when we look south of the border and see what happened down there with subprime loans and so on. What we need to re-vitalize the financial sector and to have true respect and relevance to it is that it has to come from a very base level and that base level is the credit union movement.

I'm very fortunate in my constituency to have three credit unions: the New Waterford Credit Union, which is the largest of the three; Dominion Credit Union; and the Tompkins Credit Union in Reserve, which is part of Glace Bay Central. I think I want to spend just a few moments talking about, obviously, just by the mere fact of when you introduce either the Tompkins or the Coady name in the co-op or credit union movement, people recognize it right off the bat. The idea of the Tompkins Credit Union in Reserve was a very seminal moment in the movement as it expanded, not just credit unions, but Tompkinsville in Reserve is the first co-operative housing development in all of Canada.

This was working women and men primarily from the coal-mining industry getting together, realizing that the stock of housing that existed in that area was old. Many of it was up around Official Row and in that area that were old company houses built in and around the early 1900s. These folks realized that what we have to do is we've got to build adequate housing for ourselves and our families and this was an extension that came out of the credit union movement. Clearly, if you have the pleasure to drive into Reserve, there is a cairn right at the end of that road and it's there in honour of the committee that helped build that.

These are people who have been honoured throughout all of Canada for what they've done. These were visionaries and somewhat, the people who have been involved with the movement of this bill toward passage, they were visionaries. Because they realized that, again, to accumulate as much capital as possible in an area that's responsible for that capital. It's not offshore, it's home, it's homegrown and we applaud that vision aspect of it.

I talk about the Tompkins Credit Union in Reserve and the Dominion Credit Union; again, it's a small town but that's the only financial institution in that town and has been for quite some years, as long as I can recall. This is an institution that helped many small businesses and families get their first start and they were always there for people. Again, it's a matter of their base to grow from. You can walk up and down, whether it's Station St., Langan St., Corbett St., there's a Corbett St. in Dominion. (Interruption) Probably somewhere they might be related to me, but they'll never admit to it in public.

[4:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, you can see homes that were either built through financial help with the credit union movement, or certainly that were repaired and refurbished with money from Dominion Credit Union and the leadership role they play in their community. I think I did a crossword puzzle this weekend and one of the clues in it was, where everyone knows your name. I was going to put down *Cheers*, but there were too many words. The answer was actually "small town." I said, well, that's Dominion. It's a small town and everyone knows your name and that's how they like going in - it's very congenial when you go in there. They know you by name and you're not just a number in somewhere in Toronto or somewhere like that. You are relevant, you get to meet and decide on the future of that financial institution as it relates to your communities. Dominion has been a leader in that, again.

In my own community, my credit union, the New Waterford Credit Union - it was similar to other small credit unions for quite some time because it was teetering on whether it would survive, because what happened is people thought it had lost its relevance. This was when banks started getting to mortgages and they began to loosen up lending and so on. There were fewer people involved.

A man by the name of Lew Fiander - he is from over on the Northside, Mr. Speaker. They hired Lew as the general manager and Lew said, look, we're perilously close here in what we have out in loans and what we have in savings and this is not a good situation. What Lew did was he went out and he started a campaign, albeit not a loud one. He met with the then mayor and council of New Waterford. Then he met with the unions, then he met with the churches, and told them and reminded them of their role in the community and what a loss it would be to have your credit union close on you, how important that is for you to have control over your financial future.

Lew is retired now. I think he retired in about 1999 or 2000. He will be long in many memories because of what he did. He reinvigorated the local community to say this is where to go to drive investment in your community when you need it. It is not only the straight-up whether you're looking for a car loan or a loan for a mortgage for a home or just student financial aid. What it has become, through Lew's successor in Bruce MacDonald - they've really involved themselves as a leader in the community. It is not only giving back dividends, but it is the larger part of the community.

Some of these folks may not be members of that credit union who they help directly. They were the prime motivator for a few years and sponsor of Safe Grad, and I don't think there's a person in this Assembly who wouldn't applaud what Safe Grad has meant for our young students graduating. Their utmost safety is kept in mind. For years, you would see graduation after graduation and you would see at that time of year you would sadly pick up a newspaper or other forms of media about incidents on prom night and so on.

They took the Safe Grad idea and really cemented it. The real point of their leadership, in my estimation, was to foster the growth, make it stable, and then hand it to a committee but on that committee are still many of the employees of the credit union.

That's what they've done. It's so intricate to what the credit union movement is itself. It takes the local idea, grows it and then allows it to pass down and to grow further. So I can think of some of the people that work there, Pauline Leadbeater and Kathy McLellan and Harvey LeBlanc. Harvey's a good friend of mine, he happens to live over around Florence, but I like him anyway. (Laughter) Harvey's a great guy. There were other people there, Betty Gillis there for many years and Marilyn White. All these folks, all from the community and Cheryl Wilcox - all these folks were from the community and they understood what this meant and how to treat people.

I'm not denigrating the banking system, that works very well in this country and that's fine. But I don't make any apologies to say that my support for the credit union movement because it has that grassroots ability to help the person there. It doesn't have to need a loan that has to be vetted in Toronto, it can be vetted on the local level by people who are your neighbours.

It's always fun if you have time to get in, and one of their former offices they turned into a small art gallery and it allows local artisans to show and have exhibitions there and I invite people, if you have time, to go see it. As a matter of fact, they're a major sponsor of the Junior C hockey team. They reach in many areas. It's so important when we're here today to debate Bill No. 76.

While some people may say, is this growth too much? I don't think it is. As a matter of fact, I know it isn't. What it is, it's the right growth at the right time. It's the reality and many things I think we could take a lead as legislators and their ability. There's often talk about the ability for us as the four provinces of Atlantic Canada to do regulations together and so on. I think they're showing us the way here. I think we should sit up and take notice.

While our government have sponsored this bill, this is a bill that's put forward and certainly been mentored by the credit union movement so it's to them that we owe the responsibility of this bill. It's our pleasure as a government to bring it forward.

We, as a government, wholeheartedly support this Bill No. 76. But more importantly, as a government, we want to say that we support the credit union movement and its

importance in the economic development - not only in my community, not only in the Province of Nova Scotia, but throughout Atlantic Canada. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Thank you. It's a pleasure for me to rise in support of this bill. I think it's an outstanding bill and I would like to commend the minister for bringing it forward. I know it has been in the works for a period of time, but this minister in the last year and a half has taken this forward to the House and I commend him for that.

While I'm speaking about this minister, I say it repeatedly in my constituency, I say that in 20 years time, people will look back on this minister as the greatest Finance Minister this province has every seen. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, I speak but the truth and I want to tell you how long I have been a credit union member. I want you to listen to this for just a moment. You take the age of the member for Yarmouth, take the age of the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville, and combine them and that's about how long I have been a credit union member. I belonged to the New Glasgow Credit Union when it was one or two rooms. It had some farmers, some fishermen, some coal miners, some steelworkers; the farm families who couldn't get money anywhere else could get some money from the credit union. It was looking after some small businesses in Pictou County. It was a small credit union. It also had as a member a young news director, a very young news director at that time as a member.

Now, as the son of a coal miner, I grew up in a house that didn't have a great deal of money. I've never had much family money over the years but the credit union took chances on me time and time again. I have, through the credit union, purchased three houses, I operated a business and, in fact, I couldn't count the number of cars that I have had financed through the credit unions in this province. After being involved with the credit union in New Glasgow I got involved with the credit union in Antigonish and the member for Antigonish knows how good that credit union is down there. The Bergengren Credit Union is a great credit union. It is a credit union that has really supported the surrounding area and I'm proud to say that the New Glasgow Credit Union is now associated with the Bergengren Credit Union.

In 1973, I became a member of the Province House Credit Union just across the street from us and I just want to use as an example, an example of what the credit union does for people. Now, before I say this I want to say that I belong to the Westville Rotary Club and the Bank of Nova Scotia is represented there, the Royal Bank of Canada, RBC, is represented there. They have great people and I've dealt with those banks as well but not like



the credit union. Since we, on this side of the House, cleaned up the operating expenses of MLAs, since we did that, since we cleaned up the first changes that have been made ever for transparency and openness, the only thing that perks any more for the average MLA is coffee and we did that. We did that.

