



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker

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Second Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2010

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 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 this afternoon's proceedings. Before we go to the daily routine, I'll recognize the honourable Minister of Health.

The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of order. I'd like to follow up on a matter that was raised yesterday by my colleague, the honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park, during Question Period. The member tabled a letter which I have reviewed, along with my department, and found that it went to people in nursing homes as part of communications about an increase in fees, and it contained an erroneous clause that does not conform to government policy with respect to security deposits.

Having reviewed this letter, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter of apology and clarification that is being sent to all residents of the homes who received the September 27th letter, as well as a letter that we are sending to nursing homes so that they are clear that the government's policy is that there will be no security deposits collected.

Mr. Speaker, I and my department regret any confusion this may have caused, and I want to apologize to the House that this letter went out, and I want to thank the honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park for drawing this matter to my attention. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for rising on her point of order today to let the House know, and all Nova Scotians know, of the unfortunate error that was in that letter. On behalf of the member for Halifax Clayton Park, I'd like to again thank the minister and just say that you've corrected it and that's all we ask for.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the information.

The late debate, under Rule 5(5), to be held at the moment of interruption - I'll read the operative clause:

Therefore be it resolved that this House take action and help the 14,000 children living in poverty in Nova Scotia.

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

The honourable member for Pictou East on an introduction.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise at this time and recognize a very special constituent from Pictou East, Gordon Anderson who is in the east gallery. Gordon is a long-time school board member of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, a committee chairman, and a very active person in Pictou East. He also is the immediate past president of the NDP Association of Pictou East. Yesterday we had the president in the very same seat, so I certainly thank the executive members who are showing up here, and I ask Gordon to rise and receive a very warm welcome from this House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on an introduction.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to be able to introduce a Grade 12 class from Horton High. We have 21 students from Mr. Brad Richard's class. He also has his student teacher with him, Jonny Wiser. I have them up in the east gallery and it is an absolute pleasure to have them here in this historic House today. I ask everyone to give them a very warm welcome in this very historic House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors here this afternoon, and we hope the students enjoy the proceedings here in the House.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition signed by Nova Scotians across the province, with the operative clause reading:

“We, the undersigned, want the Nova Scotia Government to re-examine their decision to withhold covering Lucentis injections for all Nova Scotian’s [sic] afflicted with Macular Degeneration. We want the government to provide us with the same level of health care that everyone in the rest of Canada enjoy [sic].”

[2:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by 4,147 Nova Scotians and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition signed by Nova Scotians of Yarmouth County. The operative clause reads:

“The long waiting time for medical attention at the Yarmouth Out Patient Department affects everyone. Those with out [sic] Doctors have no choice but to sit and wait for as long as 9 - 12 hours in some cases. This is unacceptable. We need a Walk In Clinic to service the people of Yarmouth.”

Mr. Speaker, the petition has been signed by 1,770 people from Yarmouth County and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise here today on this occasion to announce the creation of the Suburban Priorities Team. Creating this team fulfills a government commitment to the suburban residents of Halifax Regional Municipality. These families have moved to the suburbs to enjoy the space, the peace and quiet, and a sense of community that suburban life allows, but the suburbs of HRM have experienced tremendous growth in recent years and it's putting pressure on the families who live in the suburbs of HRM.

These families may not want to fight a growing traffic jam every morning to get to work. They want to have options, Mr. Speaker. They may want to take public transit, or bike to work, so they want governments to make it easier and safer to do that. Families are telling us that they want to do their part for the environment. Public transit is one part of that but they also want to have other options.

They may want to put up a clothesline without having to worry about restrictive covenants in their neighbourhood, or they might want to install a solar hot water heating system that will help cut their energy costs. Families in suburban HRM are concerned about their children's and their grandchildren's education. They want to know that their child will have a good experience in the school system and they want us to find new and creative ways to strengthen the school's role as the hub of the community to bring neighbours together there.

Mr. Speaker, these are simple things, and they don't have to be expensive, but they'll make such a difference to families in suburban HRM. That's why we have created the Suburban Priorities Team. Creating the team was a government commitment to the families of HRM. The team will listen to the concerns of residents in suburban HRM. They will work with the municipality to support them where they can. This team is going to take action and they are going to get results.

Mr. Speaker, some things that families want will be a municipal responsibility and some will be provincial, but people don't care what level of government is responsible for their concern. They expect governments to work together. They expect government to listen and that's what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, last week we introduced an amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act that will ensure there is one metre of open space between cyclists and vehicles on our roads, and this will apply across the province. It is a very good example of the kind of action families in suburban HRM have asked us to take. I'm also pleased to tell this House that our government will introduce three bills today that will also help suburban families save money and reduce their carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be tabling amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipal Charter. These amendments will allow HRM to offer an exciting new program that will allow homeowners to install solar hot water heating systems and pay for it over time

on their municipal tax bill. This program is the very first of its kind in Canada. HRM needed these legislative changes to allow them to offer financing on municipal tax bills and we are very happy to support them.

I'm also pleased to tell this House about two bills that my colleague, Minister Estabrooks, will table today. One bill will amend the Motor Vehicle Act to ensure that public transit vehicles have a right of way when re-entering traffic on streets and highways across Nova Scotia. The second bill will ensure that homeowners across the province can install clotheslines regardless of restrictive covenants in their neighbourhood. There are more measures to come. Again, these are simple things and these are things that will make a difference in people's day-to-day lives. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to stand today in my place and respond to the minister's statement. I can understand where the minister is coming from in trying to reduce our carbon footprint, but it seems a little bit odd that you have to make a specific law to allow clotheslines. It should actually be put in enabling legislation so the municipalities can provide relief if, indeed, there are covenants. Typically, after being on regional council and seeing what covenants mean, usually the covenants don't mean a darn thing - only as good as the people who own the subdivision. After it's built, they typically don't enforce the covenants because it's simply too expensive. It must be a very limited number of people that would have this problem.

The real issue today is that we're seeing a lot of problems in the suburban area. I don't know - I'm sure the minister is aware of this, that HRM has gone through HRM By Design and has basically stopped a lot of development outside the urban core and made it impossible to build unless you have road-front property. I see that over and over again as you move forward, and more things that the municipality has done have been very restrictive.

I'm quite concerned about the fact that the municipality is going to finance solar hot water heating. If it's anything like the rates that they put on local improvement charges, the first year it's a great deal because you don't pay any interest on it on your tax bill. The second year your bill is doubled because the interest has accumulated so badly. Typically, it's a lot cheaper to go get a personal line of credit or readdress your mortgage and your mortgage opened up to buy these things rather than the municipality finance it. It sounds like the municipalities want to become bankers. I'm very concerned about that. I like the idea of the hot water solar heating.

I think there are some very restrictive things that the municipality has done as well. It's my understanding that when the Superstore in Porters Lake put a windmill up - which is a great thing - nobody in the community complained about it, but someone else in other areas did. Superstores are going to put them up all over the place in HRM, and I believe -

I stand to be corrected on this if I'm wrong, they passed a bylaw that you can't put a windmill up by a grocery store anymore.

So you talk about reducing the carbon footprint. When you talk about these things, these are important long-term things for the environment, but they're frivolous things. These should not come to this House. You should have enabling legislation that allows the municipalities to do these things on their own - amend the Charter so they can do these things. We've seen all kinds of silly things happen in the municipality, like the chicken bylaw they did and the cat bylaw they did. I can tell you, when you mention either one of these things in my community, you see some very angry people.

Wasting time doing these things - there are so many more important things we have that we have to do in this province. Three more bills will add to the count that the NDP is putting forward at this time. I don't know what they're trying to do, if they're just trying to get more bills through than the last government did, I don't know, but they seemed like frivolous bills. In the meantime, we lost 8,600 jobs in October and close to 400 last week, yet we're not doing anything to really address these things.

These are the things we need to do; we need to make sure our young people are going to stay here and grow our economy. There is no talk in this presentation about English as a Second Language for immigrants who come into the province, there are so many things missing here. I believe that indeed, the concept is good to do these things. I don't know where this group or the backbenchers of the NDP are going to do because a lot of these things are HRM issues. I think if I was still on council I would be very upset about this situation if, indeed, they are going to come in and tell the municipality what they have to do. If that's the case, they won't last long.

We have to keep a clean environment, we have to make an environment so it's good for our children to stay here but I don't think this bill does that, or that any one of these three bills do this. I still can't believe that the municipality wants to finance hot water solar heating systems. It doesn't make any sense because you can finance them a lot of other ways and I guarantee you that if you don't pay your taxes - and I see this a lot in my area - if you don't pay your property taxes you lose your home. So if you put more pressure on your property taxes and anything to do with your property taxes, it's not a good thing. The property taxes in this municipality are already too high for the service you receive.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of difficulty supporting these frivolous bills and this whole process. I hope I'm wrong, I hope the government has a grander plan than this and that indeed, they will come forward with something that will really help the communities that desperately need help. With those few words I'll take my seat. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for sharing her comments in advance today, to allow us to have a look at what is being proposed with this Suburban Priorities Team. I share some of the thoughts of my honourable colleague who has just spoken on this matter in that I am wondering what - I kind of wonder about the purpose of this initiative. To me, there are already mechanisms within government to do a lot of these things. What is left is just the work effort, the work ethic and the effort to do them. If we look at traffic jams or, for instance, there was some mention of transit for buses and for bicycle lanes. That is stuff that we can just implement, we don't need a priorities team to discuss that. If government wants to do that, government can do those things.

We can clutter the books with legislation, Mr. Speaker, but why don't we just get to work for Nova Scotians? I think that's what Nova Scotians want us to do. Putting up clotheslines, whether or not people can put up clotheslines - those are municipal issues that can be determined with bylaws. There's a whole level of government, a local level of government to deal with those matters. Solar energy systems, I wonder why government is wading into this matter. There are already (Interruption) I have to laugh at the Premier telling me that I don't know what I'm talking about because he told me that once before, when he laughed at my question about renewable energy in this province and energy rates going up. Lo and behold, this summer what did Nova Scotia Power come to Nova Scotians with but the reality that because of the mercury reduction targets, they were looking at raising Nova Scotians' energy costs by 12 per cent to 18 per cent a year.

Perhaps the Premier should sit back and listen to some of the things that we're talking about over here because I know that Nova Scotians care about them and perhaps they'll indicate that to him, come the next election. Solar energy systems, it may be a great idea but why is government stepping in to the world of the private sector to encourage these developments? I think of a company like (Interruptions)

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

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I think of a company like Irving. Irving provides their customers, if they want to buy a new furnace or a hot water tank, they provide financing, there is a mechanism for people to spread out the cost of buying infrastructure like that for their homes. I would just question why government would be wading into that.

We're open to learning more about what this suburban priorities team is, who they'll be and what they'll be doing, but it seems to me that a lot of this stuff can be handled by government already, if it wants to do these things. As my colleague had mentioned, we have very important things to be talking about in this Chamber and things we need to be doing from a bigger picture perspective. It's time we start focusing on those kinds of things.

I always have to ask about democracy. We have members, local councillors, here in the city that look at a lot of these issues. Why can't they approach government when they have those issues? (Interruptions) If they have approached government, I know if I were in government and council had approached me about something that they wanted done, I would endeavour to do those things. I don't see the need in cluttering up the things we do with more . . .

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

MR. MACMASTER: I think I've said it enough already, but the last thing I would like to say, there are measures in this province that would help other areas outside of HRM and I don't see why we have a team for HRM and not for the rest of the province. I guess when we go back to it, I wouldn't bother having a team at all.

I think I'll conclude my comments with that. I think I've expressed my thoughts on this matter and there's obvious disagreement on both sides of the House on this initiative. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2399

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 Danny Williams has faithfully served the people and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador for seven years as their Premier and their staunchest champion on the national and international stage, being referred to today as a political pugilist, a tribute to his assertive style; and

Whereas Mr. Williams is and will remain a friend and ally of Nova Scotia, and indeed the entire Atlantic Region, evidenced by his work to create an historic agreement on the development of the Lower Churchill Falls for the benefit of the entire region; and

Whereas Mr. Williams has announced today that he intends to step down as Premier effective December 3rd, leaving the post of Interim Premier to Ms. Kathy Dunderdale;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize the leadership and courage shown by Mr. Williams and wish him well in his post-political career, while pledging our commitment to work alongside Ms. Dunderdale and other Atlantic Premiers to forge a new economic relationship.

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. 2400

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

Whereas an estimated 65,000 Canadians live with HIV and thousands of new HIV infections occur each year significantly impacting on the lives of those infected, their families, and communities; and

Whereas the misconceptions and stigma attached to HIV continue to create serious barriers for HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support; and

Whereas reducing the spread of HIV and ensuring Nova Scotians living with HIV and AIDS have the best possible quality of life remains a priority of the government and its many community partners through Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize November 24th to December 1st as AIDS Awareness Week.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health Promotion and Protection.

RESOLUTION NO. 2401

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

Whereas influenza is a common virus that sends thousands of Nova Scotians to their doctor and emergency rooms each year; and

Whereas the Department of Health Promotion and Protection launched its annual flu vaccination campaign on October 14th, announcing flu vaccinations are free for all Nova Scotians this year; and

Whereas the VON will be at Province House tomorrow morning to offer a complementary flu clinic for MLAs and staff;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize that immunization is the safest and most effective way to prevent the influenza and encourage all Nova Scotians to get their flu shot.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2402

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

Whereas Ami MacKay of Scots Bay, Kings County, published her first novel, *The Birth House*, in 2007 and saw great success with the novel reaching number one on the best seller list; and

Whereas Ms. MacKay's debut novel was named best novel and she was chosen as best author at the 2007 Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Awards; and

Whereas Ms. MacKay's novel, *The Birth House*, has been chosen for CBC Radio's 2011 Canada Reads competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Ms. MacKay on being selected for CBC Radio's 2011 Canada Reads Competition and wish her continued success in her publishing career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 111 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Hon. William Estabrooks)

Bill No. 112 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Ramona Jennex)

Bill No. 113 - Entitled an Act to Prevent Prohibitions on the Use of Clotheslines. (Hon. William Estabrooks)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2403

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

Whereas on November 29th over 1,700 lobster boats will set their gear to fish a six-month season in Lobster Fishery Areas 33 and 34; and

Whereas this area stretches from Digby to Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is the biggest and most productive lobster fishing area in the world; and

Whereas this six-month season through the winter months is also the most dangerous time to catch lobsters, but are the best lobsters in the world because of the cold waters;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House wish this huge fleet a safe and prosperous season, and also everyone put lobsters on your Christmas list for one of the best treats you will ever taste this coming Christmas.

