



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker

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Second Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Affaires acadienne - Rapport d'étape 2010, Progrès réalisés pour les services en français offerts par le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse, L'hon. G. Steele	2984
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1894, Brothers, Diana: Kings Co. Warden - Appt., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse	2984
Vote - Affirmative	2985
Res. 1895, Tourism Industry Assoc. (Can) - Nominees, Hon. P. Paris	2985
Vote - Affirmative	2985
Res. 1896, Natl. Down Syndrome Awareness Wk. (11/01-11/07/10) - Importance, Hon. Maureen MacDonald	2986
Vote - Affirmative	2986
Res. 1897, Deng, Jacob: Courage/Perseverance - Acknowledge, Hon. R. Jennex	2987
Vote - Affirmative	2987
Res. 1898, Power of Green Conf. - Contributions, Hon. P. Paris	2987
Vote - Affirmative	2988
Res. 1899, Amirault, Trudy: Retirement - Congrats., Hon. M. More	2988
Vote - Affirmative	2989

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 83, Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act,
Hon. S. Belliveau 2989

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 1900, Crosbie, Martha Louise - Gov.-Gen's Award,
Mr. L. Glavine 2989
Vote - Affirmative 2990

Res. 1901, Smiley's Prov. Park - Anniv. (50th),
Mr. C. Porter 2990
Vote - Affirmative 2991

Res. 1902, Nicky's Ice Treats: Staff - Congrats.,
Hon. W. Estabrooks 2991
Vote - Affirmative 2991

Res. 1903, Barteaux, Audrey: 55-Plus Games - Medal,
Hon. S. McNeil 2992
Vote - Affirmative 2992

Res. 1904, Music N.S.: N.S. Music Wk. - Organizers Congrats,
Mr. A. MacMaster 2992
Vote - Affirmative 2993

Res. 1905, Brigadoon: Fundraising - Congrats,
Hon. R. Jennex 2993
Vote - Affirmative 2994

Res. 1906, Landry, Logan - La Médaille de la lieutenante-gouverneure,
Hon. M. Samson 2994
Vote - Affirmative 2995

Res. 1907, Whitall Bros. - Kickboxing Championships,
Mr. A. MacLeod 2995
Vote - Affirmative 2996

Res. 1908, Hiltz, Mrs. Viola - Maritimer of the Week,
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse 2996
Vote - Affirmative 2996

Res. 1909, Pothier, Sr. Yvonne: Refugee Work - Thank,
Ms. D. Whalen 2997
Vote - Affirmative 2997

Res. 1910, d'Entremont, Dr. Lionel: Work - Acknowledge,
Hon. C. d'Entremont 2997
Vote - Affirmative 2998

Res. 1911, Doane, J. Chalmers - Order of N.S.,
Hon. J. MacDonell 2998
Vote - Affirmative 2999

Res. 1912, Main St. Dart & Area Bus. Assoc.: Veterans' Support	
- Recognize, Mr. A. Younger	2999
Vote - Affirmative	3000
Res. 1913, Fredeen, Alan Howard - PSC Long-Service Award (25 Yrs.),	
Hon. K. Casey	3000
Vote - Affirmative	3000
Res. 1914, Liverpool FD Jr. Firefighters: Veterans Park Cleanup	
- Thank, Ms. V. Conrad	3001
Vote - Affirmative	3001
Res. 1915, C.P. Allen HS - Nocturne: Art at Night Fest. - Participants,	
Ms. K. Regan	3001
Vote - Affirmative	3002
Res. 1916, Genge, Dr. Leah - Emerging Leaders Summit,	
Mr. K. Bain	3002
Vote - Affirmative	3003

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:

Health - Quality & Patient Safety Comm.,	
Hon. Maureen MacDonald	3003

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 1917, Tracadie United Baptist Church - Anniv. (188 th),	
Mr. M. Smith	3008
Vote - Affirmative	3008
Res. 1918, Smith, Rev. Alfreda - Commun. Contributions,	
Hon. K. Colwell	3008
Vote - Affirmative	3009
Res. 1919, Health: Breast Screening - Importance,	
Mr. C. Porter	3009
Res. 1920, Smith, Janalyn - Super 8 Gen. Mgr. of Yr.,	
Mr. B. Skabar	3010
Vote - Affirmative	3011
Res. 1921, Baltzer, Clyde: Educ. - Contribution,	
Mr. H. Theriault	3011
Vote - Affirmative	3011
Res. 1922, Chisholm, Floanna - LPN Lifetime Achievement Award,	
Mr. A. MacMaster	3011
Vote - Affirmative	3012
Res. 1923, TIR: Hwy. Capital Budget - Employment,	
Ms. V. Conrad	3012
Res. 1924, Sweeney, Jacob -	
Baseball N.S. Minor Baseball Player of Yr., Mr. Z. Churchill ...	3013
Vote - Affirmative	3013

Res. 1925, Holy Angels HS: NDP Gov't. - Preserve, Mr. A. MacLeod	3014
Res. 1926, Undercurrent Youth Ctr.: Vols. - Thank, Mr. G. MacLellan	3014
Vote - Affirmative	3015
Res. 1927, Eel Brook & Dist. Vol. FD - Jaws of Life Tournament, Hon. C. d'Entremont	3015
Vote - Affirmative	3016
Res. 1928, Weaver, Susan - Kings Co. Female Special Olympics Athlete of Yr. (2006), Mr. L. Glavine	3016
Vote - Affirmative	3017
Res. 1929, Layton, Robert: Commun. Serv. - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3017
Vote - Affirmative	3017
Res. 1930, Boudreau, Janelle - La Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure, Hon. M. Samson	3017
Vote - Affirmative	3018
Res. 1931, Home Match: CBU - Efforts Applaud, Mr. K. Bain	3019
Vote - Affirmative	3019
Res. 1932, Raja, Behraam - Pakistan: Funding - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	3019
Vote - Affirmative	3020
Res. 1933, Tattletales Bookstore - Commun. Contributions, Mr. A. Younger	3020
Vote - Affirmative	3021
Res. 1934, Hutt, Bryden: Children's Wish Fdn. - Fundraising, Mr. Z. Churchill	3021
Vote - Affirmative	3022
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:	
No. 355, Health: MS Patients - MRI Doppler Test, Hon. S. McNeil	3022
No. 356, Educ. - Holy Angels HS: Community - Consult, Mr. K. Bain	3023
No. 357, Justice: Prov. Jail - Weekend Passes, Hon. M. Samson	3025
No. 358, Fish. & Aquaculture - Aquaculture Regs., Mr. H. Theriault	3027

No. 359, Educ.: Holy Angels HS - Repair Costs, Mr. A. MacLeod	3028
No. 360, ERD: IEF - Business Cases, Mr. Z. Churchill	3030
No. 361, Nat. Res. - Clear-Cutting: Min. - Position, Mr. A. MacLeod	3031
No. 362, LWD: Skills Dev. Training - People with Disabilities, Ms. K. Regan	3032
No. 363, Nat. Res. - Forestry Regs.: Impact - Consider, Mr. A. MacMaster	3034
No. 364, Health: BTO Prog. - Income Threshold, Ms. D. Whalen	3035
No. 365, Justice: West. Kings Schools - RCMP Sch. Liaison Position, Mr. L. Glavine	3037
No. 366, Nat. Res.: Wagner Rept. - Min. Response, Hon. K. Casey	3038
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 78, Public Utilities Act, Ms. B. Kent	3042
Mr. A. Younger	3043
Mr. A. MacMaster	3044
Hon. G. Steele	3044
Vote - Affirmative	3044
No. 79, Securities Act, Hon. G. Steele	3045
Mr. L. Glavine	3047
Mr. A. MacMaster	3048
Mr. H. Epstein	3049
Hon. G. Steele	3053
Vote - Affirmative	3054
No. 81, Oak Island Treasure Act, Hon. J. MacDonell	3054
Mr. H. Theriault	3055
Mr. A. MacMaster	3057
Mr. G. Ramey	3059
Mr. A. Younger	3063
Mr. C. Porter	3065
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse	3067
Adjourned debate	3069

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):

Nat. Res.: No Farms, No Food Organization - Support,	
Mr. L. Glavine	3070
Hon. J. MacDonell	3072
Mr. C. Porter	3074

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., Nov. 5th at 9 a.m. 3078

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 1935, Harlow, Danny & Nathalie - Anniv. (60 th),	
Hon. S. McNeil	3079
Res. 1936, All Saints Church (Kingston) - Anniv. (50 th),	
Mr. L. Glavine	3079



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 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. Today's proceedings will now get underway.

Before I go to the daily routine, I want to announce the late debate under Rule 5(5) at the moment of interruption. It reads as follows:

Therefore be it resolved that the No Farms, No Food organization be supported in a timely manner by implementing recommendations from the Agricultural Land Review Committee's recent report.

That was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton South and, again, it will be held at the moment of interruption at six o'clock.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Merci, M. le président. C'est avec plaisir que j'aimerais déposer le Rapport d'étape 2010: *Progrès réalisés dans les services en français offerts par le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse* selon les exigences de la Loi sur les services en français.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a document entitled Progress Report 2010: *French-language Services provided by the Government of Nova Scotia* as required by the French-language Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1894

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 on November 2nd, long-time councillor and deputy warden in the Municipality of Kings County, Diana Brothers was elected warden of the Municipality of Kings County; and

Whereas Diana Brothers will lead and represent the residents of the Municipality of Kings County, the province's third largest municipality after Halifax and Cape Breton; and

Whereas this is the first time a woman has been elected warden in Kings County's history;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Diana Brothers on her election success and wish her well in her new position as warden of Kings 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 Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1895

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

Whereas a record nine Nova Scotia finalists have been nominated for the 2010 National Awards for Tourism Excellence by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, known as TIAC; and

Whereas these Nova Scotian nominees have been recognized for offering superior tourism experiences to travellers in Canada; and

Whereas the TIAC award nominees have helped to make Nova Scotia a premier travel destination and strengthen the tourism industry, which creates good jobs and helps to grow the economy;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate the TIAC award nominees on this national recognition of their excellent customer service and wish them continued success.

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

[2:15 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 Minister of Health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1896

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

Whereas Down syndrome is a naturally-occurring chromosomal arrangement that exists universally across racial, gender, and socio-economic lines; and

Whereas one in 800 babies has Down syndrome and 80 per cent are born to women who are over the age of 35; and

Whereas November 1st to November 7th is National Down Syndrome Awareness Week and a time to focus on the unique strengths and abilities of people with Down syndrome and to work to ensure equitable opportunities for all Nova Scotians and all Canadians with Down syndrome;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge the importance of National Down Syndrome Awareness Week and commend the Nova Scotia Down Syndrome Society for their ongoing support for Nova Scotians with Down syndrome 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?

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 Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I'm speaking on behalf of Immigration today and I beg leave to do an introduction first, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. JENNEX: Thank you. I draw everyone's eyes to our east gallery and I would like to introduce Jacob Deng. Jacob is a young man I met at a book launch and since this resolution is about him - if you don't mind, Jacob, remain standing while I do this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 1897

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

Whereas Jacob Deng, at the age of seven, survived unimaginable hardships when he fled insurgents who attacked his village in Southern Sudan in 1987, killing many people, including most of his family; and

Whereas for many years Jacob, while surviving in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, took advantage of what education was available before coming to Canada and then to Nova Scotia in 2003, where he continued his education and is a new university graduate and lives here in Halifax with his wife and two children; and

Whereas *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* is a book based on Jacob's story and a film documentary, *Wings of Hope*, follows Jacob as he returns for the first time to his home in Sudan;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Jacob Deng for his courage and his perseverance and acknowledge the charity he has established to help make a difference in the lives of people in Southern Sudan.

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. (Applause)

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 1898

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

Whereas the Power of Green Conference has been promoting the convergence of economic and environmental prosperity for four years; and

Whereas the conference has brought the business community, environmental organizations, and government together to discuss and share new ideas about economic growth, sustainability, and conservation; and

Whereas the Power of Green has been an excellent example of diverse groups collaborating to promote and create change in our province through the many different visionaries it has brought to Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House recognize the Power of Green's contributions to Nova Scotia's economic and environmental progress and encourage all interested stakeholders to attend this year's conference.

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 Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1899

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

Whereas Trudy Amirault, regional library director of the Western Counties Regional Library, has been a tireless worker and advocate for public libraries across the province for more than 35 years; and

Whereas during her years of service, Ms. Amirault has made significant contributions to the library field, working with many organizations and communities to bring information and reading materials to Nova Scotia families; and

Whereas her volunteer work with the Community Access Program, and many other committees and boards, has furthered the role of public libraries as promoters of literacy and access to information;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Trudy Amirault on her retirement from Western Counties Regional Library, and thank her for making a lasting and positive impact on our province's regional library system.

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. 83 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1996. The Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. (Hon. Sterling Belliveau)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1900

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

Whereas in 1996, the former Governor General of Canada, the late The Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, created the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award; and

Whereas the award recognizes Canadians who have made significant contributions as volunteers to their communities and have given extraordinary help to individuals, families and organizations; and

Whereas Martha Louise Crosbie of Kentville has received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in recognition of the volunteering and hard work she has done to restore Crosbie House and the commitment she has made in making Kentville a better place;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Martha Louise Crosbie for receiving the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award and wish her continued success in her 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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1901

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's provincial park system provides access to some of the best opportunities to enjoy the rich natural and cultural heritage our province has to offer; and

Whereas Smiley's Provincial Park, located on the Meander River close to the Village of Brooklyn, Hants County, celebrated its 50-year anniversary on July 17th during their 9th Annual Family Fun Day, which was attended by hundreds of local residents; and

Whereas Smiley's Provincial Park is an 86-site campground, which includes a picnic area, a playground and walking trails;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the dedicated staff at Smiley's on making this celebration a great success and wishing them all the best with future events.

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 Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1902

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

Whereas Nicole McDonald of Haliburton Hills, Stillwater Lake, and Holly Van Barneveld and Matt Fey, who are both from Chester, enjoyed a busy summer working at Nicky's Ice Treats located in St. Margaret's Centre in Upper Tantallon; and

Whereas these three teenagers came together as a result of the efforts of Nicole's Mother, Mariette, to provide employment skills training for school-age youth with physical disabilities; and

Whereas the goal of these three students was to make money and have a little fun;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate all involved with Nicky's Ice Treats this past summer with best wishes to Nicole McDonald, Holly Van Barneveld, and Matt Fay in their future endeavors.

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 of the Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 1903

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

Whereas Audrey Barteaux of Moschelle proved excellence in sports can happen at any age as she captured the silver medal at the 55 Plus Canada Senior Games held recently in Brockville, Ontario; and

Whereas Audrey and 64 other Nova Scotians travelled to Ontario to compete in the biannual games designed to promote well-being amongst seniors; and

Whereas the 55 Plus Games served to bring together amateur competitors who participate for the sheer joy of competition, the opportunity to tour Canada and the social interaction;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Audrey on her accomplishments and wish her continued success in future competitions.

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. 1904

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

Whereas November 4th to November 11th is set aside as Molson Canadian Nova Scotia Music Week; and

Whereas over 80 homegrown acts will preform on 11 stages in Yarmouth, making the lineup for this year's Nova Scotia Music Week the biggest and most diverse the annual festival and conference has ever held; and

Whereas talented Nova Scotian musicians are one of the things that make our province rich and unique culturally;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Music Nova Scotia for organizing one of Nova Scotia's premier festivals and thank all the talented musicians for carrying on our province's proud musical legacy.

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 Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 1905

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

Whereas Brigadoon, a year-round facility for residential camps for children and youth living with a chronic illness, marked the official start of the building Brigadoon Capital Campaign in May 2008 to raise the funds to make Brigadoon's dream a reality; and

Whereas at Brigadoon it is believed it takes a village to build a village, the Capital Campaign Cabinet members - Roger Sinclair, Ruby Blois, Todd Bethune, Colin Michael MacDonald, Joanne Hames, Wally Jarvis and the unstoppable David McKeage - worked with passion and dedication on behalf of children to raise the necessary funds to make Brigadoon a reality; and

Whereas through the generosity of individuals, corporations, and community organizations, Brigadoon celebrated the completion of its Capital Campaign on November 3, 2010, by raising \$7.5 million;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Brigadoon and its many supporters for creating a place where children with illness can be just children, and wish them every success as the programs begin this coming Spring.

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.

[2:30 p.m.]

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1906

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: M. le president, à une date ultérieur je demanderai l'adoption de la resolution suivante:

Attendu que la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure est présentée chaque année à un élève de la onzième année; et

Attendu que la Médaille est présentée aux élèves qui obtiennent un rendement élevé tout en faisant preuve de leadership dans leur école et leur communauté; et

Attendu que Logan Landry, élève de onzième année à l'École Beauport, a reçu la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure, remise par Son Honneur Mayann Francis, le 4 juin 2010 lors d'une cérémonie à l'École secondaire de Clare;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent Logan Landry pour avoir reçu la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure et lui souhaitent un grand succès dans ses projets d'études et de leadership.

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is presented yearly to a Grade 11 student; and

Whereas the medal is presented to students who achieve high academic standards while being leaders in their schooling community; and

Whereas Logan Landry, a Grade 11 student at École Beauport, was presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Medal by Her Honour, Mayann Francis on June 4, 2010, during a ceremony at École secondaire de Clare;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Logan Landry on receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Medal and wish him continued success in his academic and leadership pursuits.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 1907

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

Whereas Steve Whitall, Rob Whitall and Josh Whitall are brothers from Eskasoni, Cape Breton who enjoy and excel in the sport of kickboxing; and

Whereas the Whitall brothers have trained for many years under the watchful eyes of coaches Gilbert MacIntyre and Daniel MacDougall and achieved great accomplishments; and

Whereas Steve Whitall holds the Atlantic Canadian Super Heavyweight title, Rob Whitall holds the Atlantic Canadian Welterweight champion title, and Josh Whitall holds the Atlantic Canadian Cruiserweight champion title;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate and compliment the Whitall brothers on their unusual achievement of gaining three Atlantic Canadian Championships in the sport of kickboxing.

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 Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1908

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 this summer, Mrs. Viola Hiltz of Chester was a recipient of ATV's Maritimer of the Week Award; and

Whereas many friends and swimming students past and present gathered at the Chester Lido Pool to witness Mrs. Hiltz receive this award from the Warden of the Municipality of Chester, Mr. Allen Webber; and

Whereas Mrs. Hiltz has dedicated most of her life to volunteer work in the community, primarily with children, from teaching Sunday school to running the swim program at the lido pool for, in her words, "so many years she has lost count";

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Mrs. Viola Hiltz for being a recipient of the Maritimer of the Week, and also for her dedication to the youth of her community.

