



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker

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Second Session

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2010

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2010

Sixty-first General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Charlie Parker

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll start today's proceedings. It's a very wet morning out there, so we'll get started here as soon as we can. We'll start with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would first like to make some introductions in the east gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. MORE: Today we have several representatives from student organizations. As I call your name, perhaps I could ask you to stand. From the Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia we have Elise Graham, Gabe Hoogers, Rebecca Rose, and Kaley Kennedy. Representing the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations, Chris Saulnier, and from the Student Assistance Division of the Department of Education we have Carol Lowthers, Mary Ann Laba, and Matt Miller. I ask my colleagues to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the fact is Nova Scotia's Student Assistance Program is among the weakest in the country and some of our graduates have among the highest debt level in the country. Today we are acting on our Premier's commitment to change this. We are acting so our young people and some older ones can afford the education they need to prepare themselves for good jobs that grow the economy.

Government was recently presented with a report on the university system in Nova Scotia by Dr. Tim O'Neill. Dr. O'Neill points out that a post-secondary education is an excellent investment. University graduates earn \$750,000 more than high school graduates over a lifetime. He also points out that students with the most limited resources available to them need more help. We agree and we are committed to addressing this challenge as part of our commitment to make life better and more affordable for families. At the same time, the total government support for universities exceeded \$440 million in 2010-11.

Taxpayers expect us to make the very best use of our post-secondary investments, so student debt load goes down while maintaining our commitment to live within our means. We want to hear from students, parents and all Nova Scotians to support the right decisions in meeting this objective. The department is holding six public meetings and an on-line video conference in French - and for those unable to attend a meeting, submissions can also be made through a Web site.

The consultation process will provide an opportunity to receive valuable feedback on how to improve student assistance. It will help government to engage stakeholders and identify options on types of assistance, grants and loans, levels of assistance, debt caps and other operational improvements. It is now up to us - universities, government, students and others - to work together to make the right decisions to ensure our universities remain affordable to students and strong, competitive institutions into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the minister believes that student financial assistance is important, but her announcement today is of little value to individuals who are not able to access post-secondary education, those struggling to make it by while

trying to complete their education and those who are finished and trying to pay off their student loans.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in a camera store buying a small camera for my son and got chatting with the clerk. The clerk said he had seven years of post-secondary education. He had yet to complete his degree; he had \$60,000 in debt. He was working in a camera store. His student loan payment was as much as his rent every month - and his story is typical of what has been going on here in Nova Scotia.

In 2007, students pressured the government to do a financial aid review. There were student consultations across the province and now, today, the minister is proposing to do the same consultations all over again. Don't get me wrong - I'm glad we're going to find out what people think, but I think we already know what the answers are. Why aren't we going back over that report? I went on the Web site and I can't find that report on the Web site, so I'd like the minister to table a copy of those 2007 consultations. We should be going through it and make sure that students' concerns from back to three years ago have actually been addressed.

It appears that this government is making this announcement today to try to make it look like they're taking action now on student assistance, before they raise tuitions. That's a recommendation that's contained in the deeply-flawed O'Neill report. We've seen it time and time again from this government - they commission a report so they can break their promises, and I hope the government realizes that parents and students will not fall for these tricks. Thank you.

[9:15 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for providing a copy of the statement prior to this morning, and I would like to acknowledge the students who are in the gallery. I had an opportunity to meet with some of those students when I was the minister and also since I've become the Education Critic, and I do congratulate the minister on providing opportunities to listen to what those students have to say. These are the young people, these are the bright minds in our communities, and these are the people who we need to listen to when we're looking at changes that may affect them directly, so I congratulate you, Madam Minister, and I thank the students for being here and being willing to participate in the process.

We know the information is clear, we've known this and the member opposite referenced a study in 2007. During the time 2007 to 2009, one of the things that our government did was to listen to students. We tried to implement - and we did, I believe,

implement - some initiatives that were of benefit to students and they acknowledged that. It's because we listened to what they had to say.

One of those things that we did was the tuition reduction initiative, which was to bring our tuition to the national average. We were well above the national average and it took considerable resources from our government to be directed towards that initiative. The initiative was to be completed by 2010 with the tuition to the national average by that time. I have spoken to the minister and I encourage her to ask her Cabinet to support a continuation of a tuition reduction initiative that will allow tuition in Nova Scotia to stay at the national average.

We recognize also that there are many costs related to study and we also listen to students who said, we need financial assistance up front. A tax credit at the end of a four-year program is meaningless if you haven't had enough money to get to university to start with. As a result of listening to students, there were up-front bursaries that were initiated and students appreciated that. Their comment - it's great, it's not enough. I agree with them. I'm hoping the minister, again, will continue to listen to that message.

The other initiative, I guess, that we believe helped students cope with the debt of post-secondary education was the memorandum of understanding. That MOU froze tuition so students could predict what their tuition was going to be over the course of the next three years. In order for students to do the planning for their education, they need to have some reassurance that tuition will not skyrocket at any time. The memorandum of understanding, which froze tuition, allowed them to do some of that preplanning.

These are a few of the initiatives. I'm sure that the minister will hear messages from students when they go through the consultation process and I'm not surprised that the messages will be much different. I'm just encouraging the minister to listen and respond.

A couple of comments that I would like to make about the O'Neill report. Again, I've spoken to the minister about these and two of them in particular that could directly impact negatively on students and their university costs. One is to lift the cap on tuition and allow universities to do what they will with tuition. My concern is what they will do is put the debt on the backs of students, which I believe is totally unfair and the MOU protected students from that. I'm hoping that the minister will consider that when she's reviewing the O'Neill report.

The second recommendation in the O'Neill report has to do with lifting the cap on student loans. Again, I have to question the rationale behind that because if students are allowed to borrow unlimited numbers of dollars, they will be left with a huge debt at the end of their post-secondary, the member has mentioned that. I know that 19 per cent of students who have a student loan default on that. Let's not create a larger student loan and force students to study elsewhere. I would encourage the minister to listen to the students and I

would encourage the students from their associations to speak up so the minister clearly understands what they need. Thank you very much.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1937

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

Whereas chronic pain affects 15 to 20 per cent, or nearly 6 million Canadians daily; and

Whereas those affected by chronic pain often miss work, spend more time in hospital and frequently visit their doctors in search of ways to alleviate their symptoms; and

Whereas Canadians of all ages who suffer from chronic pain feel vulnerable, devastated and demoralized due to the many misconceptions and misunderstanding of their chronic condition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize National Pain Awareness Week and commend the work of organizations such as the Canadian Pain Coalition to raise awareness of this chronic condition.

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. 1938

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

Whereas Halifax Stanfield International Airport celebrated 50 great years of service to Atlantic Canada in September; and

Whereas the airport has recently received a number of major awards including just being named the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's Corporate Partner of the Year; and

Whereas Halifax Stanfield International Airport was deemed the world's best airport for overall passenger satisfaction in its class for the seventh straight year by Airports Council International;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Halifax International Airport on their excellent service on behalf of Nova Scotia and continued success into the future.

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. 1939

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

Whereas the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has served communities across Nova Scotia for more than a century; and

Whereas Billy Joe MacLean has long served the people of Port Hawkesbury as their mayor; and

Whereas Billy Joe MacLean was confirmed as the new president of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities on Thursday, October 28th at their conference in Sydney;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wish Billy Joe MacLean every success as the new president of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities.

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.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, may I please make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. YOUNGER: In our west gallery, I'd like to draw your attention to a number of people. Please stand when I read your name and hopefully I won't forget anybody: Douglas Smith of the Nova Scotia Road Safety Youth Committee; Fred Phillips, the tour director for the Nova Scotia Ramblers; Bob White, vice-president of Bicycle Nova Scotia and founder of the Nova Scotia Ramblers; Andrew Dacanay and Peter Williams of Nova Scotia Bikeways Coalition; Scott MacPhee of Clean Nova Scotia; Sandra Bennett of the Nova Scotia Ramblers; Mike Smith of Bikes Nova Scotia; Marie-Claude Grégoire of ADAPT; and Gordon Tate of the Municipality of Chester.

Mr. Speaker, as you are probably aware we rode from various points, including from Dartmouth. I rode with them today on our bikes to introduce this bill, we wish it was a bit sunnier. I would also like to thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for signalling yesterday afternoon that he also would support the legislation I'm about to introduce.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 84 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Mr. Andrew Younger)

Bill No. 85 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 31 of the Acts of 2004. The Police Act. (Hon. Ross Landry)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1940

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

Whereas Allen and Violet Large of Truro were the fortunate winners of the lottery in July, a win of \$11.25 million, but have always played the lottery for fun and not for financial benefit; and

Whereas Allen and Violet have shown their appreciation for the community that supported them during Violet's battle with cancer by selflessly donating their lotto winnings to various charitable organizations; and

Whereas it was the Larges' appreciation and recognition of the wonderful work performed by these charitable organizations that led them to donate over \$11 million;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly agree with what people around the world are saying about Allen and Violet Large, and recognize that they represent some of the finest attributes of the human spirit in terms of charity and goodwill within their 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 Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 1941

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

Whereas Allen and Violet Large, a hard-working couple, retired in Truro after having spent 30 years working in Ontario; and

Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Large, a quiet couple who have strong values about the importance of family, friends and community, won \$11.2 million in July of this year; and

Whereas Allen and Violet Large, believing they already had everything they needed from saving carefully for their retirement, and recognizing the financial difficulties of others, gave away 90 per cent of their winnings to family and community organizations such as churches, fire departments, and the hospital;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature acknowledge the selfless expressions of generosity demonstrated by Allen and Violet Large, and thank them for being such positive role models in our 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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1942

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

Whereas Remembrance Day will be celebrated throughout our country on November 11th; and

Whereas members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 150 in Arichat will hold a number of events in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

Whereas following a supper for their members on Friday night, a pre-Remembrance Day ceremony will be held at St. Anne's Centre while on Remembrance Day a service will be held at St. Hyacinth's Parish Church followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at Branch 150 Legion, concluding with a lunch and entertainment;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Branch 150 President Paul Samson, the executive, veterans and the entire membership for their continued efforts to celebrate Remembrance Day so that we may never forget the sacrifices made by so many to ensure our freedom.

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

[9:30 a.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 Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1943

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

Whereas there are close to 2,400 members and 100 4-H Clubs in Nova Scotia dedicated to the development of young people to help them become responsible members of society by building leadership and entrepreneurial skills; and

Whereas every year during the county's 4-H annual Fall banquet, recognition is given to rural leaders who pledge and uphold the 4-H motto "Learn to do by doing," and who have reached a five-year milestone in leader tenure from the 4-H Council; and

Whereas four dedicated leaders from Victoria County are being honoured for their commitment to the 4-H program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate and give thanks to our rural 4-H leaders: Nelson Edge, 15 years, from Arm of Gold 4-H Club; Joseph Pierrard, 5 years; Angus Nicholson, 15 years; and Nelson Peterson, 20 years, from Baddeck Valley 4-H Club.

