



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker

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Second Session

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010

Sixty-first General Assembly

Second Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Charlie Parker

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll start today's proceedings. Before we go to the daily routine, I just want to announce the late debate topic under Rule 5(5). It reads as follows:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly demand that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal honour the commitment of the previous Tory Government and the Premier's election pledge to honour all of the previous government's commitments.

That is submitted by the honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes. That will be debated at the hour of interruption at six o'clock.

I'd like to take this opportunity at this time to introduce a special guest in the Speaker's Gallery. We have Mr. James Macnutt. We just had a very successful book launch. Mr. Macnutt has written a book called *Building for Democracy: The History and Architecture of the Legislative Buildings of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick*. It would make a great Christmas gift. It is very well researched and I would recommend it to you. I'll ask you to give Mr. Macnutt a round of applause. (Applause) Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on an introduction.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome, Mr. Macnutt. It's great to have you here. At this time I would also like to acknowledge in the east gallery two distinguished guests from the United States. First of all, Senator Tommy Moffatt. Senator Moffatt is from Mississippi. I had the opportunity to have lunch with him today and we hit everything from football to coastal communities to history, particularly when it came to - and I want the member for Clare to be aware of this, and the member for Argyle and the member for Richmond - we were talking about the influence of the Acadians and the good United Empire Loyalists that you are listening to at the moment.

Senator Moffatt is the chair of the Energy Council, which counts Nova Scotia as one of its members. He is from Mississippi and he, along with Lori Cameron, who is the executive director of the Energy Council - and a wizard on GPS, I hear - will be hosting and organizing with us. We'll be doing the hosting next June as we will be hosting the Energy Council here in Nova Scotia. I would ask that Senator Moffatt and Ms. Cameron stand and receive a warm welcome from the Legislature. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our guests here this afternoon and hope they enjoy the proceedings of the House.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

MR. SIDNEY PREST: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Resources and as chairman of this committee, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the First and Second Session of the 61st General Assembly.

I would also like to pay special thanks to the committee members and staff of the committee for doing excellent work over the year. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 74 - Land Titles Clarification Act (amended).

Bill No. 75 - Merchandise Inspection Act (amended).

Bill No. 78 - Public Utilities Act (amended).

Bill No. 79 - Securities Act (amended).

Bill No. 81 - Oak Island Treasure Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, before I table the annual report from the Nova Scotia Community College, may I be permitted to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. MORE: In the east gallery we have with us the acting president of the Nova Scotia Community College, Don Bureaux. Please stand for a few minutes because I just want to comment on a couple of things. I think everyone in this Chamber fully recognizes the wonderful contribution that the community college has made to Nova Scotia. This year is no exception and I do want to congratulate, on behalf of all of us, the Nova Scotia Community College for reporting their 14th consecutive balanced budget since becoming board-governed in 1996. I ask my colleagues to give a warm welcome to Don Bureaux. (Applause) We thank the entire Nova Scotia Community College staff for their excellent work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Nova Scotia Community College Annual Report.

[2:15 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2151

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

Whereas Dr. Jack Buckley, who passed away last week after a lengthy illness, was the first president of the Nova Scotia Community College; and

Whereas under his leadership, NSCC became a board-governed institution in 1996 and since then more than 250,000 learners have passed through the college's door; and

Whereas even after retiring from NSCC, Dr. Buckley watched with keen interest the growth and development of the college and took pride in the thousands of lives that have been transformed over the last 14 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all of this House recognize that Dr. Buckley's passion and dedication to Nova Scotia students will be sorely missed, and express our deepest condolences to his wife, Marguerite, his family and friends, as well as the entire NSCC community on their loss.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2152

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

Whereas adoption results in love, support and a permanent, nurturing home for many children in temporary care and custody; and

Whereas in Nova Scotia there are more than 150 children and youth who are waiting to be adopted into a loving family; and

Whereas November is Adoption Awareness Month and during this month all Nova Scotians - families and individuals - are encouraged to consider adopting one of Nova Scotia's waiting children;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House commend those Nova Scotians who have welcomed an adopted child into their home, their family and their heart.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health.

RESOLUTION NO. 2153

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

Whereas Capital Health recently introduced Language Line, a phone-based interpretation service that provides instant access to medically certified interpreters in more than 170 languages; and

Whereas Language Line allows for in-depth health assessments by phone for Nova Scotians whose first language is not English; and

Whereas the Department of Health's vision for this province applies to all Nova Scotians regardless of language spoken, which is part of our commitment to providing better health care;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House commend Capital Health for their continued dedication to health equity and quality care for all Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2154

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

Whereas representatives of Louisbourg Seafoods travelled to Brussels, Belgium, to accept star ratings for its processed crab and shrimp from the International Taste and Quality Institute earlier this year; and

Whereas this prestigious award was judged by more than 120 chefs and wine experts from the European Union; and

Whereas the International Taste and Quality Institute label is a powerful marketing tool that brings immediate distinction in the international market and can be used by Louisbourg Seafoods on all its product packaging for three years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Louisbourg Seafoods for being recognized as a producer of superior seafood products and representing Nova Scotia's industry on the world stage.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted an introduction before I read the resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. MORE: In the east gallery, I would like to introduce Krista DeCoste, the coordinator for the Healthy Relationships for Youth program in the Strait Regional School Board. Thank you, Krista, for standing. Ms. DeCoste and her colleagues on the Healthy Relationships for Youth program work with young people in the Strait area to show them the value of making good decisions so that they can develop into responsible young adults. Please join me in welcoming Ms. DeCoste and thank her for visiting today on behalf of the Strait Regional School Board's Healthy Relationships for Youth program.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2155

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

Whereas Healthy Relationships for Youth is a school-based, violence prevention program, coordinated by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, that is delivered to Grade 9 students in nine schools in the Strait Regional School Board; and

Whereas the program, through its teachers and youth facilitators, teaches young people that the prevention of racism, sexism and homophobia will greatly reduce youth violence and crime in Nova Scotia and all over the globe; and

Whereas the students themselves take on a leadership role in the program by developing peer-support skills, developing healthy social and familial relationships, and working closely with their schools and communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the Healthy Relationships for Youth program for promoting responsible behaviour and choices for young people in Nova Scotia, thereby reducing the risk of youth violence

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 Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2156

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is home to the highest tides in the world and is establishing itself as a leader in the development of large- and small-scale tidal energy; and

Whereas the Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy - otherwise known as FORCE - has received significant provincial and federal support, including a recent \$20 million under Canada's Clean Energy Fund to continue its work in harnessing this tremendous natural resource; and

Whereas FORCE has entered into a contract on behalf of its partners - Nova Scotia Power, ALSTOM and Minas Basin Pulp and Paper - that will see sub-sea cables installed at the Minas Passage test site to allow Nova Scotians to receive clean electricity directly from the Bay of Fundy;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the Legislature support Nova Scotia's bid to be the leading in-stream tidal energy site in the world, and congratulate FORCE for its work in realizing the potential of the Bay of Fundy as a clean, green energy source for Nova Scotia and beyond.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 96 - Entitled an Act to Establish Clinical Trials Respecting Multiple Sclerosis Liberation Therapy and Observation of Multiple Sclerosis Patients in Receipt of Liberation Therapy. (Ms. Diana Whalen)

Bill No. 97 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Hon. William Estabrooks)

Bill No. 98 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 436 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Solemnization of Marriage Act. (Hon. Ramona Jennex)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2157

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

Whereas on September 28, 2010 the residents of Dartmouth lost a steadfast and dedicated servant when the Hon. Gordon Hart passed away; and

Whereas Mr. Hart's service to our province included serving as MLA for Halifax County-Dartmouth from 1960 until 1963 and MLA for Dartmouth North from 1967 until he was called to the Trial Division of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court later that year; and

Whereas his legacy to his community included chairing the Dartmouth School Board, the United Way Campaign, the Rotary Club and bringing the Y to Dartmouth, in addition to serving as town councillor;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature extend their sympathies to the family of the late Hon. Gordon Hart and honour his memory by ensuring that our actions respect the best interest of the public at large.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2158

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

Whereas today Nova Scotian Muslims are marking Eid al-Adha, or the festival of sacrifice, an important Muslim holiday that concludes the pilgrimage to Mecca; and

Whereas this solemn holiday lasts three days and commemorates Abraham's faith; and

Whereas the distribution of meat among the poor is a tradition of this holiday that reminds all of us of the importance of sharing what we have with those in need;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend best wishes to Nova Scotia's Muslim community on the occasion of Eid al-Adha and reaffirm our commitment to fostering our province's diversity.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2159

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

Whereas *Radio Talk: Four Decades Covering the News in Atlantic Canada* by Rick Howe has been published; and

Whereas in this informative book, veteran broadcaster Rick Howe traces his career from covering such events as the Saint John City Hall jail fire and the Westray mine disaster, to memorable trials, politics, and to his tenure as a radio talk show host; and

Whereas *Radio Talk* clearly reflects the author's passion for radio and his dedication to covering the news;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Rick Howe on his publication of *Radio Talk: Four Decades Covering the News in Atlantic Canada*, with best wishes of good luck in his future endeavours.

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

[2:30 p.m.]

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2160

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

Whereas the International Day of Tolerance is celebrated on November 16th of each year; and

Whereas we celebrate this day to promote public awareness of the act of tolerance and the dangers of intolerance; and

Whereas raising awareness and engaging sound education can effectively prevent intolerance fuelled by fear and ignorance;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing November 16th as the International Day of Tolerance and agree to promote tolerance and respect for others within the communities and beyond.

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. 2161

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

Whereas Healthy Eating Active Living or HEAL Cape Breton, a newly formed organization has joined the challenge to encourage families to adopt healthy lifestyles; and

Whereas innovative thinking and co-operation recently brought fresh local produce to the forefront; and

Whereas on October 20, 2010, at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital site, vendors from the Cape Breton Farmers Market, one of which was Hank's Farm Market of Millville, partnered with HEAL Cape Breton to showcase their produce and prepared foods to encourage patients, visitors and staff to make healthy food choices;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate members of HEAL Cape Breton of the Cape Breton Farmers Market for joining the fight to lower the highest rates of chronic disease across Canada, by introducing local products to institutions such as the Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

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 Economic and Rural Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 2162

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

Whereas the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims in Canada is November 17th and the month of November is Mothers Against Drunk Driving's annual Red Ribbon Campaign; and

Whereas the province is taking a tough stance on drinking and driving with a new law that took effect October 26th of this year; and

Whereas the work of MADD is changing drinking and driving behaviour through awareness, education and advocacy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank all the volunteers and Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Department of Justice for their dedication to making our roads safer.

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. 2163

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

Whereas Kathleen Glauser and Chef Rollie Glauser have owned Charlotte Lane Café and Gift Store in Shelburne for the past 16 years; and

Whereas Charlotte Lane picked up the award as Best Small Restaurant at the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia's 3rd annual awards dinner November 10th; and

Whereas Rollie and Kathleen, with typical modesty, praised their staff for their role in winning the award, noting these "top notch folks" have contributed to Charlotte Lane's reputation as a restaurant of incredibly high standards;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Chef Rollie Glauser, co-owner Kathleen Glauser and the staff of Charlotte Lane on being named Best Small Restaurant in Nova Scotia, and wish them many more years delighting the palates of their patrons.

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. 2164

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

Whereas Hannah Martin, a Grade 7 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, invented a snare drum counterbalance appliance; and

Whereas Hannah won \$200 in prize money, a plaque from the engineers of Nova Scotia and placed fourth overall at the Chignecto East Regional Science Fair; and

Whereas Hannah attended the national science fair in Ontario and was judged, along with 500 other young science students from across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate this creative student for winning a bronze medal at the 2010 Canada-Wide Science Fair.

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. 2165

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

Whereas each year since 1971 the Province of Nova Scotia has sent a Christmas tree to the city of Boston, Massachusetts, as thanks for the city's help following the 1917 Halifax Explosion; and

Whereas this year the Christmas tree is the 15-metre white spruce located in the constituency of Kings South, at the property of Gary and Roseanne Misner, Highway No.12 in North Alton; and

Whereas the tree-cutting ceremony which took place November 16th, featured school children from Wolfville, New Minas and Kentville, readings by Bruce Nunn, author of *The Boston Christmas Tree Adventure*, and Natural Resources Minister, the Hon. John MacDonell;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gary and Roseanne Misner of North Alton for generously providing the province the 2010 Christmas tree for the City of Boston, Massachusetts, which will serve as the focal point for the annual tree-lighting ceremony at the Boston Common on December 2, 2010.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2166

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

Whereas Dr. Rob Brownstone and Dr. James Fawcett are Dalhousie researchers who have each won the 2010 Barbara Turnbull Award for Spinal Cord Research; and

Whereas Dr. Fawcett holds the Canada Research Chair in Brain Repair at Dalhousie University, studying how walking is regulated by the spinal cord with input from the brain; and

Whereas his research may lead to therapies for treating neurodegenerative diseases and repairing damaged spinal cords;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Dr. Fawcett on his award, thank him for his contributions to medical science here in Nova Scotia and wish him well in his quest to help those with spinal cord injuries and diseases.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2167

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

Whereas Harbourview Hospital in Sydney Mines, one of only two rehabilitation units in Nova Scotia, recently celebrated 20 years of caring and commitment; and

Whereas Dr. Doug Watt, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist, has been the director of this unit that helps people get back to doing some of the things they did before illness or injury and regain a level of independence, since 1990; and

Whereas the rehabilitation unit includes psychiatry, nutrition, dietitians, the nursing unit, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, recreational therapy, orthotics, social work, pastoral care, environmental services, a hearing and speech clinic, as well as Home Care Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Dr. Watt and all the members of the rehabilitation unit for making a positive difference in the lives of many Cape Bretoners over the past 20 years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2168

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

Whereas rowing is an international sport; and

Whereas the 2010 World Rowing Championships were held in Wanganui, New Zealand, from October 30th to November 5th; and

Whereas Olympic bronze medalist Tracy Cameron of Shubenacadie and her partner, Lindsay Jennerich, captured the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Tracy Cameron and her partner Lindsay Jennerich on their World Championship gold medal and wish them future rowing success on the waters around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2169

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

Whereas in 1960, five women from 14 Wing Greenwood created the Opportunity Shop to raise funds for the Soldiers Memorial Hospital, establishing the Greenwood Chapter of the Middleton Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas over the past 50 years, the Opp Shop has evolved into a thriving secondhand store that has raised close to \$0.5 million in support of many health care initiatives; and

Whereas in 1998, the organization was renamed the Greenwood Health Auxiliary and the membership has grown from five to 40 members who continue the work that began in 1960;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the significant contributions the Greenwood Health Auxiliary, both past and present members, has made to health care in the Annapolis Valley and wish them continued success in future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2170

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 the Canadian Cancer Society Lodge That Gives has been providing a home away from home for cancer patients while they are receiving treatments in Halifax; and

Whereas the Lodge That Gives provides cost-free, welcoming, and supportive housing and peace of mind for 1,100 patients each year; and

Whereas the Lodge That Gives is celebrating its 20th year of helping Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the Nova Scotia division of the Canadian Cancer Society and the countless volunteers who truly make the Lodge That Gives a home away from home.

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. 2171

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

Whereas the Truro Police Service has developed the CYBER Safety Rules program, which provides a positive approach to issues such as bullying and on-line predators in the cyber community using a cyber cop mascot and an educational program; and

Whereas the inception of the program in 2008 has led to a unique model, the first of its kind in educating youth and their parents about Internet safety and awareness; and

Whereas Constable Jon Keddy and Constable Todd Taylor have devoted their time and effort to this initiative so that it may continue to educate the youth in our communities and create a safer Internet environment;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Truro Police Service, Constable Jon Keddy, and Constable Todd Taylor for their efforts in establishing the CYBER Safety program and thank them for their commitment to educating youth and their parents on pertinent issues surrounding cyberspace.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2172

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

Whereas there have been many fishing tales of “catching the big one”, but Julian German, captain of the Mega Hawk, and his crew have the photos to share along with their stories; and

Whereas on a perfect day in May, with the sun shining and the seas calm, the crew of the Mega Hawk hauled in a 23.3 pound lobster; and

Whereas it took electrical tape to secure the claws on the crustacean that took up a quarter of the transport crate and is nearly as big as a 4-year-old boy;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Julian German and his crew and wish them continued success.

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

[2:45 p.m.]

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2173

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

Whereas Louisbourg Seafoods is continuing to reap accolades for the quality and superior taste of their seafood; and

Whereas this international recognition means the Nova Scotia product meets the vigorous testing and tasting of Europe's and the world's top chefs; and

Whereas Louisbourg Seafoods was one of only five Canadian companies to win awards in the Superior Taste Awards in Brussels, Belgium;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and applaud Jim and Lori Kennedy and their hard-working and dedicated staff at Louisbourg Seafoods on winning the three star award for its crab product at the International Taste and Quality Institute of Brussels.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2174

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

Whereas Chris O'Neill is a professional actor and executive director of the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts; and

Whereas Ms. O'Neill, throughout her career, has made a unique contribution to the cultural life of our province; and

Whereas Ms. O'Neill was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002 for contributions to the community and is the winner of the Valley Arts Award for 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Chris O'Neill on being the recipient of the 2010 Valley Arts Award and thank her for her contributions to the cultural life of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 2175

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

Whereas former Smiths Cove resident Roberta Heembrock launched her second book, entitled *Oscar the Herring Gull*, on August 5, 2010, at Admiral Digby Museum with a second launch the following Saturday at Mad Hatter Books in Annapolis Royal; and

Whereas the book was written around stories Roberta's Aunt Mary Lou told her about the mischievous adventures of a little herring gull named Jethro when she was nine or ten; and

Whereas years later Roberta typed the last words sitting in her home office in Calgary;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize Roberta Heembrock for writing this children's book based on her own experiences of when she was a child growing up in rural Nova Scotia and wish her all the best in her future writing 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. 2176

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

Whereas on Saturday, May 1, 2010, the Montreal Gazette ran a two-page feature called *Tune into Cape Breton* in the travel section of the paper; and

Whereas the story, by Peter Leney, details his musical adventures across Inverness County, including the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre in Judique, the Glenora Inn and Distillery near Mabou, the Festival de l'Escaouette in Cheticamp, and various inns, pubs and community halls around the Celidh and Cabot Trails; and

Whereas this newspaper feature will be a tremendous boost to tourism across Inverness County, which if it had been a paid advertisement, would have cost more than \$10,000;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Peter Leney for his excellent feature and hope that Gazette readers take Mr. Leney's advice and tune in to Cape Breton.