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 Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1909

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

Whereas for over 10 years Sister Yvonne Pothier has been the coordinator of the Refugee Sponsorship Program in the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax and has assisted in more than 100 private sponsorships in the Maritimes; and

Whereas Sister Pothier has visited Sudan and seen first-hand the need to help refugees find a safe, secure country in which to build their lives; and

Whereas Sister Pothier has been honoured with both the Sisters of Charity Elizabeth Ann Seton Award and the ISIS Individual Award for her outstanding service to immigrants and her efforts to increase private sponsorship in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House thank Sister Pothier for her selfless work on behalf of refugees and congratulate her on receiving both of these important awards in 2010.

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. 1910

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 Doctors Nova Scotia annually honours physicians who make exemplary contributions to the medical field and in their communities, including honouring a Rural Physician of the Year; and

Whereas Dr. Lionel d'Entremont of Saulnierville received the Rural Physician of the Year Award for his commitment to the community, often making house calls, visiting nursing home patients, and going above and beyond the call of duty; and

Whereas Dr. d'Entremont acts as medical director of the Clare Health Centre and has served his community since the 1970s, when he first opened a family practice;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the many contributions our rural physicians make in our communities and especially acknowledge the work carried out by Dr. Lionel d'Entremont, he truly deserves to be named Rural Physician of the Year.

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 Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1911

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

Whereas music is a universal language that speaks to all people; and

Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest public honour that can be bestowed by the province; and

Whereas on December 1, 2010, J. Chalmers Doane of Maitland will be invested into the Order of Nova Scotia for his contributions to teaching music;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate J. Chalmers Doane on his award and wish him well in his ongoing mission to teach music to Nova Scotians.

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 Halifax Atlantic on an introduction.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to draw the attention of the House to Mrs. Maureen Reynolds, who is a constituent visiting the House after many years of crusading tirelessly with passionate attention and great personal sacrifice to the cause of controlling cosmetic pesticides in Nova Scotia. So if the House would please give Mrs. Reynolds a very warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1912

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

Whereas November 11th marks Remembrance Day in Canada and is a day to reflect and pay tribute to the sacrifices of the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in the Canadian Forces; and

Whereas in honour of our local veterans, the Main Street Dartmouth & Area Business Improvement District is hosting an event in honour of veterans, complete with a veterans parade, marching band, a World War II re-enactment troop, performances of dances from the 1940s, and a photo exhibit; and

Whereas this event will take place Saturday, November 6th, in East Dartmouth;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the work of the Main Street Business Improvement District and their initiative to show support for Canada's veterans.

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 Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1913

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's civil servants are committed to working to provide the best quality of service to families, to businesses, and to communities across the province; and

Whereas each year the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission says thank you to its long-serving members through the Long Service Award Program; and

Whereas Alan Howard Fredeen from Valley, Colchester North, was recognized for his 25 years of service with the Department of Agriculture;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alan Fredeen for his service to the Government of Nova Scotia over the last quarter century.

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 Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 1914

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 Junior Firefighters of the Liverpool Fire Department play such an important role throughout the year in their community; and

Whereas during the Fall of 2010 the Junior Firefighters noted that the Veterans Park in Liverpool was littered and overgrown; and

Whereas, along with cleaning up litter in graveyards and parks throughout Liverpool, the Junior Firefighters completed the Veterans Park litter and overgrowth cleanup;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and thank the Junior Firefighters of the Liverpool Fire Department for taking on the cleanup of the Veterans Park.

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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1915

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

Whereas on Saturday, October 16, 2010, the Nocturne: Art at Night festival transformed Halifax's streets, galleries and public venues into a stage that showcased local talent and allowed the public to enjoy the visual arts free of charge; and

Whereas over 200 students and teachers from Bedford's CP Allen High School used their collective talents in music, film, set design, creative lighting and movement to create a stirring fusion of visual art; and

Whereas the students and teachers used this opportunity to present an original show that depicts a major event in our province's history - 904 tells the story of the moments before, during and after the Halifax Explosion;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate the students and teachers at CPA for being the only high school to participate in Nocturne and commend them for keeping our history alive and educating us through the arts.

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. 1916

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

Whereas more and more Nova Scotia youth are involved in leadership roles across our community; and

Whereas Dr. Leah Genge of Baddeck, and now a resident physician at the University of Calgary, was one of 20 young Nova Scotia leaders from the ages of 20 to 35 to have been selected to attend the 21inc Emerging Leaders Summit on November 21st to 24th in St. Andrews, New Brunswick; and

Whereas the 21inc Emerging Leaders Summit is a new and inspiring leadership experience which accelerates the positive impact of Atlantic Canada's emerging leaders committed to help shape our nation's future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Leah, as well as the other leaders representing Nova Scotia, and wish them well in all their 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 Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the House, could we revert to the order of business, Statements by Ministers.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a request to revert back in the order paper to Statements by Ministers.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members of the House for agreeing to revert back to this part of our agenda. Nova Scotia joined other provinces and territories across this country to proclaim November 1st to 5th Canadian Patient Safety Week. According to the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, there are between 9,000 and 24,000 Canadians who die each year as a result of preventable adverse effects.

The goal of Canadian Patient Safety Week is to increase awareness of patient safety issues and share information about best practices in patient safety at a national, regional and local level. The percentage of hospitalized patients who experience medical error in Canada is estimated to be in the range from 7.5 per cent to more than 10 per cent. This is according to the Baker/Norton Canadian Adverse Events Study. Nearly half of these incidents are preventable.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do better. We need to take every step we can to deliver high quality services that are provided safely, that is why we are acting on our commitment in the

March Speech from the Throne to establish a new quality initiative to promote and improve patient safety and health service quality across the province.

[2:45 p.m.]

A health system that puts quality and patient safety first is better managed, a better draw for health care providers and will provide better care for Nova Scotians. We're delivering on our commitment during Nova Scotia's Patient Safety Week. The Quality and Patient Safety Committee will have two purposes - to provide advice and recommendations; and to bring stakeholders together to promote and inform a provincially coordinated, innovative, and patient safety approach.

The committee will bring provincial perspective and provide strategic direction; it will facilitate capacity building and expertise; it will decide the research agenda and commission research; it will facilitate and support education on quality and patient safety; and it will support DHAs and other service delivery partners in their ongoing effort to improve the safety and quality of care. Mr. Speaker, the committee will work to improve health system transparency and accountability with one of its early assignments - the development of a reporting framework for the public, including performance against national standards.

The advisory committee is a first step, and I am pleased to announce that Dr. Pat Crosskerry has accepted my request to be the first chair of the committee. The province has been privileged to work with Dr. Crosskerry on patient safety for many years - to some he is known as "Dr. Quality" or "Dr. Safety." He is a national and international leader in this field.

He started the Canadian Healthcare Safety Symposium called the Halifax Series a decade ago in this city. The symposium has travelled across the country and came back to Halifax this Fall - it is Canada's flagship event in health care safety. Dr. Crosskerry pushed to have patient safety included in the curriculum of Dalhousie Medical School, and it was the first school in Canada to do this. Nova Scotia and Halifax are on the map in patient safety largely due to the work of Dr. Crosskerry. He has been a key player in helping us develop the quality and patient safety initiative in Nova Scotia.

As we take this important next step to establish the committee, it makes so much sense for Dr. Crosskerry to take the lead. I'm very pleased that Dr. Crosskerry has joined us today in our gallery and I ask members to welcome him. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Dr. Ross recently delivered his report to government on emergency care in Nova Scotia, and a focus of his recommendations was on emergency room standards. No standards for emergency care exist anywhere in Canada. This government will be addressing this recommendation and I'd like Nova Scotia to be the first

province in Canada to have these standards, giving Nova Scotians assurances of reliable emergency care in all regions.

I'm involved in conversations about improving health care every day, but nothing underscores the importance of improving quality and patient safety like hearing how a patient suffered due to an error, a medical mistake - an Ontario patient had the wrong kidney removed; serious patient care and medication mistakes in a Saskatchewan children's hospital. The outcome can be an annoying slip-up to a prolonged hospital stay to disability, or even to death.

I believe we can improve the quality and safety of health care through the new Quality and Patient Safety Committee we're establishing, through the minute-by-minute excellence of professionals working in our health care system and through the commitment from government to make health care better for families in every region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

The honourable member for Halifax - Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of the Liberal caucus on this ministerial statement today, on Quality and Patient Safety Week. There is no question that we must all dedicate ourselves toward greater patient safety. Some of the figures mentioned by the minister are truly astounding nationally and are great cause for alarm for all of us, with 9,000 to 24,000 Canadians dying annually as a result of an adverse effect. Again, the word is preventable adverse effect.

At the same time the minister mentioned that between 7.5 per cent and 10 per cent of hospitalized patients will suffer an adverse effect as well, half of which are preventable. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the cost is great in personal suffering and in many other ways. I am very glad to see that we are taking some steps this year to make note of Quality and Patient Safety Week to actually create that week and put the attention toward patient safety. This is something that although we're going to recognize it this week, we're certainly saying that 52 weeks a year, every day of the year, we need to focus on greater safety for patients and fewer adverse reactions and effects that are preventable.

Mr. Speaker, the addition of a Quality and Safety Patient Committee is something else that the Liberal caucus also welcomes. We're very pleased to see the minister move forward with that but we want to make sure that that committee will have the necessary tools and resources to implement any recommendations that come forward.

We're certainly aware that you have a wonderful person identified as the chair of that committee. We want to thank and show our appreciation as well to Dr. Pat Crosskerry for

agreeing to chair this first committee. His reputation as a dedicated physician, with a true vision for patient quality and safety, will serve our province well.

I was very pleased to note that he has actually put Halifax on the map in this issue, by creating the Halifax series - the Symposium on Patient Safety - and by introducing a course at Dalhousie, making us a leader in that as well. I think that bodes well for the outcome of this committee and the work that it will do.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a very important element to patient safety and I think this is a good opportunity to raise the issue of a project that has been going on in this province for many years and a project that would significantly enhance patient safety. That project is the electronic health record. I know that successive governments have spoken about it nationally and provincially and we know how important it would be. We need a record that can be shared amongst all the appropriate health care professionals so that split-second decisions can be made with the most up-to-date patient information available. We would see a lot fewer adverse drug reactions or incorrect treatment if people were better aware of allergies and medical history and other conditions that a patient had. It is very difficult to make those decisions without proper information.

Life and death decisions are even more difficult when we don't have the adequate medication and treatment histories. With an electronic health record, it would go a long way to ensuring that we had addressed some of the adverse reactions that we've talked about today, in terms of that large number that are costing us not only financially but in terms of human life and suffering. So we hope that through this initiative of creating the Quality and Patient Safety Committee, we'll see a lot of improvement and we hope that we'll see some advances on the other elements that are going to help strengthen our hospitals and the safety of our patients in those hospitals.

I also think it's important that we look at the staffing in the hospitals and I think it's a good time to mention that the training of nurses has been directly correlated. When a number of years ago across Canada went from 2 years to 4 years on training for nurses, there is now direct correlation and evidence that there are fewer adverse effects and fewer mistakes made when patients are being looked after by registered nurses. I know that we have a trend to change the mix a little bit in hospitals and I think we need to measure and follow that. I mention that, Mr. Speaker, because I know that the minister looks for evidence-based results and changes in the system.

With that, the Liberal caucus certainly looks forward to the work that will come from this committee and we will certainly be hoping to see action and power for that committee to actually have the ear of Government, thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today and say a few words about the remarks that the minister has brought forward. I'd like to first extend a special congratulations to Dr. Crosskerry on this appointment. As we've heard, he has an excellent reputation and is considered a national leader in the field of quality patient care. I respect his commitment to our province and look forward to reviewing his work around quality and patient safety in Nova Scotia.

I agree that preventable adverse events are far too high within our health care system and I'm pleased to see the government address this issue by first appointing a very capable chairperson. Nova Scotians expect and deserve high quality health care and need to have peace of mind that human error is not the reason for any prolonged health issue when they enter a health care facility in Nova Scotia.

I do have some concerns about the announcement today though. The minister has not spoken of how the committee will be composed. As I've said, we have a very capable chairperson but more details are required on how the committee will be composed. For example, how many members will make up the committee, which sectors will be represented, how often will they meet and review and at what intervals will the DHA's practices be reviewed? These are legitimate questions, questions that concern public safety and the quality of health care. I know, for example, that if I were the minister, I would want to make sure that all these facets of this committee are appropriately revealed and communicated.

Another question I have is, who will the committee report to? This is very important because the minister has mentioned in her statement that this is really about transparency and about accountability. I also believe the committee's work needs to be reported to the Legislature and hopefully we can come to some agreement on an agenda. In the Legislature we represent Nova Scotians and their concerns and for the sake of transparency, these reports must be made public by tabling in the Legislature so that all Nova Scotians can have a look and access to the good work of Dr. Crosskerry and his team. More importantly, it provides good faith and accountability in our health care system.

In conclusion, in our health care system, the patient needs to be first. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in reply to the minister's statement and I wish Dr. Crosskerry and his committee all the best and look forward to reviewing their work.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you and thank you to all the members who have spoken on this ministerial statement and we'll now go back to the Notices of Motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 1917

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

Whereas the NDP Government is committed to providing access to safe and modern facilities where people can be active and stay healthy; and

Whereas the Tracadie United Baptist Church, which serves Antigonish and Guysborough Counties recently celebrated its 188th Anniversary; and

Whereas the Tracadie United Baptist Church has applied for and received funding from the Department of Health Promotion and Protection under the Recreation Facility Development Program in the amount of \$10,000 for renovating the community centre at the church;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the Tracadie Baptist United Church on its 188th Anniversary and for receiving this funding to ensure that the church and community centre continue to be a place for the community to gather.

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. 1918

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

Whereas Reverend Alfreda Smith has been a member of the North Preston Senior Citizens Club since the 1980s and a program planner for the past 10 years and has organized many events for the seniors and for the community of North Preston; and

Whereas Reverend Smith has held the same office of Program Planner with the Ladies Auxiliary of North Preston and the Women's Missionary Society, as well as Choir Director for three different choirs; and

Whereas Reverend Smith taught Sunday School in North Preston for 53 years and in 2004 felt a higher calling and started studying for the ministry and became a full-fledged Baptist minister;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in recognizing Reverend Alfreda Smith's significant contribution to her community and wish her well in her future.

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

[3:00 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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1919

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

Whereas the Minister of Health has refused a request from citizens in western Nova Scotia for the purchase of a digital unit for the Western Region breast screening mobile unit; and

Whereas the unit would greatly enhance the early detection of breast cancer for residents of Berwick, Hantsport, Greenwood, New Ross, Windsor, Wolfville, Caledonia, Chester, Liverpool, Lunenburg and New Germany; and

Whereas on October 22nd in a letter to myself, the Minister of Health suggested that there was no need for a Western Region breast screening mobile unit, saying that one digital mobile unit could serve the province well;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remind the Minister of Health how important access to breast screening is to saving the lives of Nova Scotian women and urge her to purchase a digital unit for the Western Region breast screening mobile unit.

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 Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1920

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

Whereas Janalyn Smith, General Manager at the Amherst Super 8 Hotel, has been recognized to have met or surpassed a number of measurements of property success including quality assurance, employee satisfaction, guest satisfaction, market penetration, and financial profitability; and

Whereas as a result of her hard work and dedication to her profession, Janalyn Smith was recently awarded General Manager of the Year by the Super 8 chain of hotels, an honour shared with only one other recipient worldwide; and

Whereas Janalyn Smith travelled to Las Vegas to receive this award from John Valletta, President of Super 8 Worldwide Inc.;

Therefore be it resolved that this House congratulate Janalyn Smith on being awarded General Manager of the Year by the Super 8 chain of hotels.

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 Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1921

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

Whereas Clyde Baltzer retired this past summer from the position of executive director of the Digby Area Learning Association (DALA) after six years; and

Whereas Mr. Baltzer began his teaching career at age 21 and worked in Bear River, Central Kings, CFB Cornwallis, and Annapolis Royal Regional Academy; and

Whereas Mr. Baltzer has taught everything you can imagine from Grade 2 to Grade 9;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the special contribution to education that Clyde Baltzer has made in his many years of teaching and as the executive director of DALA, and wish him well in his retirement years ahead;

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. 1922

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

Whereas Floanna Chisholm of Inverness was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses; and

Whereas Floanna has been using her leadership, energy, compassion and positive attitude to care for the people of Inverness County for over 47 years; and

Whereas Floanna's dedication saw her return to the Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital from retirement because the hospital needed her expertise;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Floanna's commitment to her profession and congratulate her for receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award.

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 Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 1923

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 NDP Government kept Nova Scotians working during the recession by delivering the second-largest highway capital budget in the province's history; and

Whereas this investment included roads and bridges in all regions of the province; and

Whereas the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal estimates that a typical \$2 million highway repaving project creates 60 jobs, \$200,000 in business for the local trucking industry, and \$400,000 in subcontracts to other Nova Scotia companies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank the men and women building our roads and bridges across Nova Scotia for their hard work as our government continues to create jobs and grow the economy.

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 Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1924

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

Whereas Jacob Sweeney, a 13-year-old student at Maple Grove Education Centre and a member of the Yarmouth Chris Scott Construction Peewee AAA Gateways pitched a shutout in the semifinal round of the Nova Scotia Triple-A Championships; and

Whereas Jacob Sweeney was named that tournament's Most Valuable Player; and

Whereas Jacob Sweeney has since been named Baseball Nova Scotia's Minor Baseball Player of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Jacob Sweeney on this achievement and recognize his impressive contribution to the rich history and tradition of sport in Yarmouth and the Province 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?

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 1925

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

Whereas last night 300 people gathered in the gymnasium of Holy Angels High School in Sydney to show support for the 125-year-old institution and talk about their options for saving the unique school; and

Whereas in addition to the overwhelming sentiment in the community, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board and the entire Cape Breton Regional Council have thrown their support behind the effort to keep Holy Angels open; and

Whereas only one group - this NDP Government - has turned their back on the students, teachers, and time-honoured traditions of Holy Angels;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to do the right thing and preserve an important Cape Breton Institution and act quickly to save 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 member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1926

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 Undercurrent Youth Centre in Glace Bay will provide our community's youth with a safe environment free from drugs, alcohol, bullying, and negative influences; and

Whereas the facility offers options for sports, recreation, and arts and culture and will include a gymnasium with top-notch equipment and infrastructure, a games room, and a

music venue of high acoustic quality that will enhance the development of musicians in Glace Bay; and

Whereas a group of committed and empowered volunteers identified a need in our community and provided vision and leadership in transforming a Glace Bay landmark, the Epworth United Church, into a commendable community centre;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate the project champion, Dave Sawlor, and the volunteers who have created a remarkable opportunity for young people and wish them continued success in protecting the future of our proud town.

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. 1927

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 volunteer fire departments in rural Nova Scotia are often first responders to the scenes of car accidents and are called upon to extract victims trapped in a vehicle after a highway crash; and

Whereas recently, at a competition in New Brunswick, five members of the Eel Brook and Districts Volunteer Fire Department came in third among 13 other departments in the Jaws of Life Tournament; and

Whereas Eel Brook and Districts Volunteer Fire Department was the only Yarmouth County fire department in the tournament and it was the second straight year that the Eel Brook team placed third - the only team to make the top three this year and last;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the five firefighters of the Eel Brook and Districts Volunteer Fire Department:

Curtis Muise, Jason Saulnier, Dana Baker, Jonathan Leblanc and David Gorst on their successful competition and thank them for their dedicated service, caring and professionalism in responding to the call of victims in life-threatening situations.