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. 1944

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

Whereas all Nova Scotians will achieve better health and a sense of achievement through active participation in recreational sports; and

Whereas the Liverpool Bantam Privateers baseball team members Mitchell Alexander, Brad Murray, Tyler Dauphinee, Lucas Whynot, Ty Whalen, John MacEachern, Sam Harding, Thomas Harvey, Lucas Harvey, Michael Crabbe, Matthew Oickle, Marshall Young, Candace Weagle, Ryan Foster, head coach Barry Whalen, and assistant coaches Kevin Huskins and Robert Oickle had the sense of achievement as they captured the Provincial "R" Division title for baseball this summer; and

Whereas it has taken seven long years for the team to win gold for their hometown, with the support of parents and fans;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the Liverpool Bantam Privateers baseball team members, Mitchell Alexander, Brad Murray, Tyler Dauphinee, Lucas Whynot, Ty Whalen, John MacEachern, Sam Harding, Thomas Harvey, Lucas Harvey, Michael Crabbe, Matthew Oickle, Marshall Young, Candace Weagle, Ryan Foster, head coach Barry Whalen, and assistant coaches Kevin Huskins and Robert Oickle for having captured the Provincial "R" Division baseball title this summer.

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. 1945

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

Whereas Remembrance Day will be celebrated throughout our country on November 11th; and

Whereas members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 110 in L'Ardoise will hold a number of events in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

Whereas following a supper for their members on Saturday night, Remembrance Day events will include a service at Holy Guardian Angel Church, and a ceremony at the community centre, followed by a lunch at the Legion;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Branch No. 110 President Theresa Clements, the executive, veterans, and the entire membership for their continued efforts to celebrate Remembrance Day so that we may never forget the sacrifices made by so many to ensure our freedom.

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. 1946

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 in 1960, 50 veterans of the Second World War met at Saint Michael's Church in Wedgeport to begin a plan to create a Royal Canadian Legion in their village; and

Whereas 50 years later, at a banquet on June 19, 2010, Charles Campbell, president of Branch No. 155 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Wedgeport presented medals marking 50 years of service to the last three surviving members of the original group; and

Whereas Gerald Pothier, Willard LeBlanc and Alcide LeBlanc all served in World War II, both overseas and on the home front;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Branch No. 155 of the Royal Canadian Legion on its long and prosperous history, and thank Gerald Pothier, Willard LeBlanc and Alcide LeBlanc for their dedicated service to their country and to their 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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1947

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

Whereas 30 years ago this year Terry Fox set out across Canada on his Marathon of Hope, and since then Canadians and people around the world have commemorated his heroism by participating in the annual Terry Fox Run; and

Whereas Bedford resident Jeannine Theriault has heeded Fox's call "to keep going without me" by participating in the Terry Fox Run each and every year since its inception; and

Whereas the devotion of people like Jeannine has made the Terry Fox Run a success and helped it raise over \$400 million in support of research to find a cure for all forms of cancer.

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize Jeannine as an inspiration in her own right, commend her commitment to those affected by cancer, and congratulate her for keeping Terry Fox's dream alive.

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. 1948

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

Whereas the Shean Co-op in Inverness has received the Environmental Excellence in a Small Business Operation Award at the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business Week dinner; and

Whereas the Shean Co-op management team achieved this award by replacing their refrigeration system and by installing LED lighting which will drastically reduce their carbon emissions; and

Whereas the Shean Co-op is a leader, providing an example to other small business, by reducing its environmental footprint and improving the competitiveness of its cost structure;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Shean Co-op for its commitment to corporate and environmental responsibility and for its initiative and awareness of renewable energy technology.

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. 1949

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Halifax-Clayton Park, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas on Monday, November 1, 2010, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia launched their Heart and Stroke BrightRed Campaign; and

Whereas the Heart and Stroke BrightRed is the first major campaign launched by the foundation with a goal of raising \$1.8 million; and

Whereas this campaign will help build research capacity in our province by funding the new Graduate Research Awards Program and create safer communities throughout Nova Scotia by funding the replacement of automatic external defibrillators and provision of associated training through a program known as Restart a Heart, Restart a Life;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Heart and Stroke Foundation for their initiative in making our province healthier and safer and extend our appreciation and best wishes to the Heart and Stroke BrightRed Leadership Council for a successful campaign.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria - The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1950

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

Whereas this year, the ladies of the Middle River Alderwood Auxiliary were once again rocking to raise money for the Alderwood Rest Home in their recent annual Rock-a-Thon; and

Whereas the mini concert as part of the fundraising effort brought together local talent for music, song and storytelling; and

Where proceeds from the events are used to help Alderwood Rest Home and its residents;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislative Assembly congratulate the Middle River Alderwood Auxiliary on another successful event and thank them for all their 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 Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1951

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

Whereas Jim Smith of Dartmouth was first elected to Halifax Regional Council in October 2000, representing District 9, the constituency of Albro Lake-Harbourview; and

Whereas Councillor Smith was re-elected in 2004 and 2008, to Halifax Regional Council; and

Whereas Councillor Smith was elected deputy mayor for Halifax Regional Council on November 2, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in congratulating Councillor Jim Smith on his election as deputy mayor of Halifax Regional Council, and wish him every success in his new role.

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. 1952

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 volunteer fire brigades have been an integral part of rural communities for decades; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their community have the best fire protection possible; and

Whereas three generations of the Congdon family - Kenneth, his son Douglas, and his grandson Christopher - have served as volunteer firemen in Colchester North;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Christopher Congdon for receiving the Firefighter of the Year Award from the Great Village and District Fire Brigade and for carrying on the proud tradition of his family.

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. 1953

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

Whereas A Child's Voice Foundation is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and managing programs that support the physical and emotional well-being of disadvantaged children with illness and disabilities; and

Whereas 8-year-old Mya Harvey, who attends Brooklyn District Elementary School, recently had her long hair cut for a second time as a donation to A Child's Voice Foundation, where it will become a hairpiece for a child in need; and

Whereas educating our children at a young age about the importance of charities and what those organizations mean to the lives of others will inspire them to continue into the future with admiration for charity work;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and applaud Mya Harvey on her generosity and selflessness.

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. 1954

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

Whereas Sheree Fitch is an author, educator, and literary advocate who has written more than 25 books for children and adults; and

Whereas Ms. Fitch, who has won numerous awards for her work, has been a workshop leader and literacy educator, has been a keynote conference speaker, has travelled the world to promote literacy, is the inspiration for the Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarships - given annually from monies raised in the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournaments for Literacy - and is Honorary Spokesperson for the Nova Scotia Read to Me Program; and

Whereas Ms. Fitch, a graduate of Acadia University, was awarded an honorary degree last May from Saint Thomas University in recognition of her influence in the national and international literary world;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Legislative Assembly congratulate Sheree Fitch on her accomplishments and express their thanks for her contributions to literacy at home and abroad.

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. 1955

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 Joe Bishara founded the Maple Grove Memorial Club in 1985 as a way for the school to show support for veterans, current serving military members, and the war dead, and it has grown to include Yarmouth High School and boasts more than 140 members; and

Whereas the memorial club held its Silver Cross ceremony with songs and words of remembrance on June 5th, amid tears and smiles from parents, relatives, and friends of soldiers who died in Afghanistan; and

Whereas the silver crosses, given to the fathers of soldiers from Nova Scotia who have died while serving in Afghanistan, are a modified version of the Maltese Cross which were designed by the students in 2006 and have the soldiers' names engraved on the back;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Joe Bishara and all the students who have been members of the Memorial Club and thank them for 25 years of dedicated service to veterans and their families, as well as wish Joe a happy retirement and success in all his future endeavours.

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

[9:45 a.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 Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1956

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

Whereas the TransCanada Trail has provided Nova Scotians with an opportunity to get out in the fresh air and take part in an activity that promotes healthy lifestyles; and

Whereas when completed, the Auburn, Kings County, trail will provide users an experience second to none; and

Whereas Bob Wright and the Kings County Trails Society have worked extremely hard to build the Auburn trail and make it into a positive experience for all;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Bob Wright and the Kings County Trails Society for their hard work and dedication, and wish them continued success in all future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1957

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

Whereas Allie MacDonald of Port Hawkesbury has a key role in *Score: A Hockey Musical*, which is one of Canada's most successful movies of 2010; and

Whereas Ms. MacDonald was part of the prestigious opening of the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival for her role as Eve in that film; and

Whereas Allie was dedicated to her craft at an early age, from her first movie role at the age of nine to being selected as one of only 40 students to attend the Canadian College of Performing Arts in Victoria, B.C.;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Allie on her artistic achievements and wish her continued success in the film industry.

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. 1958

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

Whereas more than 300 municipal leaders were on hand in downtown Toronto at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities 73rd Annual Conference when former Windsor Mayor Anna Allen was recognized for her 17 years of municipal public service and for her devotion and committed belief in trying to get more women to run for municipal office; and

Whereas Anna was the recipient of the Ann MacLean Award for Outstanding Service by a Woman in Municipal Politics, an award named in honour of New Glasgow's former mayor; and

Whereas Anna received the award for recognition of exemplary service to her community and the mentoring of women who want to run for municipal government;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate former Windsor Mayor Anna Allen on receiving this distinguished award at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference and wish her every future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 81.

Bill No. 81 - Oak Island Treasure Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise for debate on the second reading of the amendments to the Special Places Protection Act. I would like to begin today by acknowledging the efforts of the honourable member for Hants East - the Minister of Natural Resources - and of our government for bringing forward the repeal of the Treasure Trove Act and creating the Oak Island Treasure Act.

I would also like to say how pleased I was to see the honourable member for Dartmouth East speaking in support of the government's actions at yesterday's or the day before's bill briefing. Certainly, I want to acknowledge all of the speakers that spoke yesterday with respect to this bill.

Clearly, the Official Opposition recognizes that we have made the best decision for Nova Scotians in this matter. Introducing these changes to treasure hunting regulations will bring the province in line with other Canadian provinces and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. It will also help ensure the preservation and protection of marine heritage resources in all of Nova Scotia.

The Special Places Protection Act plays an important part in keeping that commitment. Amendments to the Special Places Protection Act will remove all references to treasure. These amendments will help ensure that the Act continues to follow best practices in heritage research and that it continues to allow for the preservation and study of our cultural and ecological heritage.

To reiterate, Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Natural Resources has said, we know that Nova Scotians want our history to be researched and we know that they want it to be interpreted right here in the Province of Nova Scotia, not sold to collectors from outside the province.

We believe that artifacts and shipwrecks, along with our coast, belong to Nova Scotians. We've reviewed research and best practices and will act to protect this history. The Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage looks forward to working with the Department of Natural Resources to implement the repeal of the Treasure Trove Act and changes to the Special Places Protection Act. In doing this, we are ensuring that important pieces of Nova Scotia's history stay in this province to benefit learning and research. People, generations from now, will be thanking us for what we are doing here. Staff in the Heritage Division are already looking at ways to enhance our approach to preserving and researching marine heritage.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading and I will now take my place. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to stand up and thank all members who had something to say on Bill No. 81. I have to say I guess one of the good things about this Legislature is the variety of experiences that members bring and interesting little tidbits of information. I appreciate the comments of the member for Digby-Annapolis. I usually appreciate the comments of the member for Digby-Annapolis but certainly he threw an other little component into what we might deem to be treasure items.