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. 2404

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

Whereas Danny Williams was elected the ninth Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2003, and was re-elected in 2007, transforming his province through unprecedented economic growth, a substantial reduction in the provincial debt, and renewed provincial pride; and

Whereas for seven years Premier Williams was a tireless, articulate and effective advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador, with a record of getting things done and taking his province from a “have not” to a “have” status; and

Whereas today Premier Williams announced his retirement from public life and can enjoy his retirement in the knowledge that both Newfoundland and Labrador and the Atlantic Region are better off for him being Premier;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank Premier Williams for his service to his province and to our country, congratulate him on a successful career in public life, and wish him well as he leaves office.

Mr. Speaker, if I may say, I saw Premier Williams in action in a previous job and I am very pleased to make this motion today, and I therefore 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 Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to do an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you. I would like to bring the attention of the members of the House to the east gallery, please, and with us today we have five members from the Carpenters Union Local 83 and some other folks from the regional council. I would ask the folks in the gallery to rise as I say your name: Eric Daley, president, Carpenters Union Local 83; Peter Greer, vice-president, Nova Scotia and P.E.I. Regional Council; executive members of Local 83 - Ron MacDonald, Vern Rowe, and Shane Butler. We extend warm wishes to them. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 2405

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

Whereas 2010 marks the 125th Anniversary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters Local 83, located at their new Carpenter Millwright Trades College in Lower Sackville; and

Whereas the union was first formed 1885 and has spent every year since representing carpenters and those in related trades from across the province by having provided \$40 million in wages, \$2 million in health benefits, and a pension fund of \$60 million for their members in retirement; and

Whereas this group has constructed many buildings and structures in the province and plays an important part in our community through the operation of their new college - a venue to ensure that the next generation of carpenters are fully skilled and ready to take on the task of building in this great province;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the United Brotherhood of Carpenters Local 83 on their 125th Anniversary and their accomplishments, while wishing them the best in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[2:45 p.m.]

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2406

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

Whereas today marks the beginning of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, which starts with the International Day Against Violence Against Women and ends on International Human Rights Day, on December 10th, symbolically linking violence against women and human rights; and

Whereas the 16 Days campaign unites groups and individuals world-wide in their call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women; and

Whereas the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia has provided all members of the Legislature with a purple ribbon, which is to be worn to support efforts to eliminate violence against women;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House acknowledge Thursday, November 25th, as the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence and recognize that raising awareness and developing health public policy, which addresses violence against women, is a 365-days-a-year job.

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. 2407

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

Whereas the North Star Lodge Number 74, Londonderry, Colchester North, recently celebrated their 135th Anniversary for continuous service; and

Whereas the Meritorious Service Medal, the highest honour for a brother Mason, is presented for going the extra mile, for doing good service to the fraternity and must be sent to the Grand Secretary and the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia for approval; and

Whereas Myles Rushton, a 50-year member, was presented with the rarely-awarded Meritorious Service Medal by North Star Lodge Number 74, Londonderry;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Myles Rushton for receiving this very prestigious medal from his brother Masons.

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. 2408

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

Whereas MacLeod Safety Services, a traffic services company, was established in Truro in 1988 and focuses its business on retail sales and work site safety; and

Whereas MacLeod Safety Services has a large component of their business dedicated to reinforcing the message of keeping people who work in construction and utility industries safe and free of injury; and

Whereas MacLeod Safety Services has been recognized by the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association by receiving the Chair's Award of Excellence for the safest company with a payroll under \$1 million;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate MacLeod Safety Services for receiving the Chair's Award of Excellence from the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association and thank them for their commitment to making safety in the workplace a top priority.

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. 2409

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 Grainger was born and brought up in Dartmouth where he met and married his wife, Heather, and they moved to Lake Echo 36 years ago, bringing up their son and daughter; and

Whereas Fred is an area representative for the Lake Echo Ratepayers Association, participated in obtaining the very first Lake Echo Community Centre, has been president of the Lake Echo Minor Softball Association for the past 20 years, booking all the fields for the teams, et cetera, and he served as vice president of his union when he worked as a machinist in a Halifax dockyard; and

Whereas at the present time Fred is busy studying for the ministry and is a postulant, working out of his own church, St. Augustine's Anglican Church, with his ultimate goal to become an Anglican priest to help out in the parish, which consists of five churches spread out over a very large area;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House acknowledge Fred Grainger for his participation in the community and wish him well with becoming an Anglican priest and continuing to help others.

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. 2410

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

Whereas on Saturday, October 16th at Memorial High School in Sydney Mines, the SC-42 Convoy committee presented *Valour in the Black Pit*, a theatrical re-enactment of Convoy SC-42, which met its final fate southeast of Greenland in an area known by sailors as “The Black Pit” or “The Mid-Atlantic Gap”; and

Whereas Convoy SC-42 consisted of 64 merchant ships that set sail from Sydney Harbour and were attacked by a German wolfpack that sank 16 ships and killed 280 merchant sailors, highlighting the importance of the role played by Sydney Harbour in World War II; and

Whereas the valour, sacrifice, and dedicated effort of many servicemen and women are being recognized in this, Canada’s Naval Centennial year, including a naval candlelight service presented by the Cape Breton Naval Veterans Association as a solemn tribute to those who lost their lives while serving in Canada’s Navy and Merchant Navy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Bonita Gouthro, the SC-42 Convoy committee, and participants for this magnificent production, and remember with gratitude the sacrifice of the sailors of the SC-42 Convoy.

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 Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2411

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

Whereas Janet Sutherland, daughter to Charlie, municipal councillor, and Camilla Sutherland of Westville, Pictou County, will be admitted to the Bar of Massachusetts on December 3, 2010; and

Whereas in May 2009, Janet graduated from the University of New Brunswick with her degree in law; and

Whereas along with her parents and partner Neil Neville, Janet will be a special guest of the province at the Nova Scotia Tree Lighting Ceremony in Boston on December 2, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Janet Sutherland on her accomplishments and wish her success in her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2412

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

Whereas Julianne Robicheau grew up in Clare watching Fashion Television and honing her design skills as she dreamed of being a fashion designer; and

Whereas Ms. Robicheau's love of fashion continued to grow and she reached her dream of being a designer when she and her co-designer Courtney Flood unveiled their collection during Ottawa Fashion Week; and

Whereas Julianne and Courtney have combined Julianne's design sketches and Courtney's skills with a needle to create a clothing line full of bright-coloured, fun clothing for both women and men;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Julianne Robicheau for reaching her goals and wish her and Ms. Flood continued success as they begin their career in the fashion industry.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2413

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

Whereas the Alderwood Community's Festival of Lights in Baddeck will take place Saturday, December 4, 2010; and

Whereas Alderwood's Festival of Lights has multi-themed houses decorated in support of the cost of their Christmas decorations; and

Whereas tickets are still available for this wonderful community celebration in downtown Baddeck;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Alderwood working council for the variety of initiatives they undertake as a result of some assistance through the Nova Scotia Seniors' Positive Aging Fund for their Alderwood Community Recreation Project.

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 Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 2414

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

Whereas Dress for Success is a not-for-profit organization that promotes the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and career development tools; and

Whereas since launching in Halifax in 2001, Dress for Success has assisted more than 900 women in HRM, equipping them with apparel, coaching and support, thereby instilling a greater sense of confidence while helping women make successful transitions into the workforce; and

Whereas this evening, November 25th, Dress for Success Halifax will hold its first Kick It Up fundraising event at Palooka's Boxing Club on Gottingen Street, with all proceeds supporting local Dress for Success participants;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Dress for Success Halifax, its supporters and volunteers for their commitment to Dress for Success programs and services, and to all those Nova Scotia women who are fighting hard to reach their full potential at work and in life.

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. 2415

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

Whereas the Salvation Army of Yarmouth has faithfully served those in physical, emotional and spiritual need in the Yarmouth community for approximately 125 years; and

Whereas countless Yarmouth individuals and families have benefited from the enduring work of the Yarmouth Salvation Army; and

Whereas this week, the Salvation Army of Yarmouth will launch its annual Christmas Kettle Campaign, which assists local families with Christmas and winter relief;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize the Salvation Army of Yarmouth for 125 years of compassion, generosity and good service to the people of Yarmouth and wish it many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2416

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 residents of Yarmouth County have been patiently waiting for access to family doctors to improve; and

Whereas it is estimated that between 3,500 and 8,000 residents in Yarmouth County do not have access to a family doctor; and

Whereas people without a family doctor are forced to wait in the emergency room at the Yarmouth hospital in order to be treated for something that could be done at a health clinic;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in calling on the Minister of Health to support a new walk-in health clinic for the people of Yarmouth County in order to ensure better access to family physicians and to limit the unnecessary use of the emergency department at the hospital in Yarmouth.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2417

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

Whereas on November 30, 2010, Mr. Alexander “Braz” Ellsworth Ryan of Canso in the constituency of Guysborough-Sheet Harbour will celebrate his 106th birthday; and

Whereas Braz Ryan, born in 1904 and raised in Canso, worked as a fisherman, a deckhand on the trawlers and as a watchman, taking time out to serve his country in the Merchant Marine; and

Whereas Braz is a well respected and much-loved member of the community of Canso and will celebrate his 106th year with many family and friends at the Canso Seaside Manor on Thursday, November 25, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Braz Ryan on the celebration of his 106th birthday and extend to him our very best wishes for many more such celebrations in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[3:00 p.m.]

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2418

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

Whereas Costas Halavrezos began a career with CBC Radio in the mid-1970s, eventually working in both Saint John and Quebec City as a producer and host until 1987; and

Whereas as a proud Dartmouth resident, Costas was based in Halifax as the host of CBC Radio's Maritime Noon, from 1987 until 2010; and

Whereas Costas, a celebrated and popular radio personality and journalist, retired from CBC Radio in September 2010 after 23 years of hosting Maritime Noon;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Costas on his well-earned retirement and applaud him for his vibrant and rich career as a CBC Radio host, producer and journalist.

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. 2419

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

Whereas John Bragg was officially inducted into the Telecommunications Hall of Fame's Icons of Business category, after 35 years of operating EastLink; and

Whereas EastLink was the first national cable company to offer telephone service and the first telecommunications company in North America to combine video, Internet and telephone in a bundle; and

Whereas since 1969, EastLink has grown to be the largest privately-held cable telecommunications company in Canada and has been recognized as one of Canada's 50 best-managed companies in the past four years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate John Bragg on being inducted into the Telecommunications Hall of Fame's Icons of Business category and wish him many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2420

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

Whereas Terry Janes, a local mechanic for more than 35 years in Bedford and Lower Sackville and an Esso service station leaseholder for more than 10 years, reliably served thousands of motorists in that time; and

Whereas Janes is described by his clients as having been kind, respectful and, by one client, as the most honest person he had ever dealt with, was known for his superlative customer service at all times, including during both Hurricane Juan and White Juan, when he sent employees home and manned the station on his own; and

Whereas Janes this past Spring reluctantly hung up his mechanic's wrench after station owner Imperial Oil decided to close the Cobequid Drive service station that Janes had leased;

Therefore be it resolved that the Members of the Legislative Assembly recognize a man who was and is a remarkable asset to his community and lament the loss of a retailer who, while providing rare old-fashioned style service, became a reliable, trusted and admired friend to so many.

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. 2421

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

Whereas Mary Astephen of North Sydney is 89 years old and loves to be active and is well known for walking in the Northside for the last 65 years, wearing her signature hat in the community; and

Whereas Mary came to Cape Breton on the Queen Mary as a war bride and built walking and swimming into her daily activities all of her life; and

Whereas HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Cape Breton has made Mary a HEAL ambassador because she is an inspiration to all those who cross her path with her credo to eating healthy and active living;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mary Astephen on becoming HEAL Cape Breton's newest ambassador and wish her many more healthy years in this position.

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. 2422

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

Whereas the Canada Centre for Policy Alternatives says that 14,000 children live in poverty in Nova Scotia and there are more than two dozen homeless young people in the Yarmouth area alone; and

Whereas the Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team (SHYFT) is seeking to provide shelter for homeless youth and has already secured \$342,000 from the federal government, along with municipal support, to renovate and operate the facility which will be housing homeless youth in Yarmouth; and

Whereas this NDP Government is the only level of government which has not provided the needed financial support for this important initiative to help ensure our homeless youth have shelter;

Therefore be it resolved that this House urge the NDP Government to provide the necessary provincial funding to ensure that SHYFT is immediately able to provide shelter for homeless youth so they are protected while the cold winter months are upon us.

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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2423

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 on August 17, 1960, Yvonne and Romain Pothier were joined in marriage at Ste. Anne's Church in Ste. Anne du Ruisseau; and

Whereas in 50 years of marriage Yvonne and Romain were blessed with three daughters, Simone, Rachel, and Nicolette, and have four grandchildren; and

Whereas on August 15, 2010, an open house was held in Wedgeport in their honour where they welcomed many members of their family and friends, and on August 17, 2010, a mass was celebrated where they renewed their vows, also surrounded by their family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Yvonne and Romain Pothier on celebrating this milestone and wish them many more happy years together.

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. 2424

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

Whereas each year the Western Region Woodlot Owner of the Year is awarded to a deserving woodlot owner; and

Whereas this year the award went to David Thomas from North Range, Digby County; and

Whereas David held a field day at his woodlot in September to showcase his property and to demonstrate the sawmill, Christmas tree management, and tree-tending operations;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate David Thomas on receiving this year's Western Region Woodlot Owner of the Year Award and wish him well in his 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 Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2425

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

Whereas Rita-Clare LeBlanc, a Halifax West High School student, founded the Maritime Youth Standing Together (MYST) organization after receiving a Christmas gift from her uncle challenging her to choose a mission to help others and he would donate \$77.12 to her cause; and

Whereas Rita-Clare rose to the challenge and chose to help build a school in Mali, Africa, and set a goal to raise \$15,000, of which MYST has raised \$7,000 to date, for African Sky's 10 in 2010 school-building program; and

Whereas when the new school opens, 100 children will be able to attend school close to home without having to walk a long distance;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the outstanding effort that Rita-Clare LeBlanc has put into creating the MYST organization and into mobilizing volunteers to help raise funds to build a school in a faraway land for children that need a helping hand.

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.

Momentarily we'll be going into Orders of the Day, Oral Questions Put By Members to ministers. Again, a reminder about not having electronic equipment on during Question Period. It's only for an hour, but on both sides of the House I would ask that your computers, your laptops, your BlackBerrys, not be on. No texting, no tweeting, no e-mails, please.