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. 1928

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, 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 Susan Weaver participates in multiple sports throughout the year, including track and field in the summer and curling in the winter;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Susan Weaver for being named Kings County Female Special Olympics Athlete of the Year for 2010 and recognize the contributions she has made to fundraising and raising awareness for Special Olympics.

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 Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1929

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

Whereas Robert Layton, a lifelong resident of Great Village, Colchester North, has always given of his time and effort to support community events; and

Whereas Robert has been a volunteer firefighter with the Great Village and District Fire Brigade for the past 65 years and continues to respond to all calls; and

Whereas Robert is thought to be the longest-serving active firefighter in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Robert Layton for his many years of community service and for his dedication and endurance as a volunteer firefighter.

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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1930

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure est présentée chaque année à une élève de la onzième année; et

Attendu que la Médaille est présentée aux élèves qui obtienne un rendement élevé tout en faisant preuve de leadership dans leur école et leur communauté; et

Attendu que Janelle Boudreau, élève de onzième année à l'École Beauport, a reçu la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure, remise par Son Honneur Mayann Francis, le 4 juin 2010 lors d'une cérémonie à l'École secondaire de Clare;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent Janelle Boudreau pour avoir reçu la Médaille de la lieutenant-gouverneure et lui souhaitent un grand succès dans ses projets d'études et de leadership.

Monsieur le Président, je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is presented yearly to a Grade 11 student; and

Whereas the medal is presented to students who achieve high academic standards while being leaders in their school and community; and

Whereas Janelle Boudreau, a Grade 11 student at l'École Beauport was presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Medal by Her Honour Mayann Francis on June 4, 2010 during a ceremony at l'École secondaire de Clare;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Janelle Boudreau on receiving the Lieutenant Governor's medal and wish her continued success in her academic and leadership pursuits.

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. 1931

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

Whereas the Home Match project was launched this year by Cape Breton University on behalf of the region's multi-agency Affordable Housing Renovations Partnership; and

Whereas Home Match aims to give more CBRM residents access to decent housing - a basic human right; and

Whereas Cape Breton University and the Affordable Housing Renovations Partnership acknowledge the operating-funding support of the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnership Strategy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the efforts of Cape Breton University in launching Home Match, to link organizations in the CBRM working with people who lack safe, stable, or assisted housing.

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

[3:15 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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1932

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

Whereas recent flooding in Pakistan created an ongoing humanitarian crisis which left 1,750 dead, six million homeless and millions more in need of daily assistance; and

Whereas 11-year-old Basinview School student Behraam Raja of Bedford committed to raise \$5,000 to help children in Pakistan left parentless and homeless by the flooding; and

Whereas Behraam's dedication saw him eclipse his goal - he raised a total of \$10,000, which was then matched by the federal government and will be used by UNICEF to assist children affected by the floods in Pakistan;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Behraam for doubling his fundraising goal, and commend his admirable humanitarian efforts;

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. 1933

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

Whereas Tattletale's bookstore in Dartmouth has served the Maritimes since 1995; and

Whereas Tattletales, and especially co-owner Anne Whebby, has been a long-time supporter of children's education and literacy development through the Partners in Education Program, penny campaign, and promotions that put books on school shelves and in the hands of young readers; and

Whereas Tattletales will host an event on Saturday, November 6th, expanding its community support to include the "Women United for Community" campaign by the United Way of Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the contributions of Tattletales to our community and for its ongoing support to local schools and young readers.

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. 1934

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

Whereas Bryden Hutt, a Grade 2 student at Meadowfields Community School in Yarmouth, has a rare immune deficiency known as Ommen's syndrome; and

Whereas Bryden Hutt himself was once a recipient of a wish from the Children's Wish Foundation; and

Whereas on Saturday, October 16th, Bryden Hutt was a participant in the Children's Wish Foundation's Annual Wish Foundation Walk for Wishes and raised \$5,000 for the Children's Wish Foundation;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bryden Hutt on this inspirational accomplishment, recognize his contribution to the Children's Wish Foundation, and wish him continued success in all that he aspires to.

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.

Before we go into Oral Question Period, just a couple of reminders. No electronic equipment is to be on either for questioners or for answerers during the next hour and, also, please direct your questions and answers here through the Chair.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 3:19 p.m. and we'll go to 4:19 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HEALTH: MS PATIENTS - MRI DOPPLER TEST

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Yesterday it was reported that a vascular surgeon in Halifax has sent a technician from his clinic to Barrie, Ontario, to be trained with the MRI Doppler exam. Mr. Speaker, I think you would agree receiving training by professionals who have studied under Dr. Zamboni would be positive and will go a long way to ensuring the procedure can be provided safely here in Nova Scotia. My question to the Minister of Health is, will the minister be willing, at the very least, to provide the MRI Doppler test to MS patients here in Nova Scotia?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I have consistently said that we are waiting for the go-ahead from the medical and scientific experts that would tell us that this procedure is effective, that it is an acceptable level of risk and, until we have that go-ahead, I am not prepared to authorize any procedures.

Mr. Speaker, there are seven research projects underway right now in North America - four in Canada - and we have asked that the research be fast-tracked. I look forward to the results of that research.

MR. MCNEIL: Other provinces have taken a leadership role and demonstrated with their actions the importance of gathering good science with clinical evidence around the MS liberation treatment. This NDP Government has chosen to wait on the sidelines.

Once the clinician returns from Barry, Ontario, you have a vascular surgeon who is willing to perform a routine angio procedure, we will have a team here in Nova Scotia, so my question to the minister is, does the minister agree that this opens the door to provide the opportunity to conduct a clinical trial here in Nova Scotia?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, first of all, no other Canadian province is offering what the honourable member is suggesting the Province of Nova Scotia

should offer, and angioplasty of the vein is anything but a routine procedure according to the medical advice that is being given to the health ministers in this country.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, properly trained professionals are the key here in Nova Scotia. We believe that a door has been opened for the government. The NDP Government now has the opportunity to be a player instead of a follower in gathering clinical evidence around MS liberation treatment. My question to the minister, will the minister use this opportunity to provide Nova Scotians suffering from MS the hope they have been looking for and move toward a clinical trial here in Nova Scotia?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member and all members of this Legislature that I have talked with many of our specialists - MS specialists and others. They are following very closely the research that is being done and the studies that are being published; they are in conversation with their colleagues in other provinces; and they are preparing themselves, as expert professionals would do, to provide the best possible care to the MS community when the evidence is available that points them in a particular direction. We all await the results of the research that is happening.

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

EDUC. - HOLY ANGELS HS: COMMUNITY - CONSULT

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday more than 300 concerned residents of Cape Breton and Victoria Counties met to address the pressing issue of what can be done to ensure that Holy Angels High School remains open. It was a spirited meeting fueled by genuine care and concern for this historic institution and the quality education it has provided for more than a century.

My question to the minister is, why do you continue to ignore the will of the Holy Angels High School community and other hard-working Cape Bretoners by refusing to commit to keeping this school open?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all those who came out to that meeting last night, and certainly the organizers. It's important that we have many minds and voices and suggestions coming forward on what the possible options would be to keep Holy Angels open and continuing into the future. This government shares that vision. In fact, yesterday the principal of Holy Angels, Theresa MacKenzie, was in Halifax attending principals' meetings, and I want you to know that the Premier, the Deputy Minister, and myself, all took advantage of her being in town to have discussions with her.

I personally spent about 20 minutes with her over supper last night. She very passionately and eloquently talked about the legacy of that school, the benefits of attending

that school and their hopes for the future. I'm sure she relayed many of the messages that were expressed last evening at the public meeting. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, during Question Period yesterday, the minister stated that "We have agreed to support them, to help them look at other options. We will ensure that they have the information they need to make further decisions." This shows they have no intention whatsoever to save the existing Holy Angels High School - and I'll table that quote. This government's pattern of creating a crisis to facilitate their political agendas is disturbing to say the least. My question to the minister is, will the minister supply, by the end of business today, the alternatives she says exist?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, obviously I'm saying one thing and people are hearing something else, so I will repeat myself. Developing the options is a responsibility of the school board. I want you to know that actually, earlier today, I sent word to the school board that I will be travelling to Sydney within the next couple of weeks and I would be very pleased to meet with representatives of the school, including some of the students. I'm also planning to meet with the board, and we will sit down and look at the information that they will provide on other options that they are looking at.

It is a responsibility of school boards to thoroughly investigate these issues when something unexpected like selling but not having the lease available for a building that they have a school program in. I trust the leadership of that board to be doing due diligence, to be making sure they are checking into all the options available to them to continue Holy Angels. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon the minister said one of the options available is to move the students to another school. In Sydney there are rumours out there that the government plans to move the 299 students at Holy Angels High School to Breton Education Centre, in the Deputy Premier's home constituency. My final question is to the Acting Premier, is this yet another example of the NDP choosing political expediency over the best interests of the people of Nova Scotia?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that is what he said. It's a rumour. It's not about political expedience, it's about allowing the board to do what they want. Very clearly (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. CORBETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, very much. This government is very, very cognizant of what's going on with Holy Angels. We do not want to see that program wound up - that's why we're willing to work with the school board to find a solution within the financial parameters. We're being fiscally responsible and we're being responsible to the people that go to those schools. That's what we are committed to, not like that crowd.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

JUSTICE: PROV. JAIL - WEEKEND PASSES

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, now that the Minister of Justice has secured a new jail for Pictou County, I would like to question him on the issue of overcrowding in our provincial jails, especially the Burnside correctional facility. The Liberal caucus has uncovered that the Minister of Justice has dealt with the issue of overcrowding in our jails by handing out weekend “get out of jail free” passes. We have learned that on average 15 passes are issued each weekend and over 1,000 in the past year, yet the Minister of Justice tells us he had no idea these passes were being handed out by his staff. My question to the minister is, will he be kind enough to tell Nova Scotians when exactly he became aware of these “get out of jail free” passes?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I’m glad the issue of the jail has finally sunk in to the Party across. On the issue of the overcrowding, I do know some history, it’s been going on for approximately, in excess of twenty years and it went under the previous administration and their government as well. On the issue of overcrowding, its gone down under this government versus the previous government, and my understanding is that this weekend, they stated that in all likelihood there will not be any releases this weekend, so we’re heading in the right direction.

[3:30 p.m.]

MR. SAMSON: The Premier yesterday spoke about transparency in his government and I asked the minister a very simple question: When did he become aware? Clearly he has not answered that, as he has been unwilling to give information on so many other issues. Mr. Speaker, our caucus has been trying to get more information for Nova Scotians on this very issue. We filed a freedom of information request which specifically asked for all background information, statistical information, briefing notes, correspondence relating to temporary absence passes granted to sentence offenders at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, including, but not limited to, offenders serving intermittent sentences and long-term inmates of the facility between May 1, 2006, and October 12, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, in a reply dated October 25, 2010, the Department of Justice indicates that they have identified 1,500 pages dealing with these “get out of jail free” passes at that time period.

So, Mr. Speaker, let’s make a quick review. The Minister of Justice has been in office for almost a year and a half; problems with overcrowding at Burnside have been on the front burner for his department even before he arrived; 15 passes a weekend, 1,000 a year - so could the Minister of Justice explain, with 1,500 pages relating to this issue in his department, how can he possibly explain why he was kept in the dark until a few weeks ago?

MR. SPEAKER: I'd ask you to table the letter you read from, please.

MR. LANDRY: I am glad that he keeps wanting to find out that information.

As Minister of Justice, I was aware that there was a number of gaps and problems in the system and they were a carry-over from the previous government and a carry-over from his administration. So that's nothing new, and that's why we looked at adding - we've put another supervisor over there to help with the workload. We also added additional staff and right now we're adding about 100 new beds and we're up around 84 additional bunks in the facility - so in the last year and a half, that sounds like to me that we're getting something done and not like the previous administration that did not get it done.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal caucus brought this to Nova Scotians' attention, the minister's first reply was he had no idea that this was taking place - over 1,000 passes issued under his administration and yet he had no idea this was taking place. So the passes were given to criminals that the minister has acknowledged were sentenced for crimes including a baseball-bat beating, assault, possession of counterfeit bills, failing the breathalyser, obstructing justice, sexual assault, and possessing child pornography.

These are not the types of offences that Nova Scotians think should be dealt with easily by this government. So while the minister tells us he is prepared to share information, one of the catches with our Freedom of Information requests is that it comes with a price tag. Apparently this government isn't so quick to share this information because they want us to pay \$2,130 in order to get the information requested. So my question to the minister is with a bill of \$2,130, will he be kind enough to lend us a few bucks so we can pay the FOIPOP fee to get information from his own department?

MR. LANDRY: Well the Liberals do have a nice, cushy trust fund - my colleagues here are saying that - so that's a good thing.

I really get a kick out of the member making the following statements and outlining that, trying to create the atmosphere of fear. The court has already deemed that these individuals live in the community and it's a court-ordered process (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, who has the floor?

SPEAKER: Order. Order, the Minister of Justice has the floor.

MR. LANDRY: Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm on record of saying if you do the crime, you do the time, and that's why we took the following steps to add sufficient staff and that's why we're adding bunks. It's a process that's been in place, historically, because of their work, their administration and not handling the problem in the first place. This government is building a new facility which should help correct that, along with the bunks.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the Deputy Premier tell his fairy tale of fiscal responsibility earlier in this Question Period because this summer the government pushed a long serving public servant from office for what appears to be no reason other than he disagreed with the direction of government. Rod MacArthur, our former Chief Clerk . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order, that question I'm going to rule is out of order because that falls under the jurisdiction of myself, as Speaker. It does not fall under the jurisdiction of a ministry. It is out of order and I'll explain why it is out of question. Anything to do with the former Chief Clerk is out of order. [Interruptions] I'm aware that anything that falls under the jurisdiction of the Speaker is out of order. There have been Speakers' Rulings in the past that have confirmed that. I'm going to ask you if you have a different question, I'll entertain that, but it's out of order because it's under the jurisdiction of the Speaker. Do you have a different question on a different topic? No? Okay, I'll go on to the next questioner.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - AQUACULTURE REGS.

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, is that all right? I've had many calls of concern relating to two proposed aquaculture sites in western Nova Scotia. These people are worried about our coastal sustainability and they don't believe this government has a clear and safe plan for this new industry. We need to have the best regulations around aquaculture if we're going to grow this important industry, and also to ensure the people that it's going to be safe. My question to the minister is, what is your government doing to make certain Nova Scotia has the best aquaculture regulations in the world?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member opposite that we are moving forward with an aquaculture development strategy. I'll use a different term - we are charting a course for this particular industry. I also want to point out, there's a vast difference between us and the previous government. In the dying days of the previous government, they introduced a moratorium on aquaculture - they're now sitting in third place. We see opportunities here for aquaculture and we intend to have sustainable jobs in there to protect the environment, thank you very much.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, many of the people out there urging for stronger regulations around aquaculture are not against the industry. They just want to protect our ecosystems and the wild life the best way that we can. There's a lot of confusing information out there and I think this government needs to do a better job informing Nova Scotians about our aquaculture industry and the benefits that it can have for our economic development in

our coastal communities. My question to the minister is, what is your government's plan to better educate the public on aquaculture in Nova Scotia for our future?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, our strategy will be focusing on building public confidence and understanding the wariness of getting factual information out there to the public. I can tell you, unlike the previous government, that when they introduce a moratorium [Interruptions]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, the honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, these are sustainable jobs in rural Nova Scotia, which is very important. We're also there to protect the environment. I can tell you, just in the last 48 hours, we have introduced legislation to protect one of the strongest and most important fishing grounds in Canada. We also have a strategy to develop aquaculture in Nova Scotia, and I can visualize fishermen right from Sydney to Yarmouth, from the Flemish Cap, the Grand Banks, to Georges Bank and what they are saying on these last two topics: what a difference 17 months have made to this new government.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, recently there was a report of pesticides having killed lobsters in Campobello Island near New Brunswick. I will table that information from the New Brunswick Telegraph Journal. Nova Scotia fishermen are aware of this situation and are fearful that something similar could happen in the coastal waters of Nova Scotia. My question to the minister is, will the regulations in Nova Scotia be strong enough to make sure that a situation similar to New Brunswick's does not happen here?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I respect the member's expertise in this particular question and also want to recognize that I understand the concerns of the fishermen right across the Atlantic Provinces, not only in Nova Scotia. We are there to protect the environment; we're also there to protect the traditional fisheries. I'm very aware of that issue and I can tell you the regulations will be in place to protect our environment and have good jobs in rural Nova Scotia.

I just want to table a resolution from the member opposite that talked about the two issues, about Georges Bank and about growing aquaculture in the last session. In the last 48 hours we have addressed those two issues. Once again, I'll close - what a difference 17 months made with a new government. Thank you very much.

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

EDUC.: HOLY ANGELS HS - REPAIR COSTS

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Acting Premier. The Holy Angels High School crisis has caused a holy uproar in Cape Breton. At a community meeting last night 300 concerned citizens gathered to look at solutions for the

continued operation of this great institution in Sydney. School board chair Lorne Green said he's not buying into the Minister of Education's figures and that she is spin-doctoring the cost. The question is, who is right, the minister or the Cape Breton community?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the document that the chair is working from is a document by Trifos Design Consultants - I'm not exactly sure of the name of the company - to Mr. Paul Oldford from the school board, where they come and give their estimate of what it would cost to refurbish the building.

I'm actually quite happy that the chair has said, look, he disputes those numbers, and that's part of the reason why the minister feels it is so important to get down to Cape Breton and meet with the board chair, the affected students, the families, to resolve these issues. If these numbers are incorrect, if we're working off bad data, we want to get the right numbers to make sure the right decision is made, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again to the Acting Premier, the board chair doesn't buy the government's spin, nor does the community. The spin-doctoring of the government was met with - and I will table the document that it came from - don't allow it, don't buy it, don't eat it, and don't swallow it. District 9 CBRM Councillor Tom Wilson is correct when he says that if the building is in that poor a shape, none of the students would be here today.

For 125 years the school has produced mature, well-balanced young women. Will the Deputy Premier do the same and be mature and well-balanced and do the right thing and keep Holy Angels open, where it is and where it rightfully belongs?

[3:45 p.m.]

MR. CORBETT: I'm glad to see the Third Party uses the Cape Breton Post as their research department. I want to tell you something, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this House what I've previously said and I'll say again. We are not going to stand by and watch that program wind up. We're going to work with the school board, we're going to work with the residents of CBRM, we're going to work with everybody to make sure that it stays where it's the most feasible for that program to be and we want it to stay in Cape Breton and we want it be done sooner than later. That's why the minister is going to meet with these people. I don't know which part of that, that member doesn't get.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again to the Acting Premier - and, by the way, those quotes were from the individuals, they happened to be in the Cape Breton Post, but the people that were in the audience actually heard them. The crisis this NDP Government has created is consistent with its divide and conquer agenda, hurting communities throughout Nova Scotia. Holy Angels High School in Sydney is the latest victim.