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 Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2177

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

Whereas three years ago, ABCO Industries Limited in Lunenburg was approached by the provincial government to develop a mobile dewatering system for raw sewage treatment; and

Whereas the ABCO MDT system can be adapted to fit any model of truck chassis, resulting in a mobile system that can be used to reduce the total volume of material which would be taken to a landfill by as much as 85 per cent; and

Whereas tests show that this new system could mean a savings in fuel consumption of up to 80 per cent, as well as corresponding reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a more efficient way of dealing with raw sewage;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the important innovation achieved by ABCO Industries in Lunenburg and congratulate them on the development of a state-of-the-art dewatering system that will benefit the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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. 2178

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

Whereas Dr. Rob Brownstone and Dr. James Fawcett are Dalhousie researchers who have each won the 2010 Barbara Turnbull Award for Spinal Cord Research; and

Whereas Rob, a Bedford resident, is the Director of Research in the Neurosurgery Division and Assistant Dean in the Department of Medicine at Dalhousie where he teaches surgery, anatomy and neurobiology as well; and

Whereas his research is focused on strategies that will improve the function of people living with spinal cord injuries and diseases;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Dr. Rob Brownstone on sharing this \$50,000 award and thank him for his contributions to medical science here in Nova Scotia and wish him well in his quest to help those with spinal cord injuries and diseases.

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. 2179

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

Whereas Cape Breton University's Boardmore Theatre was established 40 years ago; and

Whereas the 40th season will include some important new Canadian theatre, as well as the Elizabeth Boardmore One Act Play Festival; and

Whereas plans are underway for a special event to commemorate the end of this extraordinary year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Cape Breton University's Boardmore Theatre Artistic Director Todd Hiscock and all those taking part in this season of plays and wish them every success with this incredible milestone.

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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2180

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

Whereas the Canso Lions Club paid tribute to charter member Lawrence Dort, who has provided over 42 years of leadership and service to the Canso Lions Club and surrounding communities; and

Whereas District Governor Barry Dean praised the Canso Lions Club for its projects and support for community groups and individuals; and

Whereas in recognition of his contribution to the Canso Lions Club, the District Governor presented charter member Lawrence Dort with a lifetime membership in the Canso Lions Club and Lions International;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lawrence Dort on his lifetime membership award and thank him for his 42 years of service and true dedication to the Lions motto, We Serve.

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. 2181

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

Whereas a state of emergency was declared for Yarmouth County, due to the extreme amount of rainfall and subsequent flooding; and

Whereas extreme flooding and damage to infrastructure forced the evacuation and displacement of many families and individuals in the Raynardton area and in Quinan; and

Whereas the Carleton Legion came to the aid of these families and individuals by donating food, as well as their time and energy;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly, on behalf of the people of Raynardton, recognize and thank the Carleton Legion for their service to those displaced by the flood for their generosity and compassion and for their unyielding commitment to 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 Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2182

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 members of the community have the best fire protection possible; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of the brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Terry Francis for receiving the Fellowship Award from the Great Village and District Fire Brigade.

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. 2183

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

Whereas Fred Brooks is a lifetime resident of East Preston where he married his lifelong mate Brenda, raised a family and retired after 34 years as a bus driver with Metro Transit; and

Whereas Fred is very involved in the East Preston United Baptist Church, becoming an ordained lifetime deacon in 1977, as well as being a member of the East Preston Men's Brotherhood, AUBA and president of the Layman's Council where he travelled to Toronto in 1980 to attend the Baptist World Alliance; and

Whereas Fred is also a member of the Ratepayers Association of East Preston, past chair of the Preston Day Care Centre, mows lawns for seniors and makes more than 200 trips a year to hospitals, manors and nursing institutions to visit the sick and shut-ins;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House acknowledge the contributions Fred Brooks has made to his community and thank him for his continued support.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2184

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

Whereas last week a person was mistakenly released from custody, a fact that Nova Scotians should have learned about immediately according to the Department of Justice policy; and

Whereas it took over 24 hours for the Minister of Justice to let Nova Scotians know that public safety had been compromised by the release of the prisoner; and

Whereas the Minister of Justice said the delay was due to his desire to get all the facts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly confirm that no new information would have changed the fact that a prisoner was at large or that the Minister of Justice put his political interests ahead of public safety.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2185

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 Halifax Chamber of Commerce Business Awards acknowledge outstanding individuals who contribute to the growth and vitality of the Halifax area business community; and

Whereas at the Chamber's 10th annual awards evening, April Glavine and her company, Lean Machine Healthy Vending Service, were recognized with the Gold Award in the 2010 Small Business of the Year category; and

Whereas Lean Machine Healthy Vending Service provides healthy convenient food choices targeting health care fitness centres and high school and post-secondary students in an effort to making her community become healthier and ensuring the understanding of good nutrition; and

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize April Glavine's attempts to increase healthy eating in Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces and congratulate her on receiving the Gold Award for Small Business of the Year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2186

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

Whereas Mr. Harold MacKay of Dartmouth, formerly from Louisbourg, had the foresight to recognize the opportunity of bringing the Quebec Major Junior Hockey to Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Mr. MacKay was the driving force behind bringing the Halifax Mooseheads and the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles into the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League at a time when there were no franchises outside of Quebec; and

Whereas Mr. MacKay also pioneered a marketing blueprint that revolutionized the type of entertainment that could be offered in a major junior rink;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and acknowledge Mr. Harold MacKay's vision and ingenuity which has resulted in his election into the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League Hall of Fame.

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.

[3:00 p.m.]

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2187

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

Whereas a state of emergency was declared for Yarmouth County due to the extreme amount of rainfall and subsequent flooding; and

Whereas extreme flooding and damage to infrastructure forced the evacuation and displacement of many families and individuals in the Raynardton area and in Quinan; and

Whereas the Cann family of Raynardton came to the aid of these families by donating food, as well as their time and energy;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize and thank the Cann family of Raynardton for their generosity and compassion and for demonstrating the highest qualities of being good neighbours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 2188

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

Whereas a new flying club has been established at the Digby Annapolis Regional Airport and is looking for members; and

Whereas Don Higginbotham organized the club, which had its first meeting on September 12, 2010, in the Digby Arena, where pilots, student pilots, ex-pilots, and wannabe pilots were asked to attend; and

Whereas Don is trying to ignite interest in flying locally and plans to have weekly discussion sessions on meteorology, navigation, procedures, radio protocols, and flight theory, as well as occasional guest speakers;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Don Higginbotham on the opening of his new flying club and wish him great success in the months and years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We're about to go into Question Period. Again, just a friendly reminder that you direct all questions and answers through the Chair and no electronic equipment during the Oral Question Period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 3:03 p.m. and we will go to 4:03 p.m.

The honourable member for Richmond.

**PREM.: NORTHEAST N.S. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
- STAFFING**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this NDP Government's political decision to build the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Pictou County has caused some confusion as to the benefits of this new facility for the local community. In the Sunday Herald, the NDP MLA for Pictou East is quoted as saying: "About 70 full-time jobs will be available to anyone who has the right qualifications, the MLA said. Since many of the positions are for guards, local people will likely have to take a security-training course offered in Truro."

This would seem to indicate that the NDP Government intends to post 70 new positions for jail guards at the new correctional facility. My question to the Premier is, will you confirm that your backbench MLA for Pictou East is correct about the 70 new jobs and thus confirm that your government intends to fire the men and women who currently work as jail guards at the Antigonish and Cumberland County jails?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm is that the people who work in the correctional service and who wish and want to be transferred to that facility will be transferred in accordance with the terms of their collective agreement. We, of course, honour those agreements. Those jobs that are associated with that facility will be filled in the normal course of that process.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately maybe the Premier should have had that discussion with the member for Pictou East prior to him making those public comments. While it took over a year for this NDP Government to politically justify building a new provincial jail in Pictou County, it would appear that they may have forgotten a few steps along the way to that decision.

On August 31, 2010, the Premier signed an historic document entitled The Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia Canada Consultation Terms of Reference. While the process to select a site for a new jail started over a year ago, this NDP Government waited until October 4th of this year to initiate consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia over these three potential sites. So my question to the Premier who is also the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs is, will the Premier confirm whether his government respected the terms of the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Terms of Reference in announcing Coalburn, Pictou County, as the site for the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, those consultations are not necessary in every case. We did speak with them with respect to specific sites. I am very satisfied and I know from my dealings with the assembly that they are very pleased with the terms of reference on the consultation.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, for a Party that spent its entire existence in Opposition prior to winning the last election, Nova Scotians really did believe they would get things right once they had finally made it to office. But, obviously, the Premier has not been reading his correspondence as of late, so allow me to help him. A letter that was sent on November 3, 2010, states: "It is clear that this political decision was made without consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia."

It goes on even further to say:

"Clearly the announcement has pre-empted any meaningful consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, contrary to the document of which the Premier of Nova Scotia supported on August 31st, 2010.

The province is in breach of the Terms of Reference for a Consultation Process and its legal duty to consult as undertaken in the letter of October 4, 2010. What remedy do you propose?"

For the Premier's awareness, it's actually signed by Chief Terrance J. Paul, co-chair Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, along with Chief Gerard Julian who is co-chair as well. So my question to the Premier is, how can you state in this House that you have respected the terms of this agreement when you have such a letter coming from two Mi'kmaq chiefs in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: What I said, Mr. Speaker, is I believe that they are very pleased with the terms of consultation that we set out. This was not a political decision. (Interruptions) That means that more than \$40 million will be saved as a result of a decision that will put the right jail at the right price in the right place.

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

PREM.: CONSULTANTS - ELIMINATE

MR. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you, sir, is to the Premier. Nova Scotians continue to search for signs of real leadership in this government but instead find themselves footing the bill for more fancy consultants. The list is growing. A 10-year agriculture strategy was promised last December - we still wait, a gaming strategy for this Fall - we still wait, and who knows if we'll ever see the municipal water or road strategies.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP continue to hide behind fancy consultants instead of making the decisions that Nova Scotians hired them to make. In fact, they've hired more than a dozen fancy consultants in the past year and a half alone at a cost of over \$0.5 million. My question to the Premier is, instead of hiding behind these fancy consultants, will you commit to some form of real cost containment by eliminating the use of fancy consultants?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Leader of Progressive Conservative Party used to be a fancy consultant. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should know that in the budget that we tabled last year, we have committed to reducing professional services such as fancy consultants by \$10 million this year, and we're going to reach that target.

MR. BAILLIE: I'm not sure which consultant advised him on that answer, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to ask as my first supplementary, while the Premier has been busy handing over hundreds of thousands of dollars to fancy consultants, he also continues to allow the bureaucracy to expand. Even taking into account the upgrade of former part-time employees, the government's own Supplementary Estimates for 2010-11 show an increase of 959 positions over the previous year, a remarkable 9.6 per cent increase. That number is amazingly close to the 1,000 positions the Premier is allegedly going to save someday. My question to the Premier is, how can you boast financial constraint when your government continues on this hiring spree?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's an amazing thing when you can rewrite history, as the member tries to do. He would know that the former government went through a process of bringing in the Department of Natural Resources workers, brought them in; they are on the track to bring in the Children's Aid Society - all of those were, as they have asked in the past, to keep commitments that the former government made.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I suppose fancy consultants deserve fancy answers and that's what we're getting here today. My final supplementary. Last week we learned that the Energy Department has created three new executive administrative positions all on its own, even though activity in the Energy Department is scheduled to decline as we create Efficiency Nova Scotia. So my final question to the Premier is, will you end this madness today by stopping the hiring of more fancy administrators in the Department of Energy?

THE PREMIER: I have to say I am not the expert at hiring fancy consultants. I believe that on the Energy file, we are moving aggressively to rewrite the economic foundation of this province by putting in place an energy policy that will alter the energy equation in Atlantic Canada in perpetuity. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: FUEL TAX - INCREASES

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, gas regulation costs Nova Scotians more than \$8 million a year at the pumps. It is bad public policy and it should be scrapped, but this government continues to add insult to injury by making Nova Scotians pay tax on the tax. Currently the HST is calculated after the province adds the motive fuel tax of 15.5 per cent

per litre. My question to the Premier is, can you tell us what Nova Scotians are paying now, with your increase?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Official Opposition would have received, as most members of this House have, the detailed breakdown from the Nova Scotia gasoline retailers that shows the dramatic decline in gas pricing with respect to the national average in this province since regulation came into effect. In fact, we used to be above the national average more than half of the year; we are now below the national average 47 out of 52 weeks a year.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the answer that the Premier doesn't want to provide to Nova Scotians is it is four cents more a litre. Now that it is at 15 per cent, Nova Scotians are being hit with a one-two punch: 15 per cent HST on gas, plus that 15 per cent HST is piggybacked on the highest motive fuel tax in the country. My question to the Premier is, you told Nova Scotians you were against the tax on tax in Opposition, why do you love it now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we don't like it one bit. The simple fact of the matter is that those reductions would increase the level of debt in the province, something that I understood the Leader of the Official Opposition was opposed to.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, what Nova Scotians were looking for was a Premier who was going to make a decision, not one who was going to try to dig their hands deeper into their pockets every time they turned around, and that is what is happening here.

The tax on tax is unfair and it makes us uncompetitive. It hurts Nova Scotians and the only one who likes this tax is the Minister of Finance, who is raking in an additional \$45 million a year because of this unfair tax. So my question to the Premier is, will you practise what you preached in Opposition and get rid of this unfair tax?

[3:15 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, just as we have lowered small business tax, just as we have taken away the requirement for seniors to pay tax on the GIS, we would love to be able to provide further tax relief and once we have brought this province back to balance, we will certainly consider all of those alternatives.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM.: SMALL BUS. OWNERS - FUNDRAISING REQUESTS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Small business owners create half the jobs in this province. They are the Nova Scotians who invest

their money and energy into our economy and they are still waiting for this government to do something to help them create jobs and reward them for their investment in our province. So it must have been a huge surprise to them when they received a fundraising letter from the provincial Secretary of the New Democratic Party asking them for money. My question for the Premier is, were you aware that your Party had the gall to solicit money from the small business owners of this province that you snub your nose at?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there are many small businesses, of course, that support government and the reality is we are the first government in decades who lowered the small business tax rate.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I want to table that fundraising letter. Nowhere does this letter mention the damage the government has done to small business - a 2 per cent hike in the HST. We have some of the highest power rates in the region and not to mention the tax on tax on gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, you remember last Spring when the Finance Minister of this province wouldn't meet with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the very people who represent those small businesses now that they're trying to dig deeper into their pockets. So my question to the Premier is, why don't you do something to help small business owners with their bottom line instead of trying to dig your hands deeper into their pockets?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition says is fundamentally untrue. Not only did the Finance Minister meet with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, I met with them and we are the first government in decades to lower the small business tax rate.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier fails to recognize what his government's policy is doing in hurting small businesses in this province. He needs only to ask the member for Cumberland North the impact the policies are having on his constituents or ask tourism operators all across this province. Here are some more of the facts that the NDP left out of their fundraising letter. They have added \$1.7 billion to the debt of our province in less than 18 months. In their first budget they increased spending by 9 per cent and in their second budget they've increased it by 7 per cent. That is a government that's supposed to have things under control. So my question to the Premier is, what small business in Nova Scotia would survive if they followed your example?

THE PREMIER: Tourism numbers are up, tourism-related jobs are up, the small business tax is down. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

PREM.: CONVENTION CTR. - AGREEMENT CONCLUDE

MR. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. In an article published on October 13th on the CBC Web site about the proposed convention centre, the Premier said, "This will create thousands of jobs, grow the economy, provide opportunities for communities across the province and deliver good value for taxpayers." I will table that article that includes the quote for the information of the House.

Mr. Speaker, after countless studies and business cases, likely including many fancy consultants I might add, I am delighted that the Premier has finally come to this conclusion. However, the actions of his government to date are not consistent with those of someone who supports this initiative. My question to the Premier is, if you believe in this project and as you have previously indicated, will you commit to concluding an agreement that is fair to taxpayers and in a timely manner?

THE PREMIER: Well, that's exactly what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the former government that used to lay down, roll over, and play dead, we are, in fact, negotiating for the best deal for the taxpayers.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, one of the worst environments for business is one of uncertainty. Businesses hate uncertainty and will hold back from investing or expanding as a result. One of the uncertainties around this project is the cost of construction; however, this cost has been guaranteed by the developer up to January 15, 2011, to protect taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier, will he now commit to concluding an agreement by January 15th so that taxpayers can be protected and this important development can proceed?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we intend to conclude an agreement and I can tell you this, we intend to wring every nickel out of it for the benefit of the taxpayers of this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope we're all around to see that day. The benefits of this project are known: 1,700 construction jobs, \$9.5 million in tax revenue, and \$40 million in ongoing tax revenue in the first decade alone. The project leverages \$47 million of federal contribution in exchange for \$500 million in private investment.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is, will you commit your government, your caucus, your Party, and all else to the task of getting this job done?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for congratulating us on all those things, and yes, we are going to get the job done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**PREM. - YARMOUTH FERRY: SUPPORT/FUNDING
- PROVIDE**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank the Premier for his recent funding announcement to support Yarmouth's 250th Anniversary. I will, however, remind this government that tourism operators and business owners are still struggling in western Nova Scotia because of his government's decision to cut the Yarmouth ferry.