The member for Inverness I thought really - Oak Island seems to be a long way from Inverness but he made a nice connection. I haven't read the R.V. Harris book but I'm going to.

My colleague, the member for Lunenburg West spoke quite passionately about the legislation, about the history and saying that the bill we repealed had gone by its "best-before date" but the "best-before date" on this legislation is perpetuity. These treasures belong to the people and will stay there, unless the people make application through the Minister of

Tourism, Culture and Heritage's office for artifacts, heritage licences. I appreciate his support and his comments.

My colleague, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's, I thought threw another interesting dimension to the history. With that, I thank all members for their support and move second reading of Bill No. 81, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 81. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 82.

Bill No. 82 - Offshore Licencing Policy Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making a few comments on this wet and wild Friday morning and let me assure you, if you're anywhere near the coast, of course, today - and I know there are members out there - I urge you as you're making your way down our fabulous south shore to take your time, be careful and watch for those offshore winds, that's for sure.

There are some issues - whichever side of the House we're on, we have common ties. For those who might be watching this morning or reading these comments later in Hansard, there are certain ties that just go across this floor. Certain members of this House are well aware of the fact that if it ever comes to the time, later on in life, where I'm at a Stanley Cup final in Boston and you're there and you need a good seat, just give me a call. I've said that so many times and people are always genuinely surprised.

The student who was here with me the other day was surprised when - well, she wasn't surprised, she was pleasantly surprised - that throughout that day there was opportunity for some of you to meet this young woman, Nikki Giles from Prospect Bay, right down on the water, very close to Brookside Junior High. She was surprised with the fact that I would say to her, here's one of my friends and this is Mr. So and So. Her question was, after some of you had walked away, now is he Liberal, is he Progressive Conservative, or is he with you guys? As you well know, as we know in this business that we're in - and maybe we should call it more than a business, a sport or whatever else you want to say - there are amongst us some very common ties. I see that between the good member for Hants

West and the member for Sackville-Cobequid. They shared a career and they have lots of common interests.

The member for Hants West, in particular, has been giving some sage advice lately to me, as a minister. I'm not quite sure where he got all of his expertise in some of the topics - and I see him pointing his finger at me - but I think the key thing here, and where I'm going with this is, (Interruption) Mr. Speaker, I've already been interrupted here. I want to use this as an example and I'll use it particularly with the member for Digby-Annapolis.

The member for Digby-Annapolis was introduced to my student friend who was here from my constituency. After we had walked away from him Nikki said to me, you like him, don't you? I said, of course I like him, he's genuine. He represents his constituency well, he stands in his place in this House and I did bring up the example of Georges Bank because she had been at the briefing. She said to me at that time, and you listen to him don't you, and I said yes, I do listen to him, he doesn't give me any choice. That is one of the things that I think we all understand when legislation is coming forward, when debate is underway, you and I, members of this side of the House, we're going to have our differences, but they, in my opinion, must also be opinion differences, points of view differences and they must not, under any circumstances, stoop to the level of personality differences.

[10:00 a.m.]

At no time - and I certainly can't use his proper name - can the member for Digby-Annapolis and myself have those sort of differences, we must, after all, remain to the fact that we have points of view and we're going to continue to have differences and after a good discussion, we'll have consensus. Maybe sometime when he is in Boston and wants a ticket to the NHL finals in a couple of years time, I'll get him a ticket, as an old friend, as a colleague and as someone who has had a great deal of influence on this Minister of Energy, on this particular topic.

I should also, if I may at this time - and I know that I have some comments that my staff in Energy have drafted for me and they're always very leery, he hasn't even begun the prepared part of his notes yet. (Interruption) I have to get some things on the record, though, the member for Argyle has to understand this, I have to get some of the proper things on the record - I must also thank my good friend from Shelburne. When you're invited out with two fishermen and they'll say to you - and I have a safe way to get home that evening - we'll pick up the tab, I know eventually, I know inevitably the topic is going to be Georges Bank, it's just going to happen. I'm going to be in that situation where I'm going to - and as a teacher - have the wonderful opportunity to become the student as I listen to these men and their fervent feelings for what they feel should happen to this fabulous resource off our coast - first-hand information from people who feel passionately about the topic.

I also must include at this time, the member for Argyle. When you're inheriting the traditions that he has, as he has pointed out to us in this House many times, he has my

interest when he says that his grandfather, his father and he, himself, have worked in the offshore, have worked out there in that dangerous fishing situation. That gets my attention, so when that member wants to have his particular point of view on this topic, this teacher becomes a student and listens. This is going to continue as we proceed through this process.

Members in this House have heard me speak about the Law Amendments Committee and how important it is. If you really want to be on a committee that's of some consequence in this legislative process, the Law Amendments Committee - and I know that our visiting Clerk from Manitoba can probably talk about law amendments in her jurisdiction, but it's nothing like the one we have here. People come off the street - well, they have to make an appointment now - they come into our Legislature, they have an opportunity to speak on the topic of the day, the bill that is going to be changed, and some of them change quite drastically over there.

I encourage members, as we go through this piece of legislation, to make sure that you encourage people to come forward and have their point of view on this particular topic. This is a topic of great emotional value, this is a topic that means a great deal to Nova Scotians. I can assure you that as the minister I look forward to continuing to receive advice, whether it's from members of the House here, whether it's from people who appear before the Law Amendments Committee, or people such as Denny Morrow. When I first had the opportunity to meet with the NoRigs 3 Coalition, my first question, of course - not being afraid to ask the occasional dumb question - I asked Mr. Morrow, so NoRigs 3, where was "NoRigs 1" and "NoRigs 2"? Immediately, he begins to give me the history. After all, that coalition, as soon as you see the number "3" there, you're aware these people have been at this for awhile. That, again, was another learning experience.

With those comments, I'd like to - and I'll come back to a couple other opportunities during my comments where I'll be not sticking so closely to the text (Interruption) Digressing? I haven't even started the speech yet.

It's my honour and my pleasure to speak on Bill No. 82, the Offshore Licencing Policy Act, an Act Respecting a Moratorium on Petroleum Activity on Georges Bank. It's clear to us that extending the moratorium on oil and gas activity on Georges Bank is just simply the right thing to do. Georges Bank is important to Nova Scotians, it's important to our fishing industry and, as we heard in the House yesterday, it's important to a lot of members of this House. I thank them for their comments inside and outside of the House.

In a moment, I'll provide some greater detail as to our intention with this moratorium extension and I'll speak to some of the questions that have been raised since it was introduced on Wednesday, November 3rd. Earlier I misspoke, those comments that were made in the House were not made yesterday, they were made the previous day.

We believe this bill, in its wording and its approach, achieves the right legislative protection for Georges Bank. It clearly solidifies the position of the Province of Nova Scotia

in regard to this important part of our offshore. It's important to remember this is a shared jurisdiction with the federal government and, of course, our friends to the south, the United States of America. Our action in this Legislature through this bill is a necessary step; however, we continue to work with the federal government to have it also enshrined in the accord Acts and to take a leadership role. On so many occasions on whatever side of the House I was on, or am now, I would say, well, that's a federal jurisdiction, that's something else that we have to talk to our partners in Ottawa about. This is an issue that Nova Scotians expect us to take some leadership on and then, as we proceed, to make sure we get the details in place.

I look forward to working with the appropriate federal ministers, I look forward to hearing from other parts of the country and, of course, I look forward to hearing from our American friends to the south on what they think of this piece of legislation.

Before I get into some specifics, I do want to reiterate for the record what it is we are trying to achieve with this bill with extending the moratorium indefinitely. We are not the first government to recognize Georges Bank as a special and unique place. It's a sensitive marine ecosystem that has been closed to exploration and drilling since 1988. To those previous governments, I thank them for that particular decision.

Since 1988, however, there has been that constant shadow lurking there, what is going to happen? Is this another battle we're going to have to fight? I think it's time that we made it very clear that there is going to be no drilling on Georges Bank for an indefinite period, but the way that this has worked is that there has always been an expiration date for when the moratorium needs to be reviewed. This causes anxiety in the fishing sector, southwest Nova Scotia and in Nova Scotia generally.

Nova Scotians and all those who value Georges Bank have this constant fear that the moratorium could be lifted. Not anymore. We're saying very clearly the moratorium will stay in place until such time as there is a compelling reason - a compelling reason - for us to review it, not because an arbitrary date has been reached.

Rather than continuing this ongoing debate, our legislation will provide certainty about our intentions around Georges Bank. Exploration and drilling activities will not happen in this area of our offshore, unless factors such as science, technology, environmental protection, provide us with full confidence to proceed. As I've said many times before publicly, privately, over a couple of refreshments with my friends, the members for Shelburne and Digby-Annapolis, it's just not worth the risk to drill in an area this important to Nova Scotians with the knowledge that we have. (Applause)

On that topic, as members opposite know, I have the fortunate duties to represent a number of fishing villages: Lower Prospect and Prospect Village itself and, of course, Terence Bay. I would be remiss not to mention that a number of the young men that I have had in the teaching profession are proud of the fact that they are fishermen, William

Slaunwhite in particular. Now there's a name, if you eliminated everybody in Terence Bay who wasn't named Slaunwhite it would be like eliminating the d'Entremonts from the Pubnicos. Why would we want to eliminate them, my God they are the heart and soul of the earth.

When people such as William Slaunwhite, who makes his living on the water, whether he is working further down in southwest Nova Scotia or he is working out of Terence Bay, he brings it up with me in a social situation, protect Georges Bank, and he just called me by my first name at that time, it's good to see that so many students eventually do that. I said to William at the time - not Bill, not Billy, William - I said to William at the time, just wait, when the government gets things going - this was just after we had been elected - there will be some positive news, hopefully, about Georges Bank. So there's someone else we have to listen to when we make these decisions.

The bill does extend the moratorium indefinitely. It requires a public hearing and, most importantly for me, as an elected official, it requires a vote in the Legislature to lift it. That's a real significant issue. I know in the community that I'm fortunate enough to represent, if this ever did happen during my term as Energy Minister, on the doorsteps on a Friday afternoon, whether it is rain or a beautiful sunny day in Terence Bay or Lower Prospect, that would be a question that would be put to me: why would I even consider, or how did I vote in that debate when it comes to lifting the moratorium? That is what we shall always have, a ballot box issue in coastal Nova Scotia. That ensures that in this House, in this historic Legislature, each one of us will stand in his or her place, if and when that ever happens, and you will have to have your say on what you think would be the compelling reasons for lifting this moratorium.

The comment yesterday that a resolution of the House and a vote in the Legislature was just not strong enough was interesting. I don't mean to be dismissive of it, but it was interesting and I'll leave it at that. The suggestion was that any future government at any time could overturn what we're trying to achieve here, that's absolutely true. That's democracy. Short of a constitutional amendment, every government with the support of a majority of members of the House can repeal any piece of legislation in this House. What we can do though is make it clear what a future government should do and we can enshrine it in our legislation, and that's exactly what we've done. It's exactly what we've done.