Former Holy Angels vice-principal Greg O'Keefe, stated, "If the students didn't care, then that would be the end of the story." Well we find out they do care and we all care.

Everyone seems to care except the NDP. My question to the Deputy Premier, the Acting Premier is, why don't you care and why don't you do the right thing and end this crisis today?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I do care. This government cares, in particular, this minister cares. (Applause) I've told these people in no less than three answers today, that minister, the minister who doesn't play games, the minister who's going down there and helping resolve this issue, who will meet with the people, will not use the Cape Breton Post as their pole vaulting area. We'll get this thing done and we'll do it right. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERD: IEF - BUSINESS CASES

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development boasts about the merits of the Industrial Expansion Fund. Yet, no proof has been provided by this government on the merits of this fund outside of Pictou. Nova Scotians are not able to assess for themselves if any of the businesses that the IEF has spent millions on have a sound economic or business case. The minister and this government need to understand that Nova Scotians will not accept money being spent at face value any longer. My question to the minister is, will you table in the House today the business cases and analysis, which would support your claims that the IEF is creating and maintaining jobs in Nova Scotia?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the accomplishments of the IEF in the past year. As a matter of fact, in this past year we've created more jobs than any other previous five years. We've invested in 23 companies in Nova Scotia to the tune of \$221 million. What we've done is try to ensure that every region in the Province of Nova Scotia is treated fairly and gets a fair shake.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue of transparency and accountability between the government and the people of Nova Scotia. I will note that the minister did not table those documents that were requested. In fact, the Minister of Finance identified the problem with the IEF back in 2006 when he said, "The problem here is that government can allocate itself a very large amount of money . . . without ever informing the House, without requiring the approval of the House, without any accountability to the House. That can't be right . . ." I'll table those quotes here today.

Once the NDP became government, they did just that, allocating an additional \$75 million to the IEF. When is this minister going to start being transparent and stop pushing off requests for analysis?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for that question because I think it's a very important question. I remember when we were in Opposition we raised the issue around transparency of the IEF; I remember that very well. That is why this government established an advisory group made up of five leading business men and women from the Province of Nova Scotia to advise not only the minister, but to review applications coming forward with respect to the IEF. We do take those words very seriously, we spoke those words a year ago, and we acted on what we said we were going to do when it comes to transparency.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I think it's great that they put some good people in charge of that fund, but that doesn't take away the fact that Nova Scotians don't know what's happening with this expansion fund, which has millions of dollars in it. The Industrial Expansion Fund report has a lot of pictures in it, but it does fall short on substance as well. Nova Scotians don't know if they're getting their value for their money. The report is shorter than it was last year and there is no analysis of the money that has been spent, no business cases for the companies that have received funding - but there are a lot of pictures.

My question is, when will the minister provide this House with a supporting analysis to ensure that Nova Scotians are truly getting value for the money that is spent through the IEF?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up a very serious question around transparency, and I think I answered part of that in my latest response. I will also add to that transparency - one of the things that we said that we want to do to improve the transparency around the IEF was to do just what we have done not only with the advisory committee but also with the annual report. Anyone can look at that report and the figures are there. For every dollar that government invested in the IEF, we get a return of close to \$3. We generated, in the way of revenues and taxes, something in the vicinity of \$13.5 million. The IEF is more transparent today than it has ever been.

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

NAT. RES. - CLEAR-CUTTING: MIN. - POSITION

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Earlier in the week I brought up the issue of clear-cutting in an attempt to get a clear-cut definition by the government. Unfortunately, I've not had much luck. Steve Talbot of the Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia understands clear-cutting will become a part of your government's strategy, but definitive answers have not been provided to the Forest Products Association. Will the minister clearly define, this afternoon, and clearly explain what his position is on clear-cutting?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. No, I won't, but in the very near future I will be doing that.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for being so forthright. My question for the honourable Minister of Natural Resources is, what kind of a time frame do you have in mind for the new forestry strategy then - when might we expect it to be released? Industry needs to know.

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question and I won't answer it with "soon, soon, very soon." The government has made a commitment, and actually the member probably has been following the strategy process. The strategy is to be complete by the end of the year. The highlights of that actually, I was hoping that I could make those known to industry and stakeholders, I was thinking, by the end of this week. I'm not sure that I'm going to hit that target, actually - I'm quite sure I'm not going to hit that target, but I did make a commitment to them that they could have a look at what we thought were the pressure points that seemed to raise the most concern and allow them if they wanted to have a look to see if it was possible to tweak that before it became etched in stone, the document that goes to Cabinet, et cetera. So, anyway, that's still my position.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that answer. Last week outside the Legislature, Mr. Talbot said that members of the industry are afraid of what this government's extreme position on clear-cutting will do their livelihoods. They are afraid that the NDP hardline ideologies will jeopardize 11,000 jobs and do real damage to an industry that contributes \$1 million to Nova Scotia's economy.

What the Forest Products Association wants to know is, when will the Minister of Natural Resources provide a practical common sense strategy that supports the hardworking Nova Scotians who will work in this industry and ensure that these jobs will continue to be there for future generations? I know the minister is trying to come up with that but we really need to know an answer.

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, the deadline is still to be in by the end of the year and that will be the strategy in the flesh, you know, the document that's passed to Cabinet and pass muster. I want to say that the industry shouldn't be overly concerned about the direction the NDP Government is going to go. As a matter of fact, what we'll do is we'll save that industry and those jobs from the direction that previous governments were allowing it to go.

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

LWD: SKILLS DEV. TRAINING - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Collaborative Partnership Network of Nova Scotia is made up of organizations that provide employment services to persons with

disabilities. Many of their clients have been denied skills development funding for retraining. To qualify they have to be out of school and looking for work for three years. Often these individuals are forced to draw upon income assistance because they don't have the option to retrain. So my question is for the Minister of Education, wouldn't you agree that it's better for these individuals to access skills development programs they need instead of drawing on income assistance?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, actually the funding for that program comes under my responsibilities as Minister of Labour and Workforce Development but I'm still the same person so I will answer the question.

The Government of Canada had sort of a one-size-fits-all approach to skills development and we were very pleased with the devolution of the federal funding through the LMA and LMDA programs because we've been able to align that funding opportunity with the priorities and needs in this province. Quite frankly, more Nova Scotians have qualified for skills development training since it has devolved to the province. In fact, in 2008-09, when it was under federal jurisdiction, about 67 per cent of the applicants were eligible and this year in 2010-11, 81 per cent of applicants are eligible.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, those numbers are scant comfort to people with disabilities who cannot qualify for retraining after being injured. We know our declining population is going to cause worker shortages over the long term. We need all individuals contributing to our economy. Individuals with disabilities want to work. However, they often struggle with job searches because they don't have the appropriate support and before organizations can provide the support, these folks are forced to wait three years under the Skills Development Program eligibility requirements.

My question to the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development is, will you remove the three-year eligibility requirement for individuals with disabilities?

[4:00 p.m.]

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little confused by the question and I'm not sure if the member is asking about people who get benefits through the workers' compensation program or the skills development funding, but obviously she has some concerns. I would be very willing to set up a meeting with my staff and perhaps a representative from the independent Workers' Compensation Board to come over and explain the various programs and what is available.

Certainly under the LMA and LMDA money we've been able to free up significant funding for persons with disabilities and certainly are doing more in that line than we've ever been able to do as a province. We're also looking at other marginalized groups like

African-Canadian citizens, Aboriginal citizens, women. We understand the demands of the future workforce. You can be sure that we are taking a leadership role in meeting those demands and meeting the needs of individuals. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that these people had become disabled on the job so no, I wasn't referring to workers' compensation. There are over 198,000 persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia, 68 per cent of those people are unemployed, many of them are on income assistance. My question to the Minister of Community Services is, will you ask the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development to change her department's requirements to make it easier for persons with disabilities to get training?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to express the fact that we do work interdepartmentally in this government and one of the things we are doing is the ESIA redesign, which is looking at that entire aspect and presently those with disabilities are part of that.

The other thing, for the first time in the Province of Nova Scotia, this government, through the Department of Community Services and in discussions with my colleague here, the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development, has brought together a working group of individuals in the province to develop a strategy for those who have a disability. This will be part of that strategy that they will analyze. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

NAT. RES. - FORESTRY REGS.: IMPACT - CONSIDER

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. NewPage is the main employer in the Strait area and its positive economic impact affects regions represented by our member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, our member for Richmond, our member for Antigonish, my colleague, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, in my own riding of Inverness, in Colchester, and the list goes on.

AN HON. MEMBER: Pictou County.

MR. MACMASTER: Actually, if I didn't mention it, I did intend to mention the Pictou Counties as well, our members who represent those areas. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have many personal friends who work at NewPage and they are a responsible employer. They plant more trees than they harvest, they have certification seals on their products to offer peace of mind that the wood that has been harvested for their products, and the products they have manufactured, has been done so responsibly. Will this government ensure that the forestry regulations they bring forward will take into account the economic impact of their decisions?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that, and I'm hoping that is the case, because the industry will also be pleased to hear that. The people who work in forestry, they make a living not just by cutting trees, but also by helping young trees rejuvenate our forests. I've spoken with these people, I do believe their hearts are in the right place, and I know that they care about the land they live and work on.

The new forestry policy we've been hearing about seems to be more focused on regulations and on a heavy hand by government. Why don't we choose to focus our resources less on bureaucracy and more on generous silviculture programs so that these people can earn a better living and we can optimize the health of our forests, Mr. Speaker?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, well, look, if the member opposite is hearing about the heavy hand of regulation, he's not hearing it from me. It's our intention to bring about change. Some of that change, we expect, will have to be regulated. We are hoping that as much of that that can be done to move the industry - and I'm thinking a lot about small private woodlot owners in this vision of a new forest for the province, that we can offer incentives that would be helpful to them - use a carrot rather than a stick. So as much as we can aid this process along without being heavy-handed, that would be our intention.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that this is the approach by government, because this is a very important industry for our province. I will ask the minister, do you think that we can come up with a common-sense solution so that the interests of industry are served as well as the interests that are obviously trying to be served with the direction that you're presenting?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, look, I'm not sure where the member opposite gets his information. This is not just about industry. It's about the people, the people of Nova Scotia, who indicated how they want their forests managed.

NewPage, I would have to say, has set the bar very high for the industry. They have done things and gone places where others in the industry have not been willing to go - FSC certification, no use of pesticides or herbicides in their operation. I've got to say these are people who will not notice any significant change from what we do. I can tell you that.

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

HEALTH: BTO PROG. - INCOME THRESHOLD

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday many members of the Legislature had the opportunity to meet a group of volunteers who joined us here to talk about living with cancer and the financial stresses of doing that. The principal focus of that discussion yesterday was national, and it was on the

national catastrophic drug program that's so desperately needed in Canada, but I wanted to raise today some of the other issues that also face people with cancer in our province.

The minister is well aware that there are other programs within her own department that would be of great assistance to people who have cancer in our province. One of those is the Boarding Transportation and Ostomy Program, which provides financial assistance to cancer patients for medically-necessary travel in our province. My question to the minister is, will the minister please confirm for the record that the income threshold for the BTO Program is still fixed at \$15,720?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Cancer and treatments are indeed provided in various programs, and that particular program that the member has referred to does have that income threshold and it did not change this year.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that inflation has increased over many years - in fact, my understanding is we haven't increased that threshold since 1994. So it has been many years of pressure on inflation, most recently the 2 per cent that has been added thanks to the NDP Government's decision to increase HST. At the same time, individuals have higher incomes based just on minimum wage, which means today even someone with cancer working at a minimum wage job might find themselves unable to access that program. So the low-income cut-off that Statistics Canada is giving for a family of three living in rural Nova Scotia is \$18,263, while for a similar-sized family in HRM the low-income cut-off would be \$23,610. So my question to the minister is, how can a BTO income cutoff, which ranges anywhere from \$2,500 to \$7,800 below the low income cutoff level, ever be considered a better deal for Nova Scotian families?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, everyday we make choices in the Department of Health about how we can improve health care by investing strategically. One of the choices we've made with respect to treatment for cancers was to increase the new drug program that we have by \$10 million in expenditure over the last year. This really does allow for people to have access to the intravenous drugs that are required in the treatment of cancer. Cancer Care Nova Scotia does a terrific job as well as the Canadian Cancer Society in supporting people who need treatments, who are travelling. Many charitable organizations are involved in helping people get the treatments they need.

We continue to review all of our programs and invest in them while trying to live within our means, which often is not an easy thing to do in the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, we live in one of the highest tax jurisdictions in the entire country and yet we find ourselves in a position where we're always turning to non-profit organizations and to fundraising and so on to try and provide some of the basic needs that our citizens have.

In 2008, the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid - when he was in Opposition - raised this very question of the threshold for the BTO. In 2009, the honourable member for Pictou East made the same request to the government of the day. Yet those suffering from cancer, who require financial assistance for board and transportation in order to go to the centres where they can receive chemotherapy and the drugs they so badly need, are having no additional help from government. The threshold level is too low. As I said, it has not been raised since 1994 and I believe that the minister needs a plan to do so.

My question to the minister is, when can Nova Scotians expect the minister to increase this income threshold for these very important services that are needed under the BTO program?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I said earlier, in the fiscal year we're currently in, there was no change in that program, but as we go forward toward our next budget year, every program will be reviewed. We will be looking at where we need to be making strategic investments to provide better health care to Nova Scotians and this program certainly will be one that we will have a look at.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**JUSTICE: WEST. KINGS SCHOOLS -
RCMP SCH. LIAISON POSITION**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Kings County RCMP have redirected funding for the school liaison position in western Kings schools. This has left these schools without an important resource in the community, without an important connection with their law enforcement. Could the Minister of Justice explain why these schools have lost their RCMP liaison officer?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: If my memory serves me right, there are some discussions with the District Commander there to address that issue and there should be realignment of resources in September. On the issue, I also understand that they place the position as an analyst for dealing with prolific offenders. What that will mean is that by identifying the crime pattern, they'll be able to address that and reduce that impact, which should free up front line officers to do more community work. I'm very encouraged by the leadership within the RCMP there to address those community issues. I do know that the RCMP are in direct contact with community leaders in the school itself.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Kings RCMP are experiencing what District inspector Mike Payne hopes is a short term pressure. This liaison position is an important one for the students, for the community, and from the school board members to central office, to school principals, teachers and now students have been raising their voice of concern.

[4:15 p.m.]

Quite frankly, this is precisely one of those places where our officers need to be. Call it boots in the halls if you will, they make a difference. Mr. Speaker, will the province be acting to help fill the gap in the western Kings schools?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, the Justice Department is very committed to supporting all Nova Scotians and all communities with ensuring that there are good crime prevention programs there and that we do as much as we can to reduce crime and support our communities. I'm very confident that the resourcing issues within that community will be managed by the RCMP district commander.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, District Inspector Mike Payne sees the importance of this program, so does the community. The community is rallying together to have this position reinstated. Mr. Payne is quoted as saying he fully supports these efforts. This program rolls out important proactive programming to students of all ages, that the province saw fit to let this happen is simply unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, what is the government doing to ensure that the position of school liaison for Western Kings schools is reinstated as soon as possible?

MR. LANDRY: Well, the RCMP manages the resources, they have that responsibility. I have all the confidence in their leadership and that they're working with the community to address the community priorities and needs. But I do go back, I am of the understanding that the resourcing - there are some shifts to deal with putting analysts positions in place, which is a good step forward in reducing the overall crime impact and should free up the officers to even have more contribution to crime prevention and community involvement and be engaged with the students.

As a former police officer, I was very committed then to the students and people in my community and as Justice Minister, I'm equally as committed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

NAT. RES.: WAGNER REPT. - MIN. RESPONSE

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Natural Resources. We are running out of time, his answers have been very brief today, so I expect maybe we'll get to the end of this today. I trust, as minister, you have had the opportunity to read Dr. Wagner's report relating to forestry as a part of Nova Scotia's natural resource. Dr. Wagner, the director of University of Maine's School of Forestry and a distinguished professor, reviewed the documents making up Nova Scotia's natural resource strategy and he was dismayed at the crucial recommendations about the future management. My question to the minister is, how does the minister react to Dr. Wagner's statements?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't give them as much weight as I give the statements of the people of Nova Scotia.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Dr. Wagner's credentials, I think, speak for themselves. My question again through you to the minister is, Dr. Wagner concluded that Nova Scotia only harvested 1.1 per cent of its forest and, in fact, this would suggest that the entire forest in Nova Scotia would take one century to harvest. My question is, do you believe there's more wood leaving Nova Scotia now than Dr. Wagner is suggesting?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the member's question was around harvest, not what's leaving . . .

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During Question Period, the member for Dartmouth East attempted to ask a question, which you ruled out of order without even hearing the question. I realize in the preamble, the former Chief Clerk's name was brought up. I recognize it is a sensitive issue for this government. But the members on this side of the House have a right to ask that question.

We all know, as Nova Scotians know, the former Chief Clerk sealed his fate on June 9th when he questioned the decision of this government to take the independence of the Speaker's Office and move it into the Department of Finance's office. Mr. Speaker, you also know that the day you walked into his office and fired him, he called our House Leader.

Mr. Speaker, you also know the day you fired him, you said, I'm just delivering the message.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, that's out of order. I'll allow you to have a point of order, but watch your language.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, you said - let's be clear. You said when you walked in his office, I'm just the messenger. But we want to know, when the Finance Minister is travelling across this province asking Nova Scotians to tighten their belts, why they aren't willing to answer the question of how much they paid the former Clerk to leave his office quietly and why Nova Scotians don't have a right to know?

Mr. Speaker, you should allow the question to be asked in this House so that Nova Scotians can get the answer. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: It's not a point of order.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, you cannot rule a question out of order without hearing the question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I heard enough of the question.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, there was no question. You haven't got there yet. You still don't know. Tell this House what the question was.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sit down.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: I'm rising on a point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, I've been around this House a long time and in my 18 years coming to this place, I've never seen a worse example of a Speaker protecting the government. This is the worst I've ever seen.

Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I believe, was contemptuous without even hearing a question. The Chief Clerk is a public employee, was a public employee, paid for by the people of this province and only under the direction of the Speaker's Office.

MR. SPEAKER: I ruled it out of order because any matter that belongs under the jurisdiction of the Speaker . . .

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Is not responsible to this place, is that what you're saying? Are you saying that the people that you are employed by are not responsible? We can't ask questions in this House of people who work for the people of Nova Scotia?

MR. SPEAKER: You're certainly entitled to ask questions.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: But you ruled it out of order.