Some businesses have already shut down, others are converting, and others are hanging on by a mere thread, on hopes that there will be a ferry service next year. Yesterday the Premier said publicly that his government may now finally provide the needed funding to help Yarmouth re-establish its long-standing ferry service with New England - funding that is mostly needed because of a break in service.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, will he commit to this House that his government will provide the needed up-front support and financial help to restore this vital ferry service?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I said the same thing yesterday that I said a year ago, which is simply this: if you have a good business proposal, one that qualifies for support from the government, of course we're prepared to work with them to find a sustainable service.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind this House again that the economic support is out there for a ferry service; \$6 million a year will result in \$22 million in profits for Nova Scotians. Now I keep hearing from this government that it's working with our community to make Yarmouth a destination. In reality, the opposite is happening. Infrastructure is changing, motels and B & Bs are converting to housing units and closing, and our hotels have lost so much money that they're looking at turning themselves into seniors' residences. Now people won't be able to come to Yarmouth by boat and they may not even be able to stay. My question to the Premier is, what is your government's plan to keep rooms open so that Yarmouth and western Nova Scotia can be a destination for visitors?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is always one of those moments where it is the difference between what he wishes was true and what is actually true. In fact, the number of jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia that were related to the tourism industry actually rose this year.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing that tourism is up in this province, but tourism operators are crying foul. A report presented to Queens council yesterday shows there was a 61 per cent drop in the number of visitors from the United States. Perhaps the Premier should ask the member for Queens how tourism is doing in western Nova Scotia and the South Shore. This happened during a season where the province had incredibly good weather and where tourism was up in Bar Harbor where the Yarmouth ferry brought people from.

Tourism operators have told me that this shocking decline is directly related to the NDP's decision to cut the Yarmouth ferry. My final question to the Premier is, how soon can the people of western Nova Scotia know of his intentions to provide the needed up-front provincial investment for a new ferry service between Yarmouth and New England?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Bluenose II is a symbol of this province, not because it ran on subsidies, it is because it out-competed on the basis of skill of its operators. That's what we expect for a service in southwestern Nova Scotia, a proper business case, which we will support.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**PREM. - YARMOUTH FERRY: FUNDING
- CHANGE EXPLAIN**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I want to thank the member for Yarmouth for starting this discussion and I'm going to try to continue it. Maybe we might get a couple more answers. The people of Yarmouth woke up to hear media reports this morning that the Premier has had discussions with Mayor Mooney yesterday for an international ferry service out of Yarmouth. We also heard that a number of \$6 million was thrown around but I want to hear the Premier maybe talk to that number. Why this sudden change? Why now? Why not then when we needed it the most last December? What made this Premier flip-flop on the service that is so crucial to the economic health of Yarmouth County?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I spoke to Mayor Mooney yesterday as I did with the wardens of the county and of Argyle, told them the same thing then that I told them last year, which is that we're perfectly willing to co-operate on a sustainable service. The figure of \$6 million never came up and I can further say that we are not considering an operating subsidy to be reinstated.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I can say that, for me, for the council members, for the residents of Yarmouth County, this is the first time that they've heard this. I can say that in the time it took the Premier to understand how important this ferry service is to Yarmouth, hundreds of people have lost their jobs, the local tourist trade was decimated and hundreds of families were thrown into a period of uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier, would the Premier tell the people of Yarmouth today that he is serious about restoring an international ferry service and make sure that he isn't just providing false hope to a community that has already suffered needlessly at the hands of this government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm just as serious today as I was a year ago when I told them that we are prepared to support something that has a sustainable business case. Just think for a second, taxpayers' dollars are being asked to be put at risk. They are entitled to a professional business analysis of any proposal and that's what they will get.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I can say, revelations are around everywhere that they're flip-flopping on every issue. This issue is no different, that finally they've come to their senses, they want to support the Yarmouth ferry. Why did it take the full year? Will the Premier admit today that he has used the people of Yarmouth as pawns in a political game and that by refusing Bay Ferries, he was punishing the community for their election choices?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that's the way that the former government used to do business but that is not the way that we do. What they used to do on all of these decisions was lie down, roll over, play dead - that is not the way that we operate.

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

EDUC.: REPORT CARDS - COMPUTER SYSTEM

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, recently a new computer system was launched for report cards and as a result of problems with this program, report cards have been delayed for many students across this province. Parent-teacher interviews were weeks ago and students deserve to know their marks. Yesterday CBC reported that the Department of Education was blaming teachers for report card delays, "Education Minister Marilyn More said there have been only minor technical glitches and blamed apprehensive, newly trained teachers for the delay in getting out this month's report cards." My question for the Minister of Education is, will you apologize for blaming the program issues on teachers?

[3:30 p.m.]

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I understand there have been some concerns expressed by teachers regarding the new student information system. About 78 schools across the province are in phase one of implementing it and it has gone fairly smoothly. It's a major change and so there have been some minor glitches that you might expect when you're using sophisticated technology with that many people. There are hundreds of thousands of entries capable of being entered into that system and we are just so excited about the potential of the system. It's going to provide information to students, teachers,

parents, school boards and the department in a way that will enable us to have much better evidence for future decisions and we're very excited.

I want to commend the teachers in this province. It has been a major change and they have taken on this extra workload in a very professional manner. Certainly the government thanks them for that.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, that wasn't quite an apology, saying you commend teachers, but nonetheless I guess it will have to suffice. I can tell you that parents are not happy that they cannot check their children's attendance right now. The schools and teachers I've heard from have been ready for at least three weeks. Some teachers have had to resubmit marks. Teachers are not hesitant, they want to give students their marks as soon as possible. My question to the minister is, when can we expect report cards?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, the boards don't have a common deadline for report cards. Many of them have already been printed and are being distributed, even within boards there are different deadlines for getting that information out.

I just want to remind the honourable member, the different aspects of the student information system were being phased in. There was never any possibility, no one ever suggested that the report cards and those marks would be available to parents before the teacher-parent interviews. Certainly, as we understand, the interest of parents is in what's called the parent portal, but that's in a later phase of this project and certainly, I know once it's launched, they will be extremely pleased with the depth of detail that will be available to them.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I didn't suggest that the marks would be available before the parent-teacher interviews. As the minister indicated this PowerSchool program has been rolled out to 78 schools so far and I think we can all agree it didn't go exactly as planned. In fact, it didn't go well. The program is scheduled to be rolled out to all schools across the province in the next year. My question to the minister is, what are you going to do to ensure this \$4.5 million program is rolled out more effectively to the remaining 370 Nova Scotia schools next year?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that there is a joint school board department committee overseeing all of this. There's a team within each school board managing the process. There is a lead person in every school in this province who's helping as well. This process seems to be working well. As soon as any minor glitch is identified, it is quickly looked after. It's actually \$4.5 million for this year, but the total two-year initiative is costing \$15 million, and we know that it's going to be money well invested in public education in this province. Thank you.

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

**JUSTICE - PRISONER RELEASE: ERROR
- REPORTING DELAY**

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Justice. Last week, Nova Scotians learned far too late that a prisoner had been mistakenly released from jail. They were also treated to a string of excuses from the Minister of Justice as to why it took over 24 hours to notify the public.

What Nova Scotians didn't hear was the minister admit he did not follow the policy of the Department of Justice that says the public will be notified as soon as a breach is discovered. By his own admission, the minister knew that Mr. Martell was on the lam Monday night. No further information or new facts would have changed the fact that the man was not in jail or that the minister had a responsibility to immediately tell Nova Scotians about it. Mr. Speaker, exactly what information was the minister waiting for that could justify such irresponsible actions?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, the issue that is a concern here is a couple of hours here or there. If the member on the other side is concerned about a couple of hours for the message getting out versus sitting in the House when the text was sent to me, I don't think Nova Scotians are concerned that much about the issue, from that perspective, and would rather see us be more productive in a positive way.

MR. CLARKE: Oh yes, a couple of hours here or a couple of hours there, you are either in jail or you are out of jail, but it doesn't matter to this minister where they are these days. Last week during Question Period the Minister of Justice assured members - and all Nova Scotians, for that matter - that he was on top of the issue. Well, he was on top of breaching the policies of his own Department of Justice, he was on top of blaming staff, and he was on top of blaming you, Mr. Speaker, because he couldn't use his BlackBerry. I shudder to think what the state of the Department of Justice would be if he wasn't on top of things the way he is.

Will the minister signal his commitment to transparency and to public safety by today committing to initiate a departmental review of Mr. Martell's release and the communications associated with his release and report those results to this House through you, Mr. Speaker?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. I can't help but reflect on this issue that we have. I think this is the first incident since I've come to office. This is the first incident where somebody has inadvertently been let out before their time, unlike the previous administration, where it was a regular event. We have addressed the issue. We have guaranteed that we will communicate with Nova Scotians as we have been doing. Thank you.

MR. CLARKE: What we do know is we have a Minister of Justice who won't even abide by the directives and policies of his own department, so how can the public have any confidence in anything that minister says? It's a fact that the minister did not notify the public as soon as it was discovered that Mr. Martell was on the lam. The delay had nothing to do with whether or not the use of BlackBerries is allowed in this place. As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, the use of Pages is a time-honoured and extremely reliable way of getting information to the members. I know the minister has gotten messages in the past.

By the time Question Period rolled around last Wednesday, the minister had kept Nova Scotians in the dark for over 24 hours. It may have taken longer if it wasn't for reporters who called the department and prompted this minister's staff and the Premier's staff to have a knee-jerk reaction. After Question Period he had over an hour to get his act together but he couldn't - more like wouldn't - in the purpose of public disclosure.

What I want to know is, did the minister purposely ignore the policy of his own department or is it just that he is not up to the job of being the Minister of Justice and doing the right thing for Nova Scotians?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. You know, I like to try to keep things at a higher level and with respect, but when you take over a mess from someone that left incompetence, it's a full task to correct it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

TIR: ROAD-PAVING PLAN - STATUS

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, before this House session began the NDP Government said one of the big items on its agenda would be its long-promised, five-year road paving plan. Since we're almost three weeks into this sitting and we haven't seen anything yet, maybe it is time that the government could provide us with some information on this matter. So my first question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is, where is your five-year paving road plan?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I want the member opposite to know the road plan will soon be in its final draft, and I want you to know there are no outside experts, there are no fancy consultants - it's done in-house, it will be done on budget, and it will be done reasonably. I'm aware of the fact that we're looking at having this plan available to all members of the House as soon as possible.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, talk is all we hear from the NDP Government - very little action is really taking place. My question to the minister is, why is your five-year road plan taking so long to release to the House?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Clare - that is the member for Clare, is it? Yes. No, I don't mean to make light of that; I know that it's an interesting feature. I've had many of you ask about this road plan and I want you to know that the key factor in the road is of course, as many of you are now aware, I'm hearing from you, you're putting forward your priorities - I just don't have them presented on a napkin like a certain member did in the past - and I will assure you those priorities will be listened to, but the key part you will realize of this plan is that each and every year there is an opportunity for the minister to stand in his place and report on just how well we have done or what we haven't done.

That's a key feature in this road plan, and I'm looking forward to making this public as soon as possible, but I must point out to you that my staff, particularly the people in Communications and, if I may, I'd like to mention Cathy MacIsaac in particular, she has been extremely busy lately - if I can find that contact lens that just popped out. I'm a multi-tasker. The member for Cape Breton South just got better looking all of a sudden. (Laughter)

MR. SPEAKER: You may continue, Mr. Minister.

MR. ESTABROOKS: I've always been described as a tangential thinker - you just got proof of it. Now I have to be serious about this, and my apologies for that sarcasm to the member for Cape Breton South. I could have picked on the member for Clare, it would have been better.

I am aware of the fact that many of you have been very patiently waiting for this. Cathy MacIsaac, over the last couple of weeks in particular has been extremely busy on a couple of other matters. It was decided that we'd make sure that we had it as ready and that ready it will soon be, and that's the best I can say at this time. I want to thank the staff and I want to thank the members present for their patience on this issue though.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, our construction companies are essential to building our roads and highways, and crucial to economic development. The input from the construction industry is crucial to putting in place a proper paving plan. So my final question to the minister is, will you make a commitment to this House today that a five-year paving road plan will be in place so your government does not delay the start of construction season next year?

MR. ESTABROOKS: I continue to hear from road builders; in particular, Grant Feltmate has met with me on a number of occasions. We are fully aware of the importance of having these plans in place. As I've always said, November is the key season for planning when it comes to this issue. I assure the member opposite, I assure all members in the House, I assure Nova Scotians that the five-year plan will soon be made public.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

AGRIC. - FUR INDUSTRY: REGS. - RELEASE

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government introduced a new bill to deal with the fur industry in Nova Scotia. This legislation is necessary to support and maintain a very lucrative and growing industry. Mink producers and concerned Nova Scotians alike are wondering when the regulations will be released. My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, when will the regulations be completed?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, it's the intent of the department to have them ready by Spring.

[3:45 p.m.]

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the mink industry is worth a great deal to economic development of Nova Scotia. Export sales exceeded \$65 million in 2008 and about \$80 million in 2009. However, many concerned citizens have important and valuable information to offer to the minister as well. My question to the minister is, will you hold consultations with the public to receive feedback on these proposed regulations as you promised in Yarmouth?

MR. MACDONELL: Yes, we will.

MR. GLAVINE: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker; this is becoming answer period today. One of the main concerns of industry producers and citizens is the issue of grandfathering regulations. My final question to the minister is, will there be grandfathering of the new regulations once they are introduced?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, the legislation indicates that once we have the regulations in place, operators will have up to three years to comply. That's a line in the sand - in other words, they have up to three years and then they will have to bring their operations up to a new standard.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**HEALTH: CAREGIVER ALLOWANCE PROG.
- ANNOUNCE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. She was looking lonely over there so I figured I'd ask her a question. The Caregiver Allowance was a program designed to help seniors stay in their homes longer by providing their caregivers with \$400 a month. As you know, many people give up their lives to take care of friends and loved ones and by doing this they save the

province money by keeping their family members out of hospital or out of long-term care facilities.

Last September when I and other members brought to the Minister of Health's attention numerous cases where caregivers did not qualify for this program, the minister assured us she would be bringing forward a Caregiver Allowance Program this year. My question through you to the Minister of Health is, where is the promised program? There are only six weeks left in 2010, so the clock is ticking on the minister's commitment. How much longer do people have to wait?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question, I was getting a little rusty. Caregivers are really important to this government. We recognize the important contribution they make in caring for family members and friends. The Caregiver Allowance that was introduced last year has been evaluated. We've done a public consultation with important stakeholders about it and we will be making some changes to the program along with some other additional services for seniors to keep them in their own homes as long as they want to be there. Those announcements will be coming soon. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, we have a number of questions we're asking about when, and we have some soon, very soon, but the Minister of Agriculture, he knew when, he said Spring. So we're hoping this Spring we'll have an answer on this one. We continue to believe that this government is all sizzle and no steak, that is, all talk and no action. What we're saying is, we'd really like to see this happen.

If you remember correctly, last session, I believe it was the Fall session of last year, we brought to the floor of the House the issues of Peter Cottreau and his mother Jean. We brought the issue of Sheila Barrington of Ross Ferry and many other citizens who need the Caregiver Allowance now. I want to let the minister answer, a little more definitively, when this program might be rolled out.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, like the honourable member, I've heard from numerous people around the province with respect to the care they're providing to seniors. The current Caregiver Program has assisted more than 900 people. We've had approximately slightly under 1,200 referrals for the program, so we know there are more people out there who could benefit from the program than have actually received the program. We are looking at what is required to address the next level of need. We're providing the allowance to people with challenging behaviours, but there are people who have fallen through the cracks and we need to address that. I can assure the honourable member that he and his colleagues will not have to wait very long for the announcement of our changes.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her answer on that one. We hope, and we hope because not only was this promised, it was an election promise - it wasn't just implying that they were going to do it, they were going to be making the difference with the Caregiver Allowance. So I can say and ask the question, should Nova Scotians add the new Caregiver Allowance to the long list of broken NDP promises or will the minister just tell this House today exactly when she intends to introduce the program?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that this is a minister and this is a government that keeps its commitments. We introduced the travel allowance for out-of-province health care; we hired John Ross as our ER adviser; we tabled the first accountability report on ER closures in the province; we have gotten a better deal on drug costs for people in the Province of Nova Scotia; and we invested a significant amount of money in a rapid response unit over at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Emergency Health Centre - and it has diverted more than 100 people from the emergency departments since it has been opened.

Mr. Speaker, this government keeps its promises on health care and we will keep our commitment on the Caregiver Allowance Program. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

COM. SERV. CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING UNITS - STATUS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on November 3rd I asked the Minister of Community Services how many co-operative housing units were deemed to be unhealthy in the province according to the department's ranking system. I would like to follow up with the minister to see if she has that information today. So my question again to the Minister of Community Services is, what is the total number of units deemed to be unhealthy in our province?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member with regard to his question. With regard to co-operative housing in Nova Scotia, it's a very important part of our housing program and our housing plan. The information that I have requested for the honourable member is coming from my staff in terms of the exact numbers because he was looking at the different rankings. So that will be coming from staff to him shortly.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, so we don't have the official information and the exact number, but it is clear from the department's documents that there are many, many co-operative housing units which are unhealthy. The department claims to be addressing the

issue but we don't know when or which units. So my question to the minister is, is there a priority list to address low Level II and Level III housing for Nova Scotia?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, what's important is not only the co-operative housing which we're looking at, it is that we have invested \$128 million in the stimulus package which we've been rolling out in the last year and a half. We have two years to get that program out to make sure that every cent is spent and that we get every dollar that's coming to us from the federal government, and that's why we've been focused on the stimulus package. At the same time, we are now in discussion of a housing strategy which will actually incorporate the co-operative housing and any issues that surround those.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, some of the co-operative housing I've seen in my riding is in very bad shape. People need a place to live, but it needs to be healthy. It's not enough to build houses if the government can't assist with the maintenance of those units. During the November 3rd Question Period session, the minister said, "One of the areas that I'm looking at, in particular, is with regard to the housing issues," so I'm hoping for substantial information, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Minister of Community Services is, can the minister please tell me what she is doing to address maintenance issues for co-operative housing units in Nova Scotia?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, what I am going to do is, I think that the honourable member and myself should talk later. I think that there might be a misunderstanding of co-operative housing - which are typically privately run, versus public housing - and whether it's public housing that we're responsible for, affordable housing through our department, which is a different category of housing. I'm more than delighted to speak to him and talk to him about that so we can clarify and get the right answers to him. Thank you.

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

ENVIRON.: BIOSOLIDS - REGS.

MR. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this question isn't that fancy, but I would like to ask it to the Minister of Environment, actually. Residents of HRM are grappling with the issue of biosolids as we speak, but they have been left unprotected by this government. In fact, not just residents of HRM but all Nova Scotians are up to their eyeballs with concern over this important issue. My question to the Minister of Environment is, will the government show leadership and put in place province-wide regulations to protect the citizens of Nova Scotia?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, you refer to up to your eyeballs, but I'd like to make reference to a statistic: the population of Nova Scotia produces 3000 trailer truck loads of biosolids each year. I can tell the member opposite that this is a very safe product and this meets the highest standards across Canada.