If a future government sees a compelling reason to revisit the issue, they must come to the House, they must engage in a public debate. We've written in three barriers they must pass: scientific evidence, a public review and a vote after a debate in this historic House. That says to me that is a good safe way of ensuring that this piece of legislation will not be tampered with and will be respected.

Mr. Speaker, I have faith in the democratic process. We're ensuring that no future government can quietly lift the protection we are applying to Georges Bank in this bill. This is an emotional topic, this is an important topic. This is a topic that people throughout Nova

Scotia, not just in the coastal communities, and God bless them as they continue to survive, this is a topic of interest in suburban Timberlea. This is a topic of interest in Cape Breton whether your fathers were coal miners or fishermen.

This is part of the Nova Scotia heritage. Georges Bank is just that valuable and we know it. It's historic. I'm sure that if people would look and understand the things that attracted you to come to Nova Scotia, whether it's Peggy's Cove, whether it's, of course, the highlands of Cape Breton. I guess we can't arrange - maybe the member for Digby-Annapolis could think about this as a future idea - we can't arrange to have boat tours of Georges Bank but, boy, considering that tour you took us on here one night a number of years ago, a number of months ago, that would be worth the money, no matter what you charged us. We must be open, we must be transparent, we must be accountable to this House, and in situations such as this, we face the people. That's the protection we're providing for Georges Bank. I have confidence in the process and I hope you'll share that confidence with me.

I also want to provide assurances that this legislation does not mean we do not have faith in our ability to regulate the offshore. Regulation in the offshore is one of the strong suits in Nova Scotia. I have faith in that as the Minister of Energy. Georges Bank represents between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of the prospective area of offshore Nova Scotia. The rest of our offshore does not contain some of the unique characteristics of Georges Bank but I have full confidence in our regulatory and environmental assessment system to permit petroleum activity in these other areas. In fact, this government is investing \$15 million to improve the geo-science available in these other potentially lucrative areas. We can never know enough about the sensitive areas of the offshore and particularly Georges Bank.

[10:15 p.m.]

It's imperative that we understand the implications of any development activity in this area on the fisheries and the eco-system. This is about making sure the right science is there to demonstrate the fisheries and eco-system will not be harmed. We are taking a decisive stand in protecting this area of our offshore and its valuable resources. We will assure Nova Scotians this moratorium is important to you and it's important to us. Our legislation provides clear direction on maintaining the moratorium until there is a compelling reason to not do so any more is just not correct. Straightforward legislation, it's about establishing a policy direction and process in regard to the area of our offshore.

Mr. Speaker, I was asked yesterday by a member from the media why we're not lining ourselves with the United States in doing this with regard to Georges Bank. I want to assure members of the House, members of the media and Nova Scotians that we're continuing to consult and work with our American friends and, of course, the federal government in Ottawa. They are all important players in this decision but we're taking the lead in doing what we know is right for Nova Scotia. We believe Georges Bank is a special place that deserves special protection. We value and respect our ocean ecosystem.

We also believe there is a value in further scientific research in the area, particularly with limited and focused seismic so we can better understand the geology of this broader area. No commercial exploration activity can occur and I would suggest, even if they were permitted - and they are not - no company would want to invest in a seismic program in an area where they can't drill. The only seismic activity that could occur in the future would be for scientific research purposes. For example, yesterday we used the one at the technical briefing, there could be the example of future possible work by the Geological Survey of Canada.

In fact, we also have another organization, the Offshore Energy Environmental Research Association - the OEER, as it's called - that does environmental research work in the offshore. They may want to undertake research on the impacts of oil and gas activity in Georges Bank, including impacts of seismic on marine habitat and species in the area. This is valuable information to have and any seismic would be subject to rigorous, regulatory, and environmental review processes. I have confidence that any research would not harm the marine habitat and sensitive ecosystem of the area. This is a strong bill, in my opinion, that for now and the future provides the appropriate protection for Georges Bank.

It has been a pleasure as the Minister of Energy to introduce various pieces of legislation in this House - legislation that deals with regulatory changes, legislation that deals with things that we continue to work with in resources when we look at wind turbines and tidal activities. These are all important parts of my duties as an Energy Minister. But I can assure you that when the time comes when I step away from this job, this will be a piece of legislation that I am proud to say I was the minister who brought it forward.

With those comments, I will take my place. I look forward to the debate. Thank you for your time. (Applause)

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill No. 82. Everyone in this House knows where I stand when it comes to the Georges Bank area.

For 15 generations my family has been in the fishery, and for probably that many generations we've realized what that Bank is to not only my family but every family from Cape Cod to Cape Breton to the head of the Bay of Fundy. That's a lot of people and a lot of families-two different countries and in two different provinces.

That is one of the biggest and greatest nurseries in the world for fish and I would argue that with anybody, debate anybody over that, any day. It's been proven. With two billion more people coming on this earth in the next 50 years, we're going to wonder where our food is going to come from. We know the wild fishery can't feed us, but we know that Bank can give us a great share of that food of the wild fishery. We know we need to grow

more fish, but we also realize that there is a lot at stake here for letting something go on on that Bank. Drilling for oil could put that Bank in jeopardy, wipe out the Gulf of Maine.

I just want to touch for a minute on the Gulf of Mexico. What happened in that area could happen in the Gulf of Maine just as easily. We saw one of the greatest disasters on this Earth so far happen in the Gulf of Mexico. If that disaster ever happened on the Georges Bank with the amount of tide and circulation that goes from Cape Breton to the head of the Bay of Fundy to Cape Cod, we would see a disaster ten times worse, if not greater than what we've seen in the Gulf of Mexico with no tide and the deep water that they were in.

The tide on that Georges Bank, I've been there and lived it, it turns counter-clockwise and spins off just like a huge, huge low pressure in our atmosphere and it's the whole size of the Gulf of Maine. Just imagine if oil was pumping out of the ground there and spinning out into that, in this gulf. I can only imagine it, I don't want to see it - I don't even want to imagine it.

With that and with this bill - this is a fairly good bill, fairly good, but it's not good enough. What you've done here, Mr. Minister - and I want to thank you for the kind words you spoke about me and I can repeat those words right back to you as a person that I've come to like very much, but this bill, I don't know if I like it that much. You've extended this bill, all you've done is extend the moratorium for three more years, not even to the time that the Americans have, at 2017. This only goes to 2015, and this bill can be squashed in this House; this government could do a resolution in this House today and you all vote for it and that resolution can pass to open up this legislation again, to stop this legislation. That's how I read this bill.

I'll tell you what else this bill has also done and I want to quote something. This quote comes from you, Mr. Minister, and it says: "Rather than continue this debate every few years, our legislation will provide certainty about our intentions around Georges Bank." And it says it has been closed, it is a sensitive marine ecosystem that has been closed to exploration and drilling since a moratorium was placed on it under the Accord Acts in 1988. This bill now is only going to stop drilling, it is opening up exploration. It's opening up for seismic testing and there's been a ban on that, so this bill needs to be looked at, this bill needs to be looked at to see why - if we're going to try to continue a moratorium on Georges Bank and it should be for definite, not indefinite, unless science can say down the road that it can be done, and I don't know if that will ever happen.

This needs to be looked at, this seismic testing. How safe is that on that bank of shoal water? I don't know if that question can be answered, because I haven't heard of any safe seismic testing being done on fishing grounds. There was some done up in the Gulf of St. Lawrence a few years back and the fishery up there, the fishermen, still say that that had done damage to the crab fishery where it was done. So what are we opening up here with a bill of letting exploration go on? I'm not sure, but I think it needs to be looked at and I'm hoping that somebody will come to the Law Amendments Committee and maybe explain this

to us, that maybe this isn't a good bill. But it is a bill that will keep a moratorium on here - if it's not opened back up by this government it will keep it on three more years from 2012 to the original moratorium to 2015, that's how I read this and I don't read it any differently.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take up too much more time, there are other speakers here who want to speak on this, but I'll be pleased to see this to go to Law Amendments and to see the reaction that happens there. So, with that, I'll take my seat. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member.

The honourable Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and spend a few moments talking to this bill, and I want to thank the minister for bringing this to discussion, to bring the bill forward, to bring the idea to start the discussion because, quite like the member for Digby-Annapolis, I think this starts the discussion but it is by far not the end of the discussion. I think we've talked about stopping drilling on Georges Bank. What this really does is it takes away maybe some of the public discussion that has happened in the past.

I want to go back a little bit - and in my statement the other day, when the Minister of Energy brought this to the floor of the House of Assembly, I talked about my community, I talked about my family participating in the fishery for many generations really. It was our Acadians who came to the rocky shores after the deportation, who were farmers and had to learn to become fishermen and who plied by waters of the near shore and slowly, over time, learned to go further and further off. I'm very proud that my family was one of those families that have gotten so much life from Georges Bank.

As I said, my dad is a scallop fisherman - was a scallop fisherman, just retired. My dad is 63 years old. I know the minister is not quite there, but he is almost old enough to be my dad. My dad retired around December of last year; he had been a fisherman for 47 years. At the tender age of 14 or 15 he left school to support his family and had been on the water since that time.

I can say that being a young whipper-snapper and finally having the opportunity to get on the boat and make some money, I took that opportunity. It was the longest 12 days of my life; I can tell you it is the longest time. They go out for 12 days on Georges Bank and when the weather is nice - I know the member for Digby-Annapolis has talked about the beauty of Georges Bank and he has talked about the other side of Georges Bank - Georges Bank can be one of the roughest, loneliest places you've ever been in your whole life.

I can tell you that when we had the opportunity to touch land again, and I don't know, but my family is not what you call a "huggie" family - I like to hug people, but my

family weren't sort of the huggie family - I can tell you when I got off that boat that I gave my dad the biggest hug I have ever given him, ever. To think that he had done that for his family, for me, that hard work.

[10:30 a.m.]

He didn't start as the captain of a boat, he started on - gee, I can't even remember the name of the boat that he started on but, in the day of making it easy, those boats weren't easy. I know the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is shaking his head, they didn't have what is called the dumping deck so every drag that dragged the stuff from the bottom of the ocean dumped it on the deck, and they had to take all those big boulders and rocks that came up with the scallops and, by hand, chuck them overboard, and then take the fish and then bring them and then shuck it and bring it in. It's quite a job.

I remember during my time of ups and downs on Georges Bank, where there were fish and there weren't fish - and I remember a time when if they came in with 300 bags or 200 bags on the offshore boats it was a good trip. Today they are lucky now that the fishery has really come back, it is doing very well and they're coming in with 1,000 bags or more. So it had its ups and downs - but that is just the scallop fishery and my connection to it.

There is the groundfish fishery, there's the herring fishery, there's the swordfish fishery, there's a tuna fishery not too far from Georges Bank - every bit of fish. We talk about our \$1 billion fishing industry in Nova Scotia. I don't know what the Georges Bank component out of that \$1 billion is, but it's a good chunk of it, a damn good chunk. I don't know if it's half or a little less than half. I know a lobster fishery does take in a lot of value as well. But should we have a disaster on that Bank, it would be disastrous not only for the little communities that dot the coastline, it would be devastating for the economy of Nova Scotia.