MR. SPEAKER: It's under the jurisdiction of the Speaker. It is out of order, simply that.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: It's not out of order, Mr. Speaker, it's an open matter that should be dealt with in the open. We have the right to ask those questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, these are the Rules of this House.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: We have the right to find out, Mr. Speaker, why this government paid over \$340,000 to the Chief Clerk to have him leave quietly, as our

Leader has said. That's the question here, Mr. Speaker, and I'm telling you that you have made a decision in favour of the government here and this is not the first time that you have made decisions in favour of the government and not in favour of the independence of this place here.

MR. SPEAKER: It's out of order.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I think my privileges have been stepped on here today - the privileges of all members of this House - by you, Mr. Speaker. I think you should do the honourable thing and resign.

MR. SPEAKER: I hear your concern.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I'd like to stand on a point of order as well, but not as contemptuous as that, Mr. Speaker.

In a response to the member for Digby-Annapolis, the Minister of Fisheries referenced a moratorium on aquaculture by the previous government. I know full well that there was no such moratorium on aquaculture, so I want the member to provide this House with documentation to prove there was a moratorium, or at least apologize that he may have gotten his facts wrong on that.

The only thing I remember from our time in government was an issue around Queens and having to say no to an aquaculture site in Queens, in Port Mouton. I'm sure the member for Queens would have agreed with that decision at that time.

My point of order today is that I'd like the Minister of Fisheries to provide us with more detail on this so-called moratorium or apologize for getting it wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: It's certainly a difference of opinion between the two members. That's all I can say at this point in time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 78.

Bill No. 78 - Public Utilities Act.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in no way is this a difference of opinion. The minister referenced a document, a statement that there was a moratorium on aquaculture, and I want him to be able to prove that fact in this House - provide the documentation on that.

If you reference it, it's in your briefing book. Where is it? There was no such thing. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like you to rule on it and, again, get him to provide the information to this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, a point well taken. I will take it under advisement.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: You're welcome.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, it is again a pleasure to rise and speak again to Bill No. 78, the Public Utilities Act. I'd like to just restate some of what I had noted before, in support of our good NDP Government, and just to say very loudly and clearly that we do support Nova Scotia small businesses. Our minister, by bringing this forward, our government and certainly our Premier, we stand today united - that Nova Scotia values, respects and listens to Nova Scotia's small-business people.

I speak as well from experience having been a small-business woman in my life. I had the pleasure of operating, successfully - yet challenging at times - small businesses at my home in Eastern Passage.

I have to say that it's particularly relevant, I think, as an MLA to speak to this bill when we think of the types of businesses that we're talking about that will be so positively affected by it: the mom and pop restaurants in our local communities, the cottage industries where people are working hard within their own homes to help provide for their families, the retail outlets that we might frequent to get our bread and milk, the pastry shops within our communities, the gas stations, and the list goes on and on.

They're everywhere. They make up the hearts of our neighbourhoods and our communities across Nova Scotia. The appointment of the small business advocate can make or break, or can influence the decisions that can make or break small businesses when decisions are before the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. Having an advocate there, having a voice, having someone who knows what it's like to face the challenges that Nova Scotia small businesses are facing, can make a huge difference in the deliberations.

This person who will be that advocate, with the support of this House, really knows what it takes when you put your heart and soul into this type of business, what it takes for family support, what it takes for financial support, what it takes in energy and sweat equity. Expansion of the definition, as well, opens doors and opportunities for Nova Scotians, opening to the opportunity for corporation partnerships and proprietorships.

Having the opportunity at the hearings for a small-business person to be a dedicated intervener is the right thing to do. We know that because we've spoken to Nova Scotians as a government that cares and wants to talk directly to the people who we're here representing. We had that opportunity, we heard from them and we're moving on that.

We know that business in Nova Scotia is strong, we know that it can be stronger, and legislation like this will help in that regard. We want to do things that will give opportunities to Nova Scotians to be successful. This government, this NDP minister, this NDP Premier are responding, and with that we know - I want to pay particular attention to the endorsement that we had from Ms. Leanne Hachey from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I believe that speaks volumes, that we are hitting the mark here in government for Nova Scotians and with that I'll take my place and I ask that the entire Legislature support this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: I was in a good mood when I came in here so I am going to keep my remarks short so that I don't get into a worse mood. We are glad to see this bill, we're very happy to see this move forward. It's entertaining to listen to both the Finance Minister and the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage say how they're very happy to have CFIB support, since on April 16, 2010 - and I'll table this - the quote from the Finance Minister was "I'm not planning to meet with the CFIB . . . they just issued a vitriolic news release, which I don't find terribly helpful." Apparently they're helpful when they're on his side but they're not helpful when they're not on his side. I will table that of course, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the Finance Minister. The CFIB is a very important organization in the province and represents a large sector of our economy and while it is reasonable for the minister and the government not to always agree with them, certainly very reasonable, he can't attack them one day as an organization that should have their leadership replaced and then a few months later say that he thinks their leadership is great - the same people mind you - for supporting him in this.

You know, the fact of the matter is it's disingenuous at best. We're certainly glad to see this. I know the Minister of Finance talked about his support for that previously and he'll remember that our own colleague, the member for Richmond, tabled a bill requiring this very thing, a business consumer advocate, Bill No. 3, on November 23, 2007. We've recognized

since that it didn't work out exactly as intended and the Minister of Finance has brought forward now those changes to improve that.

[4:30 p.m.]

There have been a couple of people stand up and make comments from the government benches that this is good because there will be people representing small businesses and others at the Utility and Review Board. Certainly it's good to have somebody there and we support that. I would remind the members of the government that they can always go themselves as MLAs to the Utility and Review Board hearings and appear on behalf of the constituents and small businesses in their riding, just as I have at a number of hearings in the past couple of weeks. It is not necessary just to rely on others to go there and I hope - while I haven't seen any NDP members at any of the power rate hearings or gas hearings recently - I look forward to hopefully some of them might join me there at future rate hearings. With that, I will take my place, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on this bill already and today I would like to reiterate the Progressive Conservative members' support for the bill. We do believe that small business should have their own advocate when matters relevant to them are discussed at the Utility and Review Board. With that, I will keep my remarks brief and add our support to the bill.

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 thank all members for their observations on the bill and move second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 78. 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 79.

Bill No. 79 - Securities Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on second reading of Bill No. 79, which contains a variety of amendments to the Securities Act. Members of the House will recall that over the past little while there have been a number of amendments to the Securities Act because it is part of an ongoing national effort to have mirror legislation essentially in all provinces across Canada. Part of the effort is to deal with the difficulty that securities regulation is within the jurisdiction of the provinces, although in some other countries it is within the jurisdiction of the national government. By having mirror legislation across the country, essentially we can come as close as possible within the constitutional framework of acting as a single securities regulator or as close as we can get to it within the constraints set by our Confederation.

In the current financial climate the ability to invest and participate in the global market is critical. These amendments ensure that the Nova Scotia Securities Act will reflect the adoption by Canada of International Financial Reporting Standards or IFRS. It will also establish a framework for the regulation of credit rating organizations. The purpose is to ensure appropriate securities regulation is in place and to ensure that our regulatory regime is in line with national and international standards.

With respect to the first item, the adoption of IFRS, it's necessary to amend the Securities Act to ensure that financial reporting filings are consistent with IFRS requirements being adopted by the Canadian Accounting Standards Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. Those standards will require that for Canadian publicly accountable enterprises, that they adopt IFRS as of January 1, 2011. The amendments in this bill primarily reflect IFRS terminology changes. The International Financial Reporting Standards have been adopted in over 100 countries, including countries of the European Union, and it is, of course, important that our securities legislation be consistent in Canada's financial reporting standards.

There has been a lot of talk over the years, Mr. Speaker, at least over the years I've been in the House, of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, GAAP, and this is simply another step in the evolution of GAAP and it reflects the fact the Securities Act has to keep up with that evolution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the next set of amendments has to do with the regulation of credit rating organizations. I have to admit that this is a bit of an oddity. I said in the opening of my remarks that the idea here is to ensure that there is essentially mirror legislation across Canada and so we're adopting these amendments, which are being adopted elsewhere in Canada, even though there is, as a matter of fact, no credit rating organization based in Nova Scotia. If there ever were one, these rules would apply and these same rules have either been adopted in other provinces, or will be adopted in other provinces, to ensure that there is a

seamless securities regime across Canada or, as I keep saying, as close as you can get to that within the constraints of the Canadian federal system.

Credit rating organizations are not currently subject to formal securities regulatory oversight in Canada. The initiative to regulate credit rating organizations flows from recommendations of the Canadian Securities Administrators in response to the 2007-08 credit market turmoil. The Canadian Securities Administrators have worked hard to ensure that appropriate regulations are adopted in Canada which are consistent with the international community.

So these amendments, Mr. Speaker, will do four things: first, they will make rules to designate a credit rating organization; second, they provide for compliance reviews of a credit rating organization; third, they will require a credit rating organization to provide access to their books, information and other documents; and, fourth, they will order a credit rating organization to submit to review of its practices and procedures where such an order is in the public interest. Compliance reviews will be coordinated nationally by provincial and territorial securities regulators.

This legislation will, of course, Mr. Speaker, not direct or regulate the content of credit ratings or the methodologies used to determine credit ratings because in order to be credible, the credit rating organizations must be independent in the content of their ratings. I might point out that part of the genesis of this kind of regulation lay in the fact that credit rating organizations were perhaps not as independent of the entities being rated as they ought to have been and so there was some suggestion that their ratings were not, perhaps, as objective as they could have been and, therefore, that this led in some part, directly or indirectly, to the market turmoil that we've seen over the last couple of years. Enacting a harmonized framework in Nova Scotia will allow proposed national rules on credit rating organizations to be implemented in Nova Scotia concurrent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

There are a number of other amendments, which I can only call housekeeping amendments, Mr. Speaker, simply some very small things to ensure consistency with legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. Amendments to Section 30 of the Securities Act will clarify that a self-regulatory organization has authority over former members and representatives and will clarify that the Nova Scotia Securities Commission can review and approve any bylaw, rule, regulation, policy procedure, interpretation or practice of a recognized self-regulatory organization.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out that this bill does not, of course, have anything to do at all with the move toward a single national securities regulator. That is an initiative of the federal government which Nova Scotia supports. We have indicated to the federal government that we support the move to a single regulator on five conditions - which I've gone over previously in the House and will not review now because it's not directly germane to the contents of this bill - but if the day comes where a national

securities regulator is established and is found by the Supreme Court of Canada to be lawful, that in fact this House will no longer see securities regulation because it will be managed at the national level for the whole country.

Until we get to that day, Mr. Speaker, which if it happens is still a number of years away, it is through amendments such as these that we can ensure an efficient and effective market for securities in Nova Scotia and in Canada. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to offer a few comments on Bill No. 79. It has been well detailed by the minister in his opening remarks. And as he did say, the bill is intended to reflect the requirements of the International Financial Reporting Standards being adopted by Canada. The idea here, of course, is to harmonize recording standards right across the country, and provinces of course are falling in line to make that goal realized.

The Nova Scotia Securities Act must be consistent with IFRS requirements being adopted by the Canadian Accounting Standards Board for accounting standards for private enterprises by January 1, 2011. The bill allows for the government to develop regulations for credit-rating organizations which will be consistent with the international community. These regulations allow securities regulators the power to make rules with respect to - and there are a number of areas - designating a credit-rating organization; conduct compliance reviews of a credit-rating organization and require them to provide access to books, information and documents; also order a credit-rating organization to submit a review of its practices and procedures where such an order is in the public interest.

The legislation will not direct or regulate the content of credit ratings or the methodologies used to determine credit ratings. These amendments are being enacted across jurisdictions in our country.

Amendments to Clause 5, Section 30, should clarify authority over former members with regard to self-regulatory organizations, and amendments to Section (3 A) should clarify that the Nova Scotia Securities Commission can review and approve “. . . any by-law, rule, regulation, policy, procedure, interpretation or practice of a recognized self-regulatory organization.”

Mr. Speaker, I guess it would be important to point out that further details are to come in regard to regulations and we'll see how they fit into the framework. These amendments seem to allow for greater transparency and streamline processes and self-regulatory functions. This is good in principle, however we will watch closely for the regulations and I will look forward to this bill moving on to Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, member.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we, within the Progressive Conservative members on this side of the House, are in agreement with this legislation. There are three points, as the honourable member has stated. The first is the international accounting standards, reporting standards. It is something that is being driven by the accounting industry. This is a good thing the world over.

Any time when we can have financial reporting by companies consistent around the world, it is good for a couple of reasons: one, because our world is global today, there are a lot of companies that are working with each other around the world and there are a lot of people who are investing in these companies. When they look at balance sheets and operating statements, they need to know that there is some standard. If that standard is consistent globally, then there is confidence that what is on the paper is a true representation of what is happening with that company. They can be assured, if they are going to invest in that company or deal with that company, that they are doing so in good faith and with a level of proper knowledge on what is going on.

[4:45 p.m.]

The second piece is on the credit agencies. Mr. Speaker, and this is also very important. Most people in this room would have been affected by the downturn in the stock market - our pension plans have been affected by it. One of the things that has caused this was the real estate market in the United States, and what was happening was there were a lot of people getting loans for homes who could not afford those loans. In fact, they had a term for it, they called it NINJA loans because these people had no income, no jobs, and no assets. As you can expect, the effect of giving people loans who could not afford to pay them had a devastating affect on the U.S. economy, created a housing bubble, and the rating agencies played a role in that. Sadly, they were stamping good quality ratings on companies who had assets that were very weak.

We hear about the term “asset-backed securities” and this was a case where bad loans were mixed in with a few good ones and because the company that was fronting these asset-backed securities had a good reputable name, the rating agencies turned a blind eye to what was in those securities and gave them a good-quality rating. People invested in them and then eventually the housing market went flat and these securities weren’t worth what people thought they were; in fact, they were much more risky. This legislation is going to help bring greater accountability for those rating agencies so that doesn’t happen again, and we recognize the value in that.

The third component gives the Securities Commission jurisdiction over the organizations in this country that regulate the investment advisers. This is of great importance because many people in this province - most people - rely on advisers to ensure that the decisions they make around their finances bring them healthy outcomes. Probably the main mode of savings for people in this province is for their retirement and for their retirement income.

This legislation is good because it can give confidence to investors that the people they are dealing with are reputable and it allows the commission to go back to look at the actions of former licensed advisers to ensure that those people are held accountable. If they're not held accountable, what confidence can we have in this important industry? I do think the industry would also welcome these changes because anything that's done to ensure integrity for investors is of value to them because it brings respect and trust in the industry. At the end of the day, everybody wants to see people who make investments have positive experiences.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and summarize by saying that the Progressive Conservative members of this House will be supporting this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. HOWARD EPSTEIN: Mr. Speaker, this bill must be challenging for all of us here. It represents a very specialized area of law and public policy. It's an area that's complicated and, I think, it's one of no little importance - nonetheless, it's an area that many of us will not have direct knowledge of. I certainly don't put myself forward as any expert in this area of the law or public policy, but what little I do know I'm happy to try to share with members in the House.

I think what we might do is start with trying to understand something of the context within which this bill arises. This is a series of amendments to the Securities Act. In Nova Scotia, we do get to regulate securities, but we should understand how they play out in the array of financial institutions that are part of the makeup of the nation's institutions of economic activity.

The traditional analysis, of course, of the financial sector is to recognize it as having what have often been called "four pillars." The four pillars are banks or credit unions; they are trust or - as they're sometimes known in the United States - savings and loans companies; then there are insurance companies; and, finally, there are securities agencies. Those four pillars were traditionally recommended by analysts to be kept separate. In Canada we've actually seen some merging of those different functions. We know banks are quite interested in getting into insurance, they've already been able to take over trust companies, and to a certain extent, of course, the major banks also own various securities companies.

There's been quite an evolution in the nation of these traditional four pillars. They're not separate as they once were, or not quite so separate as they once were. If one reads Canadian texts of a certain era - my era when I first learned about this - there was always a drawing in the textbook which showed four Doric pillars holding up the roof of the building. The idea was that the financial affairs of the nation would be solid and secure and well-supported so long as the four pillars were kept separate and independent and healthy.

Well, policy has evolved and there have been these mergers, but we still have a serious interest in making sure the different functions - these institutions, these pillars - are kept healthy. What we're dealing with here, the Securities Act, amendments to it, has to do with the securities agencies. Not with banking, not with credit unions, not with trusts, not with insurance, but focused exclusively on this institution having to do with securities.

This, at the moment, is a provincial function. Members will no doubt be aware that the federal government has expressed some interest in the possibility of a complete merger of the securities commissions and the securities exchanges that exist in different provinces in the country, and they've expressed some interest in the possibility of taking over regulation of securities from the provinces if it turned out that there were to be one national entity. A committee that was chaired, interestingly enough, by Purdy Crawford - now an eminent and well-respected man of business affairs originally from Nova Scotia - recommended that there be movement in that direction. But as the honourable minister said, it's not clear whether this will actually happen and if it does, it may well not happen for a number of years.

As we know, there is some resistance on the part of some provinces which have their own securities commissions. Not all provinces are opposed to it. We have a securities commission in Nova Scotia. We don't have as active trading here as there is in Toronto under the Toronto Stock Exchange or in Montreal in the Montreal Stock Exchange or in Vancouver where it's generally seen as one of the junior stock exchanges, but an active one nonetheless.

Those provinces that do have active stock exchanges and a long tradition of having their own regulation of securities activities are expressing some resistance to Purdy Crawford's suggestion. We will see. We will see how that evolves, but even if it were to be the case that at some point there were one national regulator and one national securities exchange commission, there would probably still be some residual function in our province.

Even if there weren't, until we get to the point, if we ever do, of seeing one national regulator, we have to be up to date in our Securities Act. That's what this bill is about. This bill is about making certain amendments to our Securities Act, which provides the framework for our activities when it comes to securities. Mr. Speaker, I think you will be aware that there are a number of companies that are incorporated in Nova Scotia and that carry on their businesses here and that are registered here.

There are traders in securities here - that is, people buy and sell certain shares in these companies through agents. There has to be a legal framework in order to properly regulate what it is that goes on when it comes to the issuance of shares when a company originally goes public and a variety of transactions.

It's quite fascinating to read the existing Securities Act and see what its declared purpose is. The declared purpose of the Statute as it stands right now is “. . . to provide investors with protection from practices and activities that tend to undermine investor confidence in the fairness and efficiency of capital markets.” Also it goes on to say, “. . . an adequate level of investor protection, to foster the process of capital formation.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find those words quite interesting. It's rare in a Statute, in this province or virtually any other, in which you will find such a clear language about the process of the dynamics of the economy - capital formation. In other words, how is it that pools of money are to come forward and be employed productively in our economy. One of the ways in which that happens is through incorporating companies and to some extent, of course, we should think of the Securities Act as a companion piece of legislation for the Companies Act, which provides for the method of incorporation of companies so that people don't do business simply as one person or as partners but, in fact, as an incorporated company with shares.

That's what the Companies Act is all about and the Securities Act has to do with the process whereby these companies - once incorporated with shares and with shareholders - go public, that is in which they actually take on more than one or two shareholders because this is seen as a necessary process so that we can carry on the dynamics of a modern economy.