It is used in other jurisdictions and we have a safe product. Thank you very much for the question.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it is good to know that the minister is such a fan of biosolids, but leaving it to the municipalities will result in a patchwork approach across our province. My question to the Minister of Environment is, will this government get its act together and take the lead in protecting all Nova Scotians?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, again to the member opposite, I know he's just been a short time in the House, but I think you need to come up to speed on this particular topic. We have the most stringent policies and regulations regarding this product. We take a product and we improve it for the environment. We're there to protect the environment. I'll end with a question, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the member opposite, where did these 3000 trailer truck loads of biosolids go before we did this process?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if there is anyone who needs to get up to speed on the concerns that Nova Scotians have about this issue, it is that minister and this government. However, if there was ever an issue that did not require the use of fancy consultants, this is it. My question to the Minister of Environment is, when will this government do its job and make decisions that protect Nova Scotians?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite - and all members - I wish for him to review the information. The science is there to back up this decision. We made the right decision, we protected the environment, and we basically took a waste product and created a safe product. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**TIR - CELTIC COLOURS: HWY. DELAYS
- APOLOGIES OFFER**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on October 8th, this Fall, Cape Bretoners, Nova Scotians, and visitors from around the world gathered for the opening gala of the Celtic Colours International Music Festival. While we would have expected that all of the visitors who gathered at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Center would have spoken about the beauty of Nova Scotia and the changing of the leaves, instead there was a constant grumbling about the lengthy delay that took place at Monastery, on the highway, due to road work, due to what we've now been told was malfunctioning lights. Visitors to our province and Nova Scotians were forced to wait an hour, two hours and more, before they were able to make it to beautiful Cape Breton Island.

[4:00 p.m.]

My question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is, if he's not prepared to apologize to all those Nova Scotians and our visitors, will he at least apologize to his colleagues, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and the Minister of Health, who almost - and I say "thankfully," Mr. Speaker - missed Cape Breton icon Rita MacNeil and the Men of the Deeps sing Working Man?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: I thank the member opposite for the question. I have on each and every occasion, whether I have been contacted by e-mail or directly by Cape Bretoners or other people, some from my constituency, apologized for the fact that technology failed and that it certainly is an embarrassment to how it has been handled. Staff responded as quickly as possible.

I make no excuse for the fact that these delays were unacceptable. Hopefully they will not happen again. I know personally, considering the situation of where I was spending my weekend that time, I would have been as frustrated as many of them have been. Could you please pass on to your constituents if they want to hear directly from the minister on this case, tell them to give me a call and I'll apologize to them personally.

MR. SAMSON: Well, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I certainly commend the minister for that because it had been my understanding that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the last number of years had implemented policies to specifically deal with Friday afternoon traffic, to deal with holidays, being that our province depends so heavily on tourism, the importance of making sure that traffic flows regularly on such holiday weekends. So I'm wondering if the minister could advise us, have there been any updates to that plan in light of the unfortunate situation that took place at Monastery on the day of the opening of Celtic Colours?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Thank you to the member opposite, I know I haven't got much time here but I can assure you that one of the key things on a long weekend, we always made sure that the workers were off the road early, particularly when they were going to travel in that fashion.

When I heard of this particular incident, I can say that as the minister you are responsible for these things. It's an embarrassment, we've learned from the mistake and I want Nova Scotians to know that hopefully it will not happen again. I thank them for their patience and, on behalf of the government and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I apologize for the inconvenience.

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

Before I go to the Government House Leader, some of you have ribbons or flags on your desks and I realize it is for a very good cause but normally the ribbons, flags or other such displays on members' desks have not been allowed and there have been Speakers' Rulings in the past on this issue, so I would ask you to kindly take them off your desks, even though it is for a very good cause.

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. 85.

Bill No. 85 - Police Act.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park was in full flight, and we'll turn it over to her at this time.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that comment on my starting of discussion last night on Bill No. 85, which is an amendment to the Police Act. You will recall that we were talking about Victim Services because although this is an amendment to the Police Act, it is actually relating to the notification of Victim Services staff either at the police department or at the Department of Justice where we do have a Victim Services Division.

Last night I was taking the opportunity to talk about some of the shortcomings in this program and some of my very deep concerns about how it is operated and really what benefit or what value we're getting from this program as it is currently set up. Bill No. 85 just barely touches the surface, it barely scratches the surface on what needs to be done in this area. Last night a number of speakers made the point that really it isn't even necessary for the Minister of Justice to bring this forward. There has been some suggestion by the minister that the particularly the RCMP wanted to have legal authority to release any information about a victim to those very people who are in the Victim Services area and want to provide services. Our understanding is that virtually all police forces are doing it anyway.

Further to that, it looks so much like just a very weak attempt to build up the number of bills that are going through this House to make it appear that there is a volume of work going on here, which, in fact, there isn't. This is a very minor bill that could be dealt with through the powers that the minister has anyway. Just to begin with, I had looked up the Police Act so that I could see where this amendment would fit in and how it relates to the Act. On the very first page when I turn over the cover page, the very first page has a listing of the duties of the minister and so that would be under Section 5 (3)(a) I just want to read it to the group. It says that the minister may, "issue a directive or a standard operating or administrative procedure to a police department and the police department shall comply with the directive or standard operating or administrative procedure."

I can't think of what else this would be that's before us in the form of a bill that's going to go forward, I assume, and become an Act of the Legislature when, in fact, all it needs is a stroke of the pen and a directive from the minister to tell the police department to do it and that's all it requires. I think the Act is very clear. You can see it's a large Act. The Police Act is about 30 pages but you don't need to go past the first page to see that the minister has the power and the authority today under this Act to do it. So one is left to wonder why he went through this. I refer to it as a bit of a mockery. It's a bit of a charade, really, to call in people from the Advisory Council on the Status of Women to support the bill, to call on somebody from the RCMP Victim Services to come here to the Legislature and support this bill. Of course they will because Victim Services is important and they want to promote services that are going to help the victim.

Our point in talking to this - and I know my colleague, the member for Richmond spoke at length on it - is that this is not going to change the delivery of the services in this province. If, in fact, it does anything, it may increase the demand for Victim Services, it may possibly. I'm willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. It might actually mean more people are notified about the services and if they are, we're going to have more people asking for help and we're not dedicating any more resources to it. There's no indication that we're going to increase the allowance for counselling services or increase the support that we're giving to people who are victims of crime.

Last night, I think I outlined pretty clearly where there are some deficiencies in that. Number one, we're only allowing our only form of support to a victim of crime is counselling services. When you're just immediately in the throes of a crisis and realizing that your family has been a victim and you're in trauma, you're told that what you can get - if you fill in the right paperwork and get approved by the government - the authority to seek out a counsellor. Once you've done that, you're limited to \$85 an hour for that counsellor that you might find or that psychologist that you'd find. I think I made it pretty clear last night that the average cost of a counsellor is between \$120 and \$150 per hour. So for those victims of crime who may just have paid for a funeral for a relative, who may not be able to work, which is quite likely, who have their income interrupted and are financially insecure, we're asking them to subsidize that counselling.

I'm really quite appalled, I have to say, what good is this program if it doesn't allow people to at least get the counselling award that is on the books? Now, on the books it says that a victim of crime can have up to \$2,000 in counselling awarded to them, that amount of money, not in their hand but directly to the counsellor that they choose. I already went through how difficult it is for some people to choose a counsellor from a prescribed list that they have to go through one by one and see if that person is available. Even when they find the counsellor, the \$2,000 award might sit on the table and never be touched because the family doesn't have the money to subsidize that \$85 and bring it up to the amount that the counsellor actually charges for the hours of counselling. That, right off the bat, is such a limitation because some people are not going to be able to access it and they get no help whatsoever.

I want to remind the members of the House and Mr. Speaker, yourself as well, that people in Nova Scotia who receive tickets for traffic violations other than parking, pay a 15 per cent surcharge on those tickets, and that surcharge creates a Victims Assistance Fund. That fund is supposed to go to help victims, but again, is it? Is it being utilized or is it not? I mean, if the only help we're giving people is counselling that they may not be able to access - I was saying very strongly, and I'll say it again today - I think there should be no cap on the counselling. It should depend on the severity of the crime and on what the needs are. We should not be nickel-and-diming victims and families - absolutely.

The victims of crime have to fill in a form for each member of the family. Now, I will say, after I complained about this two years ago, the forms were condensed so that a parent could fill in their children on the same form, which was good. On the old forms, it was one for every single relative and it was heartbreaking and traumatic just to fill it out once let alone multiple times, but we still have to have a different form for each different family that's related. So an aunt, an uncle, and their children would be a different form and so on - a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law would be on a different form. So we're asking them to do multiple forms and each of these family members are hoping to get access, or an approval, from the Victim Services Department.

Mr. Speaker, I pointed out yesterday, there have been some ludicrous rulings, and one of them - I will go back to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. He is very well aware of the murder, the homicide case of Paula Gallant, and the fact that one of her brothers-in-law was approved for counselling and one was not, in a very close-knit family when all of the relatives were very close, and everybody was very - and remains deeply - traumatized to this day. What a situation to put a family in where you have to go back and appeal and you have all of 30 days in the midst of your crisis to make the appeal.

Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago I brought in my own Private Member's Bill on this, it was two years ago, and I suggested that there be no cap on the counselling award and that it be up to the discretion, case by case, of the director, knowing that there are families that need more help than others. At the same time, if you've been denied the assistance of this counselling program - and remember, I think this counselling program being the sole

means of supporting victims is pretty inadequate to begin with - but in the case of an appeal, if you've been turned down, I think you should have a lot more than 30 days. I think it should be at least half a year, say 180 days, because families are in trauma and they can't deal with that kind of bureaucracy. They're not in a position to turn around and start fighting with the director of Victim Services, or whomever has brought them this bad news. They have bigger issues to deal with and that would be trying to keep their families together, keep themselves together at a time when they're not able to work, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces in the country offer a lot better services than we do. Some of them offer compensation that allows for the lost income they've had, up to a certain limit I will say, but they recognize that. Some Victim Services programs cover funeral costs, and in the case of one homicide victim whose father lived in my area, the family had a huge cost just simply to deal with the immediate need of a funeral, which they certainly never ever imagined they would have to do for a daughter. The community came together and tried to help in that respect, and did donate, but really, this should be something that, because from no fault of their own they are victims of crime, we should have the compassion and we should have the concern that would allow us to direct the funds that are coming in through the Victims Assistance Fund to the victims of crime.

Mr. Speaker, it's sometimes difficult doing research on government and where monies go but I've been trying to look at what happens to that fund - the Victims Assistance Fund. There are a number of Orders in Council that you can see over the years which say very clearly - and I know last night I was asked by the Speaker at the time that if I was reading from things, perhaps I should table them, and I would be happy to as long as I get a copy of it myself later - but some of these, for example, in an Order in Council in 2000, August 2000, it says very clearly that - I want to see if I can make it a little bit shorter, but it's pursuant to this and that.

[4:15 p.m.]

It says, “. . . the Victims' Rights and Services Act, is pleased to authorize an expenditure of \$248,000 from the Victims' Assistance Fund for payment of salaries for Victim Services Division staff. That's very nice, I hope everybody's heard that, \$248,000 is going to be taken from the Victims' Assistance Fund to pay the salaries of staff in Victim Services. I'm not going to point fingers at who is in government or why, but I say it's wrong, it's just wrong to take money that Nova Scotians are paying into that fund and not complaining about it, because just like any other fund where we know it's going to a good cause, it was identified as a fund for victims. We would expect there is some help if your life is absolutely turned upside down and changed in every way from what you knew before. You might be unable to work, which is the case with people I know, unable to resume a lot of your normal activities even years after the crime has taken place.

I think it's not surprising that would be the case because some crimes are so horrendous; as I said last night, impossible for us to imagine being in that position. I think,

as a compassionate province, we should be looking at why we would be directing funds from the Victims' Assistance Fund into just regular operations of government. Really, it's just not right. I would far rather see those funds be administered through the police department and given to the victims than to set up a bureaucracy within government. Then we have to basically rob from this fund, that was set up for victims, to fund the government operations. I think that needs to be reviewed and looked at and I'm hoping that will happen.

That wasn't the only time, I read that one from August 2000, but it continues. The only difference is they don't tell us the amount from year to year. There was another one in 2006 which says they'll continue to do that and it says there again, under the Victims' Rights and Services Act to authorize expenditures again from the Victims' Assistance Fund for payment of policing and Victim Services Division employee salaries and support worker fees from April 2, 2006 to March 31, 2011 - so right up to this fiscal year.

This has been in place for a long time, but it's not showing us the amounts that were dedicated each year, it's left it open. I'm pretty much prepared to say we're not putting very much into the help for our victims of crime. If it's true, I had reviewed the transcript from the Public Accounts Committee in 2008 when the Deputy Minister of Justice came before us and I asked her questions at the time around the financial issues of Victim Services, how much money did they have in the fund and so on - at that time, she was accompanied by the director of finance for the Department of Justice - and she indicated that \$220,000 went for counselling that year and the budget of the program . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. There seems to be a bit too much chatter in the Chamber. It's hard to hear the honourable member and it's hard for her to get her point across. I just ask that you take your conversations outside.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I was reiterating from 2008 what the deputy minister said at the Public Accounts Committee that \$220,000 out of a budget of over \$2 million - it was about a \$2.5 million budget - \$220,000 was going directly to this victim counselling program, which is the only one I said that provides any direct financial help to a victim of crime. We don't cover prescription costs so if you don't have a plan and need to get prescriptions as a result of the trauma that you're suffering, we don't cover that. We don't help them with anything but the counselling award. As I said, bear in mind, it doesn't cover the full cost of that counselling award.

There are people in the Department of Justice who will say, you can find some counsellors on that list who will do it for \$85, some of them will. But when you find yourself as a victim of crime - you have the list, there were 19 on the list that I saw of counsellors for HRM - it's your job to call through the 19 and find out who might be available and who would consider taking you on for the amount that's allocated by the government's regulation, which is \$85 an hour. A lot of them will just say they can't do it.

There's also no way for you, looking through that list, to say who's best if I'm a victim of sexual assault or I've been robbed or I'm a victim of homicide - I'm a family member who has lost a loved one. There's nothing in there that indicates which of these counsellors have that ability. I can tell you that, particularly for homicide, there are counsellors who are not able and they will tell you that when you call. They'll say, I'm just not prepared, I've always dealt with domestic violence, or I help people with children who are suffering from trauma; I'm not able to deal with this, it's too big, it's too difficult. So as the victim, it's your job to go through this list.

Can you imagine how difficult that is when you're just trying to get through every day, to just manage day to day? I can say this from experience as an MLA who has gotten involved and thought that our Victim Services Division would get involved and come out and help people and discover that they sent them paperwork and that nobody helped them fill out that paperwork. They expect people to have the wherewithal to do that.

In the case that relates to my neighbourhood and the gentleman that I know, Mr. Horne, who lost his daughter, Jennifer, the entire extended family was unable to deal with that paperwork. I thought there may be other members who could help, but nobody was able to at that point in time, and no wonder. I just thought that the government employees, whose job it is, would have the training, the experience, and be able to go in and sit with them and intervene and help them, because you don't want to be faced with bureaucracy and forms when you're in the midst of that kind of trauma.

In looking at this bill, and I have to go back to Bill No. 85 - don't I, Mr. Speaker? - because this is part and parcel of it. My point is, we're putting a bill before the Legislature which will essentially pretend that something has happened for Victim Services when really this is not on the ground, at the end of the day, going to make a hill of beans difference to the people who are being impacted, who find themselves completely broadsided by suddenly seeing themselves as victims when they never imagined that would happen in their lives. The fact is that it can happen to any one of us, to people who are dear to us, to people we know in our communities. Through no fault of their own, they're in this position of needing help and our help here in Nova Scotia is really inadequate, absolutely.

Looking over time, the evolution of this bill, I guess where we're at today, we have a Victims' Rights and Services Act, and I think maybe that's where this amendment that's before us probably should have been, I would have said, rather than the Police Act. If we'd open the Victims' Rights and Services Act, we could actually make some differences. We could actually rewrite it, perhaps today, while we've got the attention of government on victims services. There is so much that needs to be done and I'm really asking that we review the support that we have for our victims and that we look at the money that is collected from these fines and surcharges and redirect them where they belong and where the people of Nova Scotia believe they're going.

What an affront to think that for years and years we've been paying salaries and benefits and support staff costs in Victim Services, in the Department of Justice - a big department of government - taken from those fines that are coming in that should be, and people believe are, directed to victim services, victims themselves - a Victims' Assistance Fund, that's what it's called.

I'm concerned that we're not doing that and that it is really misleading Nova Scotians to think that we've been doing better than we actually have. The fact is that any MLA that ever runs into this issue, where there's a victim who has come to them for some help, will be very disappointed to see what is available. Hopefully you won't say you didn't know because you've heard it here from me now, that in my first five years in the Legislature I had never had the direct contact with that area. I just thought, like so many other things, that we have a social safety net, that we have the pieces in place to help people when they really need it in Nova Scotia.

This is something that even the federal government supports. I don't know if people have been seeing the ads lately on television, "VictimsMatter.gc.ca", the federal government is directing people to come and have a look and there is a lot of advertising now coming from them. In fact, if you live in New Brunswick, they don't just make a bill to say that the police have to inform you if you're a victim, you have to inform Victim Services. They advertise, if you're a victim, call us. They reach out. It has been on their television. People who have been from Nova Scotia and saw that in New Brunswick were just amazed that there was that kind of outreach to call on people to come back.

I think that there has been a lot of hyperbole from the department around this bill. Again, I welcome the attention on Victim Services, so the fact that this bill is before us could be advantageous. The fact that we're able to stand in the Legislature - not just myself but the member for Richmond, the member for Cape Breton North spoke on this yesterday, and I'm sure there are other members who want to speak on it, because they're going to feel the same outrage that I do, the same disappointment that we are offering such an inadequate program.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I started to look at the press release that the Department of Justice had put out around this and I just think it indicates that something is really going to change for victims and I don't believe, in fact, that it will. It says this change will make sure all crime victims in the province will be referred to helpful support services in a timely manner. Where does that indicate that those support services are? You will have to fill in a form and if the department decides you are eligible, you can go through the list of counsellors and pick one. You won't have enough money at the end of the day, probably, to pay for it.