With that, the time now is 3:10 p.m., and Oral Question Period will go to 4:10 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: With that, the time now is 3:10 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: SM. BUS. - TAX SYSTEM

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. This government talks about making our province competitive. It is doing nothing to fix our outdated tax system, which is costing us jobs. In fact the Premier seems to be listening to his

Minister of Finance who is operating with the faint hope that New Brunswick would raise its taxes. Well, that hope was dashed this week when the Government of New Brunswick laid out a plan. Things are getting worse by the day in comparison to New Brunswick. My question to the Premier is, why must small-business owners pay for your unwillingness to fix our tax system?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that we have taken measures on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia in order to control a situation where the debt was continuing to grow. We have introduced measures that will reduce that, bring us back to balance and, in addition to all that, we managed to reduce the small business tax by 10 per cent.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, our small business tax rate is going from 5 per cent to 4.5 per cent. Meanwhile, New Brunswick is cutting their's from 5 per cent to 2.5. When business looks at places to set up shop, they compare and they make business decisions, and New Brunswick understands that. When business people look at Nova Scotia, they see a corporate tax rate of 16 per cent compared to 11 per cent in New Brunswick, soon to go to 10 per cent. Here in Nova Scotia it's a one-two punch. We have the highest corporate tax rate and a higher tax rate for small business. My question to the Premier is, when will you conduct a full review of our tax system in order to make us competitive with our closest neighbour?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we are always very conscious of where we sit on all of the indexes. We believe that we have a very competitive jurisdiction here in Nova Scotia. Just for the purposes of clarity - of course the Government of New Brunswick did not mention over what period of time they intended to move - on January 1st there will be a 10 per cent reduction in the small business tax in this province.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, under any measure, this province is not competitive in Atlantic Canada and the Premier knows it. We are one of the few provinces in the country which continues to charge a capital tax and we will continue to charge it until 2012 - a lot of businesses have an opportunity to move between now and 2012. My question to the Premier is, when will you realize that you have to act now to keep jobs in our province by making our tax system more competitive?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we are moving in concert with the four-year plan of the Minister of Finance in order to keep control over the finances of the province. The reality is that what the Leader of the Official Opposition asks for is for us to increase the deficit and increase the debt in this province, which we will not do.

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

HEALTH: CORPUS SANCHEZ REPT. - IMPLEMENTATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. In 2008 the Corpus Sanchez report was released, which contained 103 recommendations for making improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of our health care system. These recommendations were supported by the district health authorities at the time and are recommendations that were accepted by the government of that day. My point is that the minister and her colleagues, while in Opposition, were often quick to criticize others for being slow to implement important recommendations. Therefore my question to the minister is, after a year and a half in office, where do you stand on the implementation of these important recommendations?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question about a very fancy-pants consultant report that cost about \$1 million. Not to make light of that report, there are very many aspects of that report that we, in fact, are working on - for example, shared services between DHAs. Shortly we will be moving forward with announcements around the opening of the new stroke unit, for example, in the GASHA area with the participation of the DHA in Pictou County, which is having great benefits for residents of that community.

[3:15 p.m.]

There are many very positive things happening in our health care system. We've implemented the new nurse line, 811-dial a nurse. The impact of that particular service is fantastic and the feedback we're getting on that service is excellent, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess we have now heard that for a report that is two and a half years old, it's good to know the department is working on some of the recommendations, finally.

Mr. Speaker, we now have the Ross Report which deals specifically with emergency services. Some of its recommendations are the same as those that were in the original Corpus Sanchez Report. My question to the minister is, when will we see an implementation plan for the Ross Report and exactly when does her department plan to begin acting on its recommendations?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we will see a plan for the Ross Report before this House rises this Fall. We also have received the standards which currently are being reviewed. I will be making those available shortly.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the words "soon" and "shortly" seem to be among the two favourite words of this government, but we are waiting still.

Mr. Speaker, the government made many promises in the last election campaign, including one memorable one about emergency room closures which, as we all know, was spectacularly broken soon after the election. Yesterday the Premier said in his State of the Province Address that we are at a crossroads, that change must happen, that we must change. My final question to the minister is, when will change mean actually doing something differently and not just more studies and more reports?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there are very many positive things occurring around this province and our health care system. As I pointed out, we've implemented 811, we need to educate the public more about that service. We have a plan to do that. We have an excellent ambulance service in this province, we need to do more to promote that service and we have a plan to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we are organizing new collaborative care models all the time in the Province of Nova Scotia. I've been at the official opening of the new Collaborative Care Clinic in Pictou County. It's an excellent example of where health care needs to go in Nova Scotia. This is a new clinic that opened under the leadership of this government not so many months ago. We will continue to see more collaborative practices. Changes in primary care—we've seen the Rapid Response Unit open over at the Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. That has diverted more than 250 people out of the Emergency Department over there. The number of code census alerts have dropped. The actions that we're taking are working, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

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

PREM. - WAGE RESTRAINT: SAVINGS - EVIDENCE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a habit of making some unsubstantiated comments. Yesterday he delivered a whopper to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and here it is, and I quote, "So far, public sector wage restraints will save \$250 million." The NDP Government has granted wage increases in every contract it has negotiated with unions. So my question for the Premier is, what evidence do you have to backup your outrageous claim and we ask that you table it in the House by the end of the day.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition knows that the habits of the previous governments were to put in place agreements at almost 3 per cent. This government, through negotiation, through a good process, got down to 1 per cent.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier can't and won't provide that information because he knows he has nothing to back it up. That is not the only claim he has made that he can't prove. In this House, he claimed tourism jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia are up this year. I want to table a section of Hansard where the Premier made that claim to the member for Yarmouth.

The next day he claimed he was basing the comments on internal information from his government. I want to table that as well. My question to the Premier is, will you table today that internal document that you used to make this claim, or withdraw it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's not even an internal document, it's just a fact that we know. I'm happy to have a look for it, for the member opposite, and if I can provide it by the end of the day, I'm happy to do that. But the reality is, there were more jobs in the tourism-related industry this year than last year.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, it's not too much to ask the Premier to substantiate his comments in this House. Repeatedly the Premier and members of his caucus have made claims that the manufacturers' tax credit has created 2,200 jobs. This is wishful thinking. In fact, there is evidence that less than 50 jobs have been created and in some cases jobs have been lost. I will table a news release from this government which backs up that information.

It's as if this government believes that if it repeats a misleading comment, somehow it becomes real. My question for the Premier is, what proof do you have that this program created more than 50 jobs and will you table that information here in the House today?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, just so the member of the Opposition is properly informed, I can tell him the information, with respect to the tourism jobs in this province, came from Statistics Canada. I'm sure he's able to access that through the Website. (Interruptions)

I said it was a document that we had, so, it's Statistics Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

THE PREMIER: It's confusing, Mr. Speaker, because he asked where the information came from, we told him, and he just can't handle the truth. (Applause)

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

PREM.: UNIV. TUITION CAP - LIFT

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier suggests that I can't handle the truth - Nova Scotians are waiting for him to start telling the truth. (Applause)

It's been two months since Tim O'Neill released his report on Nova Scotia universities. Its key recommendation is the cap on tuition be removed. We've been sitting in this House for over a month. My question to the Premier is, students and parents have been waiting long enough - are you going to lift the cap on university tuition?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, we intend to complete our negotiations under the memorandum of understanding with the universities. We intend to completely revamp the student aid assistance program so that we can put an end to one of the worst student aid programs in the country and we intend to make those decisions as we go forward to the next budget.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, we know the Premier has signed another contract with Tim O'Neill to implement this government's decision. My question for the Premier is pretty simple - are you going to lift the cap on tuition?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what we intend to do is ensure that accessibility to education in this province remains a priority of the government and we intend to completely, as I've said, revamp the student aid and the assistance program so that more Nova Scotians will have access to education.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker for the Premier, for the third time, are you going to lift the cap on university tuition?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, my answer, for the third time, is that what we intend to do is ensure that the student assistance program in this province is sufficient to be able to ensure that people who want to go to university are able to go to university.

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

HEALTH - DEPT.: BUDGET CUT - COMPLIANCE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. The government has asked the Department of Health to cut 5 per cent from its budget over three years, plus inflation, plus any wage increases. Will the minister confirm today that her department will be able to comply with this directive?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in preparation for the Spring budget we are going through the process of looking at ways that we can redirect revenues that have not been well utilized, or utilized fully. I'm working through that process with the DHAs and I'm very pleased to have their full co-operation, as well as all of the other provincial programs. It's always a challenge in health care, where health care is under so much pressure and the growth in expenditures has been significant, but we all understand the need to sustain our health care system and it's a process that is going well as we move toward the Spring budget.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the most recent *Industrial Outlook* report, issued by the Government of Canada - by Service Canada specifically - identifies the need for 3,100 new health services providers in Nova Scotia in the next four years. I have that report here and I will table it for the benefit of the House. My question to the minister is, what adjustments

in your department's budget in the areas of administration and overhead are you prepared to make so that these needed, front-line health care workers can be accommodated?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there are very many things that we, and indeed governments throughout this country who are all facing similar situations, can do to improve the way we manage our health care system. For example, there are things we can do with respect to getting down the rates of on-the-job injury for workers, the extraordinary high costs of workers' compensation in our health care system, the large amounts of overtime that are required when you don't treat your health human resources with the kind of both respect and attention that is needed, but we're doing a number of initiatives. We have our Fair Drug initiative where we are working with pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies, seniors' groups and others to get a better deal on health care drug prices and, indeed, that's a strategy that is working.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my final question is to the Premier. In his State of the Province Address yesterday, the Premier talked about "No change, no future." As we all know the Health Department is the largest and fastest-growing department of government yet, in his speech, the Premier only made passing reference to Health. After one and a half years in office and many studies, and many reports and many recommendations, there is still no sense of direction for health care for our province from this government. So my question to the Premier is, the studies have been done, the road map is there for the government to follow, will the Premier tell us when his government will actually implement these many recommendations that he has received, even if he did get them from a billboard?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is we received the John Ross report - and by the way, in keeping the commitment that we made to Nova Scotians during the last election - and we have received those recommendations. As the minister has said, she will be responding to that before the House rises but, more importantly, the road map for health care for this government is crystal clear - it is better care, sooner.

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

**EDUC. - O'NEILL REPT.: TUITION INCREASES
- RESPONSE**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the day after the O'Neill report was released the Minister of Education said she invited university and student officials to discuss O'Neill's recommendations. My question to the Minister of Education is, have students told you they're concerned about tuition increases?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I've had face-to-face meetings with student organizations. They've also been sending in e-mails and letters and other responses. Yes, I would say that a common theme has been - probably the two most important things seem to be the student assistance package and tuition fees. Thank you.

[3:30 p.m.]

MS. REGAN: Well, despite what the minister says, saying that she cares what students think, the fancy-pants consultant for the Student Financial Aid Review has been very clear that tuition fees are not a part of his mandate to seek input on and the minister is not there to hear them. Since students don't get an opportunity to voice their opposition to tuition increases at these consultations, how can we conclude anything other than that this is an indication that government has stopped listening?

MS. MORE: From day one, this latest consultation has been advertised and promoted as an opportunity for students and families and other interested groups to provide advice and input on student assistance. That's the area that the Premier and the government have committed to look at first and to fast-track the consultation and to get recommendations and advice so that it can feed in as an important part of consultations with universities and also in the decision-making processes of government. That was the condition put on that particular set of meetings and consultations. There are many other opportunities for students and their organizations to provide advice on tuition fees. I encourage them to use both those processes to make their views known. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, this government is spinning the consultations as being adequate for outreach to individual students, but students at these consultations are being prevented from talking about one of their main concerns with the O'Neill report: tuition increases. Let's face it, tuition increases will have an impact on student assistance. Taking tuition out of the discussion doesn't make sense. My question is for the Premier, since you commissioned this report and have left your Minister of Education out of the process, will you sit down with students and hear their concerns about tuition increases?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the O'Neill report sets out a series of findings with respect to our current education system. I would hope that the member opposite would understand the necessity for us to deal with this sector, one of the largest investments that we make as a province.

I can tell you this: I have met with students, many of them informally. They have expressed to me their concern about tuition fees, but if tuition fees were reduced by half and there were no student aid, accessibility would go down. It is important that people have access to the funds to be able to afford an education. That is the difference between this government and that group. We understand that funding is important for students to be able to afford a university education.

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

**HEALTH - BUDGET CUTS: LONG-TERM CARE COSTS
- DETAILS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. Health care reform is a difficult issue and, as the Minister of Finance has said, we need a grown-up conversation on the matter. So far, there have been no serious conversations on this subject, grown-up or otherwise. This is troubling. Leadership on this file, at least by this government, is totally lacking. Recently, senior officials of the Department of Health have been asked to identify ways to eliminate 5 per cent of their budget over three years. This will not be easy to accomplish, especially in the areas of continuing care and long-term care where expenses are increasing rapidly. For example, the cost of long-term care programs has grown 15 per cent in the last year - all at a time when our population is continuing to age.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health is, what is your plan to manage the long-term care costs within the context of the across-the-board 5 per cent reduction?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the question of long-term care is a very important question. I can tell you that one of the things that this government will not be doing, they will not be doing what the former government did with respect to the long-term care strategy. Building beds that are probably three to four times . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I was saying is what we won't be doing is building more beds that are four to five times more expensive or what is acceptable for a long-term care bed cost.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, again through you to the minister, more specifically, in a time when people are living longer than ever before and with the lion's share of her citizens health care needs are coming at the end of their longer lives, can the minister inform this House today how she plans to manage the continuing care budget going forward?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I intend to manage that budget the same way I've managed the budget in the last year and a half. The Department of Health budget in this province for the first time has been managed in a way where we have been on track in terms of our targets. We've done that at the same time that we've done things to make health care better for Nova Scotians. We've added programs to help people with out-of-province costs. We've eliminated deposits for seniors in nursing homes. We have added drugs that are very expensive into the drug program, like Lucentis, and we've done all that within the financial envelope that we were given last year.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, as the government moves forward trying to eliminate the massive deficit they've created, can the minister assure that any cuts in health care will not come from the long-term care program and that she will instead focus on administrative costs within her department and reduce the expenses associated with it?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member doesn't understand the complexity of the health care system or budget, it's pretty obvious. As we move forward with respect to the sustainability of health care, we will do it in a responsible way. We will do it in a way where any administrative reductions will be shared equitably across the various sectors within the health care system. We will look for those kinds of investments that will improve health care and will ensure that the dollars we're spending are on services that are needed and used - not on services that aren't needed and aren't utilized.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENERGY: LWR. CHURCHILL PROJ. - N. S. EMPLOYMNT

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy knows that I and our caucus, in fact I believe all Parties in this House support the Lower Churchill project. In fact, the member for Annapolis and this caucus have been pushing for that connection in this House for a number of years. (Interruptions)

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

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it appears the government didn't pay attention during the election when the member for Annapolis was the only Leader talking about it. Yesterday the Minister stated that 6,790 person-years of employment would result from the Lower Churchill Falls project. This is the same number that is being used by the Newfoundland and Labrador Government for total employment resulting from the project. My question to the minister is quite straightforward, how many Nova Scotia person-years will there be out of those 6,790 person-years of employment, on this project?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. The question, as it was framed yesterday by the member for Cape Breton West, was looking very carefully at the importance that we were looking at Nova Scotia jobs. It was a question that after all, when we look at it, the importance that has been given to that project. It is always very clear when we have questions of this sort, we are working with our partners. We are not looking as individual provinces. We are looking at what Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and ourselves are doing.

