



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

Second Session

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Agric. - 10-Yr. Plan, Hon. J. MacDonell	4090
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 2431, Fraser, Rory: Sheriffs/Corr. Officers - Charity Baseball Game, The Premier	4091
Vote - Affirmative	4092
Res. 2432, Lobster-fishers: Safe Season - Wish, Hon. S. Belliveau	4092
Vote - Affirmative	4093
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 114, Anti-idling Act, Hon. S. Belliveau	4093
No. 115, Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act, Hon. G. Steele	4093
No. 116, Homes for Special Care Act, Mr. G. MacLellan	4093
No. 117, Yarmouth North United Baptist Church Incorporation Act, Mr. Z. Churchill	4093
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 2433, Surette, Allister - Université Sainte-Anne: Pres. - Appt., Hon. W. Gaudet	4093
Vote - Affirmative	4094
Res. 2434, Davidson, Angela: PSC - Serv. (25 Yrs.), Mr. C. Porter	4095
Vote - Affirmative	4095

Res. 2435, Person's Day: Significance - Recognize, Hon. Maureen MacDonald (by Hon. P. Paris)	4095
Vote - Affirmative	4096
Res. 2436, Wadden, Valerie & Fred/MacDonald, Jackie & Karen: Glace Bay MLA - Impact Recognize, Mr. G. MacLellan	4097
Vote - Affirmative	4097
Res. 2437, Gov't. (N.S.): Economy/Gov't. Size - Self-Reliance, Hon. J. Baillie	4098
Res. 2438, Durnford, Aidan: Accomplishments - Congrats., Ms. B. Kent	4099
Vote - Affirmative	4100
Res. 2439, Antigonish Co. Mun. - ecoNova Scotia Award, Mr. M. Smith	4100
Vote - Affirmative	4100
Res. 2440, Ash, Enos: C.B. Promotion - Congrats., Hon. C. Clarke	4101
Vote - Affirmative	4101
Res. 2441, <i>Our Voices</i> : Authors/Supporters - Commend, Mr. J. Morton	4101
Vote - Affirmative	4102
Res. 2442, The Nutcracker - Anniv. (20 th), Mr. A. Younger	4102
Vote - Affirmative	4103
Res. 2443, MacKinnon, Elmer - Masons Meritorious Serv. Medal, Hon. K. Casey	4103
Vote - Affirmative	4104
Res. 2444, Fore Healthcare Golf Tournament: Organizers/Vols./Participants - Congrats., Hon. C. Clarke	4104
Vote - Affirmative	4104
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 117, Yarmouth North United Baptist Church Incorporation Act, Mr. Z. Churchill	4105
Vote - Affirmative	4105
PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING:	
No. 76, Credit Union Act, Hon. J. Baillie	4105
Hon. G. Steele	4109
Vote - Affirmative	4109

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:

Health: Personal Alert Assistance Prog.,

Hon. Maureen MacDonald 4109

Hon. K. Casey 4114

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING:

No. 81, Oak Island Treasure Act 4116

No. 90, Auditor General Act 4116

HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 10:20 A.M. 4116

HOUSE RECONVENED AT 10:28 A.M. 4116

CWH REPORTS 4116

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 111, Motor Vehicle Act,

Hon. W. Estabrooks 4117

Mr. A. Younger 4119

Mr. C. Porter 4120

Mr. L. Preyra 4121

Hon. K. Colwell 4123

Hon. C. Clarke 4125

Hon. W. Estabrooks 4126

Vote - Affirmative 4127

No. 108, Nova Scotia Museum Act,

Hon. P. Paris 4127

Mr. A. Younger 4128

Hon. C. Clarke 4129

Mr. H. Theriault 4130

Hon. P. Paris 4131

Vote - Affirmative 4131

No. 112, Halifax Regional Municipality Charter,

Hon. R. Jennex 4131

Hon. K. Colwell 4132

Hon. C. Clarke 4137

Mr. A. Younger 4141

Hon. R. Jennex 4144

Vote - Affirmative 4144

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Mon., Nov. 29th at 4 p.m. . . . 4144

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER 32(3):