That's great, there's a whole story behind this that is not told. Again, it is using wonderful words that are crafted to make it sound like something great is happening here and it isn't. Again, any police officer would understand that when they run into victims of crime

and through their work meet those victims of crime, they offer help. A lot of them are far more sensitive, far more helpful to the victim than you'll find in others.

Again, from Kevin Horne's own statements when he spoke to me and he's given me statements about how they felt they had been treated, they say time and again that the police couldn't have been better, that they have been marvelous, family and friends have been supportive. They talk about the courts being quite helpful, the Crown Attorneys particularly being very helpful keeping them informed but they don't even mention Victim Services, it just doesn't figure in the picture.

There's a reason for that. It's because they weren't the people who provided any real, tangible support. The kind of support that's going to get you through a crisis or give you faith in humanity and sort of restore your sense that people care and it's going to make a difference and you will get through this. That's the kind of help you need, you need somebody who sits and helps you through even the bureaucracy of it, who holds your hand and will go over it with you. Not somebody who sends you a note that says if you're not happy with this result, you can appeal within the next 30 days and if you have any questions call us and we'll see what we can do. That's not what they need, Mr. Speaker. They need somebody who is compassionate, somebody who cares and again, somebody with some special training.

I was quite shocked when I looked into this in 2008 to find that we have 27 employees at that time across the province in Victim Services and none of them are counsellors. None of them are really trained or professionals who could go out and do the counselling side of things.

Mr. Speaker, that is really what I would like to see. If we are going to set up a bureaucracy around this, we should have the sort of people who can be on call, who can get out there and be there for the people. Not unlike when there's a sexual assault and we have the Nurse Examining Program that goes out and it is something that has been very effective. We have specially trained nurses who will come out and they are on call. They will come out any time of the day or night to help and support a woman who has been a victim of sexual assault. That makes a tremendous difference, it makes it so much more sensitive, so much, I guess, less threatening for the victim of crime to come forward and to have somebody to talk to who can guide them through that.

I can't see why Victim Services wouldn't do the same thing. If they are not equipped to, then I can't see why we don't direct our money to the police forces that have those services, or that at least have begun to have Victim Services. I know that HRM has a Victim Services office, the RCMP does as well because their representative came here the day the bill was introduced. So why don't we put it in the hands of the people who will come and make a house call and look after some of the needs of our victims of crime?

Mr. Speaker, the entire bureaucracy we've built up around Victim Services, as I said, has about 27 - a couple of years ago it was 27 employees, a number of offices, I think four offices in the province that are maintained. Remember, a lot of the money going from our Victims Assistance Fund to help subsidize and pay for those salaries, so rather than going to the people needing it, it is going somewhere else. I'd like to see that changed and I'd like to see the amount of money adjusted. If you want to leave the \$85 per hour cap on I would say there needs to be another avenue for people who simply can't access the counselling at all, that they be forgiven that and that the full hour cost be paid for for those victims.

[4:30 p.m.]

I know that the Minister of Health is here and the Minister of Community Services. They understand that if you don't intervene at that time when somebody is in that moment of crisis and start to help them, you are going to have so many costs down the road, really enduring mental health problems, anxiety, people unable to go back to work, people really ruined financially. The risk is there that you would be financially ruined as a result of a horrendous crime, because not everybody can just pick up the pieces and go on in a - well, it isn't a normal fashion. There is no "normal." That's what people have said to me: there's no "normal" after somebody has murdered your daughter, or after you've lost a loved one in a way that's never to be expected.

So what I'm saying is, having a proper, well-funded Victim Services program in place is another one of those examples where you intervene early and help people so that they don't end up in your mental health courts later, or on Community Services, or later on in some sort of health crisis. I'm just saying it has a lot of implications. There are often children involved and they need counseling. They need special services. So we need to be able to respond a lot better than we have been up to this point in time.

I'm very anxious that all members of the House, and especially the Minister of Justice, listen to what the reality is. As best as I can explain it - I can tell you that I feel completely inadequate to talk about the experiences that some of the people who have come to see me have had. I'm trying to reflect to you how devastating it is, but words don't really ever do it justice or really say what those families are going through. I think all of us are sensitive enough that we can try to put ourselves in that person's shoes and say, what would that be like and would I be able to be satisfied with a partial award for part of the cost of counselling? Would that help? Would I feel that that's a just society? I don't really think so.

I mentioned yesterday, and I think it's worth mentioning again because perhaps the minister will hear it - I'm not sure if he was here, he probably was - yesterday I mentioned the actual court services. Victim Services staff look after four programs. One of them, of course, is awarding these counselling approvals, basically. They don't do the counselling, they don't go through the list with you, they just say yea or nay and make sure a cheque goes out to your counsellor when the bill comes in. So that's that program.

They also provide some help with writing your victim impact statements. So when the time comes that you're in court, when you get to that stage, they will help family members craft the impact statement. That's helpful. Some families probably need that more than others, but at least they explain it to you and they explain the court process to you. From my experience of talking to my friends, what I've heard is that it was really the Crown Attorneys, the prosecutors really, who were the help in that case. They were the ones who gave them a lot of advice, but we have Victim Services that you can turn to as well. They have a children's program as well, where they help children who are going as witnesses or have to attend court.

There are some useful things going on there, but I just don't think it's well managed. I don't think it's working. My example of that was that after more than 40 - I think it was close to 50 - visits to court, the Horne family were there for the final day when they would give their victim impact statements, when they knew they would have to face the media, when it was the culmination of more than, as I said, far more than 40 visits to court - each and every one of them being an absolute wrench to their life and just, you know, a terrible effort to get there every single time. They were determined to do it for their daughter, Jennifer. They were determined to be there every time.

On that final day, after all was said and done and they had finished the day, somebody passed them a form, which I would be happy to leave with the Clerks as well. It's the victim impact statement travel fund claim form so you can claim your travel, your parking, and your meals for the day that they were there. It was all nicely filled out for them - it's typed in, all the official information was typed in - but they got it at the end of the day. They had already paid for their lunches. They didn't have any receipts. They had already come and gone. I mean, frankly, they had no receipts so they got nothing to claim. Why wouldn't somebody have explained that earlier on? What's the point of having a form like this?

I raise it - it's not that it's a lot of money. The point is that we have a form like this and we don't tell people until it's too late. How do they feel at the end of the day, at the end of what is just a horrible day, a terribly stressful day to go through all of that, and going home at the end of a trial and realizing that this form was given to them too late. There's nothing they can do, and it's just completely insensitive. It's really ridiculous. So I don't know who's responsible for giving these forms out, I don't know if it's Victim Services, but it does say - it actually says Victim Services on the top, Department of Justice, Victim Services, so that's the sort of thing that I think is just not serving people who are going through the crime. I think those are very important things that we need to look at and to stress that area needs to do better and if we're spending \$2.5 million a year on Victim Services, we can do better.

I know that there have been some changes so I want to acknowledge a couple of things that did change. I mentioned that instead of doing a single form for each one of your children and your wife and yourself, you can now do a single form for a family so at least -

what would you call that? A single family unit and another single family unit that are all related, they each - a nuclear family, that's what I'm thinking of, one nuclear family. It's a little better, you don't have to do it again and again, that's one problem that has been resolved because it was simply bureaucratic.

Another problem was that it was \$65 an hour two years ago and there was an allowance to raise it to \$85. I acknowledge that and I know that I had spoken quite a bit to the deputy minister at the time and they were trying to find a way to make it better. Maybe if we took the Victims Assistance Fund and actually put it all into Victim Services, directly to the victim, that would be a way to help and address some of these financial problems that might be there.

I'm trying to think of what else might have been approved. One other thing was that the cap was \$2,000 in the past for all victims of crime. There has been a recognition now that if you're the victim of a homicide, a family member who has lost a loved one to murder, that you are allowed up to \$4,000, again with the cap of \$85 per hour, but there is \$4,000 that is available to you if you can subsidize it and make use of it, so that's better.

Also, that award for a homicide victim would be extended for one year after that case has gone to court, which is good because it recognizes that the previous system was two years after you got approved. Frankly - and I think the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal will know this - there were people who were eligible, but didn't want to apply, because as soon as you applied and were accepted, the clock started ticking for your two years.

If there have been no charges laid or the case is outstanding and unsolved, you knew that you would not have access to any counseling perhaps at the time when you'd really need it, when you're going through the court system, when you're reliving this whole horror. So that was not fair, either, to victims of crime, that they would be literally having to not get help in the initial years or months that they're in trauma because they think they had to wait until something had progressed in the case. So that is something that had improved but we still have caps in both cases.

I was saying very loudly that there are case-by-case issues where you need to help people whether or not two years has expired, whether or not the \$2,000 in the pot has expired. There are reasons why we need to be a lot more proactive and a lot more caring than we're being right now in this province, so I think that's very important.

The bill before us really needs to be expanded. It needs to include a lot of other changes. Really, in fact, I would suggest a bill that said that we should review the entire way that we are allocating Victim Services and we should definitely review what services we're providing. Again, I draw your attention to a couple of the other provinces, and I don't have the full chart here, but New Brunswick gives direct services for victims including counseling, compensation for victims of crime, then they have court preparation, court

support and the victim impact statements, which we do as well, but I don't see any compensation at all in our plan.

In Prince Edward Island as well, they do more than we do. In ours, it is just simply the compensation for counseling, that's all that shows up in this province-by-province overview. It's an overview of Victim Services across Canada. In Prince Edward Island it's a little clearer. It says that the staff investigate claims for benefits up to a maximum of \$15,000 for one victim. Compensable expenses include cost incurred as a result of personal injury or death, including wages or salary lost, and I can tell you, that happens. It is happening across our province that people are not able to go back to work or have lost their job or unable to focus and be able to return to work - they just can't do it - and that means financial ruin and no help from our government anyway.

At least in Prince Edward Island they say that there's an amount up to \$15,000 that would be to compensate you for that - it said because of injury, medical costs or dental costs, pain and suffering, reasonable funeral expenses and counselling costs. So our program is clearly not in line, and I'm not even going across the whole country. I have looked at P.E.I. and I've looked at New Brunswick and you can see very well that both of them are better than we are here today. I think that we need to understand that people can be devastated and that they're not getting the help they need.

I don't really want to quote directly from the people that I have helped but I do want to tell you that they want to see changes. They would like to see the province understanding the kind of loss they've suffered, understanding why some crimes are so horrendous and so impossible to imagine that life doesn't just return to normal. We can't, as a government and as members of the Legislature, think that just a small amount of counselling awards are going to make the difference.

We need to be able to be a lot more proactive and we should be looking at the harm that's being caused because I can tell you, people right in our province today are looking at Canada Pension Plan disability because of the results of this kind of terrible occurrence in a person's life. There are so many victims, from one crime there can be so many victims that are impacted. You know to find yourself having to look at social assistance or long-term disability through Canada Pension is really a terrible outcome for a family, at the end of the day, after they've already lost so much.

So I think that the call for this bill is to say this bill, Bill No. 85, is no more than just window dressing, and it's not very exciting window dressing. It just barely touches the surface of what's needed. The minister could make this decision all on his own with a directive, as I pointed out, from the Police Act. He has the powers; in fact, his duties include that and he has the authority over the police services. So he doesn't need to be here today with a bill that just simply directs police officers to tell people about Victim Services.

I'm here to tell you Victim Services isn't filling the bill anyway and we need to make it a worthwhile program that's going to help victims of crime. We need to look very seriously at what money is coming into the Victims' Assistance Fund through those levies, basically a tax on our fines, and find out what is being directed to help victims of crime in this province.

Overall the number of crimes may be declining, but we have had 11 murders in one year alone, in 2008, in that year. We know this year again, I haven't done a count, but it's a terrible thing to even be saying that we're in double-digits, you know, from year to year with murders in our province. Every single time that happens there are parents and loved ones and children sometimes and extended family who are just, absolutely, their lives are torn asunder.

So I want to make the point that we need to really look much more in-depth at this program and the very fact that this bill is so meagre - really, it becomes nothing more than one number that you can mark off, tick that off, good, we passed another bill, and at the end of the session we'll say we passed 20 or 30 bills. I just wish that the media and the public looked at the depth of these bills sometimes, you know, there's so little.

I think perhaps my time is almost up. Mr. Speaker, I think I've made my point. I hope that the members of the Legislature, my colleagues, have listened as well and that they see this as something that we collectively can make a difference about. I would hope that it's given us all pause for thought and I would hope that there will be support to make some more substantive changes to Victim Services. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and speak for a few moments on this bill, Bill No. 85, and I know the member for Richmond would like me to stand for an hour and maybe do it in French but I'm going to stay away from that one.

We've heard a lot over the last couple of days in regard to this bill, and what we as an Opposition are against on this one is the fact that it's a nothing bill. The bill itself is really putting on paper what should be common sense. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, if there's a police officer or a peace officer in Nova Scotia who is not reporting issues of victims of crime, well they shouldn't be a peace officer and they shouldn't be a police officer in this province. This is common sense. What we as an Opposition say is that there's an opportunity lost by presenting a bill that really says nothing.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issue of Victim Services, we should be doing more, as the member for Halifax Clayton Park is saying, we should be doing more for the victims. Even better, we should be trying to prevent the crimes to begin with, so that no one will have to experience being a victim of either a heinous crime or other crime.

[4:45 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk to two people from my community, and I will not use their names because I don't have their approvals on it, but I will use these as examples of victims of crime. In my mind I think Victim Services should be stepping up to the plate to help them. One of these has been helped, and I can thank the Minister of Justice and his staff for helping when I presented the information to them. I'll present this other information maybe later on tonight, as we move on to discuss other bills in this House.

The first example I want to present is a lady from my constituency who was the victim of a shooting. This individual was very much disabled by this shooting. She had to go through many years of rehabilitation and still today, because of the location of the shooting - it was in sort of her midsection, her hips - she has trouble walking and therefore requires the use of a cane and uses implants in her shoes in order to level her off.

The issue that I have on this one is that it is very difficult for her. She cannot work, as is obvious, therefore lives on the meagre dollars she does receive through Community Services. What happens is that every couple of years she can make application to the Department of Community Services, to her caseworker, for the new shoes that she requires, the inserts for her shoes, for the orthotics that she requires for this.

Mr. Speaker, she is allowed every two years to receive these specialty shoes and she can get only one pair of shoes. I'm trying to say, shoes, because she can't make an application for a pair of boots, which she would probably need in our slushy winters in southwest Nova Scotia.

This is the kind of person that Victim Services should be helping. I know she did receive some help at the beginning and I know she probably received counselling at the beginning. Mr. Speaker, what I didn't say in the beginning was she was shot; her husband, boyfriend, common-law husband at the time, was killed. She is the kind of person who has lost the opportunity because of this bill. So I am hoping that the minister, in his closure here, will talk about what he is going to be doing in the next steps.

The second person - and again I said, I thank the minister and his office for the help that he did provide for the second individual - the second individual was working as a security guard and was stabbed. Because of the recovery from a stabbing, he was unable to work this summer. Every time it seemed like he was getting forward and he'd start working again, something would flare up, he would start to bleed again and other issues would happen, and he would have to step down from work again. He required dollars in order to survive.

I can say that, and I know it was Victim Services that did step up to the plate, through the auspices of the Minister of Health's Office, that he was able to move. This is the kind of

person that we should have been standing up and talking to and thanking and making it stronger, providing more opportunity for victims of crime.

I have but two examples in my constituency and I know that every person here has another example of someone who has been a victim of crime who requires some kind of help and there's varying degrees of help. From jobs to orthotics to everything in between. This was a wonderful opportunity to help those people and that's what we, as a caucus, have decided that we want to see more.

What I can say is that we want to make this better. We want to be able to provide other amendments to this bill as it goes through the process of this House, as it moves to the Law Amendments Committee and again to third reading and provide things that are going to help people like the two people I talked about, the people the member for Halifax Clayton Park talked about, from the issues that the member for Halifax Clayton Park has talked about as well.

The member for Halifax Clayton Park has presented her information very well. I know, I talked to the member for Cape Breton North and he says when he was Minister of Justice, any time anything was presented to him by the member for Halifax Clayton Park that he was more than happy to work with her because it was very constructive, it was very well researched and they were things we should be able to move on.

I'm going to say that through this process, we, as a caucus, will support this bill to the next part in this debate. But we will be presenting some amendments to make this bill better, to make sure it helps the people who deserve the help and those are the victims of crimes. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the speakers and I now move second reading of Bill No. 85.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 85. 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. 83.

Bill No. 83 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise with respect to the second reading of Bill No. 83, the amendments to the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

Since 1997, this Act has laid out the structure for sound and sustainable development of Nova Scotia's coastal and inland fisheries. We have a big responsibility for the careful use of our freshwater resources and for the care of the fish and their habitat so all Nova Scotians, whether they are anglers who like to spend an afternoon sport fishing or commercial fishers who rely on these resources to make their living, can enjoy our provincial waters.

These proposed amendments will improve how we understand and implement the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. They will make it better by making definitions clear and simple and they will make it stronger by offering better protection to our provincial waters from the introduction of aquatic invasive species.

The bill introduces two administrative changes which include adding a definition for the term, fish products, a term used in the Act but not previously defined and updating the definition of marketing to more concisely and accurately reflect the applications and the intent of the Act. This bill will allow us the authority to develop regulations with respect to controlling the non-authorized introduction of species into our lakes and our rivers. Introducing aquatic life from one body of water into another may be harmful to the existing species and that ecosystem and the natural beauty of our lakes and our rivers. These species can have harmful effects on our recreation or commercial use of our waters. It is currently illegal under the existing legislation to introduce fish into fish habitat without a permit, but this illegal introduction still happened.

It is very difficult to stop an action that takes less than seconds to happen. In fact, there hasn't been a single charge laid anywhere in Canada for the illegal introduction of fish species since 1984. Again, that is why we need to ensure that the necessary tools are there to effectively manage and respond to this problem. Despite stewardship and education awareness efforts, the problem continues. Smallmouth bass have been documented in more than 240 locations in Nova Scotia and they are in a majority of our 46 major watersheds in this province; chain pickerel occupy approximately 100 lakes in Nova Scotia - both species have extensive negative impacts on the native species.