If we look at what the Act does at the moment, there are a whole variety of activities that are set out that are regulated by the Securities Act. Sellers of securities - that is brokers - are regulated. They're regulated in the sense that they have to be educated appropriately and licensed in order to carry on the business of acting as sellers of securities. They're subject to discipline. In fact, I don't know if you saw today's press releases, but there was in today's press releases, there was one from the Nova Scotia Securities Commission in which a dealer in securities was disciplined because he had violated the rules that are in place and this was seen as being a detriment to the public. The individual in question was fined, I think \$12,5000, had to pay costs to the investigation, and was banned for two years from, I think, owning shares in any public company in Nova Scotia. So there's a serious apparatus there to oversee the actions of people who are brokers and it's all for the purpose of providing investors with protection, which is what the preamble and purpose section of the Statute said.

Other aspects of the Act have to do with transactions involving the sale and there's a fancy word, hypothecation, of shares. So if you want to put up your shares as collateral in some financial transaction, a part of the Securities Act has to do with how sales of shares take place and how you can put them up as collateral.

There are particular rules in the Securities Act that have to do with IPOs. An IPO, Mr. Speaker, is an Initial Public Offering. That's when a company, which might be owned closely and privately by a few people, decide to offer their shares to the public for a potential purchase. That's known as an IPO. That's the first time that a company goes to the public and says we are interested in selling our shares to the public and there are special rules around what should be in the prospectus. The prospectus is the statement that describes what the business is going to do, who owns it, what the parameters of the company are to be, its objectives and so on. There are special rules around the prospectus and other things having to do with the IPO that are necessary to be in place before trading can take place.

Our Securities Act also provides for investigations. Our Securities Commission has quite wide powers to investigate companies that are involved in the public trading of shares or that, in fact, offer shares to the general public. There's an interesting test, Mr. Speaker, in the language of the Statute right now, because anyone who's an advisor to the public when it comes to buying and selling of shares. They may not be someone who owns shares in a company, but they may be financial advisors. They are obligated, under Section 39(a) to act fairly, honestly and in good faith. That's the language of the Statute right now. That's a positive obligation put upon people who are setting themselves out as financial advisors or as brokers.

[5:00 p.m.]

Furthermore, the Act, in a subsequent section, Section 44(a), defines unfair practices. It talks about things are specifically unfair practices that might get a broker in trouble, unfair pressure for example, or taking advantage of the incapacity or lack of knowledge of a client, or imposing terms that are manifestly inequitable.

Now these are interesting standards, this is wide language, but these are high standards that are imposed by our Securities Act on those who trade in stocks or who advise people who might be thinking of buying stocks. As I said earlier on, this is an area of specialization, but even though the practice of it might be in the area of specialization and even though the law around it might be an area of specialization, there are many members of the public who buy and sell stocks, who go to financial advisors and ask for their advice, so it's important that we keep our Act up-to-date, that we have the high standards incorporated in this Statute that are necessary to foster public confidence, in the purpose words of the Statute, and to help capital accumulation so that the economic enterprise of our province can go forward.

There are other specific sections of the Statute that are quite fascinating. There can be no representations about the future value of the security. Well, that's a good thing. In other words, they can't tell you that this stock is going to go up; they're not supposed to say that. If someone does that, they're in a different line of business, they're not in the business of selling stock.

The Statute regulates margin selling and purchases. Margin selling is buying and selling when you don't have the money to do it or you don't own the shares - puts and calls. An interesting thing, dangerous, don't do it, but the Statute regulates it. You have to make owners of companies principals, that is the people who are the main actors in companies where there are publicly-traded shares - they have to make certain declarations about whether they have short positions. A short position is when they are making a bet on the market that their own stock is going to go down, just the kind of thing we saw with some of the financial institutions in the United States. That is regulated right here in our Securities Act and so it should be.

Takeover bids, insider trading, misrepresentations, the obligation to make disclosure of material facts, all of those are provided for in our Statute right now and that's a good thing.

What is it that we are seeing in the amendments that are proposed today? What we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is a strengthening of this array of offerings to the public in which we try to structure our province's financial institution that keeps an eye on the public trading of stocks here. The nature of the improvements that we're engaged with is a series of improvements that are commonly being adopted around the nation and internationally. These have to do with the nature of reporting of financial information.

In other words, there has been some general agreement, internationally, that the kind of financial information that should be available and reported back by some of these companies as regulated by securities acts, should be put into a common and understandable form that provides the kind of transparency that is necessary to undermine the capital formation that we want to see and the investor confidence that we also want see.

Mr. Speaker, we've already heard from the honourable minister the details about what it is that the amendments are. I don't want to speak again to those, I endorse them entirely, I endorse the bill. I certainly am going to support it, I just wanted to offer a few comments that would give a little bit of context to the bill so that we could all try to understand the nature of the financial apparatus that we are dealing with and that this bill so admirably supports. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

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 would like to thank all members for their interventions, particularly the member for Halifax Chebucto, a very clear and succinct exposition of how the Securities Act works in Nova Scotia. With that, I would move second reading of Bill No. 79.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 79. 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 81.

Bill No. 81 - Oak Island Treasure Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to be able to stand in support of Bill No. 81, repeal of the Treasure Trove Act, the creation of the Oak Island Treasure Act, and changes to the Special Places Protection Act.

This legislation ensures that underwater cultural resources will be protected as heritage objects for the benefit of all Nova Scotians. As a result of this bill, treasure hunting for commercial purposes - with the exception of that conducted on Oak Island - will cease on January 1, 2011.

The Treasure Trove Act was enacted in 1954 to govern treasure-hunting activities on Oak Island but was never intended to determine how all of Nova Scotia's marine heritage was managed.

People don't want treasure-hunting activities in our province. Here is a sampling of what they're saying. John Wesley Chisholm is a Halifax diver and noted television producer who works for National Geographic, no less, and when travelling the globe, Mr. Chisholm admits he is ashamed of the way Nova Scotia is treating its marine artifacts. He told the media when we announced this, "I was always kind of embarrassed in my travels around the rest of the world that the rest of the world takes such good care of their . . . marine cultural heritage and we didn't in Nova Scotia." Mr. Chisholm has been clamoring for changes to the treasure-hunting regulations for years and is thrilled this government is doing what Nova Scotians want.

Darryl Kelman, president of the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society, was quoted as saying, "The proposed changes to the law bring the province in line with the rest of the country and the Western world."

Another Nova Scotian who is unhappy with treasure hunting in our province is the member for Dartmouth East. Even the member for Dartmouth East and I agree on this and he is supportive of the bill.

Nova Scotians are unhappy that the current policy allows those who explore to keep 90 per cent of their finds and this doesn't happen anywhere else in our country. Nova Scotia's regulations will now be in line with other jurisdictions in Canada and reflect the United Nations preferred approach to marine heritage preservation.

We will now focus on research and recovery of heritage objects following archaeological best practices. As for the Oak Island Treasure Act, it will regulate treasure-hunting activities carried out on the island. This government appreciates the long history, rich in tradition of treasure hunting in this area and is respectful of the original intention of permitting and regulating treasure hunting on the island. Changes to treasure-hunting regulations that we're making will help ensure that Nova Scotia's marine heritage is preserved for future generations of Nova Scotia families.

This isn't about money and chests full of gold coins buried at the bottom of the sea. We're not making these changes to generate revenue and profit for the government from hidden pieces of our past. This is about protecting what is ours - our historic artifacts and our history.

Mr. Speaker, I'm expecting that my colleague, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, will also have a few words on this bill. (Applause)

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, we too as a Party agree with this bill somewhat, but I myself find it quite confusing and I will tell you why. I mean, it's a bill; it has been introduced in legislation to repeal the Treasure Trove Act, amend the Special Places Protection Act, and create an Oak Island Treasure Act. Now, that statement's quite confusing in itself.

Another statement that confuses me is "ownership of Nova Scotia's underwater cultural and heritage resources will be more secure," according to the government - underwater. Now, keep that in mind - underwater - because I'm going to tell you about some shipwrecks around this shore that aren't underwater. Over the years these shipwrecks and the treasures aboard them have come ashore. I'll tell you why, because I'm quite an avid beachcomber. I love beachcombing. I'm like Forrest Gump's mother - she said, life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get. Well, when you go beachcombing, you never know what you're going to get. I always think of Forrest Gump when I walk on the beach. (Interruptions) A relic himself.

But I want to talk about what comes up on the beaches, and there are things that come up on the beaches from these boats and things. I, myself, here a few years back found a piece of wood stuck in the sand and rocks. I thought it was steel. I thought it was metal to begin with, but I dug it out and I took it home and dried it out. I planed this piece of wood down. It was so heavy I thought it was lignum vitae at first, but I found out - a professional person told me it's not lignum vitae. It was an African redwood, African iron redwood, that was put into boats 200 to 300 years ago somewhere in Africa. I found this on Digby Neck down in Petit Passage. So there is probably lots more stuff there if you want to go dig around that beach a little, and a lot of people dig around the beaches.

I'll tell you another story about some treasure. Back during the war - and this house still stands down on Digby Neck - there was a ship that came from the U.K. She was a Merchant Marine ship, and below Brier Island she was blown up with a torpedo from a submarine. About a week or two later a body was found on the beach and they believed it came out of this boat. There was a moneybelt on this body. That was quite a little treasure, and it was in pounds because that boat was coming to pick up supplies somewhere up in the Bay of Fundy - I don't believe Digby, but I believe probably Saint John. So this person who found this, he reported the body. I don't know if he reported the money or not, but he got enough money out of that moneybelt to build himself a home which still stands down there today. So that was quite a treasure that he found on the beach. Do you leave it or do you take it? On the beach, not underwater.

I mean, I could go on all day here about fishing boats bringing up stuff - cannons, anchors. I see them all over the place - the fishing boats bringing up these artifacts. There are anchors down on Digby Neck 200 or 300 years old. The old anchors had the wooden stocks in them. They put new wooden stocks in them and they've got them propped up on their lawns, around parks - cannons too. Are these being protected? Are these going to be protected? They're not underwater anymore. Are the fishermen going to continue to bring these in or are they going to be afraid to bring this stuff in now and just drop it? Or is it going to create a black market? Will this create a black market, making anything that you take care of and hide away - it makes it more valuable. So maybe it will create a bigger black market.

[5:15 p.m.]

I'm just playing devil's advocate here because I know that this stuff goes on and how much greater will it go on by doing this? I'm not saying that I'm going - maybe if I find another piece of African ironwood on the beach, I don't know whether I'll bring it home or not, or should I bring it home? (Interruption)

But it wasn't underwater. Remember the underwater. This is what is being stated here, underwater. A lot of this comes ashore. I've lobster fished all my life around the shores, 100-pound, 150-pound steel wire lobster trap out of 90 feet of water, 15-fathom deep, storm big enough to bring that wire trap ashore up into the woods. I've seen that so there's

probably lots of treasure out of these things. Those ships hit the rocks, they were shallower than 90-feet of water, they all hit the rocks there somewhere.

The seas have brought this stuff up into the woods. So are we going to create a lot of treasure hunters up into the shores, away from the waters? I'm just playing devil's advocate here, but this is the stuff that I see that may happen.

Anyway, I won't go on anymore about that, but these are just a few things that I'm confused about. I look forward to this going to the Law Amendments Committee because I believe there will be some people in there telling us that we're trying to come in line with the rest of Canada. But there are a lot of provinces in this country, such as out in the Great Lakes, that they don't have to deal with the Atlantic Ocean. It's a different place, that's for sure. Probably a lot of this stuff will be lost forever and how can you have a treasure if you don't even know what was there? How can you call a treasure - there was an old boat sunk there, how do we know there's any treasure?

There are lots of questions about it so probably in the Law Amendments Committee we may hear from some people who maybe can fill us in some more on this. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage whether the bill is going to be changed some about underwater, on the beach or on the land, whatever. With that I'll take my place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: We understand the value of safeguarding items of cultural significance for Nova Scotia and the intent of this bill is to do that. We do want to see what those exploring for treasure and what those who are promoting the cultural value of this preservation of what is found to have a say on this bill when it moves forward to the Law Amendments Committee.

Some treasure explorers have stated that they do respect the cultural significance of the finds that they have been finding and are happy to turn over to the province for the greater good of the people of the province. I am pleased to see what appears to be some special recognition for Oak Island and the people who have been trying to unlock the mystery behind that island. This is a fascinating story. I think it is one of the top 10 stories in our province that can be told in the history of our province. If anybody has ever picked up a copy of R.V. Harris' book on Oak Island, that is your source to read. Everybody in this room, it's worth a read, because again I'll state I think it's one of the top 10 stories in this province.

It's well-known but I don't think we fully appreciated the value of it here. The value of the story may, in fact, be worth more than the treasure. If you go into Mr. Harris' book, which was written, I believe, back in the 1950s - it might even have been in the 1940s, it has

been a few years now since I've read it. But if you go back to that book, you'll see that it's a very strange story.

It was first discovered by people who were passing by the island and they noticed something hanging from a tree. Upon further inspection they decided to start digging, there seemed to be some kind of a pit there. There are markers all over the island, even away from the supposed treasure site. When they did look in the shaft they started finding various things. The further they went within the shaft, they would find things like materials that resembled coconut husks. It appeared to be man-made and it appeared to be materials coming from places far away from Nova Scotia.

I even had the benefit a number of years back of seeing some chains, some metal, that was found in the shaft. That metal was sent away for investigation and the composition of the metal was deemed to be from foundries that would have used formulas to make that metal that would have been hundreds of years old.

I have had the benefit of meeting with Dan Blankenship, who is still living and who has spent years searching for this treasure. In fact, Mr. Speaker, even within the past year I happened to be taking a nice, scenic drive down the South Shore - because as we all know it is one of the nicer areas of our province to visit.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Next to the Cabot Trail.

MR. MACMASTER: My colleague, as he so aptly corrects me, next to the Cabot Trail, but it has been recognized. The Cabot Trail has been recognized, that's right, Mr. Speaker, I believe it has been recognized this year by a motorcycle publication that stated it was the finest drive in the world for a motorcycle, or at least in North America.

I guess to get back to Mr. Blankenship, I almost didn't go on his property that day because there were signs up that said, do not trespass, but it was not long after my election and I was familiar with traversing such places during the election campaign so I was brave and decided, well, what the heck, I'm going to go up there anyway, and I did so. Mr. Blankenship was very kind and I met with him and his wife. He was very kind and he brought me down to look at some of the things he has uncovered over the years. He has dedicated a good portion of his life to trying to find this treasure. He started, I think, back in the 1960's. In fact, he almost died in one of the shafts he was drilling but he was pulled to the surface.

This man has had very hands-on experience. His story and the story of Oak Island was once covered in National Geographic Magazine. The people at National Geographic commented that of all the stories they've ever covered in that very prestigious and well-known magazine, well-known around the world, that story on Oak Island was the one they had received the most inquiries about.

There's great public interest in this story and it is why I say there's an opportunity here, Mr. Speaker, for government to do something with this story and maybe be supportive of the community down there and Mr. Blankenship to some day tell this story. I think there's even great potential, possibly, to do a movie about this story. It obviously wouldn't be the government doing that, but there is a story that can be told. The nice thing about it is there is so much mystery here that it leaves it open to interpretation. Of course if something like that happened, Mr. Speaker, that would also help with the telling of the story from a tourist perspective, from a visitor perspective.

I am pleased to see that the government appears to be - and we're going to discuss this more, obviously - the government appears to be recognizing Mr. Blankenship and is trying to protect him from any changes. Certainly the legislation is not out to hurt anybody. If anything, it is out as a good thing to protect cultural significance in this province. I am glad to see there is some recognition of Mr. Blankenship's efforts to recover this treasure and the investment that he has made in it will not be lost. I am sure that in this day and age that he would be more than happy to - I wouldn't want to speak for him - but I am sure that he would be more than happy to be co-operative with government to ensure that any activity is done in a respectful manner and that it does not inadvertently destroy any cultural significance on Oak Island.

I did meet a couple of people over the years, in fact one this summer in Port Hood during Chestico Days. It was before the boat parade so I was of sound mind, I had good perspective. This gentleman - actually he works in Halifax here, I won't say any more about him, just out of respect for his privacy - he believes that the changes proposed are a good thing. He has a lot of interest and involvement in cultural significance in the province and he made some good points to me that made good sense in this matter. I also know John Wesley Chisholm, that the honourable member had referenced as well. We do look forward to speaking further on this matter during third reading and thank you for the opportunity to comment upon it today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the repeal of the Treasure Trove Act, an antiquated and dated piece of legislation and its replacement by Bill No. 81, the Oak Island Treasure Act.

Our government opted for the repeal of the current Act only after reviewing the lengthy and comprehensive Blackstone Report that came out in a 2005 study prior to our government taking office. This report focused on a number of critical areas, including how to improve protecting underwater cultural heritage, a potential need for institutional change and possible legal ramifications. This report as noted was lengthy, it was detailed, it was thorough and literally hundreds of individuals and stakeholders were consulted, many of them experts in the field of marine archaeology. The authors of the report also examined how the science related to underwater assets is conducted in other jurisdictions. The

overwhelming message emanating from the report was that Nova Scotia has to make protecting our underwater cultural heritage a major priority.

To further emphasize why our government feels repealing the current Treasure Trove Act and enacting a more comprehensive, well-balanced piece of legislation to safe-guard our marine archaeological heritage is so important, I wish to reference an article, which appeared in the March 17, 2004 edition of the Halifax ChronicleHerald in section A3 that related the discovery of a wreck of a French vessel, the *Auguste de Bordeaux*, which sank in a November storm in Aspy Bay is off Cape Breton Island. I know my colleagues from Cape Breton know where Aspy Bay. With your indulgence, I'd like to read an excerpt from what was reported in the provincial paper of the day. It said this:

A group of investors from Syracuse are helping raise a 242-year-old shipwreck off the northern coast of Nova Scotia, a find that has yielded gold and silver coins, jewelry and silverware. More importantly, says Norman Miles, a dramatic episode in North American history is being fleshed out.

Our duty is to teach the world what happened there, Miles said, and as we teach the world, this collection will grow in value, because it will become sought after by those that have an interest in this time and place in history.

The sinking of the *Auguste de Bordeaux* during a vicious November storm in 1761 was the starting point for one survivor's remarkable journey.

And this is remarkable, listen to this:

St. Luc de la Corne, a French military hero and one of the wealthiest men in Canada, was one of only seven people to survive the wreck that claimed 114 lives. He then walked hundreds of kilometres during the worst of winter back to Quebec City. In other words, he walked from Aspy Bay to Quebec City in the winter.

La Corne's story and that of Auguste Expedition LLC's efforts to recover artifacts from the shipwreck will be told in a documentary this week on National Geographic Channel. So it was made into a documentary as well.