Res. 2445, MacKinnon, Pinky: Onslow Belmont FD - Serv. (44 Yrs.), Hon. K. Casey	4145
Res. 2446, Queens Co. Fair - Anniv. (130 th), Ms. V. Conrad	4145
Res. 2447, Queens Co. Seafest: Vols. - Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad	4146
Res. 2448, Veinot's Print: Cole Ford/Charity Row (2010) - 2 nd Place, Ms. V. Conrad	4146
Res. 2449, Great Whites: Cole Ford Charity Row (2010) - 3 rd Place, Ms. V. Conrad	4147
Res. 2450, Liverpool Vol. FD/Ladies Aux.: Garden Party - Fundraising, Ms. V. Conrad	4147
Res. 2451, N. Queens FD - Fundraising, Ms. V. Conrad	4148
Res. 2452, Mersey Tobeatic Research Instit. - Silver Salamander Award, Ms. V. Conrad	4148
Res. 2453, Allison, Mark - CHAMP: Anniv (35 th) - Participation, Ms. V. Conrad	4149
Res. 2454, Robart, Lynn/Myers, Troy - Living Well By The Sea Conf., Ms. V. Conrad	4149
Res. 2455, La Leche League: Work - Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad	4150
Res. 2456, Ramey, Julie: Educ. Wk. Award, Ms. V. Conrad	4150
Res. 2457, MacNeil-Dixon, Hannah - Summer Swimming Prov. Tournament, Ms. V. Conrad	4151
Res. 2458, Nat. Res. Dept. - Firefighters - Training Exercises, Ms. V. Conrad	4151
Res. 2459, Crooker, David - N. Queens Heritage Soc.: Support - Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad	4152
Res. 2460, Tanner, Dan - Assoc. of Professional Sommeliers: Pres. - Appt., Ms. V. Conrad	4152
Res. 2461, Charity Row: Cole Ford - Sponsorship, Ms. V. Conrad	4153
Res. 2462, Thompson, Bronwyn - Summer Swimming Prov. Tournament, Ms. V. Conrad	4153
Res. 2463, Lohnes, Ashley - Pengrowth-N.S. Energy Scholarship, Ms. V. Conrad	4154
Res. 2464, Liverpool Reg. HS: Anti-Bullying Support - Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad	4154
Res. 2465, Well Man Clinic: Vols./Participants/Supporters - Thank, Ms. V. Conrad	4155



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2010

Sixty-first General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Charlie Parker

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll get today's proceedings underway.

Before we start the daily routine, I just want to bring your attention to the order paper. There's one error on the paper, if you want to have a look - on the last page under the Law Amendments Committee, Bill No. 98, the Solemnization of Marriage Act should not be there. That's just a typographical error and actually it should be under the Committee of the Whole House on Bills - or I guess it actually is there, but it's on there twice, so just take out that Bill No. 98 under the Law Amendments Committee.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, I'm pleased to submit our 10-year plan for agriculture entitled Homegrown Success. As part of the jobsHere strategy announced by the Premier, Homegrown Success paves the way towards greater economic prosperity for the agricultural industry. This plan sets out the future direction for government and outlines a broad strategic approach to the long-term growth of agriculture in this province. Government and industry share the same objectives: a profitable, competitive, innovative, self-reliant industry valued for contributing to the economy, the environment, and vibrant rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have great optimism that together we can build a strong agricultural economy in the province, and I beg leave to table the report.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. If the minister wanted to make a ministerial statement regarding that matter, then he could have done so and he should have provided the Opposition Parties an opportunity to respond. As he knows, tabling a report does not entail a speech and, in fact, I think it is now incumbent upon the House to let the Agriculture Critics respond.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't think there would be any objection if the Agriculture Critics did want to respond, so I will leave it up to the critics if they so wish.

[9:15 a.m.]

The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, having been asked at the federation's AGM yesterday, and being somewhat of a bit of a sounding board after the minister made his presentation, I think the three speakers on CBC this morning said it all, there just was simply no meat on the bones. There is very little in this report that gives hope to farmers for the next 10 years. The minister is talking about having the flexibility, after five years, to make some changes and adjustments, but there is literally nothing to change or adjust based on what is in the document that has been presented.

I guarantee you there will be a negative backlash from many sectors that are continuing to hurt here in Nova Scotia. There are no targets to establish a stronger, local-food economy, so this is a report that, unfortunately, had to use a tree to get it out to the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have an opportunity to talk for just a few minutes on this as well. I'll concur with the Liberal critic, I was there yesterday. I heard the speeches. I see the report, this is 18 months in the making, 18 pages of glossy with nothing in it. I stood around and I spoke to the farmers afterwards who are very disappointed - not only what you're hearing today on the radio, the majority, all of them I spoke to are disappointed with the lackluster of this, nothing in it.