So here's the situation. I go across the street to the credit union today and I say to them, can you get this service at a bank? Now, just listen for a moment without the heckling, listen for a moment. I go over and I say could I get a copy of cheque 472 for my expense account because in cleaning it up, as you know as members, you also have to show that the cheque has actually cleared. So I go over to the credit union and they make a copy of the front of the cheque and the back of the cheque for me. Now, can you walk into a bank and get that kind of service? Can you do that?

Well, I'll tell you, the credit union system is one that I have used in at least seven counties. When I lived in Cape Breton, the credit union was very important to me up there and as the Deputy Premier was talking about Dominion and other places, I used to use that credit union in Sydney and all kinds of other places - Glace Bay, the member for Glace Bay, I used to be over there in that credit union a lot as well - so the credit union has been there for me in over a dozen communities.

[4:45 p.m.]

I just want to say how important this is for the Province of Nova Scotia, for Newfoundland and Labrador, for Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to have a united credit union, an Atlantic-wide credit union system and I'm very proud that our minister was the minister who brought that into the House. (Applause)

I want to not just talk about the bill, I want to talk about people because people are really important to me. I go into the New Glasgow Credit Union quite often and in the New Glasgow Credit Union there is a young woman who started Grade Primary with me. Her name was Sharon Wadden, she's now Sharon Martin, and it's a great pleasure to walk into a credit union and see a person still working who, in fact, started Grade Primary with you and that's the kind of service I get in the credit union. When you walk in the door, there's a recognition.

There is another person that I want to mention who works in that credit union in New Glasgow and her name is Glenda Fraser. Glenda Fraser drives in to New Glasgow all the way from the Garden of Eden and only a constituency like Pictou East could have a community called the Garden of Eden. I say to the member for Pictou West, the Speaker of the House, I say to him, the sun rises in Pictou East and it sets in Pictou West.

I mean, this is a great constituency, but that woman who drives in from the Garden of Eden - I want to tell you a little story about her. Glenda Fraser was talking with me one day in the New Glasgow Credit Union, and I think this is a real tribute to this government and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal should be listening here,

because basically what she was telling me was that for about 20 years driving in from the Garden of Eden, she could never go fast because the roads were in such desperate shape. With this minister, there have been three projects in that strip of the Sherbrooke highway and she said, I met a Mountie car the other day and I had to look at the speedometer for the first time because the roads are getting in better shape. What a bouquet to our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. (Interruption)

Yes, indeed. Someone has just heckled and said, we will look back in 20 years time on that minister as being the best Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal this has province has ever seen. (Interruption)

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I know with your wisdom you're running the House in an effective manner, but it seems to me when members stand in their place they should be speaking on title and I really have to question the fact, I'm listening to debate here, we're not talking about transportation issues today, we're talking about credit unions. So, Mr. Speaker, could you please rein this member in and get him on title. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. He is absolutely right and the member for Pictou East is well aware that we're talking on Bill No. 76, the Credit Union Act, and I suggest that the honourable member get back to the subject at hand.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, I'm into my fifth year in this House and this is the first time I have ever been reined in by one of my own colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. MACKINNON: I was very clear that I was talking about the credit union system because it was an employee of the credit union on her way to work, so I apologize if I've offended anyone in the House. I think probably at this point I will take my seat. (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us another story.

MR. MACKINNON: Well, I think I might get an opportunity to speak in the Address in Reply over the next few days. I'll be given a full hour at that time. I know I will not be as entertaining as you were last night, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, but I will try to at least enliven this place, which doesn't get too much liveliness from the members opposite.

I support this Bill No. 76 fully and I look forward to an even stronger credit union system in the future. I am very hopeful that kind, friendly service that I've experienced for

45 years will continue over 45 years. I just cannot say enough about the credit union system in Nova Scotia. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I, too, am pleased to rise and speak to Bill No. 76, the Credit Union Act. I do welcome this bill and I do echo the comments that have been made by other colleagues in the House in recognizing that there are points in time when you can help processes and institutions move forward and, indeed, do that in a collaborative manner and one where co-operation within the region and strengthening an institution, as was mentioned by other members, has a very strong, solid history in this province and indeed, a proud history.

You know, Mr. Speaker, like others, I have had experiences with our credit unions. I know in Cape Breton North both the Princess Credit Union in Sydney Mines, as well as the North Sydney Credit Union - and the member for Cape Breton Centre was talking about some of the credit unions in his area and the history from Sydney Mines with coal mining, but in North Sydney when you go into the credit union, I remember years ago in the branch, before its new modern facility with all the modern amenities that are in town, you'd be downtown and you'd go in with your little book and you'd be in a lineup with all the ladies and fellows with their nets on and the fish scales on their boots when they are in doing their business. That was all part of the smell of money and people earning a paycheque.

Times may have changed and shifted a bit in the community and we've actually, thankfully, seen some of that business come back and people strengthening their credit union. I know the member for Cape Breton Centre when he talked about the Tompkins in Reserve Mines - it's actually an interesting model. I know in my time with BCA Holdings and working with New Dawn Development you saw the community come together, and that building that is in Reserve Mines that otherwise was wondering what its future would be, and the community came together in that very model that speaks to the credit union. I remember going in there and there was the credit union itself, but the community library was there, the Tim Hortons, which is very much a community gathering point, the pizza shop and there is program space upstairs - which was my involvement with friends of one of them that the new member for Glace Bay has mentioned. Mike Calloway and others, I think Neila Fraser and myself who were working on some of the employment programs and initiatives for youth transitioning in the economy and there was a space upstairs at that building, it had community space built into it. It wasn't large, nor is it a large building, but it speaks about a community supporting community while trying to provide an offer, a banking function, and for people to come together.

That's a positive thing and I know throughout as people can say no matter where you go. I know in Antigonish, the Bergengren - I always called it the "Bergeron", I've been burgeoned some people might say, but there's an institution that has had very great and progressive ability and a larger banking capacity, to use that term.

What I do know is when we previously brought forward the small business loan program, and this is where we can set some of the politics aside and talk about the strength of working together, I remember when we brought in the small business loan program, you'll know recently there was an announcement to expand that to allow, besides new business start-ups, to allow for expansions as part of that. As the honourable member for Inverness has stated, it's good when you can look at these measures that don't cost but definitely can contribute and expand opportunity to take advantage of those.

I know the Minister of Finance, in bringing this forward, talked about looking for ideas. I remember part of the intent before with the credit union loan program and the significant part providing them with a 75 per cent guarantee, so the 25 per cent of the risk would be borne by the local community and that part of the model was why people embraced it at the local community level. They knew things that the bureaucrats or the civil service wouldn't know if it was on a computer screen in Halifax, they'd know on the ground what the individuals, what the community history is and know how to share that risk.

What we've seen is continually topping that up, adding to it and expanding. One of the challenges that has been there is that some, like in Antigonish, have been able to have a great uptake, others haven't had the capacity because they've been smaller and limited to the 25 per cent. They've been more risk averse in taking advantage of that.

I do know one of the things we had tried to do before with Nova Scotia Business Inc. was to establish a process where the credit union business program and the CBDC, the federally funded Community Business Development Corporation, which has a funding limit as well in place, as well as NSBI, being able to collaborate, share some of the risk and help team their efforts and resources and spread those resources to work together. In some cases it has proven to be beneficial.

A case that hasn't been, I know with NSBI there was an intent to establish a component of the lending program for smaller businesses. That was to deal with the \$500,000 and under that would be there. I would hope that the Minister of Finance may look at working with NSBI, working with the Minister of Economic and Rural Development, looking at where these programs benefit. Coming out of a recession, if we're truly sincere about helping smaller businesses, we do have some mechanisms at our disposal that the minister and the Cabinet would not have to add more money but change the existing composition of the portfolio within NSBI and work with them.

As we go forward, I would be calling upon the government to go back. We had hoped that would have been the case. Time moves and elections pass and things get stalled. But there is a way, if we want to use, within the existing pool of dollars, ways to help with better outcomes than that's something we, on the Progressive Conservative side, support the government in examining and looking at. Support the government in bringing forward and configuring so that federal and provincial and community-based initiatives all have a place to be able to be stacked or partnered and outcomes can be achieved.