We talk about drilling and offshore oil and we've already seen - we're already on the downside of the bell curve. We've made royalties, they've come up and they're starting to come down so it's not dollars that we can depend on in the long term. Georges Bank continually renews itself every year to provide a part of that \$1 billion to our economy - every single year and it has done this forever. Why would we mess with it?

My community would tell me very quickly, we need an outright ban on it forever. This bill doesn't really do that. What it does, interestingly enough, it does take some of the public discussion away from it. Because of the way it was structured before, you would put a date and then as you get closer to that date you have to do some public consultation, you have to do some research whether you're taking off the moratorium or you're extending that moratorium. We've had NoRigs 1, we've had NoRigs 2 and we're working on NoRigs 3 and I'm sure there would have been a 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 as time rolled on.

What I'm worried about with this bill is really - I don't maybe have an appreciation for exactly how the moratorium or the ban is removed. From the minister's comments, from what we're reading within the bill, should technology change, should advances be done, should someone approach government with a better way, then they would have a bit of a public consultation to remove that ban. Then a resolution of the House of Assembly will overturn that Act.

In my mind that sounds a little easier than what we have today. But I want to really have a look through exactly what that means. We should get rid of that resolution piece and put that whichever government is in power in 10 years, in 20 years, in 30 years has to repeal the Act, has to do the full work to make sure that the interest of Georges Bank is protected.

Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has said this is step one and it really is step one because there is something that can trump this Act and that is the Accord. The federal government is, of course, a very important part of banning drilling, seismic work, what have you, on Georges Bank. I'm hoping they will look at this bill, suggest changes if need be and be a partner in what happens for Georges Bank. Without their support what we're doing in this House will be wasted and we don't want it to be wasted. I think we all believe that taking a sensitive area like Georges Bank and allowing drilling to happen would be devastating to the ecosystem and, of course, to our economy.

I had the opportunity to travel to Norway a couple of years ago when we were looking at this the first time. They wanted to see how did a country like Norway allow fishing and drilling to sort of happen in the same place. It was an interesting conundrum that they had there. They really talked about sensitive areas and if you look at how their offshore is blocked, there is a number of places that you can't drill here, you can't drill there, you can't drill there. We said, what constitutes a sensitive area? What is a sensitive area? They talked about nursery, they talked about an ecosystem, they talked about everything that Georges Bank is.

I would say that as well as this is step one, I'm hoping this minister will get on with step two, three, four and five, whatever steps it takes to protect Georges Bank forever for my community, for my family, and for everybody's families here, and for all of Nova Scotia. So thank you very much, and I look forward to supporting this, but enhancing this as it goes through the House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, certainly first of all, I want to recognize the earlier speakers and the wisdom and the knowledge they bring to this. Without looking at my notes, I think NoRigs 3 summed it up when they talked about this particular bill as the story of the year. It's going to be hard to follow up on a comment like that.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of this legislation put forward on oil and gas exploration on Georges Bank. This government has sent a clear message: we are protecting our environment and we are protecting our fishery. I've been asked many times how a Minister of the Crown can be both the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the Minister of Environment, and my answer has always been the same, if you want a healthy fishery, we must care for our environment. Protect the environment and we will most certainly have a healthy fishery.

This legislation shows that the health of the environment and that of the fishery go hand in hand. As a young boy, I spent many a day sailing homemade ships, something that the author William Bliss Carman penned about in the poem *The Ships of Yule*. So today it is certainly an honour to stand in my place to speak to the regulations and definitely banning oil and gas exploration on Georges Bank. As Nova Scotians we are blessed with many abundant natural resources like the wind that filled the sails of the famous Bluenose and the tidal knowledge that Angus Walters relied on as he successfully engaged in his daily fishing exercises.

This government is moving to protect Georges Bank - arguably one of the most precious marine resources. Today Georges Bank is traditionally fished by Canadians and our American fishers. However, in the 1960s and the 1970s Poland and, yes, the former Soviet Union fished one of the world's largest herring stocks there. The decision by Canada and the United States to declare an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles in the late 1970s led to the overlapping exclusive economic zone claims on Georges Bank. Both nations agreed in 1979 to defer the question of maritime boundary to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. After five years of consultations the court ruled in 1984 that the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Maine was split between both nations. Today, Canada's portion of the Gulf of Maine includes the northeast portion of Georges Bank.

It was the testimony of Nova Scotia's fishermen from the ports like Lunenburg, Yarmouth, Digby, Cape Sable Island, and yes, my hometown of Woods Harbour, and their historical attachment to the fishing on this bank, that helped win that court case in The Hague. The history clearly shows our attachment to Georges Bank and the important role that it had and continues to have in our lives.

As a society, Mr. Speaker, our addiction to fossil fuel certainly remains high. This government recognizes the importance of a transition to renewable energy, such as wind and tidal power, and has taken action. We are moving toward becoming one of the world's leaders in renewable energy with our commitment to 40 per cent renewable energy by 2020. We will not satisfy our energy needs at the expense of our environment or our fishing grounds. This government has shown leadership, not only in the development of wind power, but through the support of tidal energy for which the Bay of Fundy is famous. Our Premier, in August of this year, pushed to get the Bay of Fundy recognized as one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. Many times we refer to our province, our oceans, our

fisheries, our environment, however, we are simply caretakers who make policies and regulations by placing a ban on oil and gas explorations on Georges Bank.

We have set the stage to pass this province on to our children better than we have found it. We know that Nova Scotians are concerned about the protection of the lucrative fishing grounds resources on Georges Bank, especially those who earn their living in the fishing industry. Our fishery supports vibrant rural communities around the families that live in them. These Nova Scotians who rely on the fisheries around Georges Bank have been very vocal about their concerns regarding oil and gas exploration. They have expressed their fears that developments are being planned on Georges and the activities will commence as soon as the moratorium is lifted.

It has been years of inaction but this government is listening. We have heard the concerns of our fishermen, our coastal communities, the environmental stakeholders and Nova Scotians from all walks of life who care deeply about protecting our beautiful province and our marine resources. We have heard the concerns that oil exploration and development activities may negatively impact the marine ecosystems and the fisheries.

I want to recognize the efforts of the coalitions of fishermen, the fishing groups, the environmentalists and the Aboriginal groups for their persistence to protect these sensitive areas and I celebrate with them this important step forward.

Georges Bank is one of the most biologically productive areas in the North Atlantic. Georges Bank has sustained huge stocks of fish such as herring, cod, haddock, as well as scallops, just to name a few, and other fisheries such as yellowtail flounder, swordfish, tuna and almost especially lobster. It supports major fisheries resources, most of which are conducted out of southwest Nova Scotia. The offshore scallop fisheries has been the second highest landed value of all species fished in Nova Scotia and is largely conducted on the Georges Bank.

Many in the fishing industry continue to believe that the oil and gas activities on Georges Bank will pose too great a risk for this sensitive and very productive area. We have heard loudly and clearly these concerns that Nova Scotians have related to the potential oil and gas development on Georges Bank. This government is doing more than just listening to the concerns of Nova Scotia. This government is making decisions that matter to Nova Scotians. We have taken actions, needed and asked for, to ensure that the fishing industry listens and are heard and addressed by balancing the environmental, commercial and all the other interests of Georges Bank.

In closing, my grandfather and father fished from Cape Breton to Grand Manan Island and it's certainly an honour to speak on this issue. Thank you very much for your time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

[10:45 a.m.]

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to stand and speak on this bill. Let me start by saying that we do believe this is a step forward. We are supportive of the direction that the government is taking on this. As I said the other day, we just believe that there are ways that this can be strengthened. The minister noted in his remarks that he wasn't sure what our concern was about the resolution and how that might be any different. I'd like to provide some thoughts on that issue, as well as on the issue of seismic exploration. Frankly, if the minister or his staff have information that would suggest that our concern about there just being a resolution should be amended or reconsidered, we're also happy to do that, of course.

Mr. Speaker, I guess the heart of our concern is summarized really well in a quote that was on the CBC last night and I'd like to just read that quote. It said that being a Conservative Environment Minister is kind of like being the vice-president of veggie burgers at McDonalds. Well, you know, that's where our concern is. I don't believe this current Energy Minister, or Environment Minister, would for a second suggest that we should suddenly allow drilling on Georges Bank, I don't. I don't believe that if the member for Digby-Annapolis was the Environment Minister, or the Energy Minister in the future, that he would.

But I do believe there are people who would use the provisions in the Act, where they get to a point at committee and go to public hearings around the province - public hearing being good - but we all know - and the Minister of Energy in Opposition criticized former governments for this - where they would stack a committee; they go and get the answer they want; they come forward with a resolution; they have a majority government and in three days you can have a resolution debated and passed by this House. It can be introduced on one day, it doesn't get unanimous consent, it's called two days later, voted on and it becomes law.

The difference with having to repeal the Act is, yes, the majority government can still ultimately do it, absolutely, obviously a majority government could still repeal an Act. The minister is absolutely correct on that. The difference is that there is a much lengthier process. The repeal of the Act requires the same first reading as the resolution does. It requires a debate at second reading, but then it also requires the Law Amendments Committee, which, in addition to the public hearings that have taken place around the province, allows anybody that last opportunity to come and speak before MLAs. It lengthens that process and makes sure that in a short three-day window that the government doesn't suddenly repeal the good work that this bill tries to do. That is the crux of the concern.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that is reasonably easily solved and it is reasonably easily solved by removing a line in the Act. Obviously lawyers - and I'm not one - would have to double-check that this would be correct, but there is a provision that says that this Act can be overturned by a resolution of the House of Assembly. I can't find the exact line here but

by removing that line in this Act, by just removing that one line, the Act then becomes a permanent ban, unless the entire Act is repealed. The only way to repeal it is to actually go through first reading, second reading, the Law Amendments Committee, third reading and Royal Assent by the Lieutenant Governor. That makes it a much more cumbersome process for a future government to overturn this Act.

Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate, I do not want anyone in this House to think that I believe that there's anybody sitting here right now who would suggest that we should overturn this. I don't believe that, but the minister quite rightfully said that this is the Act for the future. This is an Act that we want to put an end to the constant bickering. It does put an end to some of it, the whole process has to come up every few years, but I believe there will be pressure.

That leads me to the second concern, which is on seismic testing. The second job I had at Fisheries and Oceans, years ago, was also monitoring seismic testing off Sable Island. It was around the time they were just starting to do some seismic testing work. One of the concerns from fishermen, and we had to put on not only myself, but we had to put fisheries observers on some of the rigs to watch the impact of the seismic testing because in some places - and we were fortunate that this did not happen in the Gully - in some places the seismic testing resulted in floating fish kills. That is what everybody was concerned about. We were very, very lucky. In the Sable Island case that didn't happen and it all went according to plan and so forth.