The priority, of course, is to make sure that we have Maritime-linked jobs that are going to be shared with Cape Bretoners, whether they are from Lingan, whether they are from Whitney Pier, or whether they are from Timberlea-Prospect. That's the commitment

I give the people of this province. That's the commitment we give to Nova Scotians. We are going to make sure we have the jobs in place so that we have this project on time and it is ready for the people of this province.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, that's a slightly different answer than he gave the member for Cape Breton West yesterday. In fact, I'll quote him, yesterday, when he said, ". . . I will work with Nova Scotians to make sure those jobs are in the hands of Nova Scotians and Cape Bretoners." He just said Maritimers and Maritime jobs and working with other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, there's a very big difference in that and I would hope that it's the desire of all members of the Legislature that Nova Scotia gets as much benefit out of that as possible. I also hope the minister is not playing with the hopes of Nova Scotians. We know the details of the deal as outlined and confirmed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Government that the Inuit of Labrador will have first crack at all jobs on the project, then second will be the people from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and after those are exhausted will be Nova Scotians and others.

My question to the minister is, of the anticipated 2,700 jobs that the project is expected to create at its peak - and that data is from the minister's own department and from the Newfoundland and Labrador Government, confirmed today - how many of those jobs will be Nova Scotians working in Nova Scotia?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, to members of the House, this is a tremendous accomplishment of regional co-operation. It has shown that governments can put aside their differences in the Atlantic Region and in the Maritime specifically. It is a wonderful example of regional co-operation. We saw it firsthand when Kathy Dunderdale, the new - I wish her all the best - Acting Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador was here, when we heard the words that were exchanged, when we saw this action and what resulted.

Ms. Dunderdale made it very clear. She said to me privately afterwards, this is an example of regional co-operation, but more importantly, it means jobs for Nova Scotians, it means jobs for New Brunswickers, jobs for people from Newfoundland and Labrador, that's what we're in this for together, that's the message that Kathy Dunderdale gave me, as the Minister of Energy, and that's the message I pass on to this House and to Nova Scotians - jobs, jobs and more jobs. (Applause)

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to take away from the importance of this project, or the regional co-operation aspect, or any of that. What I and many Nova Scotians are concerned about is that the Premier and the Minister of Energy have been letting people believe that the majority, or all of these 6,700 person-years, would go to Nova Scotians when, in fact, the fact is that those numbers are for the entire project.

[3:45 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please tell me, and tell this House, why he continues to use the total job creation numbers for the whole project, when talking about benefits to Nova Scotia, instead of telling Nova Scotians exactly how many jobs they can expect in this province for Nova Scotians?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, perhaps he will check Hansard as he usually does. At no time during these answers have I mentioned a number. At no time have I mentioned a number today. It's of some concern, the specifics - when we are looking at the issue at hand here. The issue is, as Kathy Dunderdale said to us, privately, as she has said publicly, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will never treat Nova Scotians as a partner like they were treated in the past history of relations when it came to differences between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. That will not happen when it comes to this regional example of co-operation.

I will take the Acting Premier of Newfoundland at her word. She's a person of her word, we're working together, we're going to continue to work together. It will be a partnership that will be good for Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, including the Inuit of Labrador.

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

HEALTH - REPORTS: MIN. - STANCE

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. I'm glad to see she was just talking about reducing administrative costs. Something has come forward that just highlights a need where restraint can be appropriate and practical. The Minister of Finance repeatedly asks, what can we cut to reduce spending?

For starters, we can stop funding excessive reports that are needlessly costing Nova Scotians precious tax dollars when modest fact-based reports will do. In addition, reports should only be printed on a request basis with online versions available - yet another way to reduce the costs. This is a report that would have come forward from Capital Health, a very expensive document when compared to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, it is a basic information fact document. (Interruptions) They're documents before the House, not a prop, Premier, you should know that by now.

My question to the minister is, does she support the production of expensive, flashy reports such as the Capital Health Annual Report, or will she stop, through an immediate directive, unnecessary expenditures of scarce tax dollars at a time when the government indicates belt tightening is required, like her minister has asked?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Our Capital District Health Authority is our largest health authority here in the province. It serves over 400,000 people, which is more than half of the province's population. It's very important that the Capital District Health Authority communicate with residents of the community it serves, that they put forward their annual budget in terms of expenditures and revenue, the various programs they have.

It is true that we are concerned about administration and waste and directing as much of our resources as possible to the front lines of health care. In the process that we are going through in planning for the budget, we will be looking at every line item. We've asked the DHAs to submit their proposals to help us realize the savings that are required to provide very good health care, but to sustain our health care system.

MR. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, while the minister accepts the plans and issues the cheques, apparently she's not in charge of the balances. It's not an attack on Capital Health, it's the fact that they're wasting thousands upon thousands and tens of thousands of dollars. She can talk about that catchment area - well the Public Accounts report represents almost one million people in plain text. It's an example where they're saying one thing and doing another.

I can appreciate documents for tourism and economic development purposes may need further investment, as we know. We have to make improvements there. Yet we almost see on a daily basis, reports being tabled in this House that contain more graphics than they do content relevant to public reporting and disclosure. That's the point. The Minister of Health has only one area where unnecessary costs are being incurred.

My first supplementary is to the Minister responsible for Communications Nova Scotia. Does the minister believe that Communications Nova Scotia has a role to play in reducing printing and publication costs and if so, will the minister direct all departments and agencies to stop unnecessary publication spending when plain text on-line formats would be more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, to those who are directly under our purview, it's already done.

MR. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, evidence would show that's not the case. Again, it's a question of where this government gets up and says with some level of apparent legitimacy that they want to reduce spending, yet are allowing excessive spending such as the excessive glossy spending that has nothing to do with the reporting of Capital Health. They are documents of the House. It would be different if I was bringing in, I suppose, a patient's bed, it's different, but obviously the point is they say one thing and do another.

My final supplementary is to the Minister of Finance, since the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia doesn't want to exercise prudence there like the Minister of Health doesn't want to exercise prudence in her department. Given the Minister of Finance's familiar refrain of asking what cost-cutting measures the Opposition would propose, my question to the minister is, is the Minister of Finance prepared to provide a directive to departments, agencies, and government-funded entities to reduce and eliminate unnecessary publication costs when these tax dollars could go to more pressing and needed priorities such as funds to purchase Holy Angels High School. Now, there's an idea worth supporting by the minister.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refer the question to the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, as I tried to explain very succinctly to the member before, we're doing the best - everybody that's directly under our purview, they've been given that direction, similar to what we've done when those - rather than like that crowd, have a March Madness. As the Chair of Treasury Board says, a penny saved is a penny saved. We're not going to waste it like that group, we're going to save it for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

**COM. SERV. - CDN. CTR. FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES:
REPT. - POSITION**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia released a report indicating that 14,000 children in this province live in poverty. The report said, "Certainly, the provincial government needs to do more to set and reach meaningful targets to reduce poverty." My question is, does the Minister of Community Services agree with this recommendation to specify goals and targets?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, one thing we do know is that families are struggling and children are in poverty, unfortunately, in our province. I know that the honourable member also knows, because he is a very smart man, that it took years to get to that position in this province. It's this government that has a plan going forward and has implemented steps to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for speaking the truth here in the House today. I've asked the Minister of Community Services in this House to outline a specific plan to address poverty issues. She has said she has given income assistance recipients an additional \$26 per month. This isn't an adequate response to the 14,000 children in Nova Scotia living in poverty. The report released yesterday notes that the most vulnerable children live in families that rely on social assistance. My question is, will the minister commit to giving more than \$26 to income assistance recipients to alleviate poverty?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the honourable member asked me this question because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the things that we have been doing - not only that \$72 million investment, but we have actually increased our subsidies by \$400 for child care programs that help families to be able to afford to put their children in child care so they have the opportunity to go to work. We've also increased the foster care rate by 10 per cent - the first time that has been done in this province in over 10 years - to help those families that are taking our children and helping to look after the most vulnerable children that we have in this province.

We gave \$500,000 to the transition houses and women's centres to help them in their efforts to help our families in Nova Scotia. We took the tax off children's clothing in order to help the families. We took off the tax on electricity. There is a list longer than this, and we also have further plans. I certainly welcome the honourable member to come to my office and we can go over them any time he sees fit that he would like to do that.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, \$50 million was approved in the budget to help Nova Scotians on low and fixed incomes through the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. As we know, \$3.74 million was saved through what the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations explained as a lack of full uptake. The Salvation Army received \$400,000, which will certainly be spent wisely - we all know that.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, will she lobby her colleagues to ensure the remaining \$3.3 million goes directly to low- and fixed-income Nova Scotian families?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the honourable member that I do not have to lobby my colleagues for any support in terms of helping Nova Scotians. Each and every day they come to me. I am so proud to be a part of this government that recognizes where the needs are in this province and are working diligently every day to make a difference within the financial constraints that we have. We're out there consulting and asking for people's suggestions and we're working with the people of Nova Scotia.

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

**JUSTICE - VICTIM SERV.: SURCHARGE
- DISBURSEMENT**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice. Victims of crime face difficult struggles every day trying to rebuild their lives. It is imperative that the province do all that it can to help those victims who are seeking counselling. Yet our province caps the amount that we will provide to victims at \$85 an hour - hardly sufficient to cover the hourly expense of psychologists and health.

In addition to that, we collect a 15 per cent surcharge on many fines in our province to get funds to help victims. Yet it's unclear exactly how much of the money that's taken in through the Victim Services surcharge is actually directed to counselling assistance and how much is spent on the regular operating expenses of the Department of Justice.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Justice is, will the Minister of Justice detail exactly how much of the Victim Services surcharge collected by the province is actually used to cover counselling expenses?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. There are many services that that fee goes toward. I'm not so certain how quickly or how soon that data could be - that goes toward the actual payment for support services in the category she mentions, but that's something that I suppose we could try to look at.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I was able to do some digging on my own and in the last fiscal year the province budgeted \$267,800 to go toward counselling assistance. However, only 46 per cent of that money was actually spent to help victims cover the cost of counselling. So this means that the province underspent what little it had set aside for victims of crime by \$144,805. However, as is the pattern with this government, the full details remain more difficult to get. We do know that victims are being forced to subsidize their own counselling because the province has a cap of \$85 an hour.

[4:00 p.m.]

My question to the minister is, would the minister table in the House - today if he can - how much money is collected by the province on the Victim Services surcharge, from what fines it has collected, and a complete breakdown of what is spent from that fund on administration and staff salaries rather than on help for victims?

MR. LANDRY: Boy, there's a lot in that question. I first want to state that the victims in this province, there are many and I take each and every case very seriously. On the issues of finding out those details, I'd rather put the resources into providing services but we will try to spend some time to work through some of her requests. I'm not certain of how we would break that down but I will ask the question within my staff and see how complex that would be. I'd rather provide the services direct to the victims but we'll spend some time looking at those questions.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear the minister say that he would like to spend the money directly on help to the victims because that's not where it's going right now. It's going to the administration of the Victim Services Program throughout the Department of Justice.

Last year, or actually in 2008, the budget overall was about \$2.5 million, of which only \$200,000 went to counselling, which is the only direct support to victims that we provide. So I'd like to ask the minister, when can we expect a complete overhaul of the Victim Services plan?

MR. LANDRY: What I would like to talk about is that I'm committed to improving the quality of life of all Nova Scotians, in particular those who become victims of crime or victims of society, period. As a government, as you heard the Minister of Community Services speak, we are committed to that focus. We will look at that in all areas - within the justice system, within our health system, within our education and within our social services - to improve the quality of life of all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH: CHILDREN'S INSULIN PUMPS - FUND

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health. Ontario and Saskatchewan have insulin pump coverage for children and adults. Newfoundland and Labrador has joined those provinces and will offer assistance to people with diabetes, up to 25 years of age. British Columbia now offers coverage for children under the age of 18 years of age. My question to the minister is, when will Nova Scotia join the rest of Canada and start funding insulin pumps for children?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member brings an important topic to the floor during Question Period. First of all, Nova Scotia is one of six provinces that provides no support for insulin pumps. It is not accurate to say the rest of Canada.

We've looked at the programs in the other provinces, we've looked at what the need in Nova Scotia might be. We know there are 600 children annually diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes here in Nova Scotia and we know that a program to provide insulin pumps for those 600 children would roughly be in the vicinity of \$2 million annually. That's a significant investment and at this time we don't have that kind of revenue to invest. I have said that we will continue to monitor the programs in other provinces which, in some cases, are relatively recent. The information on the effectiveness of these programs, the cost effectiveness, is still to be determined.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I understand the costs in there. I know the member for Cape Breton North just had a suggestion, and those were the fancy booklets - maybe we can save a few hundred thousand dollars there.

Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia diabetes cost model estimates there are currently 87,000 people, or almost 9 per cent of the population, diagnosed with diabetes in Nova

Scotia increasing to more than 125,000 people, or 12.2 per cent of the population, by 2020. So by 2020, 30 per cent of Nova Scotians will be living with either diabetes or pre-diabetes.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question is through you to the minister. Yesterday all members of the House of Assembly voted unanimously to support the Diabetes Association in its effort to make further advances in research treatment. Will you now consider funding this equipment which the Diabetes Association has deemed critical to successfully treating diabetes?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we have excellent programs in Nova Scotia for people with diabetes and nobody in this province will go without the health care services that they require because they have this disease. I'm aware of the study that was released earlier this week and I met with the Diabetes Association. I consider them a very valuable partner, along with many other partners that we work closely with in areas of chronic disease management and prevention, and I look forward to continuing the good relationships that my department has with that association as we work to provide better health care for people with diabetes in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, insulin pumps can provide better disease management. They may prevent or delay the onset of complications like blindness, amputation, and the need for dialysis, which we know reduces the overall health care costs. Insulin pump therapy has been shown to be beneficial in pediatric patients with Type 1 diabetes. So my question to the minister is, have you considered models in other provinces and how they may be applied to helping children with diabetes in Nova Scotia?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member that we do, in fact, monitor very closely all of the latest research and scientific information that will guide us in making wise decisions on how we invest very precious health care dollars. This matter will be no different than any other matter with respect to how we approach our decision making.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

TIR: STOPPED EMERGENCY VEHICLES - SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. This past Spring the government approved legislation to issue fines for drivers who speed past emergency vehicles when their lights are flashing on the side of the road. So my question to the minister is, what have you done to inform Nova Scotians of these penalties, Mr. Minister?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question - an important piece of legislation that at the time was supported by all sides of the House. In particular, of course, the good member for Sackville-Cobequid played an important role in bringing forward this piece of legislation that's coming forward.