A 10-year plan, there's no plan, Mr. Speaker, this speaks to nothing. There is not one commitment from government in this plan whatsoever, and that's a darn shame because the farmers have been standing by. It's coming soon, and what's coming? - 18 pages of gloss.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask, through you to the minister, to provide the cost of gloss right here - 18 pages of waste. Why didn't he take this money and put into the farm community that needs it? We'll be back with more on this. Again, I would request through you that the cost be made public of what 18 pages of gloss cost, for nothing. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): May I make an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw to your attention, in the east gallery is Rory Fraser, of Dartmouth, who is a sheriff and is going to be the subject of this resolution. He joins us here today, as I do this resolution. He is originally from Bear River, so I wonder if everyone in the House would just give him a round of applause and welcome him to the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2431

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

Whereas Sheriff's Deputy Rory Fraser, of Dartmouth, organized this year's sheriffs and correctional officers charity baseball game, which took place in Cole Harbour on August 1st; and

Whereas the participants of this year's game raised almost \$11,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation; and

Whereas that money was used to grant two wishes, including sending Lauren, a young Dartmouth girl fighting lymphoma, and her family to Disney World in Florida;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Legislature recognize and thank Rory Fraser and all the sheriff's deputies and correctional officers, who participated in this year's charity baseball game, for their efforts to make life better for sick children by raising money to grant their wishes.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2432

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

Whereas Monday, November 29th, is considered "dumping day" in southwest Nova Scotia, as it marks the start of the lobster season in Areas 33 and 34; and

Whereas these areas are the largest inshore fisheries in Canada and a valuable part of Nova Scotia's economy, bringing in hundreds of millions of export dollars each year; and

Whereas ocean conditions at this time of the year can be extreme and working conditions can be dangerous for our fishers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wish all lobster fishers a safe and productive season and recognize the difficult working conditions they face on the sea and the substantial contributions they make to the economy of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 114 - Entitled an Act to Require an Anti-idling Policy for the Government of Nova Scotia and Public Passenger Vehicles. (Hon. Sterling Belliveau)

Bill No. 115 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Public Disclosure of Compensation in the Public Sector. (Hon. Graham Steele)

Bill No. 116 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 203 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Homes for Special Care Act, to Permit the Creation of Family Councils in Nursing Homes and Residential Care Facilities. (Mr. Geoff MacLellan)

Bill No. 117 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 110 of the Acts of 1961. An Act to Incorporate Yarmouth North United Baptist Church of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. (Mr. Zach Churchill)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2433

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: M. le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que Allister Surette de Pubnico-Ouest a été nommé prochain recteur et vice-chancelier de l'Université Sainte-Anne et entrera en fonction le 1^{er} juillet 2011; et

Attendu que Allister est un membre actif de la communauté acadienne à titre de président du comité organisateur du Congrès mondial acadien et président actuel du Conseil

de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, don't il est l'un des membres fondateurs; et

Attendu que l'Université Saint-Anne est le seul établissement d'enseignement poste secondaire francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse avec cinq campus situés à Halifax, Petit-de-Grat, Pointe-de-l'Église, Saint-Joseph-du-Moine et Tusket;

Par conséquent qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette assemblée félicite Allister Surette pour sa nomination à titre du 20^{ème} recteur et Vice-Chancelier de l'Université Sainte-Anne et lui souhaite bonne chance dans ses projets futurs.

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

Whereas Allister Surette of West Pubnico has been named as the next president and vice-chancellor of l'Université Sainte-Anne effective July 1, 2011; and

Whereas active in the Acadian community, Allister has chaired the organizing committee for the Acadian World Congress and is currently Chair of the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, of which he was one of the founding members; and

Whereas l'Université Sainte-Anne is the only Francophone, post-secondary institution in Nova Scotia, with campuses located in Halifax, Petit-de-Grat, Church Point, Saint-Joseph-du-Moine and Tusket;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate Allister Surette on his appointment as the 20th President and Vice Chancellor of l'Université Sainte-Anne and wish him all the best 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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2434

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

Whereas public servants contribute to the prosperity of our province while doing many things for so many great people; and