We also know and we hear it time and time again how if you go to one of the big banks, they're going in and the only thing making a determination is a computer program. The discretion is gone from the local branch managers of the banks. I remember growing up, it was the Royal Bank and Bank of Nova Scotia in my community, that still had a presence. Now you go in the bank managers don't have a capacity to offer you lending, to give you that extra discretion based upon your history in the community, based upon people's knowledge and understanding of your circumstances or the supports that may be there from other companies.

If you're a small business and you know, if you're in Port Hawkesbury and NewPage is taking you on as a supplier but you need capital, the bank screen doesn't necessarily recognize that you're not much of a risk and therefore should support it. Because the traditional banks lack that, there is an opportunity where credit unions, in expanding into the marketplace, they have filled a void, it has been a positive filling of that void.

[5:00 p.m.]

As I say, if the Minister of Finance working with the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and with NSBI were to look at how do we reconfigure some of the existing programming dollars for investment, for business support - because we know that the big opportunities always come. Cabinet knows through the Industrial Expansion Fund the large opportunities are always right at the door of a minister's office, the Premier's Office. They're being presented and often it's the smaller businesses that can benefit or aid in those outcomes that lack the same sort of mechanism or ability to get that level of attention, but there is a way to bring that forward.

That's why I think building in the way that this bill does to open up the region more - as I said, it may be one of the few times I'll compliment the minister on moving forward and I do compliment him, and I do commend the government and to give credit where credit is due, credit unions deserve some credit being provided to them, and the government moving forward. I think, as we move along, we have to look at how the credit unions get over some of those voids; how the smaller credit unions may need some other mechanism to help them to work with small businesses that can't currently go into their branch and access the small loan program; how the strength of Maritime, regional and Atlantic co-operation can help grow the capacity of the credit union here. If the government does that, I think they will have done well by previous initiatives and move forward.

I know the member for Pictou East had referenced before about MLA and expense and clarity but one of the things I will agree about, when you move forward, it is to provide the transparency. Just as much as with us as members, people can come in and see what we're doing, with a credit union, I kind of question why a person needs that many houses and that many cars but, however.

MR. MACKINNON: I'm older than you.

MR. CLARKE: Well, yes, and maybe in a few decades I'll get there, too, Mr. Speaker. I've been driving on smoother roads for a lot longer than that member obviously has been, but I'll tell you this is a positive thing. What we talked about with the MLA expense process was providing for transparency and clarity, but also, just as much as we in the House - as time moves on you have to look at what the needs of constituents and members are, we have to look at the needs of communities and business and that requires making changes from time to time. When you can process things - as my honourable colleague, again from Inverness, has said - that don't cost the taxpayers additional money but increase and improve outcomes, then that's a good day and just as much as we ourselves will have to respond to the times, I think we can collaborate on those things that do make improvements and we all strive, amongst all Parties and members, to do that so the public has confidence in us and we then instill confidence in the public institutions like the credit union.

So with that, I do want to commend the minister for bringing this forward. I do offer and reiterate the support of the Progressive Conservative caucus. I know that places like Cape Breton, where I'm from, appreciate the value of credit unions and the types of individuals and businesses that are supported by them, that this indeed is a good day that I think all members of the House can celebrate and collaborate with. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to join the debate on this bill this evening. I wanted to offer a few remarks on my own behalf with respect to the legislation, I think it's obvious it has fairly broad approval from all quarters of the House. I have been an active member of the credit union for as long as I can remember. I started out with what was called the Harbour City Credit Union in Dartmouth. It was amalgamated with the Dartmouth Community Credit Union. The Dartmouth Community Credit Union amalgamated with a series of other credit unions and eventually became the Heritage Credit Union and I was certainly happy to be a part of that throughout.

I served, originally, on what was called the supervisory committee and then after that on the audit committee of the Heritage Credit Union and did so for more than 10 years. I'm always very proud of that association. It's not just my own, it was also the fact that my father was involved with the credit union for many years and was a member of the Dockyard Credit Union - again, for as long as I can remember. The principles, of course, associated with the credit union are very understandable ones. It is simply that the financial resources of the members of the credit union are used in the local community to strengthen community economic development. They are used to ensure that there is an access to local services in what we refer to now as the banking or financial services sector.

They have been filling that role in this province for a very long time, often associated, of course, with Moses Coady and much of the work that was done out of the St. Francis Xavier Extension. Many of us who have, over the years, wanted to champion that notion of local economic development, of self empowerment, of harnessing the financial

strength of the individuals of the province so that we can move forward and build the industry of our province, build the commerce and trade of our province, have been supporters of the credit union movement.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that this particular endeavour will try to strengthen the overall Credit Union Central. With more members it will mean that they can or will have the financial strength to be able to provide services, a broader range of services. One would hope, if they can take advantage of the buying power that comes with more members, that you would be able to provide those services on a more cost-effective basis.

The credit union is always looking for new ways to serve its membership and, in fact, I would say that the Nova Scotia credit union system has been one of the most innovative anywhere in the country. People who have been to other areas of the country would know that Vancity Credit Union is a very large enterprise in British Columbia, but even with its size there have been innovations and things that have come out of the credit union movement in Nova Scotia that have been adopted in other parts of the country.

For me, I see this as the continued kind of innovation and progress that we look for in the credit union movement. The credit union, of course, has a very successful - it was noted by Donald Savoie - small business program where they provide capital for small business startups. We've expanded that relationship to a larger extent now, Mr. Speaker. We're in the midst of a program where the credit union is going to hire people who are social services recipients and train them to take good jobs in the credit union system. These are jobs that pay well - they're not minimum wage jobs, they pay well, they are jobs with pensions and health benefits. They have set a target. I believe the current target is 100 people who they want to bring into the system to give good jobs and to strengthen their system, but also to strengthen each of the families that are associated with those individuals.

This is real leadership by the credit union movement. I see this as something that we would hope to be able to emulate. I believe the more co-operation we can have among the Maritime and Atlantic Provinces, the better and stronger we will be. I've said for a long time that I believe the success of Moncton is good for Halifax and vice versa. I think the same with respect to Charlottetown, the same with respect to Corner Brook or St. John's. The aggregated market of 2.3 million people is stronger than 990,000 in our province. I think the credit union movement recognizes that. They recognize that the aggregated strength of their collective membership in Atlantic Canada is much greater than just this province's membership, so I am proud of the work that they are doing and I am proud to be associated with it and I am certainly proud to support this legislation. So, thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

MR. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I too appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak in the House on behalf of this bill. Many of the speakers have already referenced Antigonish and the Bergengren Credit Union and the history that we have with credit unions in my area, but I want to talk a little bit about that because I think it's got an importance that is significant to this bill and to the future of credit unions in our area.

Dr. Moses Cody had said, give people ownership, and that really is kind of the seed or the background out of which the Bergengren Credit Union grew in Antigonish. It was an idea of a study group, a study club at Saint Francis Xavier University, it came from that originally and the charter for the Bergengren Credit Union was issued in 1933. It was opened for business late that year and the assets at that time were \$27.50. It was originally a credit union that was started for farmers only. It very quickly widened its membership to include others. A year later, the assets increased to \$372.85; that's when wages were \$2 a day.

So that amount of money in a year was considered to be a remarkable improvement. Credit unions didn't begin here in Nova Scotia. They started originally in Germany about the mid 1850s, around about that time, and then of course in Quebec in 1900, Alphonse Desjardins took up the idea for the caisses populaires and the people's bank. His original deposit in that credit union was 10 cents.

To make the connection between this bill and Antigonish and the Bergengren Credit Union, there was a gentleman in Boston, Mr. Filene, a millionaire. He was inspired by the development of credit unions in India and he thought that this would be a good idea for the United States and he hired Mr. Roy Bergengren to promote and manage them as the director.

In 1931 Mr. Bergengren was about to take a holiday and a little priest from Antigonish hustled into his office and that was Father Jimmy Tompkins and Father Tompkins persuaded Mr. Bergengren to forgo his vacation and come to Antigonish where he spoke at Saint Francis Xavier University and together at that time with A.B. MacDonald the Bergengren Credit Union became - they started the legislation that was passed in 1932 that enabled credit unions to form in Nova Scotia.