As we've learned well, the key thing in the midst of this, when you make changes of this nature, is education. It's very important to make sure the public is aware of the fact, and it continues to be a challenge. I make no secret of the fact that we have to make sure that when it comes to a piece of legislation like this, it's understood - particularly when we're looking at people who travel into our province, particularly in the summertime during the tourist season. It remains an ongoing challenge, but it's a piece of legislation that is supportive of the policing community and it's a piece of legislation that was badly needed in this province.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, this is good legislation and anything that can be done to improve the well-being of our emergency workers is a positive step. However, in order for the law to be effective, Nova Scotians need to know this legislation is in place. So my question is, will you post signs and notices on our highways to inform motorists driving in Nova Scotia of these penalties and make certain it is enforced?

MR. ESTABROOKS: As the member opposite knows, this is an important piece of legislation and we'll do everything possible to make sure the driving public is aware of this important law.

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

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: If I may, I'd like to respond to a question that was asked earlier by the Leader of the Official Opposition. I want to table the Southern Nova Scotia Labour Market Monitor, it shows an increase from October to October, increasing employment by 1,100 jobs in the southern region of Nova Scotia, and the detail to that that shows that accommodation and food services rose by 0.1 - I realize it's a modest increase, but it is an increase. It also notes in there that the labour force increased last year by almost 2,800 people, which usually happens when people are more optimistic.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, in Question Period, indicated, if I heard him correctly, that he did not use a number in this House. I will table Hansard from yesterday indicating that he, in fact, did. I will also table the Premier's own press release, which quotes the Premier as saying thousands of jobs and uses the number 6,790 person-years.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for tabling that.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

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

The motion is carried.

[4:11 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Mr. Alfie MacLeod in the Chair.]

[4:36 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Mr. Alfie MacLeod in the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bills No. 7 - Pharmacy Act.

Bill No. 75 - Merchandise Inspection Act.

Bill No. 78 - Public Utilities Act.

Bill No. 79 - Securities Act.

Bill No. 81 - Oak Island Treasure Act.

Bill No. 85 - Police Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 74 - Land Titles Clarification Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House with certain amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 58 - Powers of Attorney Act.**Bill No. 72 - Police Act.****Bill No. 76 - Credit Union Act.****Bill No. 83 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.****Bill No. 90 - Auditor General Act.**

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House without further amendment.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with the concurrence of the House, I wonder if we could take these bills that were just reported back from Committee of the Whole House on Bills and move them on to third reading today.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, if you can indulge me just for a moment, the Committee on Law Amendments has just met, and I believe that they're ready to report. May we revert to the order of business, Presenting Reports of Committees.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: 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. 95 - Consumer Reporting Act.

Bill No. 97 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 98 - Solemnization of Marriage Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favorable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with your very kind indulgence in these matters, 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. 102.

Bill No. 102 - Tanning Beds Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health Promotion and Protection.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising to move second reading of Bill No. 102, the Tanning Beds Act.

This is an important piece of legislation. It is public health policy that would create a healthier, safer environment for Nova Scotia's youth. It is legislation supported and called for by groups that see first-hand the effects of excessive exposure to ultraviolet rays, groups

like Doctors Nova Scotia, Cancer Care Nova Scotia, dermatologists and the Canadian Cancer Society.

It is no secret that tanning has harmful, long-term health effects which are caused by excessive exposure to ultraviolet rays. Indeed, the evidence is quite compelling. I will share a few of these facts with you. In July 2009, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer classified ultraviolet light-emitting tanning beds as carcinogenic to humans. This same group also noted that the risk of skin cancer increases 75 per cent in people who begin using tanning beds before age 35. Indoor tanning, using tanning beds actually exposes the skin to UV radiation 10 to 15 times higher than that of the midday sun.

Mr. Speaker, according to the World Health Organization, sun-bed technology has evolved so that these beds produce higher levels of UVB to mimic the solar spectrum and speed the tanning process. UVB has well-known carcinogenic properties and excessive exposure is known to lead to the development of skin cancers. As with sun exposure, recent studies indicate a relationship between the use of sun beds and malignant melanoma as well as non-melanoma skin cancers such as squamous and basal-cell carcinoma. Thus, the consequences of regular sunbed use may include disfigurement from removal of skin cancers, early deaths if the cancer is a malignant melanoma, as well as substantial costs to the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the most startling fact here at home is that here in Nova Scotia we have the highest rate of skin cancer than any other province in Canada. According to the 2010 Canadian cancer statistics, in Nova Scotia skin cancer rates increased by 2 per cent every year over a 10-year period between 1997 and 2008. The Canadian average during that period was 1.2 per cent. In fact, just recently we learned through Statistics Canada that for the first time more Canadians are dying from cancer than from major cardiovascular diseases and one of these cancers is skin cancer.

Mr. Speaker, it's also no secret that as adults, many of our harmful habits are the results of activities we began early on. Often, in the absence of appreciating the full results of their action, young people sometimes undertake harmful activities. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to protect our young people from forming negative habits, habits that can cause long-term health effects in later life.

Mr. Speaker, government has an important role to play in this as well. Government can help to create safer, healthier environments for Nova Scotia families and we can help reduce the risks of harm. That is why we have introduced legislation to ban the use of tanning beds to youth under 19 years of age. We are taking a preventative measure to protect the health and safety of our youth. This decision was based on much research and thoughtful consideration. Information from the World Health Organization shows tanning from an early age has negative health effects later in life. The age restriction in this legislation is consistent

with other legislation in Nova Scotia, including restrictions around the age when individuals can legally purchase alcohol and tobacco.

[4:45 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, in developing this legislation, we also took into account the fact that peers can influence each other's behaviour. Many students who are 18 years of age are still in high school. In targeting these young people, we hope to garner greater influence in the behaviour of larger numbers of young people.

This legislation also aims at educating our youth about the harmful effects of tanning and dispelling myths and misinformation. The tanning industry markets toward youth, toward this very age range that our legislation aims to protect. At times the industry uses aggressive marketing techniques, which promote a healthy tan. Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform everyone that there is no such thing as a healthy tan.

How about the other myths that our young people hear and pass on in their social circles, myths many of us as parents, guardians and caregivers also hear and regrettably, sometimes, take as truth. How many times have we heard that when travelling south, or when planning to tan, we should first get a good base tan? This practice provides negligible protection as there are no conclusive studies that a base tan provides adequate protection, or even any protection for that matter, against skin cancer.

Mr. Speaker, tanning involves exposure to unhealthy UV rays which damage the skin. A tan is, in essence, skin damage. What about the oils and lotions that are sold and marketed to help one achieve this tan? We have already established that there is no such thing as a healthy tan, but many of these lotions and oils only enhance the tanning effect. These products do nothing to help protect against the harmful effects of UV rays. The only sure way to protect yourself from skin cancer is to avoid tanning and to use sun block, which blocks UV rays. As any tanning bed user would know, sun block will not produce a tan.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that skin cancer rates, and cancer rates in general, have a significant impact on our health system. An increase in cancer rates translates into increased health care costs and further pressure on an already over-burdened system. More importantly, we have to consider the personal costs to those who develop skin cancer, their families and our communities. The significantly higher rates of skin cancer in Nova Scotia, and the increasing trend over time, make it a concern for public health in this province.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia will be the first province in Canada to have this legislation and we are certainly not alone in having legislation like this. There are many countries around the world that have much stiffer legislation than this. I was provided with a copy of a release that came out today, in Australia, where one of the Australian states has introduced legislation prohibiting tanning beds for persons under the age of 30. Indeed, in that release they made reference to the Country of Brazil where tanning beds have been banned in their

entirety. There are numerous European countries that have restricted tanning to youth and have had this legislation in effect for years, out of consideration for the health impact.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that with this legislation, we are attempting to implement a policy that puts the health of our young people at the top of our priority list, in a way that we may not see benefits for several generations, but, nevertheless, those benefits will occur at some point in the future and I think we all will be very grateful to watch the rates of cancer decrease, and anything we can do to contribute to reductions in the burden of illness in this province is very important.

Legally restricting access to tanning beds is the right approach, and there is a national working group across provinces looking at the best practices, both at a provincial level and certainly in the federal area, as well, where there are some regulatory jurisdictional issues. Our tanning legislation has been modelled after our tobacco legislation, using a method that we know works. Enforcing this legislation is one of the many future steps that we will be looking at moving forward. In passing, we will engage the stakeholder community and industry to receive feedback on how the regulations will take shape.

If we're going to see long-term reductions in skin cancer rates, we need to help our youth understand that tanning is not a healthy activity, and we need to put measures in place that prevent them from developing lifelong habits that expose and increase their risk of developing skin cancer.

This government is committed to creating a healthier, safer province - that also means focusing on changing behaviours and reducing exposure to harm. This legislation is not about restricting the rights of Nova Scotians, it's about the responsibility we have as a province to protect our youth.

In closing, I would like to say that pretty much every day as Minister of Health I'm approached by some advocacy group, some individual quite often looking for an expanded health care system, a system that will adopt new drug coverage, new treatments, new services, and a different way of offering services. I am extraordinarily aware of the pressures that chronic disease has placed on our health care system and the sustainability of our health care system, and when people have real need we have to respond to that need as best we can, but it's the perennial problem that we face not only here in Nova Scotia but everywhere, the need continues to grow, yet we do very little to prevent chronic disease from occurring in the first place.

We cannot sustain a growing illness model, as Dr. Ross said in his report, and we need to start looking at the systemic change that's required to reduce the burden of chronic illness on our health care system. Prevention is the way to go, and certainly starting with our youth is a noble venture that will hopefully result in a population with less chronic illness, a population that has healthier lifestyles, a population that will place less of a demand and

burden on a health care system that, at some time, will run out of steam if we don't invest in prevention and health promotion and protection.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is intended to address those issues - the importance of reducing chronic disease and the burden of illness in our province. Thank you.

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a lot of pleasure to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 102, an Act to Regulate Tanning Beds. This is certainly something that is borne out by a lot of evidence and the minister began her remarks quoting some of the world experts who have spoken out against the use of tanning beds for young people in particular. I was interested in the minister's remarks where she said even people under 35 years of age, I think it was, increasing their risk of skin cancer if they are regularly using tanning beds.

Certainly we know, and we have known for a long time, that as children are growing their skin is much more susceptible to damage from the sun. I remember years ago when I lived in Jamaica, they had said to us about children - I had a baby there at the time - they said if they get a sunburn that blisters, they have a very high chance of developing skin cancer in the future. We were very careful, as we often are with our children, but as they get to be teenagers, we need to protect them as well. It's interesting to note that the strength of the kind of UV rays that people are exposed to in a tanning bed is much higher than they would get being out in the sun in our climate.

I was also very surprised, when I heard the briefing on this bill, to learn that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of melanoma in the country. That was one of those figures I didn't know. We know so many other health problems and diseases are found in high prevalence here in Nova Scotia, but I did not know that we would be high in the case of melanoma, which is really related to exposure to the sun. I think that gives us even more reason why taking this action today, of the government bringing forward this bill, is a positive thing for Nova Scotia.

I think, when the minister said that it's to protect our young people, that pretty much says it all. When we do see a bill coming forward that we believe is hitting the mark, it's one piece of the puzzle, it may be in some ways a small piece, but it's an important move. I would just say the minister indicated we're the first in Canada to do this, and we are actually the first to have a stand-alone bill, but there was a health promotion bill in New Brunswick a couple of years ago that did include this. It might be a number of years ago that they did that, I don't have the exact time frame. They did put it in, but it was part of a bigger bill on health promotion.

We're very happy to see that we are making a move to protect young people. I think a lot of times when parents are asked for permission on this, they may not actually be fully aware of the damage or the risk that young people are exposed to when they do go tanning. I had mentioned about living in other countries. I had the opportunity to live in Korea when I was - quite some time ago, shall I say, in the 1980s. What's interesting there is it really points out how we consider tanning as sort of something of beauty, something that enhances our looks.

In Korea the people actually shun getting a lot of sun. They hide from the sun because they see it as people who work outside, like agricultural workers, or people who are out in the elements, are the ones who are tanned. People who have professions and jobs and work indoors don't want to be tanned. Really, they see it in the reverse, they saw it as an unattractive feature and actually tried very hard not to be tanned. I found that very interesting because we're just the opposite. They could not understand why we would lie out in the sun and why we would want to have that exposure to the sun. That was literally 30 years ago. I'd say they've taken better care of themselves in that regard.

I see it very much as a societal change, just like we've seen with smoking. There was a time, a long while ago, when that was considered glamorous and attractive. We certainly don't have that view of it today. I think over time we'll see more of that. It does begin with protecting the health of young people. I think that we can't change everything in a day but we can try to protect the young people. Very clearly, the World Health Organization - and this brought it to a head, I would say, because we've heard from other groups - but in 2009 when the World Health Organization actually classified tanning beds as a known carcinogenic, that certainly sharpened the issue and brought this into focus for all governments to look at.

When we look at the progress that's been made in other jurisdictions like Europe - the minister mentioned Australia and Brazil has really gone a long way on that - those are countries that traditionally, particularly Brazil and Australia, have a lot of sun, have a lot of fair-skinned people and had much higher rates of cancer. They would have been far more aware of it and been responding to the fear of exposure to the sun already. I think perhaps they had higher awareness of the concern.

As I said, I think the trend was there. I think it may be unfortunate that industry wasn't consulted in the first go-round, but I will say that they should have seen that this was coming. Doctors Nova Scotia had a resolution to the effect that this should be done. They had run ads about that, I saw their ad in the newspaper after their annual general meeting. So I think that the industry would definitely have been aware that this is in the works and would be coming forward to protect young people.

[5:00 p.m.]

Again, I notice the minister mentioned that the industry will be consulted along regulations, and I think that is always a good idea. Certainly this is a business proposition for some people and they will want to be consulted on how it goes forward. I have no objection whatsoever to restricting tanning beds for young people because it does boil down to better health in the long run - not only from our societal concerns about the cost of health care but individually. Young people often feel invincible and might not see any connection to the harm that this could cause.

I think it is an important first step in changing people's attitudes as well. Again, the age limitation, there's been a little bit of - I wouldn't say "controversy." Maybe "discussion" - around the age, whether it be 18 years or 19 years. We certainly had that discussion as well with our caucus - was it 17 or 19? (Interruption) We've gone to 19. Our choice of age is anybody under 19 - 19 years and older have the ability to make their own decision.