Whereas Angela Davidson of Newport Station was recently recognized for her quarter century service with the Nova Scotia Government where she works as an Employment Caseworker with the Department of Community Services in Windsor; and

Whereas Angela is the embodiment of civil servants who provide high quality service to keep our families safe, our businesses growing and our communities thriving everyday;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Department of Community Services employee Angela Davidson for 25 years of outstanding work with the Nova Scotia Government and wish her every future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 2435

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

Whereas the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, known as LEAF, is a national charitable organization, founded in 1985 and celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, works towards ensuring the law guarantees substantial equality for all women in Canada; and

Whereas Person's Day is celebrated in Canada each year on October 18th to commemorate the decision taken on October 18, 1929 by the Privy Council of Great Britain that women were persons in law and with all the rights and legal powers that had previously been limited to men; and

Whereas the Halifax branch of LEAF held a Person's Day Breakfast this past October 18th at the St. Mary's Boat Club to celebrate the milestone represented by Person's Day, the eight decades of efforts and accomplishments that have followed that historic decision and LEAF's quarter-century of support for the rights of women and all persons;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly join with LEAF and women across Canada in recognizing the significance of Person's Day and congratulates LEAF and its Halifax branch on its ongoing efforts for women's rights and equality.

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.

[9:30 a.m.]

In the spirit of not having props or other items on our desks or chairs, I would ask maybe that the item on the desk of the member for Inverness be removed, please. Thank you.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, may I may make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. MACLELLAN: If I could draw the attention of the House to the west gallery, I have two very special friends of mine here today - Ms. Katherine MacDonald who is the acting executive director of ACAP Cape Breton and a tremendous asset to Cape Breton and along with Katherine is Mr. Mason Fraser who used up his entire summer managing my election campaign. That's pretty good for a 6-year-old. So I ask that Catherine and Mason rise for a warm reception from the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 2436

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

Whereas I rose in this historic House on Friday, October 29th, to deliver my maiden speech as a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature; and

Whereas it was such an emotional and proud occasion for me, I thought it would be fitting to directly identify those special family members and loved ones who supported me in reach of my childhood dream; and

Whereas in my haste to get through the list, and with heckling raining down on me from the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville regarding my mom's tea biscuits, I inadvertently failed to read the names of four of the most special people in my life that I love very much;

Therefore be it resolved that the House joins me in recognizing the invaluable impact my parents-in-law, Valerie and Fred Wadden, and my grandparents-in-law, Jackie and Karen Macdonald, have had on me since I was a teenager. I love them very much.

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. 2437

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

Whereas the Auditor General identified reliance on federal transfers as a significant risk to Nova Scotia; and

Whereas we would be very hard pressed to maintain the many government programs and services that Nova Scotians have come to expect and depend on without substantial federal transfers; and

Whereas after a 10-year trend of declining reliance, the Auditor General reports that Nova Scotia is now becoming more reliant again;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge that only economic growth and more efficient government can lead Nova Scotia toward increased self-reliance and continuing on this government's path of higher debt, higher taxes and bigger government is taking Nova Scotia in the wrong direction.

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 Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. KENT: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery. We have some special guests here today. If I could ask them to rise as I talk about them a little bit, Kelley and Scott Durnford are parents and family members, residents of Eastern Passage, and they're here today proudly with their two sons, Keegan and Aidan. I'm going to tell you

a little more about Aidan later but Keegan is a proud Nova Scotian piper. I thought you all should know that.

They're here as well with Kelly's mom, Helena Sullivan, and Scott's mom and dad, John and Viola Durnford. Matthew Torrey is Aidan's best friend and so they're here to have a sense of what goes on here in the House, and if I could ask everyone to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2438

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

Whereas Aidan Durnford, a 9-year-old boy from Eastern Passage, has proven his athletic ability as a hockey goalie over the past three years by playing for the Dartmouth Whalers Novice Advanced team; the Eastern Heat Spring AAA team where he won MVP in the bronze medal game and, currently, as goalie for the Dartmouth Whalers Atom AAA team, a difficult position to obtain as a first year Atom goalie; and

Whereas Aidan is also a straight A student at Tallahassee Community School who has won the respect of his teachers through his excellent work ethic in the classroom and has showed physical fitness initiative by organizing a foot hockey league which the students play as often as they can; and