A year later, the Bergengren Credit Union was in operation and the Bergengren was the 14<sup>th</sup> credit union in Nova Scotia. It had a board of twelve directors, three of them were women. That was back in 1932. The credit union in Antigonish made its first loan in 1934. The loan was for \$35. They built their first building a couple of years later for \$300 and the first full time manager was P.D. MacDonald who continued to manage the credit union for a considerable period of time.

By 1950, the assets of the credit union had grown to \$117,000 and by 1960 it was \$760,000. By 1970 it was \$5 million. In 1977 P.D. MacDonald passed away and he was replaced as the General Manager by Mr. Ted Cogan. And the credit union has continued to grow in Antigonish. Bergengren now has a branch in Saint Andrews, which is a community, a small community, a very vibrant community just outside of Antigonish and as my friend from Pictou-East said, Bergengren has joined with the New Glasgow Credit Union, so we



actually have three different credit unions carrying the name of Bergengren, all under the same umbrella. That whole idea that this bill talks about, the joining together, is something that has been happening in Antigonish for quite some time.

Bergengren Credit Union in Antigonish now has - and this includes the three of them - 18,000 member-owners. Its assets today are \$177 million. So from that original \$27.50 when it started, the assets are now \$177 million.

[5:15 p.m.]

I guess the main thing to point out here is it's not just a business, a credit union. I think it's a way of showing co-operation and unity among people in order to come forward with a common purpose. I guess the loyalty of those involved in the credit union over the years remains its main asset. We have people who have been members; families who have original members are still there. My own parents, married in 1939, became credit union members. My mom passed away just this year and one of the things that she had said to us toward the end of her life was, remember I have an account at the credit union. She always kept \$1,000 in the account because when this account was originally opened many, many years ago, if you kept \$1,000 in your account, when you died you got \$2,000. She wanted us to remember that when she was on her way.

Anyway, as I said, I just wanted to rise to speak because Antigonish is a vibrant credit union centre and we have a very viable credit union there. It is well respected and used by the entire community, so in connection with this particular bill, as I said, I think the joining of the credit unions in our area to form one major credit union bodes well for what this bill is intended to accomplish. When people get together they can do great things. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise in support of Bill No. 76 as well. Credit unions are an important part of our world and I know that the credit union system here in Atlantic Canada and Nova Scotia has done a great deal of work to get to this place and to this bill. I think the minister's willingness to bring this forward is a recognition of how important the system is to our economy, to the welfare and personal lives of many people in Nova Scotia. It also, I think, speaks to the flexibility of the credit union movement in adapting to the times.

I've been a credit union member for almost 30 years - not as long as some people here, but 30 years is a long time. You know, interestingly for me, although I'm a native Nova Scotian, I became familiar with the credit union movement in Saskatchewan, a place where co-operation has been a watchword for a very long time. In fact, I guess for the early

pioneers to survive through those cold prairie winters it became necessary to find ways to work together. Certainly they discovered that it was either co-operate or perish.

Interestingly, that sense of co-operation which underlines credit unions became something that was very useful in the evolution of other important programs that we have in our world, in Canada, like Medicare.

As a result of that experience, I joined OMISTA Credit Union in 1981 when I was living in Moncton, and during part of that time or afterward became a member of its board of directors and have served on various committees and became quite familiar with both how successful the business could be and with how much good it could do in the community.

In the last 10 years I've been a member of Valley Credit Union, which is a credit union that exists in the Annapolis Valley. It started off in Waterville in an individual's home. I can remember as a young fellow being aware that the credit union existed, but was always a little bit leery of becoming involved in what seemed like such a small operation.

The fact is that credit unions these days are very secure institutions. Deposits in credit unions are secured by various kinds of legislative protections and are required to have full investments. They provide a very wide range of services. Credit unions are - I think it doesn't go without saying - owned by their members. As a result of that ownership, they're governed by their members who can take decisions by one person, one vote.

Earnings that credit unions make are shared by their members. The earnings that credit unions make, therefore, are probably frequently used in the communities in which they exist and they make investments in communities. They build communities through making personal loans, as some people have mentioned, the cars they've bought, the houses they've purchased - I've been among that group. They make loans to small businesses which sometimes may not be able to secure loans from other kinds of financial services.

They make important contributions to charities, often because the members of boards and the members of the credit unions themselves are highly vested in what's happening in their local world. Credit unions are flexible and they're able to provide many resources close to home. Valley Credit Union, where I'm currently a member, has moved a long way from that one-house operation. There are now branches in Middleton, Waterville, New Minas, Canning, Bridgetown and Greenwood. They've been building a very secure base.

I think another thing the Valley Credit Union does, as many credit unions in Nova Scotia have been able to do, is to provide financial services for small communities that have, in fact, been abandoned by larger financial institutions. That's become an important resource for those small communities, for example, in my own area of Kings North, Canning being one of those in particular. For me, and its many members, Valley Credit Union provides effective, friendly, personal and personalized services.

I just want to close by saying a couple of more small things, but maybe they're very big things in a way. A man named Daniel Papero, a systems theorist, once wrote that co-operation has probably been as important as competition in the evolution of our world. When I think of credit unions, co-operation is the word that comes most readily to mind. Credit unions are all about co-operation. They're one of the great ideas we have to make life in Nova Scotia better and I congratulate the minister on having brought this bill forward as one way to improve the economic climate in Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of Bill No. 76, the Credit Union Act. Credit unions are extremely important in small rural communities and areas like Guysborough-Sheet Harbour. One of the things that is important to these communities that exist in this constituency is access to financial services. The previous speaker talked about the fact that credit unions have often moved in to fill a void

One of the good examples, of course, is the East Coast Credit Union, which opened its doors in Mulgrave a number of years ago in an attempt to fill a void. That organization has done a commendable job for that community and for the citizens of that area. Another very important credit union in the constituency is the Sheet Harbour Credit Union. It again provides services, especially services that are necessary for a lot of seniors. Many of the seniors in that region are members of that credit union and that credit union just went through a significant transformation to modernize that facility and to make it more accessible for the residents, especially the seniors.

As I was listening to the debate, I was thinking about my own experiences with the credit union. I have shares in two credit unions at the present time. My constituency account was deliberately put into a credit union because I felt it was important to support that community venture. I'm also a member of four co-ops, so when I started looking at that, I have shares in four co-ops. The co-operative movement and the credit union movement are very important to me.

Credit unions have a long history in my area and the names of individuals like Father Jimmy Tompkins and Moses Coady are still household names in that area. These individuals and their accomplishments are still very much talked about and very much revered by many of the citizens, especially the more senior ones. The credit unions themselves evolved in this area out of hard times. One of the things that happened was that as times got a little better, people moved away from some of the credit unions, but it's interesting to see that people are moving back to credit unions, especially in some of the smaller areas.

This bill is extremely important because it will strengthen and grow the credit union movement not only in this province but in Atlantic Canada. This will provide regions with more services, more capital, and as I have indicated, it is a step in the right direction to growing the economy here in Nova Scotia and, indeed, Atlantic Canada. I would like to

commend the minister and all members of this House who have gotten on their feet to speak in support of this bill. Your unqualified support expresses a vision and a movement in a direction which will, I think, give us in this province an opportunity to move ahead and to become a leader in the credit union movement in Atlantic Canada. For that I think the minister and all members of this House are to be congratulated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak just briefly about Bill No. 76 and to show my support for it. One of the disadvantages of coming kind of late in the debate is that most folks have already said just about everything there is to say about the importance of the credit union movement to our province. My colleague, the member for Antigonish, traced the history to Germany, the caisses populaires, and right up to the present time. We've heard names like Father Tompkins and Moses Coady and I won't repeat all that.

I will say that the LaHave River Credit Union which is in my constituency has served the hardy folks down there, the farmers, the fishermen, the forestry workers and the businesses for many years. If you want to know how hardy the people are in the area from which I come, I will call your attention to the east gallery and show you that at least one of the people who came in here today is still up in that gallery and until very recently, so was her cohort. (Applause) That's the kind of people who live where I come from.

I did a little research and, of course, I found out that the LaHave River Credit Union actually started in about 1955 and in my case, and maybe this is the case in some of the other constituencies too, it was in a room of a house, that's where it started. It ended up in about six or seven different places on King Street - the older part of the town - and then Aberdeen Road and now to North Street, its current location. Somebody else talked about innovation and how innovative credit unions are and the Premier referenced one thing; I just want to reemphasize that - the Target 100 plan where credit unions are stepping up to the plate and looking at people who are on community services. The other thing is the fact that they're interested in amalgamating and growing into a more solid unit that will better serve all people who are members of credit unions.