This bill, while it bans the drilling, and I'm sure the minister will correct me if I'm wrong - but every indication I've had, from the comments about the bill and the comments at the media briefing, is that seismic work would still be permitted. The fishermen at the briefing expressed concern about that because not only is seismic testing always a risk - and of course it's a risk and it's a measured risk - but the whole point here is we're trying to take out the measured risk from the Georges Bank. If you're going to take out the measured risk, take it all out.

The second issue is, the only reason you do seismic testing is to see if there's oil and gas there. So all you're doing is effectively saying on the one hand, we don't want to have oil and gas exploration there - which we agree with - but on the other hand you're kind of leaving the door open and saying, well, you know what? If you can build a case for it, then come back and we'll start this whole process of the public hearings and the review and so forth. That troubles me.

I don't foresee a time when there will be an exploration method or an extraction method that is 100 per cent safe, I don't see that time. Maybe it will happen, anything is possible. They said that the Deep Horizon well wouldn't happen. It's funny to read the documents that were filed with the U.S. Energy Department and note that they said that, this is perfect, it's never going to happen. They also said the Titanic was unsinkable. I don't know if we'll ever get to that day but it doesn't matter if you create an Act that doesn't

require only a resolution to repeal it. If you have to repeal the Act - and any government can do that - then they will have to defend that to the public.

When we look at seismic - I, like the member for Digby-Annapolis and some of the other members - I'm not clear on why we would say, you're not allowed to drill but we're going to allow you to go build the case for drilling in the meantime. I know that's most likely not the intent of the Minister of Energy but that is the message in some respects. In fact, we've heard from that in the past couple of days so that is troubling.

I would prefer to see a bill that does two things. One, that removes the allowance for seismic testing in that location; and two, that just requires the repeal of the Act. I would ask the minister to consider those as options going forward. It is a good bill but I think it can be better and why wouldn't we all want to try and make this the most airtight bill we can?

I am not a commercial fisherman, I've never been a commercial fisherman. I've spent a lot of time in my life on fishing boats working for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I have spent time as a scallop diver. In around those areas, one of the things that the member for Digby-Annapolis was calling - I keep having to be careful not to call him Junior - one of the things that he talks about is the cyclic effect of the tides. It's interesting, when you go scallop diving up in that area, you actually time it to the tides and you ride the tides. They drop you in at one end of the tide and you basically coast like Superman over the bottom and grab scallops as you go up to your limit. Let me tell you, those tides are strong. There's only one other place - and I've been diving in much of the world - I've seen tides as strong or as fast as that and that's up in the Northumberland Strait, which, interestingly enough is also a good scallop location. The member for Digby-Annapolis is absolutely right, that's a problem if you ever do get a spill there or an accident. It's a real problem because the tides are such that they can spread that much faster than we saw in the Gulf of Mexico.

There was much concern in the Gulf of Mexico in the Deep Horizon rig that the loop current would take the oil and disperse it into the Gulf Stream. As far as we know, that hasn't happened but it is much more likely in a case on Georges Bank because the Gulf Stream very frequently runs directly through. There are many fishermen who will tell you stories about all of a sudden the sun comes out on the Georges Bank and they jump into the water and they see sea turtles and the water is really warm - the Gulf Stream. We all know that. So you have a bank that actually the Gulf Stream often runs next to or directly through and that makes it much more risky than even somewhere like the Gulf of Mexico to begin doing this sort of work. That is what is of deep concern to me.

I think we also need to recognize - and I said this in my response the other day - that there have been test wells drilled on Georges Bank, 10 of them and none of them had commercial quantities of gas or oil. There are other locations with potential in offshore Nova Scotia that the industry is able to focus on. The minister talked about that the other day and he's absolutely right.

There's no need to open this area and require or allow for either the exploration or the testing or the investigation, because it does one of two things: it either creates false hope for the industry, that they can do investment and seismic testing and if they find something the Act will be overturned; or it says to them, we're going to let you spend money but we're never going to overturn this. Neither one of them is good. One's bad for the industry and one's bad for the reputation of government.

Let's just close it. Let's just say no. We know that Georges Bank is one of the most productive spawning and fishing areas in the world. It is a nursery ground for much of the North Atlantic, for our fishermen up off Cape Breton and off the Eastern Shore. We know that the nutrients that come through Georges Bank supply many of those fishing grounds, in part because of the tidal conditions and in part because of why it's there. We know that is a unique ecosystem unlike very many others in the world - certainly unlike any others in the North Atlantic. It makes sense to have the protections there.

A couple of years ago we saw the federal government actually change shipping lanes so that the whales are less impacted in that area. Why did they do that? Because that area is important for even our large mammalian species. This is a unique habitat. It is an important habitat. It is one we should do the utmost to protect.

While we absolutely support the intent of government and the direction of government on this, I would ask the minister to consider those two changes: to remove the ability for seismic exploration to take place, to remove that false hope and that false concern that might exist as a result of it, and also to remove the ability of this to be overturned by resolution and require this bill to only be able to be repealed through the normal process of the Legislature which would require full repeal of the Act. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: I am so pleased to be standing in my place speaking to Bill No. 82, the Offshore Licencing Policy Act. I'm pleased to give my full support to this minister and this government for making the right decision in placing an indefinite moratorium on oil and gas exploration and drilling on Georges Bank.

I have a deep respect, appreciation, and love for our oceans and waterways. For most of my 50-some years I lived near the water in St. Margaret's Bay, and now I'm fortunate to live close to a wonderful freshwater river system. As a young girl, one of my favourite programs was *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*, and as we all know, Jacques was one of the world's most famous oceanographers and undersea explorers.

I didn't grow up in a fishing family, but I had many friends and neighbours who were fishers and I spent a lot of time hanging around on some of the wharves in the communities of St. Margaret's Bay. Even though we weren't a fishing family, my dad had a small cape boat and we used it for recreational fishing. I spent many summers on the weekends - usually

on a Saturday or Sunday, the family would pack up and get in the small cape boat and we would go off into St. Margaret's Bay, sometimes hours at a time, to reach some of the fishing grounds that were historical in my grandparents' generation. My dad was very familiar with some of those fishing grounds.

[11:00 a.m.]

On my dad's boat he had what we called a tuna stand and it was a stand that extended at the bow of the boat. My parents would allow each of us to take turns, myself and my siblings, to stand out on that tuna stand. Our job was to keep an eye out for tuna, whales, sunfish, porpoise, dolphins, and sea turtles. When we finally reached the fishing grounds, and I'm not sure if we ever made it to the Georges Bank, but I'm sure we fished in and around the area of Georges Bank, we spent many hours handlining for haddock, cod, and halibut - of course we can't handline today.

I also spent many years of my young life snorkeling and swimming around the shores of Moser Island, and I was always absolutely fascinated by the underwater living ecosystem of seaweeds, eels, crabs, flatfish or flounder - sculpin, which I was very afraid of. It was a beautiful ecosystem. In my early 20s I received my certification for scuba diving, and during some of my underwater dives, I saw, up close and personal, an amazing, diverse, intricate environment of sea life. I also had the opportunity, a few years ago, to snorkel around a coral reef in the Caribbean and the beauty of sea life there is just absolutely stunning. So, Mr. Speaker, the question around whether or not drilling and exploration for oil and gas on Georges Bank would be permitted was of great concern for me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give you a glimpse into Georges Bank, and I know many of the previous speakers have also given this House a glimpse into Georges Bank. A bank is a huge shoal; it is a plateau submerged in relatively shallow ocean waters, a series of immense banks stretching from Newfoundland to southern England on the edge of the North American continental shelf. The northernmost banks off Newfoundland and Labrador are called the Grand Banks, but the Georges Bank is on the southern coast.

Georges Bank is an oval-shaped bank 240 kilometres long and 120 kilometres wide, and it lies at the southwestern end of the chain. About 11,500 years ago the sea rose high enough to isolate the area, creating Georges Island. It was home to many large prehistoric mammals including walruses, mastodons and giant sloths, traces of which are sometimes found in fishing nets. Legend has it that the first European sailors found cod so abundant that they could be scooped out of the water in baskets. These banks were one of the world's richest fishing grounds.

We know that the fishery is already stressed and that's why it's so important to have this moratorium in place for Georges Bank, which is still a prime breeding and feeding ground for fish and shellfish, in particular cod, haddock, herring, flounder, lobster, scallops

and clams. Georges Bank is home to more than 100 species of fish, as well as many species of marine birds, whales, dolphins and porpoises.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, Georges Bank is a fragile but flourishing ecosystem, and it is extremely important to the continuing sustainability of our fisheries. It is extremely important that its health is protected for future generations.

I represent many fishers in the constituency of Queens. Many of my friends and neighbours are fishermen and I can tell you that they will be very pleased with this indefinite moratorium, for some of their livelihoods depend on it. So I thank the minister, and I thank the government, for being responsible to the fishing communities and for making the right decision in protecting Georges Bank. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. This is a very important issue for my community in Yarmouth and, like many other people in the House, I am the descendant of a fisherman as well. My grandfather, Keith Churchill, was a proud fisherman. I come from a constituency where the fishing industry has a long and impressive history and is to this day the economic backbone of the region. In fact, I believe that over 30 per cent of Canada's fishery is in southwestern Nova Scotia, a fact that really should make all of us proud of our fishermen and proud of this vital industry.

Mr. Speaker, it should also make us conscious of the decisions we make that impact the fishing industry and the lives of the fishermen who work tirelessly every day to bring fish ashore and foreign money into our economy from lobsters, scallop and fish sales. I grew up with fishermen and have many friends today who are fishermen and almost every day when I'm home in Yarmouth, I bump into somebody who's involved in the fishing industry, whose livelihood is dependent on the strength of that industry. I've talked to many people who have great concerns about the future of their livelihood and fishing in southwestern Nova Scotia.

The potential for drilling off Georges Bank, because of the uncertainty around the potential environmental impact and impact on the fish population, has been the most pressing concern that I've heard from fishermen and from community members. Georges Bank is the last lucrative area that the fishing industry has, it's the nursery area, as previous members have said today, where fish grow up and mature and where they are the most vulnerable in their life cycle. Today all the focus for our groundfishery is on Georges Bank. I would like to quote a local fisherman from Yarmouth, Jack Dunn, who said to me, if something happens to Georges Bank, we would be absolutely devastated.

The health of our fishing industry is absolutely vital. It fuels the economy of all of our coastal communities, it provides food for us all, provides a livelihood for many families, and it has a great potential to grow. I was recently at a presentation in Yarmouth on the

fishing industry and the presenter informed us that the Australian lobster industry is in the process of collapsing and there are new markets opening up in Asia, particularly in Japan, and now even in the U.S. the service industry is using lobster more and more in their menus. With the potential to enhance the processing of our fish, creating value-added products, the future of this historic industry can be just as impressive and important as its past, and even better. It can thrive and continue to fuel the economies of many communities, Yarmouth included.