Whereas Aidan has recently become an altar server at his church after making his First Communion and embracing his faith through religious education classes and weekly church sermons;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend 9-year-old Aidan Durnford of Eastern Passage for his exceptional hockey skills and excellent school and religious work ethic and praise his spirit as an outstanding young citizen of the Eastern Passage community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 2439

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

Whereas the NDP Government is showing leadership by working with municipalities to support green technologies that will help fight climate change and reduce operating costs; and

Whereas the Municipality of the County of Antigonish is committed to sustainability as a vital goal; and

Whereas the Municipality of the County of Antigonish applied for and received funding from the ecoNova Scotia Fund for Clean Air and Climate Change to purchase a hybrid vehicle and carry out energy efficiency upgrades to the landfill and waterworks building;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the Municipality of the County of Antigonish for receiving funding from the ecoNova Scotia Fund for Clean Air and Climate Change and commend them on their work toward creating a sustainable community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2440

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

Whereas Enos Ash of Sydney Mines suffers from cerebral palsy and has been an amateur radio operator since 1964, turning his hobby into a passion; and

Whereas Enos' life has been enriched by his interactions with other people and their cultures on the shortwave radio, as well as taking great pride in promoting his beloved Cape Breton; and

Whereas although Enos had done a lot of talking over the years, he has done even more listening, including having had conversations with astronauts on the International Space Station;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Enos Ash, who is a true ambassador for promoting Cape Breton Island around the world and beyond over his shortwave radio.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2441

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

Whereas the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre (KRRC), located in Waterville, Nova Scotia, works with individuals, families, and the community to provide supportive living, learning, and working environments to help persons with challenges to use their skills to improve their lives; and

Whereas earlier this year the KRRC, in collaboration with Acadia University, published *Our Voices - Hopes, Dreams and Struggles of Persons With Challenges*, a set of nine personal stories co-authored by KRRC residents and Acadia University students; and

Whereas *Our Voices* has recently become part of the collection of the Nova Scotia Legislative Library;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the authors of *Our Voices*, commend the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre and Acadia University for this unique initiative, and encourage all Nova Scotians to use *Our Voices* to learn more about the possibilities of overcoming challenges.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2442

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

Whereas Symphony Nova Scotia, Halifax Dance, and Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia first partnered to present Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker ballet in Halifax in 1980; and

Whereas The Nutcracker is now one of Halifax's longest-running holiday traditions, with a cast of more than 40 dancers and puppeteers and more than 40 Symphony Nova Scotia musicians; and

Whereas The Nutcracker will celebrate the opening of its 20th season on December 3rd at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Symphony Nova Scotia, Halifax Dance, and Mermaid Theatre on the 20th season of The Nutcracker and wish them well for another successful 20 years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2443

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 No. 74, Londonderry, Colchester North, recently celebrated their 135th Anniversary for continued service; and

Whereas the Meritorious Service Medal, the highest honour for a Brother Mason, is presented for going the extra mile and for 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 Elmer MacKinnon, a 50-year member, was presented with the award by the North Star Lodge No. 74, Londonderry;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Elmer MacKinnon 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 Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2444

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

Whereas this past summer Lynn Clarke and Tracy Forrest were two of the many volunteers who helped with the first annual golf tournament, Fore Healthcare, organized by friends of the Northside/Harbourview Hospital Foundation, Craig Ivey and Judy MacLean; and

Whereas 24 businesses sponsored holes on the course and there were 34 corporate teams and many volunteers, which made the day a major success; and

Whereas the event exceeded the expected \$10,000 goal, generating \$14,000 for the foundation, and provided everyone involved with a great day that they are looking forward to again next year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the organizers, volunteers, and participants of the Fore Healthcare golf tournament and wish them success as the tournament becomes an annual event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: 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. 117.

Bill No. 117 - Yarmouth North United Baptist Church Incorporation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 117.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 117. 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, 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. 76.

Bill No. 76 - Credit Union Act.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I realize this is third reading. I did want to say a few words in support of the bill, and I won't take up too much of the House's time at this point. I was not yet a member of the House when this bill went through earlier stages, but it is a privilege for me to be able to speak on the Credit Union Act at this time.

I do want to start by commending the Minister of Finance for bringing this bill forward. It is, as some members may know, the culmination of a lot of work by many Nova

Scotians in the credit union system who have been working for years to get to a point where this bill can come forward to this House, because it is a bill that will make a big leap forward possible for the credit union system.