Once introduced into a new habitat, an invasive species competes with native species for the space and diet. Native species are forced to find other sources of food and these changes impact the overall conditions of our native species. The problem certainly is serious.

Aquatic invasive species threaten our provincial sports fish: the speckled trout, and the two endangered species in Nova Scotia, the Inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon and the Atlantic whitefish, the latter of which is found only in one watershed on this planet.

Mr. Speaker, authority to develop regulations that limit the possession and transfer of live fish in fresh water will help us stop these introductions. Our government has listened when many stakeholders' groups and industry organizations - such as Trout Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters - said they wanted this problem addressed. I am pleased that these important stakeholders' groups support our government's leadership in addressing this problem.

Our government has taken the lead to ensure our resources are healthy and well managed for the overall economic well-being of people who make their living from inland resources or enjoy the recreational benefits. Our provincial waters, our oceans, our lakes, rivers, and streams play a very important role in our province's economy and our history. That is why we're moving to strengthen how we administer the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, and in doing so we are improving how we manage our resources and protect them for the present and future generations. Thank you very much for the time tonight. (Applause)

[5:00 p.m.]

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak on Bill No. 83. As you know, I know a little bit about fish, and that's good when I get a chance to talk about fish. This bill is to help protect our inland and coastal waters. Coastal waters are mentioned, and I'm glad that coastal waters are mentioned in this bill because the provincial government has a major responsibility for development of commercial and recreational fisheries. That's what I wanted to see in this bill and that's what we need to hear in this bill.

These invasive species are a problem, a big problem. I've heard of people down home - especially these chain pickerel, some of the lakes down in our area, even the frogs are gone. They've annihilated the frogs in these lakes and I don't know how that's ever going to recover unless frogs can be introduced. I'm sure that once these pickerel and small-mouthed bass are taken out of the lakes that trout can be re-introduced again, and I believe the anglers of this province can thrive again on our trout. But how we're going to introduce our frogs back in some of these lakes is another question, because I don't know of anybody who is raising any frogs.

There are 250 lakes in this province that are infected by this and I believe this is a good bill. I'm glad the minister brought this forward, but what I did hear in one of his speeches was that they were just going to raise the capture rate from five of these - especially

the chain pickerel - five to only 25 fish can be caught. Now, why we're going to put a limit on these fish that need to be cleaned out of these lakes, I'm not sure. I can't get a handle on that. I would say, let the anglers go at it and clean these fish out just as fast as they can. I think the anglers in the province would be pleased to be able to do this.

I want to state again that this bill does state inland and coastal waters, so I want to talk about other invasive species. It is not only our lakes that have problems and I can see how we can correct this in our lakes. Like I say, again, I don't know about the frogs but I know how we can put our natural fish back in there, the trout. I mean, in our coastal waters, we have the tunicate, we have the green crab, and these are all brought from foreign countries in ballast water and these are invading our coast. What this bill will do to protect the commercial fishermen on the coast, I'm not sure. There has got to be a way that we can clean up the tunicate and these green crab also.

I heard a story the other day that somebody was trying to catch these green crab and they were catching too many and they were fined for catching these green crab that are invading our shores that are raising havoc with our other species. That's something that I believe that the minister can look at and maybe this bill can help him do that.

I want to talk about another invasive species too, and this hasn't been talked about for a while, and it's the seals. I need to talk about them because they're one of the greatest invasive species of our coast. I mean, these invasive species - I'll tell you why they're an invasive species - they're a natural species to our coast, but there are so many, the population has grown so big in the north and up our eastern shore from Halifax up, these grey seals especially have invaded the Bay of Fundy and the American shore where they've never been before in history.

Our coastal fishermen, inshore fishermen, in 30-foot boats, have to go offshore 12 hours to catch a fish, 12 hours to Browns Bank, down out of the Bay of Fundy, because they cannot catch a commercial fish inshore anymore. These invasive species, seals, have invaded the shores so badly that the great bank of Georges Bank cannot produce enough fish out there to feed the inshore fisheries of this province. Georges Bank always fed the shores of Nova Scotia - Georges and Browns Bank, I should add, especially in the Bay of Fundy. This bank cannot produce enough. The boats have to go out on that bank to catch what fish there are, the bigger boats, the bigger draggers. The smaller boats can't get there. They can get to the Browns Bank area from up where we live in the inner Bay of Fundy, but that's where they have to go. There are not enough fish in the inshore waters to feed both the invasive species and the commercial fisherman. Yet, we want to see these seals stay there.

What is this bill going to do to protect our inshore coastal fishery, our traditional fishery, our haddock, our cod, our pollock, our halibut, the fin fishery of our inshore coastal fisheries that we don't have anymore. We have hundreds of licences around this coast, groundfish licences, long-line licences and everybody sitting onshore on the banks, most of them twiddling their thumbs because they can't go and make a living with them.

Thank God for the lobster fishery in Nova Scotia, thank God for that. They are smart enough to stay clear of these invasive species of seals, the lobsters are. I don't when that's going to - they're going to get smart enough that the seals are going to take them over and I think it's happening now. I believe it's happening, I know it's happening because my sons throw these small lobsters back over and the seals dive to get them before they can get back down to the bottom where they are safe. I don't know long that will happen. We have eight million seals out there, and growing from two million 10 years ago. There are people who say we need to save these seals.

We have the same people, we have people trying to grow fish commercially around this province because there's no ground fish around the shores, let's grow some fish. You've got the same people who want to save some seals but don't want to grow fish. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what this bill will do to correct that but if something isn't corrected around this coast for the commercial fishery, we're all going to be in the city. We're all going to be living in the new convention centre up here because there won't be much around our coastal areas. They are leaving, our children are leaving. They are young and sweet, they are sweeter than the pups of the seals and they have to pack up and leave. They are leaving steady, because of these invasive species, the seals. That is over 50 per cent of the problems in our coastal waters.

Mr. Speaker, I have to be careful here because I can get worked up about it and I don't want to. I want to try to talk some common sense and figure out this bill. It's great, this bill is going to help the anglers in our lakes. It's great, we're going to get rid of this invasive species but you know I'm waiting until this goes over to Law Amendments Committee because I believe there are going to be people there who may want to save these chain pickerel, that's what I'm scared of. The anglers' association of this province had better be aware of that and the minister, too. Let's save everything that is invading us, that is changing our lives. The anglers think their lives are changed because they can't catch a speckled trout. How do you think our lives have changed in the coastal communities of this province, where we can't feed our children and have to send them out to the polluted areas of Alberta to make their living?

Mr. Speaker, I won't go on any more, I just needed to make that point. I hope and pray that the minister can shove this bill on or improve this bill and make this bill do something about all the invasive species of this province, not just our lakes. That's the point I needed to make and hopefully I've done that. I'm looking forward to this going to Law Amendments Committee and it will be interesting to see who is there to speak on this. With that I'll take my seat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening in support of Bill No. 83, amendments to the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. In Nova Scotia fishing is more than just a job, for many Nova Scotians it is a way of life, a vocation passed from father to son,

generation to generation. Fishing villages dot our coastline and obviously the industry sustains their unique way of life. In 2005, a Gardner Pinfold study showed that the direct GDP impact of the ocean sector in the Nova Scotia economy was estimated at more than \$2.5 billion. At that time of the study the ocean sector accounted for about 7 per cent of total provincial employment. Those are numbers, those are hard working people who are worth protecting.

The fishing industry is an important part of our province's history. And we, on this side of the House, we support legislation that ensures that this will still be a part of our future for many years to come. We support legislation that protects Nova Scotia's resource, especially against the dangers of an invasive species of fish. Already, fishers and sport anglers across Nova Scotia have expressed concerns about smallmouth bass and chain pickerel.

Smallmouth bass have been found in more than 240 locations in Nova Scotia, while the chain pickerel can be found in as many as 100 lakes here in the Province of Nova Scotia. Both species are not native to Nova Scotia and they pose a threat to native species such as the speckled trout and to endangered species like the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon and the Atlantic whitefish.

As I understand it, this legislation gives enforcement officers more authority to prevent the transportation of live fish from one location to another. The minister intends two regulations to introduce fines and other penalties. On this side of the House, we hope the fines and penalties are meaningful, that they are deterrents to those who want to bring non-native species into Nova Scotia, and they match the seriousness of the offence.

We need only look at the Great Lakes to see the damage foreign species can do. More than 87 non-indigenous aquatic species have been accidentally introduced in the Great Lakes in the 20th Century alone. Zebra mussels are a stark example of the explosive growth potential of non-native species. They were first discovered in the Great Lakes in the 1960s. Just one year after the introduction, their population was estimated to densities of 35,000 per square yard, or 30,000 per square metre. Many scientists believe that the changes to the Great Lakes' ecosystem caused by zebra mussels are more significant than the changes caused by nutrient and toxic landings and loadings combined.

I know these changes give our province the power to control the non-native species that are already here and to prevent the further introduction of invasive species. I hope they are effective enough to prevent these kinds of invasions that now plague the Great Lakes and many other lakes and waterways across North America.

To wrap it up, I'm pleased to support Bill No. 83. Earlier today the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture had a resolution regarding a company in Louisbourg with their awards they have won for shrimp. I also had one for that same company with their awards for crab. That cannot be continued if we don't protect the resource that's so valuable for this

province. I'm pleased to support Bill No. 83, it's a positive step forward in protecting an integral part of Nova Scotia and to preserving a time honoured way of life as a fisher person. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this evening and say a few words on Bill No. 83. A review of this bill shows that it has quite a wide scope in some of the changes and the amendments that are being made and there has been some discussion on the side of invasive species being introduced into lakes and waterways of Nova Scotia.

[5:15 p.m.]

There are also some changes here that address the issue of the licensing of processors and the marketing of seafood products here in the Province of Nova Scotia. I'm proud to say that Richmond County is still one of the largest producers of seafood in Nova Scotia, especially with the tremendous growth of the snow crab fishery which has taken place over the last number of years.

As I'm sure the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is well aware, fishery products continue to be one of our number- one exports in value here in Nova Scotia, especially when one looks at fish such as snow crab, lobster, and scallops. Those are certainly your higher-end products that are generating a significant amount of revenue for our province. As well, we've seen the growth of mussel farms and other different aquaculture developments, along with the continued importance of the groundfish fishery in certain areas of Nova Scotia.

When it comes to the processing side of it, there is a bit of a division of power that takes place between the province and the federal government. You do have the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which provides the processing licences and the buying licences, yet you also have what is now the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which does a great deal of the regulatory work and the inspections of fish plants and the inspection of processing facilities - it used to be done by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans but has now been sent over to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, so there is a bit of a dual role that takes place there.

Having looked at some of the proposed changes, I'm left to wonder whether the province, with some of the changes being proposed, will be mimicking the work that is already being done by the federal agency, especially when it comes to the inspection of plants and the inspection of some of the seafood that is being processed. Maybe the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture will be able to clarify that later, because I'm sure the last thing that we want to do as a province is increase the amount of red tape that is being faced by our buyers and processors in Nova Scotia.

In Richmond County, as I mentioned, there are millions of pounds of snow crab which have been landed in the last number of years. Last season the individual licence holders had quotas in excess of 200,000 pounds per licence. I believe, in speaking with a local processor, that approximately 9 million pounds of crab were bought just by that one buyer, whereas we also have two or three other buyers who are active in Richmond County. I believe the figure was almost 7 million pounds of that were processed in Richmond County, which would make the plant on Isle Madame the largest snow crab processing facility in Nova Scotia - there are larger ones in New Brunswick and I believe there may be some larger ones in Newfoundland and Labrador as well.

Needless to say, any changes that are being proposed that would impact those operations, that could potentially have a duplication of some of the inspections already taking place, are of great concern to me and of great concern to my community. I'm looking forward to hearing what the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture will have to say on those concerns and some of the proposed changes that are included in Bill No. 83.

As well, there has been some talk about some of the changes on the marketing side. In many ways in Nova Scotia our seafood products have sold themselves. We've had to do very little in order to identify markets as a province and as a government, because for the most part buyers and processors have been able to do that themselves. I know there has been a renewed effort, especially with the collapse of the price of lobster in southwestern Nova Scotia last year, that new initiatives were developed to try to find more markets for our seafood products, especially lobster, and try to find a higher value for that product as well.

One has to keep in mind that the whole professionalism of the fishing industry in Nova Scotia is changing. Once upon a time fishermen were happy to bring their catch to the wharf, sell it to a buyer and get paid for it, and that was the end. But more and more - and I'm sure the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture will be aware of this - he's probably seeing more and more applications for buyer licences through his department. What's happening now is that individual fishermen themselves are starting to buy from each other and, more and more, you have individual fishermen who are looking to hold their products, especially lobster, to try to find markets themselves or wait until the price is more favourable.

You're certainly seeing that to a great extent in southwestern Nova Scotia and I know that it's starting more along the lines in my area as well, whereas fishermen are now saying, what can I do to try to get a better value for my product? What can I possibly do to find new markets for my product, rather than solely relying upon the local buyer to accept all of that responsibility?

There is a professionalization that is taking place within the fishery, especially with younger people who have come into the profession who are more aggressive, I would suggest, and are more innovative in trying to find a better value for their product and certainly a better price for their product as well. We certainly need to keep that in mind when

looking at the potential changes being proposed in Bill No. 83 and what role the government can play in that as well. Mr. Speaker, to hear that Louisbourg Seafoods was recognized at a show in Brussels - you know, I've had the opportunity to meet Jimmy Kennedy on a number of occasions, and to see where he's gone through his life to now being a major processor being recognized in Brussels, I think that speaks volumes about the changes that have taken place within the fishing industry in Nova Scotia. To see a processor in Louisbourg being recognized at such an international event speaks volumes of the potential here in the province.

Our province can't just sit back and watch this happen. We need to find a way to be there, through the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and whether it be through NSBI or Economic and Rural Development, to work directly with processors at trying to identify new markets and trying to identify new technology. I was pleased to see, I believe it was earlier this week - it was either yesterday or on Sunday - where the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture did announce significant investments to a number of different processors around the province, at being able to upgrade some of the technology that they are using in their processing to keep up with the times.

There's an exciting project taking place in my own community, a number of exciting projects I can speak of. At the Université Sainte-Anne campus in Petit-de-Grat they have a lobster project which I know the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is aware of. I believe he may have toured it when he was in the area. There are a couple of marine biologists who are working on trying to actually take lobster from the larvae stage and the egg stage and grow it into a reasonably-sized lobster that can be released into the wild to grow. If that technology can be perfected, it will certainly create a safeguard for the lobster industry in Nova Scotia.

I want to say that some of the funding that is going toward that project is not only coming from the different levels of government, some of the fishermen's organizations themselves have been investing money. They have been investing some of their time and some of their techniques in trying to make this project a reality. Again, I think that goes to it is not only the role of government to be able to stand there and tell the industry, here is what you need. In this case I think it's the industry itself that is moving forward with this, but there is obviously a role that I believe the government can play as partner in this. I think it is important with this project, for example, that there be stable funding for it. The last thing we need is for those marine biologists to be worried about where the next paycheque is going to come from, rather than trying to perfect the art of being able to grow a lobster in captivity, only to be released later into the wild. So that is one of the exciting projects, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the project in Petit-de-Grat has received the support of a number of fishermen's organizations up in Inverness County and in Antigonish County. In both of those areas they've seen some significant declines in lobster catches in the last number of years, which is of great concern to them. Obviously they are quite excited by the opportunity to support this project, which we are all hoping will be a tremendous success.

As well, there's a new initiative that is being developed now, trying to find a way to keep snow crab alive once it arrives on shore so it can be held for a period of time as a live product. I'm sure the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is well aware of the price that you get for a cooked lobster being shipped overseas compared to the price you're going to get for a live lobster when it arrives overseas. There's a significant difference in the price.

The question now from some of the local fishermen and some of the local processors was, is there any way we can do with snow crab what we do with lobster? Can we take that snow crab from the bottom of the ocean floor, bring it up into a vessel and hold it until such time as it reaches the wharf, and then from the wharf transport it again into a holding tank so that it can be kept alive for a period of time.

Mr. Speaker, some of the issues with that is that the depth at which the snow crab is fished makes it a bit more of a challenge in that there are pressurization issues of how long the crab can possibly last once it actually is raised to the surface of the water and how long can it be kept. Right now one of the initiatives that the minister announced funding for was that exact initiative that is taking place. This summer, I believe, the infrastructure will be in place to actually start taking some of the snow crab, have the necessary equipment onboard the vessel that can take it from the ocean floor into the vessel, into these tanks to be transported to the wharf, and then again placed in holding tanks and held for a period of time to see exactly how long it can be kept alive.

The question will soon be, from there if you can keep it alive onshore can you keep it alive long enough to ship it overseas? Because I can tell you that the price you're getting now for snow crab that is going to China, for example, or to Japan, for a cooked product, frozen cooked product, that what you would get for a live product is a significant difference. It represents a tremendous opportunity for our province. So I'm pleased that the minister has given some financial support for that and I do hope his department is watching closely and providing whatever assistance that they can through the different government agencies. Whether it be through aquaculture, whether it be through agriculture, or other agencies that can help to try to make this project a reality. Because, again, the potential for our province as far as the revenues that this would create, it's certainly one that we should be exploring and that we should be working within the industry.

Mr. Speaker, as well, when you look at the scallop industry we have in the province, for the most part there's very little value-added that's taking place in our scallop fishery. The scallop is being caught, it's being shucked, and the meat is being sold. We have seen a number of projects and there's one in my area where it's an aquaculture site growing scallops. The question that they're looking at is how can we get the most value for that product? Is it simply growing it to a certain size, taking it out of the water, shucking the meat out and selling the meat, or are there other ways that could possibly yield a higher value? For example, I know that there were some efforts to try to find a way of vacuum sealing the meat in the shell so that if you go to a restaurant, they could potentially take that, put it to cook with sauces or whatever cream with it, and when it would be presented to you, you would

actually have the scallop shell with the scallop in it. The price that one would get for such a product, obviously, would be much higher than what you would get if it's simply the scallop meat itself.

So, again, that's some of the examples of the value-added work that we can do here in our province considering how fortunate we are with the abundance of fish that we have, whether it be lobster, crab, scallops and other groundfish, of what can we do to find a value-added means of getting a higher rate of return.