I can tell you that in our town the only financial institution in the town or immediate area that has drive-through banking is the LaHave River Credit Union. So you can do the Tim Hortons thing at the credit union which is pretty impressive. They employ 11 people and I would like to simply say before I take my seat that I'm very proud of the general manager, David Fancy; the branch manager, Mrs. Cindy Veinotte and the other nine employees who work there. We've very proud to have that credit union in our community. It does very good work and I'm really pleased that all members of this House have supported this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I too am really pleased to have an opportunity to say a few brief words on Bill No. 76. I'd like to congratulate the minister for bringing this bill forward.

We heard earlier from the member for Pictou East, who indicated his longevity as a member of the credit union, but I think I have him beat by about eight years. My grandfather opened a credit union account for me when I was three years old, and that wasn't really yesterday, so it has been quite a tradition in my family - both sides of my family, really - to be credit union members. My parents live in Antigonish County and there's a small credit union, the Havre Boucher Credit Union, quite close to where they live and it's a fantastic credit union. When I first left rural Nova Scotia and came to the big city, I became a member of the credit union here in Halifax. At that time there were quite a number of credit unions, but there was a credit union called Halifax Metro Credit Union. You talk about credit unions being innovators - that credit union was the first credit union to have an instant teller in the entire City of Halifax, back in the 1970s.

[5:30 p.m.]

Today I'm privileged to have a number of credit unions in my constituency. In fact, Credit Union Central is in the constituency of Halifax Needham, and in addition I have Credit Union Atlantic, which is an entity that amalgamated a number of smaller credit unions, including Halifax Metro Credit Union, a number of years ago. If I'm not mistaken, Credit Union Atlantic is the largest credit union in the province, rivaled only by Bergengren in Antigonish. We also have the iNova Credit Union, which is becoming increasingly known in the metro area for its commitment to microcredit and working with people who are interested in green projects and small development and investment.

When I look at the credit union movement, it has continued to adapt and evolve and bring along the innovative ideas that are appropriate for the time. I believe that this particular bill we have will really allow our credit unions the opportunity to grow and become even greater forces for economic growth and prosperity in our region. It's really delightful for all of us here on this side of the House to be part of seeing that movement continue to be built with some changes in the legislation that will allow them to reach their capacity and their aspirations. So with those few words I will take my place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank members on all sides of the House for their contributions to the debate on Bill No. 76. I think we all recognize that this is another important step in the long, proud history of credit unions in Nova Scotia and, indeed, in Atlantic Canada. With that, I move second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 76. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 78.

**Bill No. 78 - Public Utilities Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce this bill which strengthens and clarifies the role of the small business advocate under the Public Utilities Act. The bill really grows out of a personal experience that I had the last time I personally participated in a power rate hearing. I attended that hearing as a representative of the NDP caucus when we were in Opposition. Over the course of that hearing I learned in discussions with a representative from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that the small business advocate position that was then in place was not working particularly well. She explained to me what the problem was and I thought to myself, we can fix that. All it takes is a bill in the Legislature to make certain straightforward changes and we can make sure that the small business advocate position is as effective as it can be.

Mr. Speaker, with my colleagues' approval, I introduced a Private Member's Bill in the House. This, of course, was when I was still in Opposition. The government of the day, for reasons that it best understands, did not call that bill or allow it to pass, so I am pleased now, as a member of the government, to introduce Bill No. 78, to make things better for small business at power rate hearings. (Applause)

Supporting small business means ensuring that an advocate is available to assist small business operators when engaging in hearings with the Utility and Review Board. The primary interest of the small business community in front of the Utility and Review Board is, in fact, power rate hearings, which is why this is being done as an amendment to the Public Utilities Act rather than the Utility and Review Board Act.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the current provisions for small business advocate did not allow the advocate to function effectively. First of all, it wasn't clear who the small business advocate was representing since the definition was phrased in terms of the number of employees, rather than power consumption. So small businesses fell throughout a number of different rate classes. It was not possible for the small business advocate in any systematic

way to know who they were representing because there's no necessary correlation between the number of employees a business has and the amount of power that it consumes.

Another difficulty, Mr. Speaker, was that the way the legislation was framed, the same person could be appointed as both the consumer advocate and the small business advocate which created a potential conflict, an inherent conflict, because although the interests of those two classes will often overlap, they are not always identical. If you have one advocate representing two different interests, obviously it creates the potential of conflict.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the small business community and the Utility and Review Board and others expressed concerns about the definition of small business because it was phrased in terms of the corporation when, as many of us know, many, many small businesses are not corporations, many of them are sole proprietorships; in other words, unincorporated companies.

These issues needed to be addressed and we approached it collaboratively by forming a working group in 2009 with representatives from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Utility and Review Board, Nova Scotia Power, and the Department of Finance. This group was tasked with developing and proposing amendments which would allow the small business advocate to function in an effective manner. The result of that collaborative effort, Mr. Speaker, is before the House in the form of Bill No. 78.

The new definition will better reflect the face of small business in our province. It will allow small business to be a corporation, a partnership or single proprietorship. It will require the definition of small business to be established by regulation, based on annual consumption of utility services rather than the number of employees. It will require that the small business advocate not be the same person as the consumer advocate at power rate hearings. These amendments will ensure the small business advocate knows who they're representing and that the small business advocate can effectively carry out their function.

I'm pleased to tell the House that this initiative has the full support of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, as indicated in the government news release yesterday and in a news release from the CFIB today. If I may quote two short sentences from that news release, I would like to share with the House the observations of Leanne Hachey, CFIB's Atlantic vice-president, who said in today's news release: Now tens of thousands of small business owners across this province will finally have a formal voice at rate hearings and we couldn't be more pleased.

Ms. Hachey goes on to say: It's important to note that small businesses are the utility's second largest customer and second largest revenue generator, so it only makes sense to have them around the table when decisions are being made that impact their operations. I'd be happy to table that CFIB news release for the House.

With that, I look forward to debate on this important initiative to better serve small business in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to rise in my place and make a few comments on Bill No. 78, the Public Utilities Act. I think it is important to point out that the bill is consistent with the position of the Liberal caucus, that a small business advocate be appointed as an effective part of utility hearings. We've advocated for this a number of times in this House. In fact, the member for Richmond tabled a bill, Bill No. 3, on November 23, 2007, which established a small business advocate for hearings of the URB. This received Royal Assent on May 27, 2008.

The original bill, as the minister pointed out, defined a small business as a corporation with under 100 employees, and that has proved to be problematic with hearings over the years. It was found that the definition in terms of small businesses that are not often incorporated - that annual consumption of utility services was a more appropriate function of how a small business should be defined in this context.

In September 2009 a working group - representatives from CFIB, the URB, NSBI, and the Department of Finance - was created to develop proposed amendments to Section 92 which would allow a small business advocate to function in an effective manner. The amendments will in essence allow a small business to be a corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship. Also required, a definition of a small business to be established by regulation based on annual consumption of utility services. Also required, that the small business advocate not be the same person as the consumer advocate at power rate hearings.

While in Opposition, the minister introduced a truncated version of these amendments - I believe Bill No. 197. Do you remember that bill? Maybe you do. Anyway, it received first reading on October 31, 2008. In his Private Member's Bill he proposed to make it so that the consumer advocate and the small business advocate could not be the same person. He also proposed to change the definition of "small business" to mean that a small general tariff, rate code 10, or the general tariff, rate code 11, approved by the board for Nova Scotia Power Incorporated applies.

[5:45 p.m.]

The present bill defines a small business based on annual consumption of utility services to be determined under regulation. Although the regulations are yet to be completed, the minister said they have been mostly worked out. That was during a media questioning on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. Clarification was given by a department official as under 150,000 kilowatt hours per year in line with rate classes 10, 11, and 21. The present bill stipulates that the consumer advocate and small business advocate, as I mentioned earlier, cannot be the same person. I think this is a very, very strong measure that will be advanced.