[9:45 a.m.]

In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I saw the title of the agriculture plan, Homegrown Success, it occurred to me that is exactly what could be said about the credit union system in Nova Scotia today, because it is a homegrown success. Many members will know that Nova Scotia is the home of the credit union system in English Canada, certainly Cape Breton members will know that to be the case because the first credit union in English Canada was actually founded in Reserve Mines, Cape Breton, in the early 1930s. That is the history of the credit union movement in our country, in English Canada.

It was some very famous and prominent Nova Scotians - and some of them are more famous around the world than they actually are here in our own province, for the work they did, and I'm thinking particularly of Father Moses Coady, a Nova Scotian who is known to this day around the world. The Coady Institute in Antigonish is in operation in over 100 countries around the world, carrying on the work in community economic development that Moses Coady started here. He and Father Jimmy Tompkins and the radical priests of Antigonish, they were the start of the co-operative movement in our province, right here in Nova Scotia. That is how this all began, as a homegrown success.

Mr. Speaker, although credit unions began in the 1930s, by the 1960s there were over 300 credit unions operating in our province, in towns and villages, in church halls, large and small. My own credit union that I'm a member of, that I used to run, Credit Union Atlantic, was founded in 1937 as the Dockyard Workers Credit Union here in Halifax, to service the needs of the employees of the Department of National Defence and the Navy. It's a great history.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are in the year 2010 and the situation is very different. There are, today, 31 credit unions operating in our province, not 300. The reason for that is there is a need to create economies of scale, to provide new services to compete with very, very large banking competitors, so they have merged together in large numbers - that is how we've gone from 300 to 31. It is a trend that is in place so that the services that credit unions provide, in our province's case, to 165,000 Nova Scotians - and that might be a number of some surprise to members of the House, that one in six Nova Scotians, one in six of our combined constituents, are actually members of a credit union, served by 87 branches.

Mr. Speaker, of particular interest to rural members, members who represent rural ridings, there are actually 28 communities in our province where the only banking alternative that they have is a credit union, so this is a very, very important part of our economy, not just in those 28 communities but across the province, serving that many people, that many businesses.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of my credit union, Credit Union Atlantic, starting in the 1930s in the Depression as a small dockyard workers' credit union, that the dues to join the credit union were 50 cents and, if you couldn't afford 50 cents, they would put you on the instalment plan - you could pay 10 cents a week for five weeks in order to be a paid-up member of your credit union.

This is something amazing for us to think of today, but it speaks to the roots of the system and the kinds of people it was designed to serve in those days. Today Credit Union Atlantic is a \$300 million company, serving 25,000 Nova Scotia families, with branches around central Nova Scotia and a vibrant small-business line of business as well, serving all kinds of people. I raise it only as an example of what credit unions have become - they have become a very real and viable banking alternative. People deserve to have competition and alternatives, and that is what credit unions are providing today across the country in our province.

I just give that brief history lesson, sir, to bring us to the point of this bill, which is to allow credit unions to take another big step forward in service to Nova Scotians, and in service to all Canadians, because there is a concurrent bill in the House of Parliament in Ottawa that was part of the last federal budget.

The Conservative Government, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Flaherty, brought forward a bill as a result of his budget last Spring, to allow for credit unions to operate even beyond their own provincial boundaries, to join together with the credit unions in neighbouring provinces or across the country. This was something that was requested by the credit unions of Canada. They requested, so that they can further strengthen their system, further allow them to accumulate capital that can be then lent out into their communities to encourage families to get a mortgage, to buy a home, to take out a business loan to start a business in areas where that is not easy to do. This is a step forward at the national level for credit unions.

When I mentioned that we've gone from 300 to 31 in the last generation here, I mentioned that because the structure of the credit union system has to change to accommodate this new reality. Credit unions themselves have asked the government to enable them to do that by making the amendments that this bill contains to the Credit Union Act, to merge the Credit Union Centrals of the Atlantic Provinces into one. Nova Scotia has its own Credit Union Central that once served 300 credit unions, now it only has 31 to look after. This is a great opportunity for efficiency to be created in Atlantic Canada for the credit union system.