For years, Mr. Speaker, lobster that was not in a condition to be sold on the market was simply cooked and put in cans. Now we're finding that some of the processors have found a niche market in selling lobster tails, just the tails themselves of the lobster is what is being sold, and that many restaurants are starting to offer that as part of their menu. That's another example of some of the initiatives that have been taking place and I think that has to continue to be done - not only by the industry but certainly with the support of the government as well.

One of the other areas which I'm not sure if the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is aware, or the government is aware, there has certainly been a growth in Richmond County, and I believe Guysborough County as well, but it has been in the use of traps to catch shrimp. Now, Mr. Speaker, for those who aren't aware, for the most part shrimp that is fished off our coast is done so by draggers which means it's a vessel which is towing a net behind it and that is what is catching the shrimp. One of the concerns with that is that any time you're dragging, you're going to catch anything that's in the way of your drag, whether it's shrimp you're looking for or anything else. The other problem is that the product tends to come in crushed and there's really no escape for an undersized product.

[5:30 p.m.]

So what has been developed in the last few years is the use of these traps which, in essence, looks like a lobster trap. The difference is that the chute is located on the top of the trap. Most of them that I've seen have been a wire mesh, and the idea is that the shrimp, once it is baited inside of this trap - it's a rectangular trap - the shrimp will fish inside chasing the bait, and they don't really have the means of understanding how to swim back outside, so they stay stuck in the trap. What's good about the trap, though, is that because of the size of the mesh that's used, smaller shrimp can swim out. So, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that this is a very environmentally-friendly way of fishing shrimp. A number of fishermen in my area of Richmond, and I know in Guysborough, have been using this method of fishing.

The problem right now is they really don't have a market for it and they don't have a place they can take their product to, so in my area, for the most part, the fishermen who are actually using this way of fishing for shrimp are only using one-quarter of the traps they could be using because they are basically selling to the locals.

My question is, what role can the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and NSBI and other agencies play in working to try to promote this as a green product, a product which is fished in a very environmentally-friendly way? These traps just sit on the bottom of the ocean. They really don't catch anything other than shrimp and they don't do any damage to the bottom of the ocean, unlike what draggers would do. What you get is a larger shrimp - some people refer to them as prawns - you get a larger shrimp and it doesn't retain the smaller size shrimp because they can easily swim out of the trap with the mesh size.

This is a product which I think our province should be promoting. I know there was an effort a few years ago, I believe with Fisherman's Market, that was working with some of the fishermen in Guysborough, to take their product and bring it directly here in metro, to try to have sales for it. I asked the question to fishermen, I said well then the New Brunswick shrimp fleet is unloading its boats in Richmond County, why won't you simply put more traps out in the water, catch more product and sell your product to go to the processing plants in New Brunswick? The problem is that these shrimp being sold locally are going for almost \$2 a pound, whereas if it's going to the processing facility, it's almost 50 cents a pound, so the money is just not there.

I certainly can envision that there's a potential for that product, whereas I'd love to see the day where we would be seeing more lobster and crab fishermen, depending on the nature of their industries, also have the shrimp trap licences where they would be catching less shrimp than a dragger would, but still getting a higher value product, catching it in a much more environmentally friendly way and certainly, as is being suggested, a better quality product. I can tell you, I'll give you a plate of shrimp that came from a dragger and then I'll give you a plate of shrimp that came from these traps and it's unbelievable the difference in the product that you're going to get, not only size-wise but the firmness of the shrimp and the quality of it is going to be obvious to anyone who would look at that.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, that's a potential resource and a potential revenue which I believe we're missing out on because of the fact that markets haven't been properly identified. I have no doubts that if consumers who were looking to buy shrimp were told, here are your options: you can buy the shrimp that came from a dragger or you can buy this product that was fished in a very environmentally-friendly way - I think right now, when you look at the growth of the organic sections in our supermarkets, the demand is obviously there. We have more awareness among consumers and I believe they'd be prepared to pay the higher price, knowing they're getting a better product and a product that was fished in a very environmentally-friendly way.

I would hope the minister will look at that and I'm pleased that he is aware of that. I remember a few years ago when I raised the issue of the shrimp-trap fishery, the minister at the time was the former member for Cumberland North. Rather than just admit he had no idea what I was talking about, he kept trying to answer and just kept digging himself deeper and deeper into a hole. At the end of the day we had a bit of fun with him and it turns out that he made some embarrassing statements based on the fact that he had no idea.

In this case, I'm pleased to say we have a Minister of Fisheries who I believe has a career in the industry and has much greater awareness. As far as the shrimp-trap fishery, I'm not sure if it is something that's done in his area or not, but I would hope that he would look further into it, because right now you have a number of licences that are not even being used. I think the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour is probably aware of that, that a number of fishermen in his area have licences and don't go out. This is a lost opportunity for our province.

Again, the whole idea when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans started to take away groundfish licences and that and how they started building up these quotas was that they wanted to see the day that they had multi-licence-holder fishermen. The idea with that is that fishermen wouldn't become so dependent on one species, so that if you had a lobster licence, a crab licence, and maybe one of these shrimp licences, if one of the . . .

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order - I'm sorry to interrupt the comments on debate from the member for Richmond, but there is a disturbing trend with regard to disclosure that is occurring. I will table a CBC report, "Burnside jail assault triggers lockdown." We're now reporting that occurred as of 11:00 p.m. last night and there is no public disclosure. We've seen this again where the Minister of Justice is not providing disclosure to the people of Nova Scotia. I think it is a breach of his own policy in disclosing that to this House and to the people of Nova Scotia. It's a disgrace.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member for his comment, but it is not a point of order.

The honourable member for Richmond has the floor.

MR. SAMSON: I personally thought it was a good point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'd simply strongly encourage you to take it under advisement and possibly report at a later date.

As I was saying, again, I would encourage the minister to look into this matter. That's just one that I'm familiar with. We've also seen the development of the sea urchin industry where there has been a growth there. There was potential in our area and there were a few fishermen who did get involved. I'm not sure where the status of that is now, but those are all emerging fisheries. We're hearing now of sea cucumbers - I think that's what they are called - we're seeing the issuing of licences for sea cucumbers.

There is tremendous opportunity and I believe that a number of these new fisheries, especially sea urchins - it's the use of divers who are basically picking out these sea urchins. Again, I would suggest to you a very environmentally-friendly way of doing these fisheries. I think there obviously is an opportunity for the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and for government. I know that there has been a bit of an increase in trade shows. Some Nova Scotians may wonder at times, is there value in these trade shows? Well, certainly, I think if anyone asked Louisbourg Seafoods if there is value in trade shows after the awards

that they received, the merits of that certainly will be obvious to everyone. So there is a role to be played there.

As I mentioned on that shrimp-trap fishery, the thought that licence holders aren't even going out to fish because of the fact that they haven't been able to secure markets. What I can tell you is that in my area off Isle Madame in the last few years, it hasn't been a question of how much they can catch. They're only putting out a quarter of their traps because they can only handle so much product due to local demand, because of the fact they don't have a clear market in order to send this product.

At a time where I know the government is talking about bringing us back to balance, I think these are some of the different initiatives that can be looked at as a means of trying to increase revenues in our province by the use of natural resources that we have. If properly marketed and working with the industry, I think there are opportunities there as well, which I would encourage the minister to look very closely at.

In closing, having looked at some of the changes to the issues of licensing and inspection of vehicles used to transport seafoods, there are a number of changes in this bill that raise some red flags for me, which I hope the minister will be able to address. The last thing we want here is a duplication of what is taking place with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and that we're putting any extra red tape on buyers or processors here in the province. I certainly hope that the minister can give some assurances that these changes are not going to have that effect.

I'll just add one last item. In talking about invasive species, there was a story recently about this new small species which has been attaching itself to the bottom of vessels. I hate to have to report, but it's certainly in Arichat Harbour, because when I took out my pleasure craft, my father quickly advised that exact species was on the bottom of the vessel and it says it can be treated with fresh water and vinegar. One could only hope that all invasive species would be so easy to deal with.

With that, certainly any legislation that's going to strengthen our fishery in Nova Scotia and our coastal resources, both inland and along the coast, is something that can be supported. I hope the minister has taken note of some of the concerns I've raised and I look forward, as a member of the Law Amendments Committee, to seeing any presentations and suggested changes to Bill No. 83. Merci.

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

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all the speakers tonight and I want to recognize the expertise and their knowledge of this particular topic. I move second reading of Bill No. 83.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 83. 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. 87.

Bill No. 87 - Court Jurisdiction and Proceedings Transfer Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry my colleague's left the House, I see he had great news for everyone. (Interruptions) Oh, yeah, bring him back in, it would be a pleasure to have him here in the House.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce second reading of an Act to Amend the Court Jurisdiction and Proceedings Transfer Act. This bill contains changes that will clarify language and correct a section referenced within the Act. The Court Jurisdiction and Proceedings Transfer Act was enacted in 2003.

AN HON. MEMBER: Are you looking for me?

MR. LANDRY: I just feel more comfortable knowing you're in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The Minister of Justice has the floor.(Interruptions)

MR. LANDRY: You can hold your kind words until later. I'll continue on where I was. In 2003, it created a uniform standard to determine the most appropriate jurisdiction to deal with the court matters. The Court Jurisdictions and Proceedings Transfer Act is divided into three parts. Part I establishes the territorial competence of courts in Nova Scotia, Part II authorizes the transfer proceedings between jurisdictions and Part III deals with the proclamations.

It is important to this government that we work to improve the way we do business to better serve the public and to ensure our legislation is accurate and clear. That is why I am proposing amendments to three words inadvertently removed from the Uniform Statute in 2003. I'm also proposing that an incorrect cross-reference in the Act be corrected. To clarify, I am proposing to add the words, "accept the transfer" in a clause of the Act. I am also proposing changing a clause so that the text refers to Section 12 instead of Section 14.

The changes I am proposing here today are consistent with the Uniform Statute in the law in other jurisdictions in Canada. These changes will provide accuracy and clarity to this important piece of legislation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in following up on my comments last night, here we find Bill No. 87. Again, as I mentioned on second reading, we're not to get into the specific clauses of the bill, more generally on the general principle of the bill. Let me just give a bit of a description for those watching or those reading as to what this bill looks like.

It's called an Act to Amend Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2003 (Second Session), the Court Jurisdiction and Proceedings Transfer Act.

[5:45 p.m.]

I spoke of Bill No. 85 last night, and I believe I referred to it as an environmentally-friendly bill in the fact that it was one-page long, only took up three-quarters of that page. Allow me to start by saying that this one is even more of a green bill, because in fact it only has two clauses, a total of 60 words, and only takes up one-quarter of a page.

So as we stand here at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, November 16th, this is what the new NDP Government would have us debating on justice issues in the province. Just before having the opportunity to stand in my place, when one looks at some of the justice issues facing our province, I believe . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The Chamber is getting noisy.

MR. SAMSON: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last night I tried to take a few minutes to talk about some of the issues facing the Justice Department which I thought were worthy of debate here in this House - more than the bill presented, which was basically a policy directive to police forces in our province which was put in the form of a bill. Here we are presented with a separate bill, Bill No. 87, which could easily have been tied into the other bill and possibly some other Justice bills.

A few years ago, the previous government was very big on these Justice Administration Acts. They were omnibus bills which, I have to say, I lamented because of the fact that the government of that time used to make significant changes to one bill and add about another six bills, which were more minor changes, in the hope that no one would really notice. So I was pleased to see that the previous administration was forced to basically break down the bill so that it was very clear to us and clear to Nova Scotians exactly what changes were being proposed.

This government has taken it a little bit further in trying to find whatever they can in order to add to their list of bills. Even though this bill is 60 words and two clauses, when the Speaker and the Clerk walk in at the end of the session and rhyme off all of the bills which they will say were of such value to Nova Scotians, the hard work this House did, they will rhyme off Bill No. 87 as one of those bills. As I mentioned, it has two clauses and 60 words, yet it stands as its own piece of legislation.

One has to ask, as I mentioned last night, are there any other issues facing the Department of Justice that might be more pressing for members to be debating? Last night I mentioned a few of those issues, but with the Department of Justice we don't know what's going to happen from day to day. Prior to being able to stand in this House to speak on this bill - in fact, while I was speaking on Bill No. 83, the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act - I want to thank my colleague for Cape Breton North who rose on a very valid point of order, pointing out what had already been mentioned to me previously - I had not seen the media report, but had been advised by our hard-working communications and research staff that there was yet another eruption of violence at the Burnside Correctional Facility.

Now, after what I described last night, about our situation last week, about the Minister of Justice finding out about someone who was mistakenly released who should have been kept in custody - it took over 24 hours for him to finally issue a news release on that - one would think that's not going to happen again, when there's a significant issue in the Department of Justice he is going to let us know immediately and tell Nova Scotians how he plans to address it.

But if I understand correctly from the member for Cape Breton North and from the CBC Radio news report, the disturbance was last night - in fact, quite possibly, it may have been during my debate on Bill No. 85 last night. I can understand, after going through the justice issues, the people there at Burnside may have been upset to know we were spending our time discussing Bill No. 85 when there are so many other pressing matters that we should be talking about at Justice. I talked about the double-bunking problem and how double-bunking had caused an escalation in violence toward guards and toward other inmates. How ironic, as I'm having that discussion, advising the House, and advising the Minister of Justice, it would appear.

And maybe the Minister of Justice was going to tell us; we don't have all our facts yet. Maybe he's collecting his facts now. I'm not sure if he's allowed to use his BlackBerry now because I wouldn't want him not to be issuing a release on the basis that he doesn't feel that he can use his BlackBerry here in the House.

It is no longer Question Period, Mr. Speaker, so hopefully he does have the opportunity to be able to approve a release to advise Nova Scotians as to exactly what disruption took place. It's my understanding from the reports that some of the guards who work so hard on behalf of Nova Scotians were injured as a result of this, which is of tremendous concern to Nova Scotians.

When I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, in talking about justice issues, to meet with the correctional workers at the Burnside facility, I told them very clearly that Nova Scotians have a tremendous amount of respect for the work they do - you work in very difficult circumstances; you do a job that most Nova Scotians would not want to do; and you do it day in and day out knowing the dangers that you face. Yet whereas we had been told that any major disruption at the Burnside facility would be made public, here we are again with a disruption last night and we're having to find out through the media that it happened.

I know the minister responded to the media. On two occasions I asked him to table reports in the House and, rather than do it in the House, he slipped them to the media first. I'm curious, why would he not have told all Nova Scotians in this case that there was another major disruption and why are we not having a debate here in this House as to how we can find ways to bring sanity back to Burnside, and how can we find ways to deal with the problems of overcrowding rather than waiting for the minister's proposed solution of a new jail in Pictou County which is two to three years away - why are we not debating that here on the floor?

Is the minister still signing off on get-out-of-jail free weekend passes - why are we not debating that here in this House? He told us he was going to stop - I think he said a few weeks ago that he was hoping to pass the weekend without having one pass given. He hasn't mentioned it since. When he spoke on this bill and justice matters, I did not hear him tell us. (Interruption) Well, on Bill No. 87, Mr. Speaker, and on second reading, how ironic - I never thought I would see the day where members of the NDP Party would be trying to tell members of the Opposition to be quiet.

Who would have thought? When I think of the days of having John Holm here in this House, Robert Chisholm in this House, Kevin Deveaux in this House, if they could be brought back here tonight to hear the member for Sackville-Cobequid and the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island suggesting that there should be limits on the debate of members of the Opposition - who would have thought? And if they could only be back here to see - how embarrassed they would be to think of what the NDP Party has now become, now that they're on the government side, that they would want members of the Opposition not to talk about the issues of justice affecting us here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we'll have the opportunity in the days and weeks ahead to force the Minister of Justice to tell us exactly what did happen at the Burnside facility last night and what actions are being taken. I'm curious to see whether he's going to blame this one on human error. I'm wondering if that's going to be because his solution to the problems at Burnside was to send the Director of Corrections, Sean Kelly, to Burnside, and by him having his office there, he was going to take care of these problems. So, now, will he be the fall guy and will he be the one that the minister will blame for the problems that have taken place and that there was another incident of violence?

Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that Nova Scotians don't have a tremendous amount of sympathy for the inmates at a correctional facility but, as I mentioned earlier, they have a tremendous amount of respect for the men and women who work on behalf of Nova Scotians in those facilities. When they hear stories of violence, when they hear stories of guards being injured, being attacked and being assaulted, it is unacceptable and never should it be accepted here in this province. And rather than debating that at 5:55 p.m. on Tuesday evening, an event that apparently happened last night, instead we're dealing with a bill that has two clauses and 60 words. I believe Nova Scotians expected better from this government . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: They deserve better.

MR. SAMSON: . . . and not only did they expect better, I would suggest to you that they deserve better. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, if the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville has comments he wishes to make, I certainly encourage him to stand in his place and to make those comments. Clucking from the other side certainly does nothing when you're talking about violence against the men and women who work in corrections for our province, that certainly does nothing.

I know that my time is getting short today, but I will have the opportunity, God willing, to return at a later date when the Government House Leader calls Bill No. 87 again. Just to give you a bit of a sneak preview of my comments as we move forward, I am saddened and embarrassed to say that Richmond County, as a result of this NDP Government, is the only county in Nova Scotia that does not have court services due to a decision by this government to close the court and, again, without any sort of plan as to where we go next. It was very important for me to take the time in this House to advise the minister and the members of the government of the impact that has had on our community and our access to justice and being tried by your peers in your own community, especially with some of the significant cultural identities that we have in Richmond County.

In light of the hour that is approaching, I would be pleased at this time to move adjournment of debate on Bill No. 87 so that we may return at a later time to resume the debate on this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Unfortunately, that concludes the government's business for today. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Opposition House Leader for tomorrow's hours and business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will sit from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, we'll be calling Bill No. 92 and Resolution No. 293. I do now move that we adjourn until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn and meet tomorrow at 2:00 p.m..

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have now reached the moment of interruption and the topic for late debate is:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly demand that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal honour the commitment of the previous Tory Government and the Premier’s election pledge to honour all of the previous government’s commitments.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

TIR MIN. - PREV. TORY GOV'T.: COMMITMENTS - HONOUR

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand this evening in debate to talk to this resolution. The reason why our caucus submitted this resolution was really to talk about some infrastructure deficiencies that we have, in particular, in southwestern Nova Scotia. I know that many of these deficiencies can be spoken to and echoed across the province.