There are several reasons why I think it does make sense. When we asked some questions of the minister's staff who came to give a briefing to the Liberal members and to our staff, what I felt made sense was, one, the enforcement of this bill. Assuming it goes forward and is passed, it would allow the same enforcement officers who do tobacco control to also do the enforcing of this Act. That is the same age - you can't buy tobacco if you are under 19, so that gives a commonality there. It is also the idea of taking it at an age level where, hopefully, we will have captured most of the kids who are in high school, because of the fact that there are a lot of marketing campaigns aimed at high school students.

Again, it is very clear, I was even surprised to hear that the connection, the correlation to health risk even goes up to people in their 30s. I certainly knew that your skin was much more susceptible to damage as you were growing. It is a great worry, Mr. Speaker, and for that reason I think that, knowing what we know today, with the call for action from the World Health Organization, with our own doctors here in Nova Scotia endorsing and actually calling on government to take some action and to make this move, I think it is the right thing to do.

I have often spoken in the House that it annoys me that we are the last province to pick up on a good idea, that we see something that is clearly the right thing to do and we watch every other province in the country do it, and then we say okay, now it's our turn. I'm glad to see us show a little initiative - and more than a little, really. Although we are not the first to put it in any legislation, it is a bold step to actually step out and do something like this. It is really annoying, not only to me but to Nova Scotians, to see how often we are happy to let the rest of the country lead the way. We just wait and wait and people don't understand why we have this reluctance to be a little more action-oriented.

This is something that, again, I feel it is important that we take that time to say yes, it is the right thing to do, in this case government has not waited to be followers. They are going to set the tone. I think that's a positive thing too.

In terms of the bill, there is some suggestion in there that the police might also be used in enforcement? I'm not sure. I didn't hear the minister discuss that in her opening remarks, but I would wonder a little bit about why we have included police and RCMP under that, and whether or not they have been consulted would be a question that I would raise with the minister. Where are they, in terms of their acceptance of this? This may not be something that they want to have under their responsibilities. I know we have provincial enforcement officers who are probably around the province and certainly in a position to do the lion's share of this, so perhaps we could just look at involving them.

In terms of reaching out, I think the biggest challenge is going to be the message to young people, trying to educate and get support from young people that this is the right thing to do. I think we need to look at allies in doing that. I made note of the fact that there is a youth committee at the IWK Health Centre which is made up of teenagers who I think could be allies in this messaging. We need to look for other groups that are young people who are involved in volunteering. We have a Youth Secretariat, I believe, so we should try to engage them, because this bill is really directly related to an issue that they are probably going to care more about than anybody else.

We need to have young people who take the time to understand the issue and perhaps can be advocates and carry the message to their own. We know that people, especially young people, tend to listen more to each other and that peer pressure, than they do to adults in authority or their parents, or their teachers. So if we can have more young people who see the value of this and understand what is motivating, and understand the science behind it, I think we'll find that it will be much better accepted in the general public as well.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly am looking forward to the Law Amendments Committee when it comes there and to seeing this bill move forward through the system.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to speak a super long time on this one, but I do want to get a few comments registered. (Interruption) I am not the member for Cape Breton North, okay. (Laughter)

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

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I want to say our caucus, the Progressive Conservative caucus, recognizes the importance of addressing the issue of skin cancer in Nova Scotia. I want to say that in Nova Scotia we have a 1.5 times higher rate of skin cancer per capita than the rest of the country. There's obviously a need to address this problem.

Mr. Speaker, there can be a lot of reasons for the increased skin cancer rate, whether it's the largely Anglo-Saxon makeup of our population, the fact that there's a large number of people who work in the outdoors - like farming, fishing, forestry - the diverse seasonal change which leads people not being in tune with skin protection or the strength of radiation that is being used in tanning beds.

Mr. Speaker, all members of this House recently lost a great person in the late Honourable Michael Baker through skin cancer. So while Mr. Baker was not a user of tanning beds, his passing highlights to all members the severity of skin cancer.

The PC caucus does have some reservations about this legislation and I want to state that this is a positive step forward in prevention. Now, media and a member of government stated you must wait until you're 19. This message is much like messaging around alcohol which gives tanning and alcohol the appearance of forbidden fruit and youth will continue to be seeking out tanning. So I'm hoping that there won't be a rush to sort of beat the 19 rule. As most of us know, we all probably didn't wait until 19 before we let alcohol touch our lips.

What we need in place is more emphasis on education and social marketing which is what we've seen with anti-smoking campaigns that have effectively lowered provincial smoking rates. I'm also wondering, as well, why it's Health Promotion and Protection and maybe not Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations that is taking care of this issue. I say this because licensing enforcement of tanning facilities, there's already a governance model such as around the way motor vehicle inspections are conducted. I know we'll probably have a debate on which one is better but, is it Health Promotion and Protection to have the enforcement unit, or are we going to be using the tobacco enforcement unit to do this? The best manner forward is education, as I've said before, and investments will inform youth about the consequences of tanning beds.

Mr. Speaker, the other question coming forward is why when someone turns 19 are they automatically informed to know the dangers of tanning beds? I know at 41, I probably don't make the best decisions, but I guess I'm allowed to, but is 19 the issue that they're allowed to as well. What has changed at the age of 19? That's why we need the extended issue of more education so that even after the age of 19 that this is not such a great idea.

Mr. Speaker, young adults in their teens and early twenties are the people likely to abuse these tanning beds. Just look at the pop culture and it glorifies pseudo celebrities like those shown on Jersey Shore. Young people actually want to be like these people. Like it or not, these people are the role models of our youth through our media and, of course, being well-tanned seems to be the regular base for these. Education and social marketing investments by the government will actually pay dividends in reducing these tanning issues. We support this legislation and we're hopeful that we can work with the Minister of Health Promotion and Protection to make more effective steps to help the health of young Nova Scotians.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is unfortunately another one of those common sense bills, you know, anybody that really is well informed should make an informed decision. Well, whether to step into a tanning bed, I have never stepped into a tanning bed. I have never stepped into a tanning bed but I think I would be a little too claustrophobic in that anyway. But I laid on a beach a few times and probably have been one of those people who have gone down south and made sure that they had a good sunburn before they came home so that it lasts over our dreary winters.

I'm probably also one of those people who forget to put on their SPF. Who has got time for that? Who has got time to reapply? We try to put it on our children as best we can but they're busy, they're in and out of pools, they're in and out of lakes, they're in and out of their things and it's really hard to put it on them. This is a good bill, a good step forward and one that we will support through third reading in this House.

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

The honourable Minister of Health Promotion and Protection.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members opposite for their comments and I would now move that we close debate on Bill No. 102.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 102. 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, with your indulgence and the indulgence of the House, I seek unanimous consent to revert to the order of business, Presenting Reports of Committees.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: 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. 87 - Court Jurisdiction and Proceedings Transfer Act.

Bill No. 93 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 94 - Motor Vehicle Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

[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. 103.

Bill No. 103 - Motor Vehicle Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 103, Amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act. Presently, Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada where letters about demerit points are sent to drivers. The amendments introduced this week will streamline our notification process on demerit points. The proposed change means that drivers in Nova Scotia will no longer receive warning letters when four demerit points are earned or accumulated. This change will save time and money and will create efficiencies within our Registry of Motor Vehicles operations.

Drivers can access their point accumulation in a number of ways. Drivers can check with the Drivers Handbook upon conviction for an infraction to see how many points they're assigned to that infraction. They can also contact the Access Nova Scotia Call Centre to ask about the points accumulation on their driving record.

Finally, drivers in Nova Scotia can also find links at our Web site to a demerit-point table, which describes how many points are assigned to each infraction. This change only applies to fully licensed drivers. Fully licensed drivers who accumulate six demerit points will be contacted by the deputy registrar indicating that they will be required to undergo a re-examination with a driver enhancement officer. This proposed amendment will generate annual cost savings, which will help us get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

[5:15 p.m.]

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 103. The amendment that's being proposed under the Motor Vehicle Act will remove the requirements for the registrar to issue a warning letter when four or more points are entered on a person's driving record. I was going to ask the minister to clarify who this new regulation applies to but in her comments she did point out this will not affect individuals who have a beginner's licence. This will not affect a newly-licensed driver. This will only affect fully-licensed drivers.

We know in Nova Scotia when a driver is convicted of an offence, demerit points are assigned to your own driving record. Again, depending on how many points you accumulate on your record, pending if you accumulate four demerit points as the Motor Vehicle Act states now, the registrar has an obligation to notify the driver with this warning letter.

With this amendment that's being proposed here - the current obligation for the registrar to notify an existing fully-licensed driver in Nova Scotia - the registrar will no longer have that responsibility. As the minister pointed out, there are various ways how a driver in Nova Scotia can check his or her record depending on if they have been convicted and if they have accumulated demerit points on their record.

The Liberal caucus has no problem in supporting this bill to move on to the Committee on Law Amendments and we certainly look forward to what individuals will have to say. I was interested to hear the minister point out to the House that Nova Scotia's the only province that currently has this obligation. You have to really wonder if the time has come for Nova Scotia to just move on and provide this responsibility to the drivers here in Nova Scotia. With those comments, I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to stand for a few moments to speak to Bill No. 103. Quickly put on this one, we're wondering whether this did require a piece of legislation or could it have just been decreed by the minister or an Order-in-Council?

The second point on it is, do we need to know what the other opportunities that drivers would have to know their level? If you've lost points, when do the points come back? I've talked to a few individuals who have lost points. They say the letter comes in handy because it reminds them that they really should be safe for the next number of months while their points are down so they don't lose all of their points and therefore lose their licences for an extended period of time. Therefore getting a letter back reminding them that they are back at full points, which in a way helps them know that time period, but maybe it makes them go a little faster than they should or not pay attention as much as they should.

I'm just wondering what the opportunities are to know what their point balance is, I guess, in absence of a letter. I'm going to let the minister maybe finish that up and maybe she can explain that one as she closes debate on this bill. Thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I will speak with the member outside. I did answer those questions that he asked in my speech, but I would at this time like to thank them for their comments and I'm rising to move second reading of Bill No. 103. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 103. 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. 105.

Bill No. 105 - Education Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to move second reading of Bill No. 105 and I am delighted for the opportunity to speak about the proposed changes to the Education Act. This will maintain and improve public education in Nova Scotia.

This bill involves two separate amendments to the Education Act, involving students and teachers, particularly principals. The first proposed amendment is to give the Minister of Education the authority to provide an instructional leadership program for public school principals and teachers in leadership positions. The amendment would also establish the minister's authority to grant a certificate following successful completion of the program.

To truly advance teaching and learning for students and for teachers, the role of the principal as the instructional leader is critical. The principal needs to be knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Leadership coupled with high expectations and targeted school-based support will move Nova Scotia forward.

Nova Scotia principals have told us forcefully that they want to be the instructional leaders in their schools, but they need assistance and support. This program will be designed to focus specifically on the needs of Nova Scotia principals in developing their knowledge and skills to be successful in that instructional leadership role. The overall goal is to improve teacher effectiveness in every classroom.

I should also highlight that the Department of Education is providing the program in response to recommendations by key education partners for a revised approach to teacher professional learning for Nova Scotia. This initiative is highly supported by school boards and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, as well as other key education partners. We are looking forward to offering the program once it is fully developed.

The second proposed amendment to the Education Act is meant to clarify how the Department of Education can use data collected from students and schools. The best decisions are made when we base those decisions on reliable information collected through consultations, meetings, and research. The bill would clarify for what purposes the Department of Education and school boards can collect and use personal information about students, teachers, and others in the public school system. The proposed amendment will make it clear that personal information can only be collected and used for planning, delivering, monitoring, or evaluating programs and services that the department is involved with, administering and ensuring compliance with the Education Act, and for conducting research related to education.

Provincial assessments are a good example of how the department uses personal and statistical information to improve learning. By gathering and analyzing the data, the department is able to develop more effective strategies to improve student performance in key subjects, such as math and literacy. A recent example would be the mathematics assessment administered to about 8,000 Grade 3 students last June. I understand that

students, parents, and families want to know how their personal information is collected and used. I want to assure all Nova Scotians that any information collected in surveys or research will be better protected by this legislation.

The proposed amendment will provide greater clarity for the department as it collects and uses information safely and responsibly. Both of the amendments to the Education Act are meant to improve and sustain public education in Nova Scotia, and I would like to thank the staff at the Department of Education for taking great care to properly update the Education Act for the benefit of educators, students, and parents. I would also like to acknowledge and thank school boards and our education partners for their continued support for this process.

The Education Act is the cornerstone of the entire education community and I'm proud of the level of involvement from all our partners. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in my place to speak to this bill. It is good to see that the government has put two bills together in one, because what we've seen is a lot of little, tiny, housekeeping bills, so thank you, minister, for putting two together in one.

Clause 1 authorizes the Minister of Education to provide an instructional leadership program for teachers and grant diplomas for the successful completion of the program, and also to collect and use personal information for certain purposes.

Clause 2 prohibits the Minister of Education from collecting or using personal information if other information would serve the purpose, or collecting or using more personal information than is reasonably necessary.

Our caucus has several questions about this bill. How will this program be administered? What resources will be devoted to this program? Are universities already offering this type of program? We certainly have a number of educational programs around this province and is this taking the place of some of the qualifications for a Master of Education? Could the universities be doing this work? Because it seems to us that if, in fact, we are taking away potential students from universities at a time when the crop of potential students is shrinking - one of the conclusions reached by Doctor O'Neill - that seems sort of counterproductive to us.

The government is threatening major education cuts, yet it appears that they're duplicating something that already exists. At what cost will this come to us, and who will deliver this program?

Once again, many things in this bill come down to regulations. We don't have a clear indication of the implications of this bill and what they will mean, so at this time our caucus has concerns around the implications of this bill, what it will mean to university programs. We are not clear why this instructional leadership program has to be administered in this particular fashion or, indeed, who will administer this.

So with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward Bill No. 105 and two distinct components in that. I would like to speak briefly to one and perhaps more in-depth to the second. The first one I will speak to is a student information system and it's something that has been lacking in the Department of Education. It's something that is a critical tool and collecting student information and student data that can be useful in planning programming and planning assessments is critical. I commend the minister for bringing that forward.

I would issue a caution. It's one that I'm sure the minister and her staff are well aware of. One is the cost of a student information system that would encompass all schools in the province, because we know it is costly. The second thing is, once the technology is in place, once the software has been tested and once we're into implementation, I would be nervous about any kind of implementation that was attempted before there was a full pilot of the project, because I think what we're seeing now with PowerSchool is that some glitches, perhaps in the technology, are causing huge amounts of grief in our classrooms with our teachers. So having a student information system, having the information and the data readily available, to be used constructively for planning and for curriculum development and student assessment, is absolutely a wonderful idea.

[5:30 p.m.]

I do put those cautions out there though to the minister and I'm sure they're cautions that she and her staff are well aware of. I think it would facilitate a lot of the transfer of information and have it readily available in one central location.