It's interesting - not interesting, but the CFIB recognizes the value of this change and has brought out a press release today indicating so. I'm not sure if it's any part of an olive branch to the minister after the minister dismissed CFIB last year when the 2 per cent HST hike was being placed on. I think it's a case of what my honourable member for Digby Annapolis would say, it's simply a case of you can't go wrong doing the right thing.

Giving small business a voice at the Utility and Review Board hearings is, indeed, positive and, as the minister well knows, over 50 per cent of the business in Nova Scotia is small business and if this gives them an opportunity to be more competitive in our province and an opportunity for small businesses to stay healthy, then this is, indeed, a positive move. With that, we indicate that we will support these amendments and look forward to the bill going on to Law Amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we fully understand and agree with the proposal of Bill No. 78 and the need to support our small business community, to help them navigate through the thicket of regulations and other hurdles they must face to conduct their everyday business in this province. It makes sense that the small-business people, who are really the true job creators in this province, need to have their own small-business advocate when matters relevant to them are discussed at the Utility and Review Board.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has come out in support of this and we are always cognizant of the membership that organization represents and, when they are pleased, we are pleased. We do hope that the person who is appointed to this position will be mindful of our province's economic situation when it comes to billable hours. We hope that the consumer advocate - this person who has been doing a great job - that if there is less need for them now that the small-business community is going to have their own representative, perhaps some of the costs for this representative will be offset. With that, we are supportive of this bill moving forward in this House, thank you.

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

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly my pleasure to be able to rise today to speak on Bill No. 78, the Public Utilities Act. I want to thank the honourable minister and certainly our good NDP Government for bringing this legislation forward.

This is important legislation, as all of my colleagues within the House have talked about, recognizing the importance of small business. The vital need for small business is everywhere in Nova Scotia. Small businesses make up our communities that we all represent, it gives them more chances for success.

I'm speaking to this as well from experience, but a different type of experience, speaking as a former small-business owner. I had the great experience of owning and operating my own preschool in Eastern Passage for more than six years. I was the owner of

several small tenant buildings, residential buildings and, as well, a co-owner of a soccer retail outlet here in HRM. So I know those challenges, or certainly have experienced the challenges that many of our Nova Scotia small- business men and women are facing.

I'm pleased to say that I had the pleasure as well - and it's an opportunity to thank the honourable Minister of Community Services - when I think about my experience as a preschool owner and operator, of the announcement that I was able to take part in positive funding for quality child care within our province. I think that's another example of our good Nova Scotia NDP Government doing good things for small businesses. (Applause)

Nova Scotians who have an idea for small business deserve a chance to do well, they deserve every opportunity for success. Nova Scotians who have drive and passion and support around them, because frankly small business, whether it's a cottage industry, whether it's a mom- and- pop restaurant, whether it's a retail outlet within their communities, it takes more than just an idea - it takes effort, it takes support, it takes financial input from perhaps your own personal situation, and that's a big challenge. That's a big risk that families are taking and individuals are taking. We owe it, as a government, to give them every opportunity for success.

Having a dedicated advocate and a voice at the table at the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board will make a difference, Mr. Speaker. They know that world, they've been there, they've been part of it - as our honourable minister and our government has recognized and taken action for what they've heard. Without a definition of a small business, the role of an advocate, they were not able to represent as effectively as they would like. This bill allows that to happen. It allows our Governor in Council or the Utility and Review Board to appoint a small-business person, a small-business advocate, at those hearings.

These hearings, Mr. Speaker, can be makers and breakers, sometimes, of these small businesses. Times are rough but they're getting better in Nova Scotia - again thanks to a good government that's now in place - but they still have challenges. Taking their decisions before the Utility and Review Board or having them to go through that process is often critical to their success and having the voice or perspective of a small business on that board and in that process, it levels the playing field and it provides an equal voice which equates to equal opportunities. The move directly reflects the input of industry groups. Nova Scotia's small business, men and women spoke loud and clear. Our government, our minister, our Premier, is responding.

The changes will allow small businesses to be corporations, partnerships, single proprietors. It opens doors and offers endless opportunities to all Nova Scotians. This is a good day and with the support of this Chamber, we will see this day be even better when we can move this forward. If I ever consider taking on a small business again, in a future life, I'm in no rush, or perhaps if I encourage my boys to take on this type of a business venture, or constituents in my riding, just to go for it, these changes will open doors for them and allow them to be successful.

Our government spoke to the people who are living their dreams in Nova Scotia. They took the time to get it right and this is right, as has been said by my honourable colleagues across the room. Over and over, no doubt my colleagues, the same as I, we hear from people who are frustrated when they're trying to make their business successful and ends meet in order to get through their first few years. We know that it often takes three years to get things rolling and to a stable point.

So I'm proud at this point, Mr. Speaker, having had the opportunity to be a small-business person, a small-business owner, and now as an MLA, with the support of my colleagues in this House and certainly the support of this government, to be able to call my constituents and tell them what good news is coming forward from this good government. We're listening to them.

The Utility and Review Board hearings can be critical junctures for businesses. Changes happen at the hearings. This legislation will allow the small-business advocate to be a full intervener at hearings, with the proper tools to truly represent the people of the industry, separate and clearly different from the consumer advocate at power hearings we heard, and we understand how the power hearings affect small businesses. It can be profound and very specific to their industry, so they deserve to have a voice, someone with experience representing them. This legislation does that. I was a proud Nova Scotia businesswoman, now I'm a proud MLA, to be able to stand here in support of our government making these changes and I'm pleased to support the legislation before us today.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I'll move adjournment of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that ends the government's business for today. Before I call on the Liberal House Leader, I want to indulge the House again for a very short moment here and thank Mr. Don Forestell, Clerk Assistant from the House of Assembly in New Brunswick, for giving his time for us. We were somewhat short-staffed and they came here on short notice. This is Don's last day, and we'd like to thank him for his excellent work and helping us - indeed, another form of Maritime co-operation. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: Well deserved, and again, thank you from the Chair for your help in these matters in our time of need, Don. I will now recognize the House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow the House will meet between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Bill No. 77 and Bill No. 73.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we do now adjourn to meet tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have reached the moment of interruption. The adjournment motion was submitted by the Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge this government to recognize the value of Holy Angels High School to its students and to the community and keep this school open.”

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

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

#### **EDUC. - HOLY ANGELS HS: VALUE - RECOGNIZE**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, it's with real disappointment that I rise in my place today to discuss this issue relating to Holy Angels High School - a discussion that shouldn't even be taking place. Holy Angels is truly a landmark in Sydney. It's been part of the community since 1885 under the watchful eye of the Sisters of Notre Dame congregation. Now, in Holy Angels' moment of need, the provincial government has turned its back on the school and the 299 young women who attend.

Enrolment at Holy Angels has remained stable and even increased this year, even in a year of uncertainty, which is a testament to the esteem the school has earned. This is not a new issue. On December 23, 2009, our Education Critic wrote to the minister to outline concerns she had heard from faculty and students alike. The response which followed one month later predictably offered little in the way of detail. The minister danced around the issue and said she was receiving briefings from regional staff on the matter. This lack of attention from the minister has proven costly.

As a result of this inaction the school is now faced with the real threat of closure. This week, the minister's department vetoed a proposal to purchase the building from the congregation. According to the board chair, a mere \$750,000 is all it would have taken to save the building. That represents about \$6,000 for every year Holy Angels has provided educational excellence. It represents \$2,500 per student at today's enrolment. That's all it

would have taken, but they haven't done it, and these students continue to be left out in the cold.

Holy Angels High School is a good news story. In a recent AIMS report, it was ranked as the top school in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. Enrolment has also been increasing for four consecutive years. In short, this is a school in which we as a province can take pride. At this juncture, we should be celebrating its successes and trying to repeat them elsewhere, not closing it down. Ironically, yesterday there was an announcement for the construction of a new junior high school in the Premier's own town. For the exact same number of students at the Premier's old junior high his government is willing to spend millions, but not willing to do anything at all to preserve the learning environment for an already-existing institution for a fraction of the cost. This is old-style politics at its worst. It's shameful, absolutely shameful.

[6:00 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, letters of concern from parents, staff, students and alumni have been pouring into our office. The connection and pride they all have in their school are truly moving. For them to be ignored by this government is unacceptable. It is certainly not a better deal for today's families.