We need to respect our fishing industry, protect it, and support it. While this legislation presented is a step in the right direction, I, along with my colleagues, fear at this time it is coming up short of protecting our precious fishing industry and our rich Georges Bank. I've spoken to fishermen who are particularly concerned about the seismic testing not falling under the moratorium. As I mentioned before, Georges Bank is a nursery area. This is where fish are born, grow up and mature. The stocks of fish that are nursed in Georges Bank are what feed our fishing industry, feed us as consumers, and feed the people whom we sell our fish to in the U.S. and in foreign markets. The species in Georges Bank are vulnerable and could be affected by seismic testing. The larvae, especially, are at risk. Seismic testing could kill many larvae and have a negative impact on the ecosystem of the area.

If we damage the ecosystem, we put our fishing industry and our economic base at risk. Another apparent weakness in this bill is the fact that it can be overturned by a simple resolution, which seems to be unusual for this process in dealing with a bill of such magnitude. That is why I hope the minister will be open to amendments as we move forward with this process, ones that strengthen this bill and ensure that the livelihood of our fishermen and the ecosystem of our precious and rich Georges Bank are fully protected.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place today and speak on Bill No. 82, which will extend, indefinitely, the moratorium on oil and gas explorations on the Canadian portion of Georges Bank. As coastal people, Nova Scotians for centuries have understood and valued this unique marine ecosystem off the southwestern coast of the province. I support this bill, and many of my constituents have asked me to do the same on their behalf. At local dinners, breakfasts and events, people talk to me about this. The fishermen were very concerned and are all very pleased that this is the stance the government is taking.

As the Minister of Energy has said, our government understands the importance of balancing our fishing industry, our environment and offshore oil and gas explorations. Recent disasters in the Gulf of Mexico have made us all acutely aware of the need for caution.

On the Georges Bank we have a unique situation where there is a current flow going around the bank continuously, which picks up warm, nutritious waters from the Gulf Stream and spreads them to the bank. This nutritious current has created the most productive waters in the world. The warm gulf waters form a gyre, which is mostly captive on the shoal area of the bank. Any material that is released into the bank drifts through this gyre for a period of time before dissipating. It's such a unique situation and it has been said that no other place in the world's oceans has this type of phenomenon. These waters are one of the most important breeding and feeding grounds for varieties of fish and shellfish.

My constituency of Lunenburg has a long and famous history of fishing and boat building, building the boats that took the fishers to sea. For centuries, the bountiful codfish, inshore and on our fishing banks, was the basic commodity produced for international trade. It was the cod that drew the early fishers and colonists and successful merchants to the coastal areas of Nova Scotia. Lunenburg, Mahone Bay and Riverport have been long-involved in the fishing industry.

Our area is famous for boat building as well and building these boats that took the fishers to the fishing grounds; hard-working dories, Cape Islanders and schooners were built here, the most famous, of course, is the Bluenose. She was a hard-working schooner known for her speed and elegance. I'm pleased that the refit of Bluenose II is underway now in Lunenburg, being done by a highly-skilled team of boat builders from my constituency. The alliance of Covey Island Boatworks, the Lunenburg Foundry and Snyders Shipyard are known now as the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance, working collaboratively on this project to be a success, bringing many jobs to our area, which we're very pleased.

At one time, when the whole fishery was more viable, many people worked in fish plants in Lunenburg and Riverport, making a living in their own communities. Fishing boats would travel 150 miles to Georges Bank, working tirelessly through every type of weather, bringing home great bounties of fish. Families worked together on these boats and at times tragedies at sea would result in deaths of many in a community at one time. Fishing has always held many dangers and is not for the faint of heart. These strong people are very pleased that we are supporting this moratorium.

Due to the overfishing of freezing trawlers in the 1960s and 1970s, disputes over jurisdiction became an issue. The boundary decision made 26 years ago in October 1984 by the International Court at The Hague allocated five-sixths of Georges Bank to the United States and one-sixth to Canada.

It is important to remember that Georges Bank represents only 5 to 10 per cent of the area for gas and oil exploration, leaving so much of the offshore unexplored. By implementing this moratorium on Georges Bank, it sends a clear message to oil and gas companies just where they can operate. The world is looking at finite resources of oil and gas in a different way now in 2010 than it did even in the late 1990s. We are well aware of the challenges that climate change is having on the world and the move to renewable energy

sources. Our government has set high goals in this area and is committed to forward thinking regarding green technologies. It takes time for new technologies to be developed and in the meantime, industry is constantly improving its methods of exploration and drilling. I am convinced there are many innovative companies working in new areas that will revolutionize energy production in the future.

[11:15 a.m.]

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand in my place and speak to the issues related to Bill No. 82 today. I have received many emails and phone calls - good ones, I might add - which is always a pleasure to receive in my office. To quote the Minister of Energy:

Exploring and drilling activity will not happen in this area of our offshore unless factors such as science, technology and environmental protection provide us with confidence to proceed. Protecting Georges Bank and its unique ecosystem is the right thing to do for the environment and is the right thing to do for the people of Nova Scotia.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you very much, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, and welcome to the Chair on this Friday. It's a pleasure to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 82 - the Offshore Licencing Policy Act. I certainly want to commend the Minister of Energy for bringing this bill forward and for allowing us to have a discussion on this issue, which has been a most sensitive issue for Nova Scotians, over the last number of years, when it comes to the issue of drilling or exploration on Georges Bank.

I do come from a long line of fishermen. From as far back as anyone can remember they were all fishermen, like so many Acadians in Richmond County, especially in the region of Isle Madame. If you look at how the homes were built and where they were built, if you look at a topographical view, there's almost nothing in the middle of the island on Isle Madame, yet the entire coast is surrounded, and that's where the people built. There are reasons for that - because the people were dependent on the sea. Most people would fish during the summer and late into the Fall. They would have a small garden to be able to provide for their family. I say "small" because anyone who has looked at the soil and the land on Isle Madame, it's very similar to Newfoundland and Labrador in that in many ways it is rock, so there weren't many areas to be able to do gardening - and almost everyone had a few animals as well to provide for their families.

Growing up it was listening to my grandfather tell stories about what life was like, and the hardships of what they went through is just remarkable. It was interesting because my grandfather passed away when he was 96 and this was a time when the Internet was certainly starting and doing e-mails and everything else. I often reflected on what a life he had, from starting off with no electricity, no cars, no TVs, the very modest beginnings, and ending his life knowing that his family and his siblings were able to communicate with each other over the Internet. Having had the opportunity to travel as part of the French Parliamentarians, when I was in Africa, to have my dad go back and tell him, I just got off the phone with Michel from Senegal, the thought that he had lived that kind of a lifespan. I often wonder what we will be able to say, should we live that long, of what we've seen, the changes from our youth to our time of passing, and how life will have changed.

That's a story that is repeated throughout our province, of what people have gone through. Certainly, for my family, fishing was our livelihood. As I mentioned, my grandfather and then my father started working in the local fish plant, went off to work in carpentry and then came back to the fishery, as my grandfather started to go up in age, in order to work with him in the fishing industry.

Unlike my colleagues from Digby-Annapolis and, I believe, from Shelburne, who are probably more experienced with the dragging side of the groundfish fishery, we would trawl, and trawl is when you have a main rope basically and you have snoods, we would call them - I'm not sure if there's any other official name for them, but back home they were snoods - with a hook attached to it, and basically you would take this, and they would be in a tub, and as the boat would be going, you would continue to have it going off the boat and it would basically lie on the ocean floor.

I was amazed having had the opportunity to fish with my father - and, like so many other fishermen, my father left school at an early age to help his family and help his parents - it amazed me that with such limited formal education, someone could take the electronics of a GPS, using the sounder, and be able to put this piece of rope right on an edge, hundreds of feet under the water. It was just amazing at how that could be done and how specific you had to be to be able to put that rope on the bottom of the ocean if you were going to have success.

I had the opportunity growing up, I believe - I was one of those kids, Mr. Speaker, that wherever dad went, I went. My mum would often joke that when I would come home from school she could have been lying on the kitchen floor bleeding and my first question was where's dad? Is he out in the shed? Is he down at the boat? Is he down at the bait shed? So that was always my question. Looking back, I consider myself to have been blessed to have had the opportunity to experience that part of the fishery, because in my community and in the regions around Cape Breton there's no more trawling. With the codfish moratorium that took place, it no longer exists. The bait sheds that we used to have throughout our communities are no more. It's a way of life that has ceased for us.

I do consider myself blessed at my age to be able to talk about that part of our history and to have been able to have lived it. I think I was probably about 11 years old when my father allowed me to pick up a chopper to start to cut bait for the first time. It was something I enjoyed because at the time I was still a bit short, so they actually put a milk crate on the floor so I could stand on it to reach the bait table and be able to cut bait. My dad would be on one side baiting the trawls and I would be on the other side cutting the bait. Imagine this young punk with a big knife trying to cut frozen herring and frozen mackerel.

I'm quite happy to report - I know we're not allowed props, but in this case - that all the fingers and thumbs are still in place. For a fisherman, that was always a very important thing. In fact, I remember the older gentlemen, the former fishermen would come in and they would always tell you, be careful, be careful, watch your fingers. At the time you'd be wearing these cotton gloves and they were always way too big, so you'd have these parts of the gloves that were sticking far out. I remember at least once that my aim wasn't the best, so I ended up hitting the glove, and when you looked at it, if my finger had actually been the right size for the glove, there would have been a significant portion of it missing.

I remember one gentleman came in who I had never met before and he continued to tell me, be careful, be careful, watch your fingers. I said, why are you so interested in me watching my fingers? He stuck his hand out and he only had one finger - he had actually been a war veteran who had three of his fingers amputated. So he was saying it tongue-in-cheek, but I can tell you, it startled me to see only one finger and one thumb when he opened his hand. I never forgot that, Mr. Speaker, and always had that in the back of my mind, what would happen if I was too fast or if I wasn't paying close attention.

That was part of my history, and growing up, as you got a little older, they would trust you to actually bait a tub of trawl. That was big step because the question was, were you going to be able to bait it properly? When it went over the side of the boat, was it going to go out in one big chunk - a snarl, as we called it? That was always the challenge and it was a matter of pride. Not only that, but the crew would be awfully upset when they came back to shore if what you had been baiting, the 300 hooks, went out in one shot rather than going out one at a time.

I remember often the crew, had they made that mistake, would point to me, being the youngest one involved, that I was the one responsible for those snarls. At the end we were even to the point where we were each tying our last rope on the tubs uniquely, so that that would take away (Interruption) We'd mark them, as the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture points out, because it was a matter of pride for us, making sure that you were not the one who had caused the snarl in that specific tub of trawl. Those are experiences that I consider myself blessed to have had, the friendships that I made down at the bait shed.

At one point I was working at cleaning the bait shed - in Petit-de-Grat, in one of the harbours, we had 25 groundfish vessels out of that wharf. Of all of those vessels one remains, and it's now doing crab fishing. Those have all disappeared. The crew, an average

of four to five men per boat - imagine, that's how many people you had. When you showed up on Saturday morning at 6:00 a.m., that was the hotbed of activity in our community. In fact, many of the older people would actually come down because that's where they'd have some socializing and everything would take place there.