For those who don't know, a Credit Union Central is both a trade association and a financial clearing house. It is kind of like the Canadian Bankers Association, the trade association for banks, and the Central Bank of Canada, the central bank for banks. It is that equivalent, combined, for the credit union system. We don't need three in the Atlantic

Provinces anymore, we only need one. This will drive down the cost of doing business for credit unions, it will allow them to combine in new ways.

One of the great strengths of credit unions, Mr. Speaker is that they are owned by their members, they are co-operatively owned. When a credit union makes money, it is the deposit holders themselves who get a share of that money back. No matter how big or small your account, no matter how big or small your net worth, you're all an equal owner of your own financial institution when you're a member of a credit union. You have one share and one vote. When that happens, and your credit union makes money, you get your share. This has been a great plan for hundreds of thousands of Nova Scotians over the years. Now it's time for another step forward and this allows that to happen.

Of course, every strength can also be seen as a weakness, and the fact of the matter is, because of the ownership structure of credit unions, they sometimes have difficulty coming together in common cause for the credit union system, for a variety of reasons, and that has held them back in the past. But on this one, on this bill, on the request that has been made of the government to make these amendments, the credit unions have come together to ask for these new powers to allow them to move forward.

I think of communities in our province that are one-industry towns that are reliant on the fishery or on the forestry alone, that when their local credit union only operates in that area there is a risk to the credit union, if there is a downturn in that one industry, the local credit union becomes at risk because all of their members at once run into financial difficulty. What this bill will allow, in conjunction with the federal bill, is to allow credit unions to use proper risk management techniques, to spread that risk around the credit union system so that, at some point, one town might be up, another town might be down, but together they're protected. This is the power of co-operation that the co-operative movement is based on and so credit unions are now going to be able to do that like never before.

I only share this with the House so that the members here, some of whom may be members of credit unions themselves - I know there are some on the opposite side and I want them to appreciate there are some of us on this side as well who are steeped in the credit union movement more than they might think. That is the case that we're encouraged by the work of the credit union system and this opportunity that is before them.

Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up by sharing this, that this bill requires concurrent legislation in New Brunswick, in the Legislatures of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, for this all to become reality. I would encourage the Minister of Finance upon completion of consideration of this bill to share the result with his counterparts in those provinces so that all of this can begin to happen for the credit union system.

I will point out that in the Speech from the Throne of the newly elected Progressive Conservative Government of New Brunswick, that they contained in that Throne Speech a clause, or a paragraph, about their plans. I will just quote from the Throne Speech in New

Brunswick, “A bill will be introduced to allow New Brunswick credit unions to become members of a new body called Atlantic Central . . . This amalgamation will give New Brunswick credit unions greater access to capital, enhanced support and better long-term control over costs - all of which will benefit their New Brunswick members.”

That is absolutely true in Nova Scotia as well so I rise in support of the bill and I encourage all members to vote in favour. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for his intervention and his service to the credit union movement of Nova Scotia over the past several years. I'm very pleased to move this bill for third reading because I think we all agree this is good for the credit union movement throughout Atlantic Canada. Thank you.

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

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the House, could we revert to the daily routine and Statements by Ministers?

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members of the House for agreeing to alter the agenda to allow me to do this statement.

We all know we have a rapidly growing population of seniors and high rates of chronic disease and disability in our province. Today we are taking steps to provide

additional support to hundreds of seniors who need help in our goal to provide better health care for families.

Our seniors need our support. I have met and heard from many who are vulnerable and facing economic hardship. As a government we are committed to working to make life better and more affordable for low income Nova Scotians. We all know the challenge the province is facing financially, but this doesn't mean we are going to stop helping Nova Scotians in need.

Key to the people of Nova Scotia electing this government were several overall commitments. One was to give seniors options to stay in their homes and communities longer. I meet seniors across the province and they tell me that they want that ability. Part of the help that we are committing to implement is a Personal Alert Assistance Program. I am pleased to announce that this program will begin in the new year.

Personal alert programs have a personal alarm that can be used to call for help in any situation. These services bring an increased level of security to seniors living at home alone and relief to family caregivers who worry about them. We will start the province's new Personal Alert Assistance Program for a specific group who meet these criteria: for people over 65 who live alone and are in need but cannot afford the service; for people who have a history of falls and use a cane, a walker or a wheelchair; and for those who are receiving publicly funded home care services.