Time is not on the students' side, Mr. Speaker, and it is not on the faculty's side. The status quo is unacceptable and the minister and her government must do more to ensure that the learning environment for the students at Holy Angels is not further disrupted.

I urge the minister to reconsider her ill-advised decision, and not turn her back on the present and future students of Holy Angels. I urge the minister to reconsider her and her government's rejection today of an all-Party meeting to discuss Holy Angels and to immediately provide the necessary support so that Holy Angels can remain a vibrant educational institution for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education. Okay, the Minister of Education has given her time now to the member for Cape Breton South so the member for Cape Breton South has the floor.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is you tried.

Mr. Speaker, I too, like the member for Victoria-The Lakes am not happy - nor was he - to rise here this evening in my place and talk about the future of Holy Angels. I have quite a history with Holy Angels High over the years. In my previous life as mayor in Sydney, I used to be quite active in events that happened at Holy Angels over the years, playing the role of Lieutenant Governor or sometimes Speaker at their Model Parliament.

I had the opportunity to observe first-hand just what was going on at the school and the excellence that was ever-present at Holy Angels. I think certain things would describe

Holy Angels to a T and one is academic excellence - it has been stated by the previous member - cited for that excellence. I think we would have to agree that it is certainly unique when you have a school - the only all-girls high school east of Montreal in the public school sector - is something that is unique and I might say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, should be preserved.

The high school spirit at Holy Angels is nothing short of phenomenal. When you go down there you can sense that they have a *raison d'être*, I guess. They love their school, they love the fact that they're in a unique situation, an academic situation of not only excellence but *esprit de corps*. They are not intimidated in that school. The young ladies who go there go there for a purpose. They go there because they feel that it is their school, their mothers went there or their peer groups went there.

I can tell you right from the principal of the school, Theresa MacKenzie, and her staff, who are also very passionate about the school, as I am and as are some of the other people who know the school and have grown up in Sydney with the school, are equally passionate about something that is unique to the point where it is accepted as part of the tradition of the north end of Sydney but yet it serves female students from all over Cape Breton Island - some from your riding, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, and some from Cape Breton North, some from Glace Bay, some from Cape Breton Centre, all the ridings in Cape Breton.

So everybody has an interest in Holy Angels and I have never, over the years, heard anybody talk about a lack of excellence at Holy Angels, quite the opposite. People have talked about the excellence at Holy Angels and how it should be preserved for many more years. I can tell you that the staff over the years, led today by Theresa MacKenzie, have one aim in mind - to make the school even better than it was over the years, if that's possible. I can tell you that the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame over the years, back since 1885, have brought the school to where it is today. In regard to the sisters and the congregation itself, as you can appreciate, they've done their job over the years, they've kept the school in rough times. They've kept it going when the school board wasn't even supporting Holy Angels way back in the early years of that school - the sisters did it and the sisters did it well.

It's time for the sisters to pass that along and they have passed it along to the public school system, but I would hate to see their legacy set aside. All the work that they did over the years to make Holy Angels as excellent a high school as it is today, I would hate to see people like Sister Agnes Cordeau and her people at the convent down there in the north end of Sydney have to sit by and watch the school go under. That would be a sad day for the education system in Nova Scotia.

We have something here that's very precious and I don't know whether the minister would agree with that but we have something that's unique. We have something that's very precious and we have something that if we lose it, we're never going to get it back again. I can tell you that the young women that I've talked to - and they called me an hour ago, I had two discussions with a couple of the students there and also all last weekend and the

concerns about the future of the school are uppermost in their minds. They say that they go to Holy Angels for a reason; they feel very special at Holy Angels. They're not intimidated by guys in their classroom, for example, they have that sort of independence where they can say and interact with the teachers there and they have this ability to do that because they are in a unique situation.

I wonder- my good friend from Cape Breton North mentioned it earlier - what Sister Peggy Butts, Senator Sister Peggy Butts, would say if she was still around. Sister Peggy, of course, was a social activist in Sydney, as we all know, and for the betterment of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia and, indeed, Canada. She was an ardent supporter of Holy Angels High. I think the government is fortunate that Sister Peggy is not around today because Sister Peggy would be crashing through those doors, coming in here, and somebody would have to haul her out of here if she didn't get her way. So, Sister Peggy, if you're listening, there are still people down here who are Holy Angels supporters.

Move on a little bit to what's been happening here and what's not happening. There were no comments made by anybody, that I can recall, in the past number of months about the concern about repairs to Holy Angels. It's only since the red flag has gone up about the closure of the school that these barriers have been put in place, perhaps to convince the government that they shouldn't chase the future with Holy Angels, in terms of repairs and that, rather they should give up on it and let it close. I reject that because we've done repairs at Sydney Academy. The previous government has allocated money, long-term money, over the years for the renovations of Sydney Academy, Riverview Rural High and Baddeck - and also some other junior highs and that in the area.

This business about the government can't afford \$10 million, that was a figure that came out of the air. There are projections made that over the next number of years there may be \$8 million to \$10 million needed to be spent on the school over the long haul. That's not something that's not doable. It is doable over a period of years, but in the meantime the principal of Holy Angels tells me that the school is in relatively good shape and can continue next year and into the future. The school is not falling down - what is falling down here is the inability of the government to recognize the importance of Holy Angels and come out and say that they're going to save Holy Angels where it is and keep the uniqueness of an all-girls high school.

It seems to me that we have precious little things in Cape Breton that we can boast about these days, but one of the things we can boast about is the fact that we have an all-girls high school, the only one east of Montreal and that uniqueness should be kept.

The question was asked earlier today and met with, what I would call, a disappointing response about the meeting of the stakeholders - I forget who asked the question now, or in a resolution, I believe it might have been - and I think it's incumbent upon the minister to sit down with the school board and the MLAs in the area. Don't forget, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, we have two government MLAs here who have an interest in Holy Angels as well, including the Deputy Premier and yourself. I would hope you too could use

your wisdom and your political savvy to convince your masters here that keeping Holy Angels would be the right thing to do.

I believe that perhaps we could agree to all sit down in the same room and come up with some kind of solution, but the solution right now only rests on the fact that the government has to buy the building. That's all that has to be done right now, is the government to buy the building from the Congregation of Notre Dame for perhaps less than \$750,000 if somebody's a sharp negotiator.

They need the opportunity to get out of those buildings because they're moving on to another home and the sisters are all getting up there and would like to spend their remaining years in some sort of secure situation, which they're working towards. In the meantime they don't want the problem with the buildings themselves down there because they're public buildings, for all intents and purposes, and should be maintained and preserved by the public.

The government has the ability to keep Holy Angels unique and provide the resources to buy the building. The history of excellence and the tradition of Holy Angels must be maintained. I know the people in my community will settle for nothing less than to keep that school open.

Finally, the Sisters of Notre Dame have done their job over the years and I think the legacy of their hard work over the years should be maintained and even built on. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and to talk about Holy Angels High School and to add my voice and that of government to the many others who have expressed their support and affection for this long-standing institution.

Holy Angels has a rich history and it does a wonderful job of educating young women. Our government recognizes the positive role that the school has played in the lives of many students across the province and, indeed, outside Nova Scotia. I've had an opportunity over the last 15, 16 months to meet many of the former students and they speak very positively about their experience and their time at Holy Angels and talk about the wonderful opportunities that they were given in that very unique setting.

I'd like to just review a little bit of the past history of this situation because it strikes me that the provincial government has been given a lot of responsibility and focus on this that is not actually its responsibility. I would just like to review a little bit of the past history to understand where we are at this point and who the decision makers are and where the decision points are.



It has been stated already that this is the only all-girls public school in Nova Scotia. It was established by the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame 125 years ago. Currently, 299 girls, young women, in Grades 10-12 attend the school. The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board was advised in November 2009, last November, that the sisters would be closing the convent and the school building by June 2011. At the time, the suggestion was made that the school could continue there for the 2010-11 academic year, but there was a lot of uncertainty about that and I'm not sure the board saw that as a viable option.

This is the point I want to emphasize. In response to the notice of termination of the lease, the board struck a committee in February 2010 to review options to continue the school. The committee had a preliminary building assessment done and that's where the figures are coming from, and I'll talk a little bit more about those later. Since last November senior officials of the Department of Education have been meeting on a fairly regular basis, both in Sydney and in Halifax, around the future of Holy Angels. Department officials have offered every support necessary to get the study done, to review the options, and to help the board in their decision making.