I spoke at an event in Richmond County Business Forum, and one of the gentlemen who was being recognized for a business he started, he started making lobster and crab pot bait bags. This was a gentleman I had grown up with. He's older than me, but I had grown up with him at the bait shed. I joked, when I was talking about him, and I said, if someone had told me back then at the bait shed that this guy, this former fisherman, would be recognized one day for a business of making bait bags, I would never have believed it, and as I said that, I told him when I went over and was talking to the gentleman, that he was looking back at me and he's too polite to have said it, but I said I'm sure that I could see in his eyes that he was saying to himself if someone had told me way back then at the bait shed that that young punk was going to be our MLA someday, I wouldn't have believed it. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, it was a place where I learned so much and I joked that day about I learned all sorts of matters of life, of finances, all sorts of different things, including sex education and everything else. I often joked that when I would get home my Dad would look at me after lunch and say, now, for the love of God tell me you'll forget everything you heard there today. So it was an interesting experience for me and something that so many Nova Scotians can refer to as well - and I'm sure the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and my colleague, the member for Digby-Annapolis, as well would have similar tales that they can tell of their days growing up and the friendships that were made during that time.

The end of the fishery for us, you would just see the decline taking place. You saw the hardship of people having to exit the fishery, boats having to be sold, crew members having to move away, and it was something that was coming. There was that element of surprise when they finally closed it, but certainly we could see it in our own family income, the fact that my father first started off with a small boat around just over 20 feet, then it was the big investment of buying a 32-footer built by Stanley Greenwood in fact - I believe the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is very familiar with that style of vessel. It was a great boat as well.

Each year you were having to go further and further away from shore to be able to set your gear and be able to catch your fish, and with that the demands on the vessels increased all the time. So all of a sudden you could go out to the Middle Bank and go out to the banks that were closer to shore, maybe steam out an hour, put your gear out at night, haul it in the day, and be back to port by supertime. Then they started to go a little further. It was a two-hour steam, it was a three-hour steam, and all of a sudden it was getting further and further and it wasn't considered safe to be going with that size of a vessel. So the next step was to buy a bigger boat.

So all of a sudden the investment was made to buy a vessel, and the 32-footer was the Mike and Danny, which was named after myself and my brother, Daniel, and then the newer boat was a 44-foot, 11-inch boat. At the time the DFO regulations were such that if you went over 45 feet you were in a different licence class so you had to keep it at that size and that was the Theo and Sons. She was decked over and she was a longliner and that's the vessel that I had the opportunity, I did my maiden voyage with them.

[11:30 a.m.]

It was not a pleasant experience. We were in a storm and we stayed out for almost two days and I've never been so sick in my entire life, although I had actually done quite well fishing before that - with the 32-footer I was fine, I never got sick and everything went well. But I'm happy to report all of the other crew was sick as well, so I wasn't the only one, and it was really nasty weather. But with that boat at the end we were fishing on Banquereau Bank. A 44-foot, 11-inch boat, we were steaming out anywhere from 18 to 24 hours to get to those grounds.

Looking back we all think we were crazy because we were fishing alongside the National Sea boats - 100-foot draggers, steel boats - and they were there at the same grounds as us on Banquereau Bank and here we were, five men in a 44-foot 11-inch boat, 20 hours away from port. Had a storm hit, where do you go? We had some stories of some of the crews home having very close calls.

One of the crews, the same exact vessel as ours, hit a rogue wave that actually lifted the top of the boat off of the hull so that they had a three- to four-inch gap all along the front of the boat, where what we'd call the house, and so here you had the water, the waves crashing over the boat and coming directly in to all the equipment and everything else, and they had nowhere to go. They had to stay there - when you're steaming 20 hours, you really have nowhere to go. They had to stay there. When you're steaming 20 hours, you really have nowhere to go. That's what we went through and right to the very end, that's where we were fishing.

I actually was in my first year of university, that summer we fished from May right until the end of August and it was a tremendous experience. Ironically, that was the last year of the codfish fishery, and as a result that was the end of our business in the fishery. My dad had to sell the boat, sell his licence and get out completely. We really know and we saw first-hand the hardship of that. I can tell you I consider myself fortunate because as I mentioned earlier, I was the type of kid who always followed my dad and I loved fishing. Had my dad told me I want you to stay in the fishery with me, I would have never gone to school. In fact, I probably would have left high school had he told me because that's the type of joy I had in fishing. I was that type of kid who always followed his father and would have taken his advice.

But I was fortunate in the fact that even when I was younger, my father would say, you're going to go to school. He said, I didn't get the chance to finish my studies, your grandfather never got his chance. You will go to school. Looking back, he saw where the fishery was going and he'd often say there is no future in this groundfish fishery for us and you have the chance to go to school, you have to go.

Fortunately I did. I often joke that I don't think he meant for me to go six years of university, but he did certainly want me to be able to finish my studies. I know my grandfather, as well, was always reminding me of the need to go to school, the need to get an education, that there would not be a future in the fishery. Even after I got elected, since I was still doing my articles after graduating from law school, I'd come home and regardless of what achievements I had done, my grandfather's first question was, have you finished your articles? Have you been admitted to the bar? Don't lose sight of that and make sure that you get that done. Who would think, someone at that age, that would still be a priority for them.

I was fortunate to be able to have done all that. As I mentioned, our community certainly saw the devastating impact you can have when the fish disappear. Our local fish plant, which at one point had employed over 500 people, all of a sudden a year or two after the closure, was demolished. It was interesting - I'm sure the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour is well aware of this because Canso is almost an identical duplication of Petit-de-Grat and Isle Madame, their dependence on the fishery. I'm sure the member will agree, unfortunately for Canso, but our communities took different paths as to where they went.

At home we often say that because the plant was demolished, it had a mental impact on our residents, in that they realized the fishery is not coming back, we have to move on, we have to do something else. Unfortunately for Canso, they had a brand new fish plant and there was still that belief that there's no way they're going to leave this fish plant closed and the fish will come back. Some of the challenges being faced today are very unfortunate because we've always had good relations with the community of Canso. We certainly wish them the best, especially during some of the challenging times they're facing now.

I say all of that in how important Georges Bank is to our province. The hardships we encountered in our communities with the closure of the groundfish fishery just simply cannot be repeated. It is our duty as legislators to ensure as much as possible that we do not put this fishery and this sensitive ecological area in any danger.

I'm also reminded during this debate, often when people talk about who should be their elected representatives and what background should they have, what degrees should they have, I have to tell you on this issue, I think our province is blessed to be able to count the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and my colleague, the member for Digby-Annapolis, as members in this House. They bring a perspective and they bring a passion.
(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'm a lawyer and I say that no doctor, no lawyer, no accountant, no physician, no expert on matters will bring to you the passion, the knowledge and the wisdom those two members can bring on matters relating to the fishery, on matters relating to what life is like off the coast of Nova Scotia. I think that really enriches our province to be able to have those types of voices and those types of backgrounds here in this House.

I realize it has been a challenge for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture because he holds two hats. On one side, he's the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, on the other side he's the Minister of Environment and then he's got his colleague who is the Minister of Energy.

We're always looking to find ways of how we can grow our offshore energy industry and that is the challenge. I know it was a challenge for the minister because he would continually stand in his place and say we're going to rely upon the best science, on the best evidence, and he really had no choice but to give that as an answer. That's the challenge in trying to promote one industry but making sure you're not putting another industry in a detrimental position. That was the fine line here and I know it was a difficult matter for the Minister of Energy because knowing him, I think deep down that this is the decision he wanted from day one, in his heart, but he had no choice but as a minister to at least be prepared to hear the industry, look at what is being proposed and determine what's in the best interest of our province.

Not having examined legislation too closely though, I do share the concerns of my colleague from Digby-Annapolis and as well, my colleague from Dartmouth East who have questioned, is this legislation strong enough? Politically, for the government, I guess the question they have to ask is, do they really want to open up this debate again? It's never been a pleasant debate, regardless of what government has been in office. The issues of Georges Bank and whether to allow for exploration or not have always been very emotional. They've always caused a great deal of concern for the communities and the industry affected and it has always placed government in a difficult position.

Is there a way of making this bill stronger? Do we really think there will be a day where anyone will stand in this House to say, I think drilling on Georges Bank is a good idea? Unless we do actually believe that will happen, why would we even allow for that opportunity? Why not shut the door once and for all and say, there is not going to be drilling or exploration on this very sensitive ecological system that we have?

My colleague from Digby-Annapolis has mentioned the disaster that took place off the coast of Louisiana and shudder the thought that could happen here off the coast of Nova Scotia, especially in an area such as Georges Bank. I can tell you that we're still waiting for the stocks to recover in our area due to years of over-fishing. One question is whether we'll ever see a viable commercial groundfish fishery again in my community. The silver lining in that is that our lobster fishery has rebounded, that landings are such that have not been seen before. Prior to my grandfather's passing at 96, they had never seen the landings of

what has been taking place off of our coast in the last five years. As well, our crab fishery has certainly blossomed in our area, which is now one of our main employers in Richmond County and one that certainly needs to be protected for the long term.

It's our duty to make sure we do everything we can here in the House of Assembly to protect Georges Bank, to protect the communities that would be potentially impacted by drilling. I do hope that the Minister of Energy will be prepared to look at any amendments that might be coming forward during the Law Amendments Committee stage that will strengthen this bill; that will allow us to be able to tell Nova Scotians that they can rest assured that Georges Bank will be protected; that the bountiful harvest that it has provided for so many years, we all hope will be able to continue without the risk of drilling and the potential dangers that are involved in that.

With those comments again, this is one of those issues which anyone from Nova Scotia, especially those of us who represent the coastal areas, is very sensitive to, and we want to ensure that we're not having to do this debate on an annual basis, or hopefully I don't have to hear it again during my career here in this Legislature. Something tells me I don't really think the Minister of Energy or the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture really want to have this debate again either. With those words, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 82.

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 honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I thought that the member for Richmond was going to tell us about the sinking of the Arrow in Chedabucto Bay. Some of us are old enough to remember that. I am sure the member isn't, but that was quite the environmental catastrophe back then.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday from the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., at which time we will be calling Bill Nos. 82, 83 and 85, if time permits. I move the House do now rise.

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 are adjourned.

[The House rose at 11:43 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1959**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Leader in the House of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas Bill Cosby once said, "This is the hardest truth for a father to learn: that his children are continuously growing up and moving away from him (until, of course, they move back in)."; and

Whereas on December 5, 2009, a very special occasion took place when Lynette and Matthew Ellis welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Lynette and Matthew on this remarkable milestone in their lives and in wishing them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1960

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 veterans span those who served in peacetime and war, some who fought in World War II and Korean conflict, peacekeepers since 1949, Afghan vets, retired Armed Forces members; and

Whereas November 6th will see a National Day of Protest, designed to draw attention to the needs of veterans and the call for a more timely response to their call for assistance; and

Whereas there are many challenges facing our veterans whether they are 21 or 101. These proud Canadians have carried out proud service for our country;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of the National Day of Protest and encourage all Nova Scotians to support our veterans by attending this event.