In view of the flood that just happened in Yarmouth County, it really brings to the forefront the issue of these infrastructure deficiencies when it comes to, especially, our bridges across our province. You all know the details with regard to the flooding in southwest and the loss of a couple of bridges. The reason why I bring this forward - the Tusket bridge, for example, that was lost on, I believe, Tuesday evening was 100-year-old

bridge. We do understand the added pressure that was being exerted against that bridge, but it being a 100-year-old bridge, finally succumbed to that extra stress.

[6:00 p.m.]

The reason I really wanted to speak to this for a few moments doesn't really revolve around the Tusket bridge, it goes to another bridge. This resolution comes from one that talks about the Indian Sluice Bridge. The Indian Sluice Bridge is a sister bridge to the Tusket Bridge, which is a little more tidal, further up the road, that spans the communities of Sluice Point and Surette's Island, or Pointe du Sault et Isle de Surette.

The bridge that I'm really concerned about, the sister bridge to the one that collapsed during the flood, the Indian Sluice Bridge, is 100 years old as well - actually I think it's almost 102 years old - constructed at a time when the tolerances were there for horse and buggy. They weren't there for school buses, dump trucks, fire trucks and those kinds of structures that continually go across it to this day.

The issue is that we had a process in place to work on design, to have a plan and a structure that would replace the Indian Sluice Bridge. That plan would have had construction begin, I believe, in the 2011-12 season. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - and I do want to thank him for his attention to this issue, but I believe the time has sort of accelerated itself because of what has happened to the Tusket Bridge.

The bridge in Tusket, which was, again, built at the same time as the Indian Sluice Bridge - they were built in the same style - is one of those single-lane bridges, the green bridges, we can call them, that are so prevalent across the province. I forget the number - and I'm sure the member for Queens will update us - on how many bridges we do have across the province and it is in the hundreds and hundreds that we do have of these things. (Interruption) 4,100? There you go, the member for Clare knows his numbers right off the bat. We really need to move quicker than what we would have expected.

Tuesday night I had the opportunity to speak to our engineer for a couple of moments, spoke to the OS, and they say they were watching that bridge all day. Again, they knew the forces that were against that structure, but they were watching it. From everything that they could see, the bridge was fine. The tolerances seemed to be going okay, but what happened was, it happened in a place that at a visual inspection you can't see, under the water.

I can say that probably many of these bridges suffer from some of the very same stresses that we can't see, they're underwater. If I take my Indian Sluice Bridge - and I know I'm going all around between two bridges here - four times a day there is a force of water that goes back and forth across the piers, and I'm afraid the same thing might happen.

The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal would know that the community that I'm speaking of, Surette's Island, has the only access through and across that bridge. As I was saying just a moment ago, I think with the failure of the Tusket Bridge, we really need to look a little more closely at its sister bridge that spans the Indian Sluice. It's three sections, it's not just one, and we continue to worry that if one goes down like it did back in 1996, I believe, the community members would not be able to go by. Like I said, the tolerances that these bridges were built for were not the vehicles of today. I would even say that some of the cars are heavier than what they were designed for, not to say the dump trucks, the school buses. Gosh, dump trucks with floats carrying excavating equipment are going across this bridge.

The funny thing is that we had a meeting the other night on Surette's Island where we invited a number of people to come and we talked about it and we had a very wonderful meeting, actually. My wife calls me, my wife who worries about everything, because I'm not around to worry about them, sometimes. She calls me and says, I'm just about to go across the Indian Sluice bridge, just thought I'd call you, I'll see you in a few moments. If I'm not there, go out and come look for us. It is starting to get that the people are spooked that its sister bridge, the Tusket Bridge, collapsed.

Here's the community, and I've talked about this, too - even though the access has been cut off on the Highway No. 3, most people are telling me, do that one last, we don't need that maybe right now, we'll need it in the future. Right now we would like you to put your focus on that Indian Sluice Bridge because God forbid, that something happens on that one. As I said, this was an unexpected collapse of the Tusket Bridge. They were watching it all day, the engineers would have said there's nothing wrong with the bridge. It's taking a lot of extra stress but we should be okay. It was up until moments before it collapsed that people were crossing that bridge.

It's funny how your community and when you have a number of people like the Gordon Woods, like the Pothier family, whether it is Carl or Hubert, they will tell you, they say listen, it's okay, don't put the bridge in there right now. I mean if you find a Bailey bridge, that's fine, stick it in there but don't go and spend a whole lot of money on that one yet because we know that our community members, that our neighbours in Surette's Island deserve a bridge first because it is of the same vintage.

As I said, we had made a commitment to try to begin construction, to have design ready for the 2011-12 season. I know some work has gone on there. I would hope that with what happened last week that we can sort of maybe step back, take another sober look at it and move forward for the residents of Surette's Island and provide them with safe transportation back and forth from their island.

Mr. Speaker, I know I probably have a whole bunch of prepared statement on that but that's the only issue I really wanted to bring up, that the age of these bridges needs to be addressed and we need to have some replacements. If we're moving for Tusket first, well

maybe we should look at Indian Sluice first. I know the cost is huge but I think the people of that island deserve it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House today to speak to this resolution. I want to begin by saying how proud I am to be a member of this government because I know that when we make a commitment to Nova Scotians, we will make that commitment a reality.

I want to make mention to the member who brought up the very real concerns of the people in Yarmouth and across southwestern Nova Scotia who have experienced flooding conditions and the weakening of much of the infrastructure. I feel quite confident that this minister is taking those issues very seriously.

In my role as ministerial assistant for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I have seen just how hard my colleagues - both in the department and in this Chamber - are working to make these commitments a reality. We said that we would undertake a five-year paving plan and we are doing just that. We said that we would improve road-building standards and we did.

Mr. Speaker, road building is a great example of how we are creating good jobs and growing the economy. Improving highway infrastructure is an investment in our local and provincial economies and in our communities. This year's highway budget is the second largest highway capital budget in our province's history. When we took office, we saw the deplorable shape of our roads first hand. This year our government announced that \$310 million would be invested in a variety of road and bridge projects for communities across this province. It follows last year's record-setting investment of \$325 million in Nova Scotia's roads and bridges.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is responsible for over 23,000 kilometres of roads in the province, the equivalent of driving from Sydney to Vancouver four times. This includes 100-Series Highways, secondary roads and bridges.

This has been a very busy year for both department staff and road builders across the province. Major projects are in various stages from planning to construction, including construction on Highway Nos. 101, 103, 104 and 125. The cost of building these roads is steep. In 2009 the cost was about \$3.5 million to build a single kilometre of new, two-lane 100-Series Highway.

I am proud to say that in Nova Scotia we have one of the highest percentages of paved roads in Canada. This means there are many suburban and rural roads to maintain. These are roads that received some rough treatment from our harsh winter weather so we

spend the summer repairing as many areas as we can. This is all possible because of the hard work of Nova Scotia's dedicated highway workers.

We committed to create the secure jobs that Nova Scotia's economy needs and we are keeping this commitment. The road-building industry in Nova Scotia is a large source of jobs, creating an estimated 5,000 direct, and 2,500 indirect, positions every year. A typical \$2 million highway repaving project creates 60 jobs, \$200,000 in business for the local trucking industry and \$400,000 in subcontracts to other Nova Scotia companies. Investing in highway capital improvements has been an important economic driver at a time when our province has needed it the most.

These projects are bringing a lasting benefit to Nova Scotians. They help ease traffic congestion. They make travel safer and support our economy. Together, with federal and municipal investments, almost \$230 million has been committed to infrastructure projects that will create secure jobs across Nova Scotia. We said we would maximize federal funds to build the infrastructure that communities need and we did it.

In fact, we have worked hard to maximize every dollar of federal stimulus funding this province has received. One example is the construction of Highway No. 103, Port Joli bypass. After well over 30 years, residents in southwestern Nova Scotia who live along Highway No. 103, in the communities of Port Joli to Sable River, will see the construction of the Port Joli bypass. This government is investing well over \$26 million and has partnered with the federal government under its Building Canada Fund for a total investment of well over \$53 million for Phase I of this piece of infrastructure.

Phase I, which will include surveying, detailed design work and land acquisition and environmental assessments is now underway. I'm proud to display on my office wall a detailed design of both Phase I and Phase II. Phase I construction is targeted to begin in 2011-12 and targeted to be completed in 2013. We will see 8.5 kilometres constructed from Broad River to Port Joli. This bypass will strengthen the Highway No. 103 infrastructure and improve safety along this stretch of highway, while at the same time supporting the local economy. It is projects like this that help attract and retain the skilled workers Nova Scotia needs while keeping our industries active.

This means we are also keeping our commitment to ensure that young people stay and build a life here in Nova Scotia. More than 100 projects are being delivered in communities across the province and we will continue to make the most of every federal dollar to strengthen Nova Scotia's economy. We are giving careful consideration to the needs, priorities and challenges facing this province. We are committed to working with communities and road builders in a transparent way and to sharing information about future road improvements.

Whether we are constructing a new road or building, we want to make sure we are doing all we can to be environmentally sustainable. Some of the initiatives underway include greening our fleet, installing weigh-in-motion scales for commercial trucks, and investigating greener technologies for road building.

Mr. Speaker, none of this work could be done without our dedicated staff. We have approximately 2,300 employees working in all parts of the province, many of whom are members of unions like CUPE and NSGEU. These are people who plow our roads in the middle of the night, who make sure our roads are constructed with safety in mind and are built to last, and who oversee the construction of public buildings where people access important services across this province.

[6:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, as ministerial assistant to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, this is an area that I can speak to with the most knowledge. However, my government has done so much more for Nova Scotians in all areas of the province. Over the last several months we have made significant progress towards getting the province back to balance, creating good jobs, growing the economy, improving health care, and making life more affordable for families. We truly are meeting government's commitment to make life better for families in all regions of this province.

We have tabled a multi-year fiscal plan to restore the province's finances and keep services that Nova Scotians need and have introduced one of the most ambitious targets for renewable electricity generation in North America. Last Spring we introduced a budget that outlines the steps needed to get the province back to balance, improve the economy, and make life more affordable for many Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker.

We maximized available federal infrastructure funds which are expected to create 7,000 person years of employment and generate \$300 million in income. Since June 2009, we have put the Legislature back to work for Nova Scotians and introduced new regulations for MLA expenses, better, open and accountable. We have frozen MLA and political staff salaries, eliminated the \$45,000 retirement allowance for MLAs, eliminated both the \$2,500 technology fund available to each MLA, and the \$1,050 monthly allowance. We reduced the daily per diem rate for MLAs while sitting in the Legislature to \$38 per day from \$84 and established the House of Assembly Management Commission - making us the first Government of Nova Scotia . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Clare.

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to say a few words on this resolution that's before the House this evening. Let me begin by telling you the total

budget for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for 2010-11. It's \$397 million. Now, mind you, we know that the province is getting help from the federal government on a number of capital projects throughout our communities. At the same time we also know that the department needs to spend well over \$100 million in salaries for staff. So, you know, technically we're looking at roughly \$300 million that's spent on capital projects in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, \$300 million certainly sounds like a big amount. I'm sure if you asked the question to many people - is it enough? - I'm sure many people will probably tell you, hey, we need a lot more money in order to try to bring our infrastructure just to an acceptable standard. So I want to look at our infrastructure in the province this evening.

In 2008, Statistics Canada released a study on public infrastructure and pointed out that Nova Scotia has the oldest public infrastructure system in the country. Well, the study only confirmed what we already knew. Nobody was surprised, you know, to hear this information. That study showed that our roads in Nova Scotia are 50 per cent older than the Canadian average, so most of our roads in our province are 50 per cent older than the Canadian average.

Now, we know that there are approximately 4,100 bridges in Nova Scotia. Well, guess what, many of our bridges are at least 100 per cent older than the Canadian average. When we start looking at our public infrastructure in the province, we know that we have a lot that needs to be looked at. I know my honourable colleague, the member for Argyle talked tonight about some bridges in his riding that need to be addressed. Again, if we were to bring all our roads and all our bridges to an acceptable standard, what would that price tag be? Well, we've heard from different people, from different sources, that the government would have to commit - is it \$3 billion, is it \$4 billion, is it \$5 billion, just in order to bring our infrastructure to an acceptable standard?

Again, when we're spending in the area of about \$300 million a year, by the time you get back to repaving some of our roads that were paved 30 or 40 years ago, I don't think we'll ever catch up to bring all our public infrastructure to an acceptable standard. There's just so much money inside that department that's being spent on capital projects. Again, when you look at \$300 million it certainly sounds like a lot, but I just want to bring this to the House's attention. According to the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association, they told us last year the cost to repave just one kilometre of pavement is approximately \$300,000.

When you look back at what \$1 million could do 10, 20 years ago, and when you look at today, how far can you stretch \$1 million in repaving some of our roads at a cost of approximately \$300,000? We know, unfortunately, there's not enough. At the same time, the Road Builders Association told us that the cost to do one kilometre of road construction is approximately \$2.5 million.

I'm sure everyone would hope that the government would increase the capital budget year after year, but we all know that the government has many other requests to meet along the way. Just last week the honourable member for Argyle talked about the flooding that happened in southwestern Nova Scotia, especially in his riding. Gratefully, our area in Digby County, in our municipality, wasn't hit as badly, but yet roads flooded. The department will have to spend money fixing some of these roads. Luckily in Clare we only had one road that was closed because of the heavy rainfall.

Bridges, of course, will need some repairs. At home, we had a number of bridges that were closed. There's one that's still closed. Until the water starts dropping, the bridge engineers won't have a complete assessment in terms of how much repair work our bridge will need. At the same time, when we look at this flooding that did take place last week - and lo and behold, there will be more flooding that will probably happen in the run of the year. So at the same time, when the Premier was down in Tusket, the question was raised, how much money will it cost? Well, again, these costs add pressures to the department's existing budget. There's no category in that department's budget just in case we have some floods and we have bridges and we have roads to repair, there's a block of money ready to be spent. Well, the department will have to find some of that money inside their budget, of course. We know that the federal government will certainly be assisting with some of these repairs.

I know my time has certainly run down - I'm trying to squeeze in as much as I can in 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately you've got a practically impossible mission when it comes to talking about some of our roads.

With the few minutes remaining I want to speak about some of the work carried out on Highway No. 101 by the department, especially in the last few months. Highway No. 101 starts in Lower Sackville in the Bedford area. It runs through the Valley and right up to Yarmouth. A new section of divided highway was opened between St. Croix and Three Mile Plains, just outside of Windsor, this past summer. Four passing lanes were finally constructed and opened in the Valley this year.

Mr. Speaker, as you are probably well aware, this project started many years ago. I know before I got elected, back in 1993 - and that's a long way back - building some passing lanes was being talked about then.

When you look at Highway No. 101, which was one of the most dangerous stretches of roads in our province, the department is in the process of addressing this problem by twinning Highway No. 101, by adding these passing lanes. We all hope that by making these improvements to Highway No. 101 the number of accidents, and especially the number of fatalities happening on Highway No. 101 will decrease and hopefully stop altogether.

With those few words I will take my seat and hopefully return to this debate some other time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank all the honourable members for their participation in late debate. The motion to adjourn was made earlier.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:28 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2189**

By: Ms. Lenore Zann (Truro-Bible Hill)

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

Whereas G & G Computers was created in 2001 and services all makes and brands of computers as well as building custom systems based on the individual needs of each customer; and

Whereas the staff and owners of G & G Computers take pride in providing quality work and excellent customer service; and

Whereas G & G Computers was awarded the Small Business of the Year Award by the Truro and Area District Chamber of Commerce;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate G & G Computers on receipt of the 2010 Small Business of the Year Award by the Truro and Area District Chamber of Commerce and wish them continued success with their business.

RESOLUTION NO. 2190

By: Mr. Jamie Baillie (Cumberland South)

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

Whereas for the last 14 years, Tena and Justin Simons have hosted thousands of visitors during the annual Haunted House held at their Springhill property; and

Whereas close to 500 people passed through their gate on Halloween this year - younger ones in the afternoon and an after dark version for those who dared; and

Whereas there are over 30 volunteers who take up to three weeks of their time to help set up everything for Halloween weekend and all proceeds are presented to the elementary schools in Springhill and/or to the area food bank;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tena and Justin Simons on their outstanding community spirit and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2191

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

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

Whereas on October 23, 1958, the world watched in horror as the 1958 Bump in Springhill resulted in the most severe underground earthquake in North American mining history; and

Whereas history later showed that through the dedication of volunteers, 92 miners survived this tragic event - one of whom was Garnet Clarke; and

Whereas Garnet Clarke, one of the last remaining survivors of the Springhill Bump, passed away on Sunday, November 14th, at the age of 81 in the town where he lived, loved and made history;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in extending our deepest condolences to Garnet's wife, Polly, his three children, Ruth, Brenda and Gloria and their families, and honour his memory by never forgetting the sorrows and lessons learned from this tragic event in Nova Scotia's history.

RESOLUTION NO. 2192

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas Molson Canadian Nova Scotia Music Week for 2010 was held in Yarmouth from November 4th to 7th; and

Whereas Nova Scotia Music Week showcased 80 musical acts in 104 performances and featured the largest and most diverse lineup of musicians the festival and conference has ever seen, with shows held on 11 stages at various locations in Yarmouth as well as Pubnico, Amirault's Hill, and Wedgeport; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Music Week Gala Award show was held at the Mariner's Centre in Yarmouth on Sunday, November 7th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Molson Canadian and its organizers for holding another successful Nova Scotia Music Week in Yarmouth in 2010 and wish them much success in the future as they promote Nova Scotia's talented musicians.

RESOLUTION NO. 2193

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas this past August the 10th International Soke Cup Chito-Ryu Championships took place in Kumamoto, Japan; and

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

Whereas Trysten Deveau took home two bronze medals, one for the individual Kumite - KYU 12 to 13 and the second as part of team Kata;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trysten Deveau for his gold medal at the 10th International Soke Cup Chito-Ryu Championships and wish him continued success in all future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 2194

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas Nason Scribner is a Grade 12 student at Prince Andrew High School in Dartmouth and has been playing the fiddle since the age of five; and

Whereas 12 years later at age 17 Nason is already an accomplished musician, having released his first CD, "Inspirations," in 2008 and performed in festivals and venues across Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas Nason has just recently released his second CD, entitled "Hear the Music";

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nason on the release of his second album and wish him well in his emerging career as a musician.