The *Auguste de Bordeaux*, a wooden sailing ship built in 1747 and 1748 in France was carrying 121 passengers from Quebec to France. The passengers, many of whom were rich, were being deported after France lost the Seven Years War to Great Britain. Among them was la Corne - a wealthy fur trader. His two sons, his brother and two nephews perished when the ship sank. But la Corne managed to get to shore. His journal, which recounts the wreck and his trek through the wilderness afterwards, survives to tell his story. From Aspy Bay where the *Auguste* sank, divers are adding artifacts to the story.

Among other treasures, they have found silverware bearing la Corne's ornate coat of arms.

[5:30 p.m.]

After saying all that, this last line is the most important line in the story. It says simply this - and this is the last line of the story that was in *The ChronicleHerald* on March 17, 2004:

The government of Nova Scotia is entitled to some of the treasure, but most will remain the property of the expedition.

It is the last line of this article, as I have pointed out, that is significant in this debate, and that line again, just in case we missed it here, is:

The government of Nova Scotia is entitled to some of the treasure, but most will remain the property of the expedition.

What was taken from the wreck of the *Auguste de Bordeaux* was an important part of our history and an equally important part of our heritage. Such practices cannot be allowed to continue. Our government will not allow this to happen again, and that is why in July of this year our government announced its intention to do away with the antiquated *Treasure Trove Act*. That's why today we're introducing *Bill No. 81, the Oak Island Treasure Act*, to replace it.

The previous Act had allowed treasure hunters to actively look for treasure on land and underwater in our province, but more importantly, and I would add, misguidedly, it allowed these hunters to keep 90 per cent of what they found. You will recall the article I read previously from the March 17, 2004 edition of *The ChronicleHerald* and the line that stated "The government of Nova Scotia is entitled to some of the treasure, but most will remain the property of the expedition." Some of the treasure kept by the province amounted to 10 per cent. That's right, 10 per cent. To put it another way, we were squandering, literally giving away, our heritage. I think the honourable minister mentioned this earlier, and I'll mention it again. Darryl Kelman, the president of the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society, so aptly stated, "The proposed changes to the law bring the province in line with the rest of the country and the Western world."

I submit to you that this is not a bad place to be: in line with the rest of Canada and in line with the rest of the Western world. Again, referring to the *Blackstone Report*, one of the options proposed was completely doing away with the *Treasure Trove Act*. Wisely, this was the course of action taken by our government. It was also the course of action recommended by *Voluntary Planning* in a report back in 2006. This Act has definitely passed its best-before date, in my opinion. The report's writers concluded that "Nova Scotia needs to make managing its underwater cultural heritage more of a priority," and further noted that

“Doing away with the act . . . reflect(s) an approach much more consistent with UNESCO (and) . . . presents little risk of interference with the sovereign immunity claims of other countries.”

Nova Scotia has much to learn from other jurisdictions which have given significantly greater weight to their underwater assets and cultural heritage. The report recommended that a full-time provincial marine archaeologist be hired and that recreational divers should be schooled regarding marine archaeology and encouraged to search for underwater cultural heritage artifacts.

The report on which this new legislation is based went on to explain that continued unauthorized treasure hunting could be minimized and indeed eliminated by good laws, policies, operational structures, and appropriate levels of funding. Under the new bill, anyone caught removing artifacts without a heritage research permit can be sanctioned with a fine. Our government realized that simply quashing treasure hunting isn't going to, in itself, better address protecting our underwater cultural heritage. Rather, what's now needed is a coordinated and systematic approach to improve marine archaeology in the province, both in the public and the private sectors.

The good news is that this is already happening to a degree. For example, the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society held its first course in marine archaeology this past June with more than a dozen people, many of them scuba divers, participating. Other groups, like the Gorsebrook Institute at Saint Mary's University, have also taken an active interest in this area, hosting a symposium earlier this year in which they examined the socio-economic impacts of treasure hunting in the province.

Mr. Rob Rondeau, a marine archaeologist who lives in my part of the province, the beautiful South Shore, feels that the lack of involvement by academia in this important area has also been a problem. Not long ago he said that despite the fact that Nova Scotia has one of the richest marine histories in the world, no university here offers a degree in marine archeology. He also feels all Nova Scotians - and I agree with him - should be better educated about their underwater cultural heritage. I couldn't agree more. What we are talking about here is our culture, it is our heritage, it is our past and it is a rich and beautiful one.

Mr. Speaker, repealing the archaic Treasure Trove Act will help us preserve what is rightfully the birthright of all Nova Scotians. That is why our government is repealing it and introducing Bill No. 81. Unlike previous governments, our government understands that Nova Scotians do not want priceless pieces of their coastal history pilfered away and sold on the world market. Our government will not stand by and let treasure troving rest in the hands of the private sector. History has shown that the private sector's primary interest is the revenue generated by selling pieces of our history. Artifacts and materials located by the private sector may never be seen by any Nova Scotian or never be viewed by them.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. There seems to be a lot of chatter in the Chamber tonight so I was wondering if those members would take that outside right now.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West has the floor.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So our government consulted stakeholders from the salvage industry as well as private individuals, those from government, and those with a special interest in our cultural heritage. This is how we have arrived at the place where we find ourselves today.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, this Premier, this minister and this government are showing genuine leadership by bringing Nova Scotia's approach to protecting marine heritage into line with other Canadian jurisdictions and indeed, as stated earlier, those in the Western world. We have been the only province in Canada to allow treasure hunting. By implementing this change, our province will reflect the United Nations preferred approach to marine heritage preservation.

Mr. Speaker, our province is working on developing options for enhancing marine archeological protection and understanding. Our focus will be on research and recovery of treasure following archeological best practices. The Treasure Trove Act was never intended to determine how all Nova Scotians' marine heritage was managed and this government is showing the leadership necessary by acting on the recommendations from the task force and the Blackstone report. Today we are taking a giant step toward preserving the birthright of all Nova Scotians and I'm very proud to be able to speak on this bill. I thank the minister and the government for their very aggressive action in this area.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Community Services is very eager to get up to speak on this bill so I'll try not to speak too long.

First of all, I want to thank the two ministers for bringing in this bill. I think this is an important move in the preservation of the underwater cultural artifacts in Nova Scotia and, indeed, it does bring us in line with other provinces and I'm very happy to see this come forward. Indeed, this is something that, in fact, some people may be fully aware that the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage was first ratified in 2001. I had the privilege to be a student of Dr. Elizabeth Mann Borgese at the time, who is one of the leading authorities of the Law of the Sea Convention, and I worked with her on the development of this convention.

It came into force January 2, 2009, when Canada ratified it and it has been a little bit of an embarrassment that Nova Scotia was, until obviously this comes into force, the only province that had not ratified it or taken the action necessary to be a signatory to it. It's worth noting that, of course, while we can make jokes about the fact that for Saskatchewan

or Alberta, probably it didn't take much to change the rules to protect underwater artifacts, it is significant in places such as the Great Lakes where they have some of our great underwater artifacts, but also up North, we often forget about some of the underwater archeology up North, as well as on the West Coast.

I know there are a number of people who want to speak so there are just a few issues I wanted to talk about. One of the things that we've heard come out, well, you know, this is terrible, it's going to mean the artifacts sit on the bottom of the ocean. Well, we really need to examine that because at the moment many of the bits of treasure, or so-called treasure, that are collected end up in vaults in private collectors' homes. I'm not sure that's any better. In fact, the convention has a number of principles on state co-operation and so forth and the UNESCO convention on this issue has four basic principles.

One is that you preserve your underwater cultural heritage. The second one is that while it is preferred that you leave it on site and don't disturb it, there are provisions for having it in universities or for example, Saint Mary's University, which has an archeology program may wish to undertake activities. I know that there are actually private companies in Nova Scotia, such as Cultural Resource Management, that do not sell the treasure, but do get grants and support to go out and look at cultural resources.

The main feature of the UNESCO convention was that there would be no commercial exploitation of underwater cultural heritage resources. That's what makes the bill that the minister has brought forward so important. That's what this gets rid of. This doesn't mean that divers like myself - the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is also a scuba diver - that we can't go out and look at wrecks and so forth. That's not what it means at all. What it means is that those wrecks will be there.

I can tell you that, for example, having dove many times on the wreck of the S.S. Atlantic, every time you go there it seems that more of the champagne bottles are gone. It used to be a famous place to go dive and see the champagne bottles still sitting there on the bottom. They are long since gone now. Granted, our sea states are such that some of them are naturally destroyed, and I'm fully willing to admit that, but I'm also aware that many of them have been taken and sit on the shelves of homes when it would be much better for us to be able to appreciate that in the Maritime Museum or perhaps a museum in Terence Bay. There are local museums all over this province that could benefit.

We need only look at Louisbourg in Cape Breton West, where Louisbourg Harbour is actually protected federally in this manner. It goes through ups and downs but there are ups and downs related to the tourism industry, related to diving, and divers go in and actually look at the wrecks, the cannons are still there and many of those artifacts. It's extremely important. The fact is, we need to make sure our cultural resources are not irretrievably lost. Once they're lost we don't get them back.

It's worth noting also that the United Nations has created a capacity building program around this convention, which actually - once you have the laws in place that allow appropriate protection of our cultural resources, in fact, it opens you up to grants from the United Nations for cultural exploration in the underwater resources. This convention is internationally recognized as the leading guideline for activities related to heritage. I'm very pleased in that respect to see this come forward.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the fact there have been a lot of organizations and groups that have lobbied for this over the years. I know John Wesley Chisholm, who was at the minister's press conference the other day, Cultural Resource Management, Shubenacadie Canal Commission was one of the groups that had lobbied for the repeal of the Treasure Trove Act, there are many, many more and if I tried and list them all, I'd absolutely forget some. If I recall correctly, the Lighthouse Society was also, at one time, doing this because of some of the artifacts associated around Sambro Island, in particular.

The fact is, there are things that have to be done. There are elements of cultural protection underwater that we have no control over such as environmental influences. We're never going to be able to stop the kind of ocean current we have here so there are always going to be things that will cause some of these sites to degrade. But there are things we can do, including the monitoring of trawling and construction activities, legal protection such as the minister is taking today, and also in making sure this is interpreted for the public and for tourists who may come here, and supporting our local museums and cultural organizations who may wish to take advantage of the opportunities this possess.

In closing, I know my honourable member for Digby-Annapolis has raised the spectre of possible black markets. I would argue that the black market environment for many of these resources exists now, it will exist 10 years from now, it will exist 50 years from now. If we don't stop it now, we won't ever be able to stop it at all. But the next step may be for us all to work together and look at the penalties in the Special Places Act, and things like that, to make sure that the penalties are sufficient enough to be a deterrent.

Mr. Speaker, I understand there are a number of other people who would like to speak so I will take my place. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd just take a minute or two today to talk to this. I hadn't planned to, but hearing what has been quite an interesting history lesson from a couple of the members in this House and being a bit of a history buff, I do enjoy our local history. But, more importantly, I was thinking about this bill and some of the things being said and wondering how is it that we are writing a bill solely for Oak Island? That's the first thing. It was the honourable member for Digby-Annapolis who had kind of raised this treasure troving on the beaches, him being a beachcomber, his second love after politics, perhaps, and fishing.

[5:45 p.m.]

Anyway, when you get thinking about some of these things you have to wonder, how can you control it at all? It is going to be a very difficult task to monitor it and that was just one example, there are many. We see treasures, depending on what you refer to as a treasure - is that outlined in the bill? I haven't been through it all specifically, perhaps it is to some degree.

We talked about a couple of different things in the bill and I'll just read a piece of it. I won't quote the whole bill but treasure means precious stones or metals in a state other than their natural state. Well, that could be interesting to debate at any point of time, by way of trying to find somebody, as we just heard. We talk about penalties for these finds and I don't know how you're ever going to win on this one, you put a bill in and it is specific to Oak Island but this happens all over Nova Scotia.

There are many treasure trove places in this province, down in the Parrsboro area and all along the Basin and down along where I live. Down my way we hear about Blue Beach and all the finds and fossils. Are those treasures? Not as described in here - maybe or maybe not. Are fossils a treasure? Maybe in some people's minds they are a treasure, who knows? There is a variety of things that wash up, as the honourable member has talked about. How is that any different? Now they are on land, how is that any different than walking down the street and picking up a quarter? That's also a treasure, that's a find in some people's minds.

We see these people with the little machines . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Metal detectors.

MR. PORTER: Metal detectors, thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's been a long day here I guess, metal detectors, are those treasures? Perhaps they are, I think probably they are, as described by precious stones and metals.

When my children go to the beach, now my kids like to go to the beach and they like to pick up shells, are those treasures? Are those precious stones? Perhaps they are to them, those are treasures.

How are we going to control it? I don't know how. The idea of this bill may be a good one, but, again, I come back to why only Oak Island in Lunenburg County? I know that's been going on many, many years and it's a great history lesson down there and there have been many who have attempted to find some mysterious gold. I often wonder if the mystery in itself is the fact that there is no mystery, you have to wonder about that.

I've read extensively on that area because I like provincial history, Nova Scotia history, Maritime history, et cetera. There's an opportunity, I don't know how we're going to capture that in a bill and I hope there are some speakers to Law Amendments Committee

and they just don't let it pass here for the sake of being what it is. It doesn't speak in here that I saw anywhere and maybe I've missed it but it's got nothing to do with treasures that are under the water. We talked a little bit about that, whose jurisdiction is that. It seems that everything under the water is Ottawa's jurisdiction and everything on the ground is the provincial jurisdiction. How does something coming from the water legally become the jurisdiction of the province? Those questions have yet to be answered. I'm not a lawyer but I know there are lawyers in this House who could probably answer or make an attempt to answer that.

Again, I just wanted to take a couple of minutes and point out a few of the things that have been brought up historically here and some of the finds. Again, a very interesting piece about finding a piece of wood, shells, how are you going to monitor it? I guess the point I'm trying to make is, if you can't monitor this and there are no penalties, then why are we going forward with it at all?

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take a couple of minutes. I do know there are other speakers who want to get up before the day is out today and have a few words on the bill. With that I'll take my place, thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am absolutely delighted to be here to speak this evening because of the fact this is even more dear to me because Oak Island is in my constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's. An Act to Regulate the Searching for Treasure on Oak Island which, as I just said, I am proud to say is part of my constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's. I am so pleased that our government is taking action on protecting our underwater cultural heritage and, at the same time, recognizes the significant investments made in search for the treasure on Oak Island.

Certainly there are many theories about where the treasure comes from and the most popular is that it belonged to Captain Kidd. I am very fortunate that it is in my constituency and that I have been on the island many times and recently had a wonderful exploration of the island and learned even more.

What I'd like for people to know is that the investments made in the treasure search on Oak Island have not only been in financial terms and in terms of time. It has also been in terms of loss of life. This is on a personal note for me, because my family - we have been family friends of the Rossignol family, and the father and the son lost their lives on Oak Island. That fateful day that Mr. Rossignol lost his life he had gone down one of what people call the money pits, and something happened and he started to yell for his son and for anyone else who could hear him. Hearing his father's cries, his son came running to the pit and started to descend down the pit and was overcome by gases, and he also died.

Another gentleman who was hired to work that day on the top area, on the ground level, also heard those screams for help and did not know that the son had passed away from the gases trying to save his father, and he went down in the pit and lost his life. So there were three lives that were lost that one day. That would have been back in the early 1960s. I know the wife of the husband - and the mother, of course, of the son - and she's a very wonderful lady. She passed away a few years ago, but a very sad story to lose your husband and child in one day.

Unfortunately the cloud of death overcoming Oak Island did not stop there. What is very interesting is that it certainly created a fear among people then, and what is the mystery around Oak Island and the fact that there's not just the mystery - now the island had ghosts. In fact, it's very interesting to know that the legend says that once seven people die looking for the treasure, the treasure will be found. Presently, six people have lost their lives, and as the honourable member in the Opposition said, Mr. Blankenship was almost the seventh person, which is very ironic in the fact that Mr. Blankenship has dedicated his life to finding the treasure.

The mystery of the Oak Island treasure is known throughout the world. It's an international icon for the Province of Nova Scotia. We are very fortunate that we have Oak Island. The story behind Oak Island draws attention on an international tourism level, and we need to boast about that. There have been many television documentaries, radio shows, and books written focusing on Oak Island. Major discussions have taken place over the years of whether there's really a treasure there, but I think Mr. Blankenship would really push you on that issue. He and others have invested millions and millions of dollars looking for that treasure and, as I said, people have lost their lives looking for that treasure. Mr. Blankenship - who is, I believe, in his 80s now - is still dedicated to finding that treasure. That's why it's so important that this government has recognized that within creating the Oak Island Treasure Act.

Mr. Blankenship certainly has been teased over the years because if you go on the island you will discover that there are clues strategically placed on the island. You can go there today and you can see huge rocks that have been carved with something years and years - hundreds of years - ago that have a clue to where that treasure may be. You can see the formation of trees that point toward where the treasure may be.

As I said, large rocks have been found in certain positions. Also, when they have been drilling in the money pit, they have discovered certain artifacts that have been brought up by the end of the drill. In fact, not too long ago, they had discovered pieces of paper on the bit of the drill and they were able to have those analyzed back to the 1700s and 1800s. So there are little clues there in the money pits. Amazingly enough, the money pits are about 200-feet deep, there is a set of tunnels running in the money pits, there are booby traps throughout, and that's what's so interesting. How did they do that that many years ago? It's like the pyramids. That's what goes through your mind, how were they able to do that? But it is there.

In closing, it's interesting to know that originally the island was discovered by three young teenagers. Even Franklin Roosevelt had an interest in trying to find the treasure. He had a company called the Old Gold Salvage Group and he tried to do some searching in 1909. Even Errol Flynn had a desire to find the treasure until he found out that a company belonging to actor John Wayne had the searching rights, so there are a lot of stories around this. Mr. Blankenship's desire to find the treasure has been a great one, but the mystery continues. I do know one thing, that the Treasure Trove Act has been found, through the initiative of this government, protecting the treasures of the past and enabling Mr. Blankenship to continue his dream to discover the Oak Island treasure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now adjourn debate on Bill No. 81.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I would like to now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Following the daily routine, if time permits, we will call Government Motions, Address in Reply and Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 81, 82 and 83.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn to meet tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Kings West:

“Therefore be it resolved that the No Farms, No Food organization be supported in a timely manner by implementing recommendations from the Agricultural Land Review Committee's recent report.”

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

NAT. RES.: NO FARMS, NO FOOD ORGANIZATION - SUPPORT

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased tonight to rise in my place and speak on this very important issue facing Nova Scotia, facing perhaps my area, the Annapolis Valley, to a much greater extent than other parts of the province.

This organization, No Farms, No Food, has been in existence now for a number of years as they saw some erosion of the farmland in the Annapolis Valley. For that reason, they became concerned, they took on first, of course, Kings County council, to push back against the sell-off of fairly significant areas of farmland. It happens now that we have done what I think is a wonderful study, commissioned by the Minister of Agriculture, to take a look at the future of preserving agricultural land in Nova Scotia and, to that effect, he set in motion a committee made up of people who, in their own right, had a great understanding of the land base and the agricultural land base of Nova Scotia and I have brought forth a very detailed, comprehensive report. It's my only copy, I'm not going to submit it but I do want to reference it during my time.