Secondly, the part of the bill that troubles me a little bit is why there is a need for the minister to have the authority to have a program for instructional leadership or teacher effectiveness. Members in the House here who are educators, some of them of course retired long before I did, were in the classroom and they were administrators, they would be well aware of the importance of professional development. They would also be well aware of the fact that over the last 20 years there were many programs, and have been many programs, on instructional leadership and teacher effectiveness, all designed, as the minister has outlined this would do, to improve teacher effectiveness and that translates to improved student learning.

So all of those things are good reasons to have professional development, but they are programs that are in place now, they have been for a long time. They've been developed, implemented, delivered, in a joint co-operation between Department of Education and school boards and individual schools, and it's a model that has been working. I guess I would simply want the minister to support the continuation of that. I'm sure she does. So that causes me to question why we need an amendment to the Act to give the minister the authority to put in place something that we already have. So perhaps the minister could respond to that in her remarks if she would.

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

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 105 and move it on to the Committee on Law Amendments, and I thank the honourable members for their comments.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 105. 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. 106.

Bill No. 106 - Handicapped Persons' Education Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand to move second reading of Bill No. 106. It's with great pleasure that I introduce a bill that will change how the province describes students with special needs who are supported by the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority. All students have a right to full and equal participation in education and students with special needs deserve to be addressed with class and respect.

Now, the Handicapped Persons' Education Act was created over two decades ago and over the past 21 years there have been significant changes in the terminology used with respect to students with special needs. For this bill, the Department of Education is proposing that the outdated wording used throughout the Handicapped Persons' Education Act be replaced with terminology that is accepted today. We're also proposing that the name of the Act be changed to the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority Act.

The Handicapped Persons' Education Act of 1989 established the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority as a corporate body and its purpose is to provide, through the co-operative efforts of the four Atlantic Provinces, educational services, programs and opportunities for students with special needs. The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority provides services to support school boards in delivering programs and services for children and youth. To be more exact, they provide support for students with low-incidence sensory impairment. This includes students who are deaf, deaf/blind, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired. The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority supports the philosophy of the inclusion of these students with their peers in their community schools, and it supports a delivery system which makes it possible for each student to receive an educational program designed to meet their individual needs. The majority of services are provided to students in their local communities.

It is important to note that these amendments do not represent any significant changes to the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority's mandate. The new terminology is meant to describe the students in a more appropriate and respectful manner. Among other changes, the province will remove and replace the word "handicapped" throughout the Act and replace outdated wording with more appropriate terminology.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority for their valuable work supporting Nova Scotia students.

Parents of students with special needs want their sons and daughters to receive a quality education with the appropriate amount of support in a safe and inclusive learning environment. The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority has been assisting school boards in providing that support for many years and the province is grateful for everything they have achieved. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that when I read that we are replacing "handicapped person" with "person with a low-incidence sensory impairment," I'm not sure the average person will know what a "person with a low-incidence sensory impairment" is. I am concerned about the ability of the average person to figure out what the bill will be about. I can understand the desire for alternate language, that perhaps "handicapped person" may have become a loaded term for some people, but I'm quite frankly a little flabbergasted by the language because I think the average person and, in fact, most people in here would not know what a person with a low-incidence sensory impairment is.

I do believe that the minister is sincere when she says that they have had advice on this and so I definitely accept that. I am just concerned about language being, perhaps, obtuse to the average person who is trying to find information on what their rights are or

anything. As for the changes from “Newfoundland” to “Newfoundland and Labrador,” that makes perfect sense to me. With those brief remarks I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to rise in my place and speak to Bill No. 106. My comments will be brief, because I see absolutely nothing that will strengthen the delivery of service to students in this bill. Changing the language to something that would be more easily understood and take away any stigma that might be attached to the word is not a bad thing, but to suggest that this does anything to strengthen the policy of inclusion or the delivery of programs to students with special needs is absolutely hard for anybody to understand. I have seen nothing in this bill that would suggest that, so the fact that it has no impact, that it will not have impact, is a poor use of the department’s time and the Minister of Education’s time and I would much rather see those efforts devoted to something that would make a difference for students in learning in the classroom.

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

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable members for their comments and just want to remind them that these recommendations and suggestions come from the APSEA board itself. Certainly our government is one to have respectful and inclusive language in our legislation and we’re trying to modernize and update it.

I’m rising to close second reading of Bill No. 106 and look forward to its progress through the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 106. 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 109.

Bill No. 109 - Weed Control Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to move second reading of the Weed Control Act. This government is moving to better protect Nova Scotia agricultural lands through changes to the Weed Control Act. It came into effect in 1967 and since then it has helped preserve the quality of our agricultural lands by protecting them from invasive agricultural weeds. The bill lays out how we manage and control those agricultural weeds designated as being highly destructive, competitive, and toxic or otherwise difficult to control.

It is estimated that the damage to crops and pastures and the measures used for controlling agricultural weeds costs agricultural communities in Canada about \$2.2 million every year. Agricultural weeds have a real effect on the producers' bottom line and this government wants to do everything to make sure our producers are competitive.

The bill was recently reviewed by the province's chief weed inspector in the Nova Scotia Weed Control Advisory Committee, which is made up of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, the Federation of Agriculture, AgraPoint, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. Several areas for improvements were identified and now this government is pleased to move to modernize the Act and clarify how it will be put into practice.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will provide more tools for investigating and responding to the threats posed by agricultural weeds on agricultural lands. With more and better options of controlling these weeds we are protecting our valuable agricultural lands and we are helping shield our producers from any negative financial impact these weeds might impose. The proposed amendments include several administrative changes such as amending the Act's title to the Agricultural Weed Control Act, to clarify the intent of application; increasing the penalties for anyone in violation of the Act; and reflecting the current Department of Agriculture's resources structure by removing references to district inspectors.

The proposed amendments also include substantive changes such as allowing inspectors to go on any property to determine compliance with the Act; creating the ability to appoint inspectors from outside the department; giving the Minister of Agriculture the authority to create education and research programs; and to allow the designation of invasive agricultural weeds to be made by the minister's order, ensuring that the department is able to quickly respond to the emerging concerns.

Those are the changes this government is proposing to the Weed Control Act, and I believe these amendments will help clarify and strengthen a law that has been protecting people, animals, and agricultural lands for more than 40 years. Agriculture plays a very important role in our province - farming and producing agricultural products are a big part of our history, our culture, and our economy.

In Nova Scotia we have diverse industries and production systems such as wild blueberries and cranberries, each with its own unique opportunities and challenges. An emergency agricultural weed problem may affect the overall viability of a sector and require a rapid response - these amendments will ensure we are in the best possible position to make an effective, head-on response to that threat. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[5:45 p.m.]

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

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading of Bill No. 109.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 109. 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. 110.

Bill No. 110 - Animal Protection Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, again I rise today on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to move second reading of Bill No. 110.

The Animal Protection Act is an important issue for Nova Scotians. As a Nova Scotian and certainly an animal lover, I'm very pleased that the changes we're putting in place will give inspectors more authority to protect the animals and animal owners they serve. The Act was proclaimed and began to be implemented on January 19, 2010. Since that time, during day-to-day operations, the provincial inspectors identified issues or gaps, if you will, that need further clarification.

These clarifying amendments will help identify gaps. The changes specifically address the ownership and the disposition of seized animals and are aimed at ensuring animals and animal owners are better protected in the event of an investigation. Some of the

proposed amendments are determined as interim measures until the Animal Cruelty Appeal Board is in place.

The three permanent amendments are as follows. We are defining permitted actions that are a part of the investigating process such as conducting tests, taking samples, seizing carcasses, and requiring the production of records or taking photographs and other recordings as part of an investigation. There is one interim amendment that will be in place until the appeal board is in operation. The interim amendment says that the Department of Agriculture is to maintain custody of a seized farm animal until a decision has been made on a jurisdiction review, if the owner has filed for such a review.

The amendments in each case are slightly modified to what currently exists in the Act. They're based on observations and experiences from carrying out the Act in the field. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, these amendments will strengthen the ability of the inspectors to do what they are to do: to keep domestic and farm animals safe and secure from harm and to take collective action when there is sufficient evidence that they are in peril.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close debate on Bill No. 110.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 110. 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 the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 107.

Bill No. 107 - Public Service Commission of Bridgewater Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 107.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 107. 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 Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, it must be getting close to the holiday season, the air of co-operation in the House. The two House Leaders from the Opposition Parties have agreed that what we'll do is start late debate now and then one-half hour from now we will resume regular business, with the consent of the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton South:

“Therefore be it resolved that this House take action and help the 14,000 children living in poverty in Nova Scotia.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

COM. SERV.: CHILD POVERTY - ACTION

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to be here speaking on a major issue in our country, our province and certainly in my hometown of Glace Bay. It is fitting that I'm the Community Services Critic with the responsibility of questioning the government on what's happening to people directly on the ground.

Community Services' problems can be seen simply by looking around, they're everywhere. They're in Glace Bay and they're in Dartmouth and they're in Annapolis, in Cape Breton South and all of our ridings across the province. How can we solve them is the big question. To me, we solve them by coming together and working as a team in combatting this very major and crucial issue.

The Minister of Community Services, in my opinion, truly does care. I think we joke, but we do have a great relationship because I think we are like-minded on some of these issues. I think that ultimately we're looking to solve the problem of poverty, or at least alleviate some of the issues that we face. I think, again, we have to do this together.

Solving the crisis of child poverty in our province doesn't rest with her. It rests with our government and it rests with the Opposition members. It's me and it's my 51 colleagues. I think we have to really bond together on that issue. We have to bring the case of poor Nova Scotians to the forefront of this Legislature and to our own conversations. We need a plan and we need it fast.

Everyone in this House of Assembly worries about poverty and thinks about child poverty. Each member is concerned, there's no doubt, but we need those concerns to manifest into actions - aggressive and progressive actions. When you look at statistics similar to the ones that were released today, I think we realize how staggering this relative problem is in child poverty in Nova Scotia.

I was alarmed to read that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated that 14,000 children in Nova Scotia live in poverty. That's pretty amazing considering our population is under one million people. That represents 8 per cent of our children; very scary. This report was from 2008 so that's two years ago; obviously we've had well-documented economic challenges. It's a global economy so they've affected us and they've affected our country. I can't imagine these numbers haven't gotten larger over the last two years. Again, this problem is increasing.

How about this statistic? Children in single, female parent families were eight times more likely to live in poverty, as indicated by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Or this one, one-third of those relying on food banks are children. The most vulnerable children in this province are those living in households that depend on Employment Support and Income Assistance from our Department of Community Services. This fact embodies the expression we use when we talk about the less fortunate or the poor - they are truly trapped in the cycle of poverty.

That's when a family is locked into poverty conditions for generations and you see it every day in this province. What chance do our children have who are trapped in the cycle, who are living in poverty in this present day? Just think about the effects, the clear ones that are in front of us would be the physical. They're hungry, they're not receiving proper nutrition, they can't think properly and they can't get a good night's sleep. If a child is cold, they don't have proper clothing and/or their providers can't keep the house warm, how can a child whose sleep is affected and is hungry, how can they concentrate in school and get the education that they need, and those physical challenges that poverty introduces to our children have psychological effects.

These poor kids are in a class competing with kids who are warm and fed. This affects confidence and it affects their motivation. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives states that 15.6 per cent of children under the age of six live below the poverty line compared to 8.4 per cent for all children. Those important first five, six years, children are not properly nourished and they're tired and they're cold.

So that affects us in the very depths of early childhood development and learning. How can the children be expected to keep up? How can they possibly keep up if those are the conditions they live under? Then the path of the long-term problem is set. These children come to resent and hate school because they're judging their own self-worth against the other kids who are in a much better position and have a higher standard of living. They come to detest school and then they quit.

In this day and age it is very difficult to find employment without secondary or post-secondary education, or training, or some sort of post-secondary development, but there are some jobs that may be suitable for a person who doesn't have a high level of training, experience or education and this is essentially what we've classified as the working poor, and a very important group in our society and in this province.

The centre's statistics also indicate that poor children in Nova Scotia live in families that have at least one parent working full time. Get that, Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of poor children belong to working poor, that working-poor demographic I just spoke of. It's amazing. It's staggering to think that these parents get up, they go to work, they do their very best to improve the lives of the people that they protect and care for, and they still can't even reach the poverty line. All indicators, again, are that this trend is increasing, so it will get worse as we go, and that's frightening, to say the least.

Those statistics are what makes the issue of child poverty real for us and these families, the children and all Nova Scotians are looking to us in this House to address this crisis.

I can tell you that the effects are real in Glace Bay. I can't imagine where we would be without the Citizens Service League and the Town House and Passchendaele House. They provide clothing, meals on wheels, support services for families, youth camps, support and share groups, and they do a lot to alleviate those negative effects in Glace Bay. I don't know where we would be without them.

Perhaps, probably the biggest thing that I see - because sports was my life before I entered into the real world, I guess - is a drastic drop in the number of kids enrolled in sports, arts and culture and recreation programs, in Glace Bay, and I'm sure that has happened in every riding. I can't imagine anyone has bucked that trend. What I find interesting about the Scouts and the Girl Guides, baseball, hockey, basketball, soccer, we tend to just brush it off as - you know what, they're lazy, or they're on their computers, or they're playing PlayStation, or they're just not interested. That may be true with some of that demographic

and some of the kids, but for the most part, their families can't afford the registration fees, just the registration fees alone, never mind the equipment that it takes, never mind the guitar, never mind the cleats or the skates. Just to get in and register is \$60 or \$70 a kid, and that's for recreation programs, never mind when you're talking minor hockey, you're in the hundreds, and that's a significant problem, and that's what I see in the Bay.

I also want to quickly mention a very impactful film that I saw. Actually, it was - I think on October 28th, my first day in the House, as my big day, but to be honest, of that week - two minutes? Mr. Speaker, I couldn't steal a few more minutes given that I'm a new member? No? Ah, come on, Mr. Speaker. Wow. I'm wasting my own time here. (Interruption)

Thank you Madam Minister, I appreciate that. My first official day was October 28th, but on October 27th was that eye opener, and I witnessed the movie "Four Feet Up" and I'm sure some members have seen it, for sure. I know that the member for Kings North and the member for Antigonish were there the day that I was there.

This is an amazing, incredible movie about a poor family and it's not statistics and it's not pictures. It's a real account of a poor family, and it's an incredible thing, and I encourage every member that hasn't seen it to see it. It's powerful, man, and it'll change your perspective on these things when you see it face to face. It's a story about an eight-year-old named Isaiah, and he's well-behaved, a smart kid and a fantastic kid. It goes through his life, an account of his life, and a very riveting moment in that film was when the interviewer asked him, if you had a magic wand and you had one wish, what would it be?