[6:15 p.m.]

Now, I just want to go on by saying that when the sisters announced that they would be selling the school, this was a blow to the board. It was a blow to the school community and I have to admit I was disappointed to hear that news. I just want to say that in February, at the invitation of a number of groups affiliated with Holy Angels, I took the opportunity to visit the school myself. Unfortunately, weather conditions being what they were that day, it was very icy travelling conditions, and so the school for the students was cancelled.

However, I did meet with representatives of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame. I met with representatives from the school board, the principal and staff, I believe there were some parents there, and also the chair of the School Advisory Committee. I was really pleased to discover that the chair of the School Advisory Committee actually was a former colleague of mine, Greg O'Keefe. The year I was elected to the Dartmouth School Board, he was elected provincial president of the NSTU. I hadn't seen him in many years so it was interesting to see that we've kind of been recycled into other positions but I certainly enjoyed reconnecting with him and meeting many of the other very strong supporters and advocates of that school.

I wanted to see the school myself. I wanted to listen directly, first-hand, to the stories of achievement and plans for the future. I did have a chance, I believe, to meet a couple of students in other settings but not that day. Now, since that visit my staff have had several follow-up meetings with the board chair and the vice-chair and the board itself. Our goal, as I mentioned earlier, has always been to help the board examine all reasonable options. Obviously the board's preferred option was that the province purchase the building. I should mention that the sisters had been subsidizing the lease on the school building and the

provincial department has been paying the lease, but we realized that the sisters have been providing cleaning and other operating costs.

We considered the board's request, but earlier this summer, either June or July, we did inform them - I believe the deputy and senior staff actually went to Sydney to meet with the board - the department informed the board in July that the province was not in a financial position to buy the building from the congregation. We cannot afford to purchase the building and when we look at the financial pressures on public education across this province, it doesn't seem prudent to purchase a 50-year-old building when there are other options.

We already have many fine schools in that board area that have existing space that could potentially accommodate the students from Holy Angels, perhaps as a school within a school. Like many boards, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has excess space and that's one of the options that the board has been considering. Apart from the purchase price, as I've mentioned a couple of times, the board's own engineering study determined that the cost of upgrading the building to modern standards would be between \$8 million and \$10 million over the next number of years. Agreed, it's not something that would have to be done the next year, but they would be needed eventually.

So what I want everyone to understand is that my priority as Education Minister, and our priority as a government, is making sure that the money we have for public education is invested as wisely as possible and that means that the classroom, the relationship and the learning situation between the student and the teacher must come first.

I want to thank the honourable members for Cape Breton Centre and Cape Breton Nova for their ongoing input and interest in this issue. I want to close with a quote that was in a recent Globe and Mail article, quoting a student who, I believe, graduated just last year, Alyssa MacDougall. She was so eloquent, I would like to borrow her words. What she said was, "At the end of the day, the school is the people in it . . . I don't think it matters if we're in this building, another building, someone's basement or sitting on the sidewalk drawing with chalk. This is a family. And if you move to another house you don't cease to be a family." Thank you.

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

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and join in the debate this evening with regard to Holy Angels. What the minister has failed to talk about is providing. It's great to talk about a house not being the home but there has been no dialogue nor direction with regards to where Holy Angels would be.

I want to say this, after 125 years, it's just not part of infrastructure of the community, it is part of the actual fabric of the community of Sydney and it is composite of young women from all over the region. Of the 299 students that are currently there, 172 are from Sydney and area, which Sydney would take in Whitney Pier, as you know, Mr.

Speaker, 127 come from other communities. I just want to provide the numbers in terms of the uniqueness of this. Glace Bay and Reserve area have 28 students currently enrolled. Louisbourg, Catalone, Gabarus, Marion Bridge area have nine students currently enrolled. New Waterford, South Bar, River Ryan, Lingan area - where the Deputy Premier is from - has 33 members. My constituency, North Sydney, Sydney Mines, Bras d'Or has 37 young women attending. Sydney and areas, as I say, 172. In Westmount, George's River, Millville, Point Edward area - that includes both Cape Breton South and Victoria-The Lakes - has 14, as was indicated, so there is a composition.

As I said the other day - and part of this is talking about it's great that Alyssa had a great experience, but the young woman from North Sydney who takes three bus transfers going and three bus transfers getting home doesn't share that view because she hasn't had the benefit of seeing out her education experience. She hasn't had the benefit of knowing that there is a future for her and to be able to encourage other young women to look at Holy Angels because, as was indicated, the only public girls' school east of Montreal.

I don't think it's fair for people to say, well, the sisters are just getting out of the business. The Sisters of Notre Dame have provided 125 years of service. She talks about the department taking up the lease. Well, you need not think that they've done a great favour to the sisters because the lease is less than what the equivalent of an FTE would be. The lease cost that the province provides to the sisters is \$40,000 per year. That's not an FTE equivalent in budgetary means so the province and the school board have been getting a very good deal for their return.

What is not included is, when they talk about \$8 million to \$10 million, I think what the sisters could be warranted a payment for service to this province for that long would be much higher. When we look at how much and what we haven't talked about is, how much money have the sisters invested in that school? How much has our community benefitted from that? You know, as much as it might have been the Catholic school system and the Sisters of Notre Dame that have done it and provided that great service, it has been ecumenical. No young woman is deprived access to that school for the only public education of its kind east of Montreal.

There is an opportunity here and as members of the Progressive Conservative caucus from the area, we met with school board officials. We talked about this \$8 million to \$10 million and what the officials said is there is no immediate crisis or need for closing that school, that a preventative maintenance and an ongoing maintenance schedule would be fine. What the minister needs to talk to the board about is, is that any contributions to Holy Angels are not clawed back from other schools in the system. That's one of the concerns that is in the system right now is that that would be clawed back. We'd be able to have the type of a dialogue that we are lacking here because the minister and her colleagues today voted against a resolution of good faith and partnership that actually voted against a precedent. I can tell you that the member for Cape Breton South would know when we were in government and there were issues, he went to a school board, the member for Glace Bay went to those school board meetings, the member for Cape Breton Nova and the member for

Cape Breton Centre went to meetings. For whatever the issue of the day was, we went there as all-Party and I and my colleagues sat on one side of the table and we had to listen. Our colleagues spoke passionately about their areas and the issues that to be addressed and we went forward as MLAs from the area.

Why the government is refusing a non-partisan, all-Party approach to sit down and really get to the heart of where a solution would be, I would hope that the minister will reflect in caucus with her colleagues and reconsider this. That we can move forward and these young women will have the assurance- so that there will be many more Alyssas in the future to have the Holy Angels experience. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time has expired. We will now rise to sit tomorrow between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The motion is carried. We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:26 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 1857**

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Special Olympics is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability through sport; and

Whereas the confidence and camaraderie these athletes develop creates opportunities to enrich their lives through friendly competition and team building; and

Whereas Danny Knox participates in both summer and winter sports including snowshoeing and lawn bowling;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Danny Knox for being named Kings County Male Special Olympics Athlete of the year for 2010.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1858**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to the life of Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated Gloria McCluskey for her hard work and commitment to the Dartmouth community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ms. Gloria McCluskey on this special occasion and applaud her active participation in the betterment of her community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1859**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to the life of Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated Wendy Lill for her hard work and commitment to the Dartmouth community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ms. Wendy Lill on this special occasion and applaud her active participation in the betterment of her community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1860**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to the life of Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated Bernard Hart for his hard work and commitment to the Dartmouth community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mr. Bernard Hart on this special occasion and applaud his active participation in the betterment of his community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1861**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to the life of Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated Daniel Brownlow for his hard work and commitment to the Dartmouth community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mr. Daniel Brownlow on this special occasion and applaud his active participation in the betterment of his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1862**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre hosted its fourth annual Community Leadership Awards Dinner on October 7, 2010; and

Whereas this annual event selects and honours outstanding citizens for their involvement and significant contribution to the life of Dartmouth; and

Whereas this year's awards dinner recognized and celebrated George Chater for his hard work and commitment to the Dartmouth community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mr. George Chater on this special occasion and applaud his active participation in the betterment of his community.