[6:00 p.m.]

It so happens that the main and central concept that comes out of this document with recommendations to the minister is that class two and class three soils and class four that is cleared land remain to be preserved for agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Each of us, as we come along as members of this House, as members of society, we can so often be very short-sighted in the way we look at good public policy. I think this is an area where we need to be bold, we need to be very much far-sighted in our thinking around preserving agricultural land.

Lots of times now we look at a lot of agricultural land in Nova Scotia that is not in use. I think it's because land not in use, therefore putting it over to development, seems to be the steps that would be taken for this land. But the class two, three, and four soils, it's eons of time to create them and once they're taken out of farmland we're not likely to get them back. We're not going to get them back for sure when development takes place.

Often, however, it's really the pressure on good farmland close to communities that comes under the greatest pressure to go towards development. Kings County has been not just a leader in Nova Scotia, they've been leaders in the country since they put in place a land use policy back in the 1970s. The goal and the mandate of that plan was to preserve the

best agricultural land in Nova Scotia but also in the top three agricultural land bases that we have in the country.

For the most part, the plan has accomplished its goal to a good extent. Not completely. We know that some flexibility is required, in fact, the plan itself allows for, in small parcels of land, in an orderly manner, that could be added to the growth centres. The concept was to direct population growth into those centres and therefore not chop up the land into building lots for residential use. In effect, this has worked very well.

At the present time, we have tremendous amounts of land in the Annapolis Valley that could go into housing. There are currently about 14,000, 15,000 building lots that are available. Even in the Town of Wolfville, the Town of Wolfville has had a lot of pressure on it. It's a university town. It's a town with quite a large number of amenities. There has been a lot of building going on but if we take a look at the maps of Wolfville and talk to the mayor and councillors there, they have sufficient building lots for the next 25 to 40 years.

While adding some of our farmland to growth centres is possible, there really isn't a great need to do it at this time. It is this farmland and generally large tracts which are close to communities and under great pressure. In many ways, they're becoming areas that are very vibrant agriculturally because growing market crops for the farm market, which has really boomed in recent years, and being close to communities, can be a great agri-business for those farmers. They can definitely sell their land to other farmers. There isn't a question around that, but of course their future is in many cases without a pension plan, and if there isn't succession in the family to pass on the farmland - and selling the land definitely is one of the ways in which they look at their own property, their farmland.

This is why, in this report as well, the preservation of agricultural land in Nova Scotia, the concept of developing an agricultural land trust - it does put some onus on all Nova Scotians to be partners in preserving the land. I now know people in the Annapolis Valley who are prepared to make endowments and donations, the same as people do to the Nature Trust, so that these very valuable class two and three soils will be maintained for future generations. I think we, as Nova Scotians, do have an obligation to do that.

One of the things which I don't have a lot of time to go into today, which we all know, is that if you have a healthy agricultural sector, when we have hundreds of thousands of acres under production, as we did, let's say, at the turn of the century - when a farm census was taken in 1901, we had hundreds of thousands of acres that were under cultivation. So part of our problem is getting back to a stronger agricultural sector in this province. I think the local food concept is catching on. There is more desire to grow our own food, and as time passes that need is going to be accelerated. We know there are a lot of forces and factors that are sort of lining up to make us once again become producers of safe, fresh, and grown in our local area.

So it is my hope that we will move this preservation of agricultural land in Nova Scotia along quickly so that counties like Kings County don't have to go through constant demand to place agricultural land into development. We debated the treasure trove Act just a few moments ago in this House and it makes me think, what greater treasure than the soil on which we grow our food? I think all of us in Nova Scotia need to take a strong forward way to make sure that the next generation does have that land available to them and that we don't become like one of the great food-producing areas of Canada, the Niagara Peninsula, which has literally lost its agricultural land base to urban sprawl. With that, I take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Liberal caucus for the topic for today's debate. I think it's not really a difficult one to support:

"Therefore be it resolved that the No Farms, No Food organization be supported in a timely manner by implementing recommendations from the Agricultural Land Review Committee's recent report."

I have to say that this report was a joint project on behalf of my department and the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The Honourable Ramona Jennex was my partner in this. The committee members . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. You must not mention the member's name in the House of Assembly. I would ask that you mention the minister's title or the member's seat. Thank you.

MR. MACDONELL: Sorry about that, Mr. Speaker. Well, I guess maybe I won't go to the names of the members on the committee. Anyway, I want to say how much we appreciate the efforts of the members on the committee. The member for Kings West stated what qualified individuals they were and they were.

I guess I'm going to set the context for my comments and I can try - I don't know if I'll get this done before we leave - oh yes, I probably can, there will be another member speak. Anyway, I'll read a little bit from this report and I'll try to get a photocopy so I can table it. Approximately 13 per cent of land most suitable for agricultural production, Class 2, 3 and 4 soil, are used for agriculture in Nova Scotia. Slightly less than one per cent of this land is also used for wild blueberry production. Urban development takes up 5.4 per cent of the 2, 3 and 4 and the remaining 81 per cent is in other uses, natural forests or other natural state cultivated forest, et cetera.

I really inform the House of that only to give some notion of exactly what the pressure presently is on what we would deem to be the best soils in the province, Class 2 being the best soil and probably in the lowest amount. Anyway, to let people know that urban development really across the province is only taking about 5.5 per cent of that soil.

There's a significant amount of No. 2 and No. 3 soils, Mr. Speaker, that Nova Scotians own in our Crown lands.

In terms of the resolution in a timely manner by implementing recommendations, we've been working at a couple of things for sure that are recommended in the report. One of those is around the quality of soils in the province, trying to improve the quality of soils. We made a commitment in the 2009 election around a Soil Amendment Program so I hope to be able to say something about that really soon.

The other one was around dykes. Every year we try to enhance our system of dykes. I have to say it's a challenge and with all the issues around global warming, possible rising sea levels and so on, this is one that the province is definitely aware of. I want to say for members, and I think probably the member for Hants West and the member for Kings West would be aware, I think because of their constituencies, of the value of the soils on the dyke lands. They are some of the best soils in the province, Mr. Speaker, so we really do want to try, although the dykes actually are protecting a lot of urban or commercial development in some areas. But still we have large areas that we protect farmland, and some of that I think, probably a fair bit of it, growing forages or grains. I'm not sure about the amount that would be in horticultural crops.

The issue that I think tends to get people emotionally wound up on protection for farmland is probably the idea that maybe we're losing it at an extreme rate. We're not but that's no reason to not be concerned. We should be putting some planning, even though we have the review committee report, we've turned this over to an interdepartmental committee and we're really hoping that some things will come out that we can act on fairly soon, after they make some recommendations.

[6:15 p.m.]

Because I'm the Minister of Natural Resources I'm glad that people from that department are working on this as well because they are the people who bought land for the Crown last year and we're working on the Community Lands Trust initiative, just trying to determine what that legislation might look like. We've done the community consultation and hope that there may be some avenues where the public could become strongly involved in the preservation of farmland in their communities.

I'll restate something that the member for Kings West had said. I might say it differently but I think my meaning is the same. The easiest way to preserve farmland is to make agriculture profitable and this is a real issue for the industry. I am well aware of it as minister and actually it was the reason, when I spoke to the Premier after we formed government, letting him know that if he wanted me in Cabinet, I wanted to be the Minister of Agriculture. I asked for the job in the hopes that I could be influential in changing policy that might help the industry along. There are sectors of the industry that are fine, this doesn't

have to be all doom and gloom, but there are those that certainly require some support, some help, some other policy direction and I'm really glad for an opportunity to be there.

I don't think Nova Scotians recognize that in terms of milk, chicken and eggs, we're self-sufficient. We produce all that we consume. And of course people would know, we produce all of the apples that we consume. We're exporters and anything that we're exporters in, we're not consuming at all. Blueberries would be another example. I have asked my department, if they could, to take a look, if it's possible, to find out exactly what the levels of production are for things that Nova Scotians consume. We don't want to be looking at, you know, pineapples but certainly for the things that we have been able to grow traditionally in Nova Scotia, I would like to get a much clearer picture of that and then we can kind of address some of the issues around the security side that might take some of the sting out of this concern.

I think the issue of food security is one that really should be a national issue, not a provincial issue. I'm thinking we probably grow wheat, but not in any significant amount and I'm thinking probably more for livestock than for people - I could be wrong on that - but certainly in this country we can grow wheat. We grow more than Canadians consume and so, you know, we should be thinking on an international level, what is it that we produce in the country to feed the people in the country and how Nova Scotia could be a part of that. But certainly when you think that Prince Edward Island, when you think about the agriculture, the farm gates receipts there are pretty close to the farm gate receipts in Nova Scotia and P.E.I. will fit into my school board district twice.

So there's a lot that we can do to try to advance agriculture and to take care of the concerns of Nova Scotians as far as good jobs, healthy economy, healthy people and food security. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: It's a pleasure to be here this evening to take a few minutes to speak to what is quite a significant issue and has been for some time in this province. You know, we see the title here and we sort of missed it a bit, I think, tonight: No Farms, No Food. Well, let's get right down to the meat and potatoes of it, pardon the pun, I guess, sort of.

You know, there's a lot we seem to be missing here for some reason and the minister's right. He talked about the industry and he touched very quickly because of the time, I realize, on a number of areas. We do have successful agriculture in the province of Nova Scotia. The apple growers do very well. I have Masons in my own back yard and I know throughout the Valley we have a wonderful apple industry. We talked about the chicken the eggs, we do very, very well but we have missed on a few areas of great importance. We have seen the hog industry fade away which was a thriving industry in this province not so long ago.

Hundreds of years ago people came here and they farmed this land - we talked a little about the dyke land a few minutes ago - and where did they start? If you think back to where the farming, when people came here in the late 1700s, there are records - I think they go back to around the late 1780s or so - that would show where that agriculture was. I think there were recordings of it in this province where they tried to attempt, and to some degree success that they gained over the years for a variety of reasons, but it would show that a lot of farming was done along those dyke lands which are gone today for the most part. They've been plowed over.

I know in my own area there's a lot of area that would have been dyked at one time along the Avon River. It would all have to be re-dyked if you wanted to get that land mass back. The report does detail that farmland is not going away in great numbers. The percentages are low. The percentages are quite low, actually, to what I think people maybe realized in the beginning. I think there was this worry that the percentage of numbers was quite high, but the problem is this: we have farmland, but it has not been farmed for a very long time, and the science and the soils - I'm no scientist, but I know the minister went to school and studied this stuff. He would probably be a lot more up to speed on the scientific details of farming the land and what that does to the soil when it's not farmed, and all of the treatments and the manures, I suppose, and all of these things that go into it, the replowings over the years and growing - but we've got the land. There's no question about that.

We need the people, but more importantly, we need the incentives. People do want to farm. I've talked to the people in the agricultural community. I attend meetings and I meet with folks individually - a variety, not just chicken farmers and not just apple growers, but beef farmers who are concerned about their industry, dairy farmers who are concerned about their industry with all that's going on and where things are, while they wait for rulings. I know the minister is very familiar with that, but we've got the farmland in this province. We've got some wonderful farmland throughout the Valley and other areas of Nova Scotia.

I know that myself and the member for Kings West obviously are partisan toward the Valley, but we know how rich that Valley land once was and still is. There's a lot of it there. I talked to a fellow who's gone now, Mr. Smith from down Mount Denson way, who owned great acres of property there but just watched it go away and didn't farm it. He was an older man and he had no one to take it. Why wouldn't they take it? There was no profit in it. You spoke, minister, a few minutes ago about why isn't the land being farmed? You have to have a profit, you've got to make a dollar at it, and you've got to be successful. Otherwise, you starve yourself. We all know that, but No farms, No food is real and it's very real in this province right now.

We soon have to find a way to bring people here. Now, I'm hearing and I heard on CBC this morning, I guess there was a little bit in the paper about it, about immigration. We saw immigrants come to this province way back when, in the earlier 1900s - I think around 1925, maybe, and forward - through Pier 21. If you're into history at all, you would have read and studied, and you guys who are school teachers are probably well aware of this, both

of you and others. A number of immigrants came to this country through Pier 21 and were dispersed throughout Nova Scotia, throughout Prince Edward Island, throughout New Brunswick, and where did they go? Farming, a lot of them, on farms or began farms and given land and were quite successful.

That went on for generations, a lot of generations, but something happened. I've said this before in many meetings that I've attended: the agricultural industry took a turn somewhere. It was profitable, but at some point the success started to wean away. Was it because of government interference? Was it because of commodities in some way? As we see in the hog industry, some things you can't control. You try to have a farm at a certain size that makes sense, that's profitable, but today it seems you're either big or you have nothing. If you look at the dairy industry, you'll see where if you're not big and you don't have a lot of herd, you're probably losing out and you can't afford to stay afloat. Who wants to take that over? Certainly the sons and grandsons and granddaughters are not interested. Why would they be?

Again, perhaps it's just the way things are turning in this century. In these times we see our children who are interested in being lawyers and they want to come work in a place like this, and doctors that we need desperately, and nurses. That's all good, but if you look back even over the last few years - and I know from family who've been in the farming industry. Now, my wife's side, her grandfather was a farmer but he also worked a full-time job at Fundy Gypsum. Why? Even in his time, why did he have to have another full-time job? Because he couldn't succeed at farming.

So this is not something that has just happened overnight. We've watched it happen. Some would say we've done very little. If you talk to the farming community, we've done very little to support them. Promises are made and it's too bad that politics are involved, is sort of my opinion when it comes to some industries in this province, farming being one of them. It's too bad that politics are involved because politics seem to make it worse at times. We have an expectation, and I've brought this up to the minister in this House, and in his time in Opposition I know that he has brought it to the floor of this House, how promises are made about how we're going to do wonderful things for the agriculture industry.

What have we really done for the agriculture industry? Well, yes, we've thrown some money at this and we've watched it go away, with no success. We've thrown money at that and for what? In the short term - and I know you've said this minister, the short term is no good. A long-term plan is what is required if we are going to be involved.

We see Quebec, Quebec made a huge investment in the agriculture industry. I forget what the figure was but it did seem to be beneficial in the majority of areas, I believe. I'm not sure what all the details of that are, but I know they had a big investment because it meant something. The government said, we're serious about farming in the Province of Quebec, so they put an investment into that because it meant something to them.

Does it mean something to the Government of Nova Scotia? I think that it does. It's always the same old question, though, it's always about the dollars and cents. Isn't that the unfortunate thing? Well, that's too bad. In my opinion, we're saying we're going to do this or we're going to do that, we're either going to make the investment or we're not going to make the investment.

That is what it really comes down to, if you talk to the farmers who are out there. Mr. Minister, I know you've talked to them, for 11 or 12 years or more you've been talking to the farmers, you know what it's like out there. You were a hobby farmer, I guess I'll call it, as well as a schoolteacher. Perhaps you would have been a full-time farmer had you been able to make a go at that.

Your industry, the sheep, they are even struggling today, as we hear in the agricultural news. What has to happen is - it's great to do all these studies, it's wonderful that we now know, after great debate and great heartache for people like the Town of Wolfville and families in the Valley and farm families in the Valley, and just general population in the Valley, that this report is out, that the study has been done. It points out some good facts that, in fact, our land is not going away. So with our land not going away - I think I'll stick to this point - we need to create an incentive to bring people here, if we do not have our own people, our own sons, daughters, grandsons, who want to invest and carry on with the family farm.

We know that the land exists, yes, it's going to take some work, we know that, too. You spoke about it, and I think the member for Kings West spoke about it as well here a few minutes ago, how that soil now has to be revitalized. That probably means money. In all honesty it means work and it means money. Is the Government of Nova Scotia today interested in investing in the farming industry, regardless of what it is? We have had success, we know how to be successful in this province. We have the people with the knowledge and the ability to be successful in this province, in certain areas of farming, but I believe that knowledge can be transferred over to a variety of areas of farming. We've got people here who know how to farm beef, they know how to grow this and they know how to grow that. They know how to make a dollar at it, but they need some help to get there.

We talked about bringing the immigrants in and I started down this road. This morning on CBC there was a great piece about that and I'm for that, in all honesty. I think that's great, if that's what it takes to get farms alive and well in Nova Scotia, I think that's great and we've seen that through immigrants before, as I've said.

What are those incentives? The small amount of money I know was tossed around with that and I say small, it's not really small, it's a couple of hundred thousand or so dollars, \$250,000 maybe. I don't know how far that goes. Is that a farm? Is that two farms? Is that 20 people? It will be interesting to see if there's any uptake on that. I know that I'll be watching it closely because it worked in the past, quite successfully, and the incentives were there years ago.

If the government is serious about what we're going to do in this province with the agriculture sector, we have to soon see that. Mr. Speaker, I know that we're going to wrap up here in just one second. I want to point out that we keep hearing about the strategy, the 10-year strategy. We're almost two years into the 10-year strategy promise now, so is it going to be an eight-year strategy or is it still going to be a 10-year strategy?

I'll tell you this, and the Premier of the day now has made this statement - just before I close - a year and a half or so ago, when the Honourable Rodney MacDonald made a statement about looking forward in the future, the statement was made by Premier Dexter, he said you won't even be around when that comes through. I'm worried now - I'm not really worried, I guess, when it comes right down to it - is this government going to be around? Are you going to be around, minister, to see this through? If we keep going, none of us will probably be around and this will all be for naught.

I encourage you, I implore you to get the strategy out [Interruption] around in this House is what I'm referring to, nothing worse, sir, but around in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize you want me to wrap up but I would just say, keep the people, the agriculture society, most important in your mind. I know you are, make the investment that counts. We've got the land, the study says we've got the land to do it. Let's get on with it, let's support the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I would like to thank all the honourable members for an excellent debate this evening. We will now rise, as determined earlier, to sit tomorrow morning between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Thank you.

[The House rose at 6:30 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1935**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on November 3, 1950, in Saint John, New Brunswick, Daniel and Nathalie Harlow were united as husband and wife; and

Whereas this couple, who have made a great team, are recognized as pillars in their hometown of Bridgetown; and

Whereas 60 years of marriage is not easily achieved without a great deal of love, respect and compromise;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Danny and Nathalie on this special occasion and wish them continued happiness in the years ahead.

RESOLUTION NO. 1936

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 throughout 2010 All Saints Anglican Church has engaged in a number of events to celebrate 50 years of being established in Kingston, coinciding with the 300th Anniversary of St. Luke's Church in the Parish of Annapolis where the first services in Canada took place; and

Whereas this year of celebration has featured numerous events at All Saints, the summer event that embraced the later community will long be remembered; and

Whereas it was the sacrifices and strong enduring faith of past and present parishioners that enabled this church community to maintain a strong presence in the Kingston area;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate All Saints Church on their successful celebration of their 50th Anniversary and wish them continued success as they serve the community.