[6:00 p.m.]

Now, I'm sitting in my chair - and my colleagues are probably thinking the same - if I was an eight-year-old boy I'd be thinking, money, a car, a trip, something to that effect. He said, to be honest with you, I think I would just like to keep the magic wand, and that was it. So he doesn't see that - look, here's your wish, here's your shot, the money and that kind of stuff is completely out of his reach. That was a very amazing thing and to see his family, his mom pushing a shopping cart from the food bank, incredible. I want to thank Debra Reimer, Executive Director of Kids Action and Susan Murray who was here yesterday on the poverty legislation.

As we sit here, let us all sit back and think about what is truly important and why we decided to get into politics. Taxes, energy, jobs, of course they are vital, but I ask you this, is there a function of the 52 Members of the Legislative Assembly more important than keeping our children and tomorrow's leaders fed, warm, safe and happy? I think not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I would have loved to have given the member for Glace Bay a little more time because he was really hitting the nail on the head, exactly, in his thoughts on poverty in Nova Scotia and the challenges that it creates for us.

I can say that everyone in this House wants to end poverty and ease the real suffering that people who live in poverty experience. We say it a lot in this House, and I'm sure a lot of people look at it as a bit of a cliché, but the children are our future, we need to treat them well. I think there's a song about that actually. That's why it's so important that children grow up in a safe and secure atmosphere with all the necessities. We know that poverty is a key determinant of health. Poor health is linked to access to resources, and it worsens along each step of the income level.

You can say that without the opportunity - and the member for Glace Bay said it very well - these children are finding themselves in school, which in most cases probably is the most stable part of their day, having to compete with children who have been warm, who are fed and who are receiving all the amenities that they need in order to succeed in life. This really creates an unfair situation and one that we shouldn't have in a modern community and modern society like we have here in Nova Scotia and in Canada.

In Nova Scotia we have made some progress though. In the Centre for Policy Alternatives' Nova Scotia Child Poverty Report Card, it examined the period from 1997 to 2008. In that report it showed that Nova Scotia child poverty rate peaked in 1997 at 18.9 per cent of 40,000 children. By 2008, that unacceptably high number had decreased and it was 7.9 per cent of 14,000 children, that's lower than the Canadian average. That's not trying to be boastful, that's just simply the numbers, and as much as that seems like a really good step forward, there are still far too many children living in poverty today.

If this was an easy problem to solve, I can tell you, we would have had it solved, we all would have had it solved. It would never have had to get to government or the Department of Community Services. The communities, the families in those communities would have solved it long ago. I can tell you, it requires a very large, multi-faceted solution.

We know that poor children live in poor families and we also know that children who live in female lone-parent families are eight times more likely to live in poverty than children in two-parent families, and we know that the most vulnerable children in Nova Scotia are those living in households that are dependent on Employment Support and Income Assistance.

So, in my mind, it's pretty easy to target our efforts. That's why in April 2009, with me as minister in our former government, we released the Poverty Reduction Strategy. That strategy provided a framework for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and those at risk of falling into poverty, while promoting the prosperity necessary for Nova Scotia to grow.

Mr. Speaker, the focus of the strategy is to train workers, increase affordable housing and improve benefits for low-income families. In short, our program took aim at the factors that put Nova Scotians into poverty and that continually kept them there.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy responded to a series of recommendations from the Poverty Reduction Working Group that was mandated through legislation supported by all three Parties. As I said at that time, the Poverty Reduction Strategy was a framework for breaking the cycle of poverty and improving the standard of living for low-income Nova Scotians. The strategy was developed with the core goals of improving opportunities for rewarding work, improving support for people in need, putting the focus on children and collaboration and coordination.

Mr. Speaker, this does come at a large cost as well, one that committed \$88 million to train workers with less than a Grade 12 education, to improve opportunities for people to get a job or get a better job. It also set aside \$400,000 to stop treating tax refunds as income, for income assistance clients. It called for a redesign of the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program and committed \$59 million to increase access to quality, affordable housing and the development for a provincial housing strategy. It also committed \$2 million to increase Income Assistance rates.

As part of the focus on children, the Nova Scotia Child Benefit and Low Income Pharmacare for Children program was made available to more families, at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million. The strategy called for new investment, to make more child care subsidies available and all subsidies more portable, at a cost of \$3.5 million.

Now Nova Scotia remains within a group of provinces with lower rates of child poverty, that's the good news. I can tell you again, Mr. Speaker, that 14,000 children living in poverty is far too many. We have a lot of work to do. What we have to do is work together, as Opposition Parties, as government, to come up with solutions to further the work that I believe was started or continued with the poverty strategy and stopping people from falling into poverty, or from falling any further than they are today.

Mr. Speaker, in October, 8,600 Nova Scotians lost their jobs and in the last week we've heard about many hundreds losing their jobs as well. So we can say we need to concentrate, be a lot more focused on developing jobs and getting opportunities for Nova Scotia families so that their children have every opportunity they possibly can have, so they can stay out of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that I've been a lucky person throughout my life and I have never had to face poverty. But I can say that I have spoken to a lot of people who have had less opportunity than I have had. You hear their stories of not being able to be members of this or that - the cadets, because you can't afford the boots, or being able to be in hockey because you can't afford the skates or not being able to bring a lunch to school.

Mr. Speaker, we know of many families who don't have the means to provide a good meal or a meal that makes sense for the nutritional needs of their children. That's why we have food banks. I wish there were no food banks in Nova Scotia. We were just hearing about the Parker Street one in Dartmouth and the concerns they had in working out a deal with a local grocer. I believe it was Sobeys who did come through and were able to provide funding, or food, in order to keep the Parker Street food bank open. I thank those people for the volunteer work, and all the work that they do, in order to keep our children fed. But we need to find a way to get ourselves out of child poverty and to make sure that those 14,000 children are no longer a number, or no longer a statistic, that they're contributors and participants in today's society and today's Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would like to say thank you to the member for Glace Bay for his passionate discussion on the issue of child poverty. I know he is new to this House but he comes here with compassion and dedication to work on those issues. I'm very pleased that he is my critic because of the fact that we know that we need to work on all these issues with respect to poverty, not just children's poverty, but the many issues that we face with people who are impoverished in this province.

I also would like to extend a thank you to the member for Argyle because he has had the experience, although it was a short period of time, as Minister of Community Services, but it doesn't take long to be in that position and know the situation that we are in - not only in this province but throughout Canada - and that we do need to come together and to cooperate. I want to congratulate him and thank him for the fact that he was a part of initiating the Poverty Reduction Strategy that developed a plan and consulted with people throughout the province so we could go forward, and it assists me, certainly, in my position as Minister of Community Services.

I understand, and our government understands and knows, that there are many families out there struggling. There are too many children who are living in poverty and that is why we need to come together as a government, we need to come together as a community, encourage the corporate level, we also need to encourage the federal level, that we have a plan that comes together for the benefit of people throughout Canada and throughout the Province of Nova Scotia, and certainly our children. It's not acceptable - the standards that we have today.

When you live in poverty, the problem is very simple, it's pretty simple: you don't have what you need to meet your basic needs, you just don't have what you need. But what is complex - and I know that each one of us here tonight knows - is resolving that poverty. There are so many issues. How do we tackle those issues? That's why we need to have conversation. We are truly committed to making life better, as a government, for Nova Scotians and I know that my Opposition friends feel the same way and want to work with

me as Community Services Minister. I think that's very refreshing to the people of Nova Scotia to know that, that we want to come together as a team.

Just the other day there were people here at the House who came to talk to us about poverty and the issues. I think that a couple of years ago you might have seen them with their placards and there might be a lot of yelling back and forth about their issues. We went out as a group - and when I say we, it was my Opposition friends - and we stood there and we talked to them together and we listened together. Then we talked later, together, on what we can do to go forward to tackle this problem.

One of the best ways that we are approaching this is the fact that to assist children in poverty means that we need to lift the families out of that situation of poverty. We need to be making it easier for families to regain their independence and pay for family priorities through things that we have recently announced as a government, and that is through the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program.

[6:15 p.m.]

We're looking at improvements that will ensure people are not denied benefits because of decisions made in the best interests of their families. We're looking at how to individualize services and identify what that particular need is for that individual or that family and that we can offer those needs to that family, which might be quite different from another family in another community. That's what we're looking at: how can we develop that and wrap ourselves around the needs for the family?

Some of the things that we have been making steps toward and that I'm proud of are the fact that shelter benefits will no longer be reduced when a youth turns 19 if the youth is a college or university student living at home. People on income assistance who move in with a partner will keep a substantial portion of their benefits for the first year of the relationship.

Families should also have the ability to save money for an emergency situation or to try to be able to do some financial planning. We recently made the change that doubles the assets amount that they're able to keep in a bank account. We recently announced that eye exams will also now be fully funded. In consultation with our community partners, the Department of Community Services is looking to find ways to improve service delivery and I think that's what is very important, it's consultation with the people of Nova Scotia and with our community partners who are all so committed to making a difference.

An important first step will be to change the way Nova Scotians access programs by simplifying the application process for when they come through the Department of Community Services. It needs to be a much easier process. It needs to be a process that allows the individual to be empowered to work with the caseworker and not feel degraded in any manner. I'm very committed to the fact that I'm looking at a total redesign of the

services available and made through the Department of Community Services and how people can access our services and how they know about the information that will help them.

The improvements to this - it's called the ESIA Program - will represent an investment of \$1 million. It's part of our efforts to break the poverty cycle. I've also mentioned in the House that I'm very proud of the fact we recently introduced the Affordable Living Tax Credit. That represents about a \$72 million investment.

There are two of these credits. The first one, the Affordable Living Tax Credit, will benefit more than 225,000 Nova Scotian households. Our government also created the Poverty Reduction Credit to help Nova Scotians living in chronic poverty. That will assist about 15,000 people. Those two tax credits will add an average of \$113 to \$313 a year in their pockets. I know that doesn't sound like a lot, but it is moving in the right direction.

Under our government, 7,500 more children were eligible for the Nova Scotia Child Benefit and Low Income Pharmacare for children. We removed the provincial portion of the HST from children's clothes, shoes, and diapers. We increased the minimum wage to \$9.65, making it one of the highest in the country presently. We made it easier for parents to transition back into the workforce by creating 400 additional child care subsidy programs.

As I said earlier, we know that one of the best ways to reduce child poverty is to lift families out of poverty and assist the parents in finding meaningful employment. We invested \$14 million to help 3,800 people access adult learning programs and post-secondary education during the economic downturn. We also invested more than \$400,000 through the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning, resulting in 100 new continuing care assistants certified and working. We have introduced Target 100 that I talked about, in order to help people get meaningful work.

There are many things. I have a longer list here, but I think what it shows is that we are working toward what we need to do. We're taking steps. They may be baby steps, but they are good steps and I know with the support of the Opposition members, that we'll be able to continue those steps. The fact is that it is not acceptable to have such child poverty within the Province of Nova Scotia and within Canada and we all need to come together and truly stand up for the rights of our children. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank and congratulate all members on the quality of the debate tonight. It is a subject that is very important to all Nova Scotians and I thank you for your job here tonight. The moment of interruption debate time has now elapsed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 7.

Bill No. 7 - Pharmacy Act.

Bill No. 58 - Powers of Attorney Act.

Bill No. 72 - Police Act.

Bill No. 74 - Land Titles Clarification Act.

Bill No. 75 - Merchandise Inspection Act.

Bill No. 78 - Public Utilities Act.

Bill No. 79 - Securities Act.

Bill No. 83 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

Bill No. 85 - Police Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The motions are carried.

Ordered that these bills do pass. Ordered that the titles be as read by the Clerk.
Ordered that these bills be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with your wise and sage leadership, the government has finished its business for today. What we would like to do is announce our business for tomorrow and maybe they will give me a chance to say the hours, unlike last night when we were aided by lesser people than ourselves, shall we say, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the bills we will call for second reading, hopefully, tomorrow will be Bill No. 108, the Nova Scotia Museum Act; Bill No. 111, the MVA; Bill No. 112, HRM Charter; and the one that we've all been hanging around for, Mr. Speaker, No. 113, the Clothesline Act.

If we have time, if we want to hang around some more so the people will drip-dry, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do in Committee of the Whole House on Bills is Bill Nos. 87, 93, 94, 95, 97, and 98.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise, to meet tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that we now do rise and meet tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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

We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2426**

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas the Tracadie United Baptist Church celebrated their 188th Anniversary in 2010; and

Whereas the church was started in 1822 with a congregation consisting of the descendants of Black Loyalists who came to the area in the 1700s and this church has always served as a focal point for the surrounding communities; and

Whereas the congregation highlighted this historic milestone with a community celebration on October 24, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Tracadie United Baptist Church, the deacons, and the entire congregation on their 188th Anniversary with the very best wishes for future success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2427

By: Ms. Becky Kent (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Passage Pharmasave provides a vital service of prescription drugs, pharmaceutical supplies, and health clinics, as well as retail items such as toiletries, stationery, and first aid supplies, to name a few; and

Whereas Sujay Khiroya owns and operates Passage Pharmasave and employs more than 20 employees; and

Whereas Passage Pharmasave recently renovated their store to better provide services to its customers of Eastern Passage and surrounding areas;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sujay Khiroya, owner/operator of Passage Pharmasave and his employees on the occasion of their grand renovation reopening and wish them all many more years of success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2428

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 ChitoRyu 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 Mitchell German's hard work and dedication to karate was rewarded with a gold medal in the over-75 kg Kumite black belt division;

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2429

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

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

Whereas Dr. Ivar Mendez, a renowned Halifax neurosurgeon, has put together a book featuring 24 images of the Bolivian mountain Illimani that not only reflects its beauty but also its connection to the people of Bolivia and their culture; and

Whereas proceeds from this book will go toward the Mendez Family Charitable Foundation that began about five years ago by providing breakfast in the Munecas province of Bolivia for approximately 60 children; and

Whereas today this foundation not only has more than 5,000 children in that province relying on them for breakfast but also in providing dental care and help in connecting students around the world by providing them with computer access and partnership with classes in Nova Scotia and Labrador;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Mendez on the completion of his book, wish him continued success, and thank him for helping those who are less fortunate.

RESOLUTION NO. 2430

By: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Advisory Council on the Status of Women)

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

Whereas November 25th marks the beginning of 16 Days of Activism against gender violence; and

Whereas this date was established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada to create awareness of gender-based violence against women and addressing the challenges against abuse; and

Whereas the Purple Ribbon Campaign is a project of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia to remember the 14 women who died in Montreal on December 6, 1989, to remember all women who have died violently and the many thousands who continue to live with abuse to raise awareness of the pervasiveness of violence against women; and to raise funds to continue their work against violence;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House acknowledge this important time of remembrance and take action by wearing purple ribbons as a show of our support.