For many seniors living on limited income, personal alert services can be very difficult to afford. This new provincial assistance program will help offset this cost and bring increased security and safety to many families. As a first step, we are committing \$100,000 annually which will assist 200 seniors. In the March Speech from the Throne, this government made a commitment to consult stakeholders and change the existing Caregiver Allowance Program to improve supports for caregivers.

[10:00 a.m.]

Mr. Speaker, we kept that commitment. That is why today we are introducing changes to the caregiver allowance. In collaboration with my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, we are eliminating the practice where those few caregivers in receipt of income assistance had their benefit deducted from their income assistance. We are expanding, in a modest but affordable way, the number of people who are eligible and in need of recognition through this benefit. It will be called the Caregiver Benefit. This is a next step to target and expand the number of people who are eligible and in need.

The name change has been made to ensure that those caregivers eligible for income assistance benefits through Community Services are able to receive the Caregiver Benefit without losing other supports they need. Now nearly 400 more caregivers will qualify for the benefit - those who care for loved ones with significant cognitive and/or physical challenges such as people with Alzheimer's who don't recognize their family and those who

are bedridden. The expansion will begin on December 1st and we are investing an additional \$1.85 million in expanding the program.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that getting back to balance means making tough choices but caring for our seniors and helping those in need are priorities for this government. Through these new and expanded programs, we have found a way to help more seniors and their caregivers while ensuring that as a province we continue to live within our means. Today's announcement is part of our overall efforts to make life more affordable for seniors while we work to ensure government gets back to balance. The expansion of the Caregiver Benefit and the new Personal Alert Assistance will help support more seniors and their family caregivers than before. In total, we anticipate close to 600 people will benefit from the expanded Caregiver Benefit and the Personal Alert Assistance Program.

This government is working hard to make life better for Nova Scotia seniors and these steps will help hundreds of seniors and their families who are in great need of help. Other measures we have taken to help seniors with low incomes include providing personal income tax relief to ensure no Nova Scotian recipient of the Guaranteed Income Supplement pays provincial taxes, which will benefit about 18,000 low income seniors; creating the Affordable Living Tax Credit which has already provided income to nearly 235,000 households in the province; ending security deposits for seniors in long-term care facilities; increasing the number of nurse practitioners to augment care in nursing homes; and working hard to get better prices for Nova Scotian seniors and those who rely on Pharmacare programs for coverage of their prescription drugs, and for taxpayers.

We know how important programs that provide support are to the individuals and families we help and we will continue to provide support for those in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to say a few words on the ministerial statement we've just heard from the Minister of Health. I do thank her for giving us the statement in advance although we got a quick change on one. I had to search hard to find where the change was but we found it. It was not dreadfully material, I think it was a correction that was in there, but it gave me a little heart stop to see that the statement had changed.

We certainly have a few comments to make on this. The Caregiver Allowance Program, as everyone knows, has been a subject of great interest here at the House. There were a considerable number of questions in the Fall session, I believe it was a year ago when this was first rolling out. Many Nova Scotians were applying for it, had great hopes that the care they were giving would finally be recognized by the government, with some small amount of support for them. They found that they did not meet the criteria, which were extremely strict.

As members of the Opposition, we have spoken to many people who were unhappy about that, in fact, their cases were compelling in terms of how much care they were giving, how incapacitated their loved ones were, and yet they did not qualify for the caregiver allowance. We are certainly looking for any improvement to that.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, one point is that the qualifications, as I said, were extremely high and they have not changed considerably in this new announcement. What we really feel is it may have taken us from what we called the MAPLE score, which we all became familiar with here through the questions in Question Period. Perhaps we moved from a 5, which was extremely stringent, to maybe a 4.5. It's hard to say how that is going to measure out, but we'll have a few questions, I'm sure, as it unfolds. The minister used the words, modest improvement, and I would say that is being pretty generous, really. We'll have to wait and see, but, modest is certainly as bold as I would want to go on that.

Mr. Speaker, last year it was the Leader of the Liberal Party who challenged the government to eliminate the caregiver allowance clawback that was taking place for people on social assistance. There were people on social assistance who were home because they had to be, they were caring for their loved ones because there was no other alternative. When they received this benefit, those few who were lucky enough to qualify, they received the benefit and then found that it was being clawed back on the other side.

We're glad to see that the government has listened to that concern and that the two ministers, the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Health, have seen the light and realized that was completely counterproductive because people were making a tremendous sacrifice, anyone who is caring for a loved one at home, we don't want to make it more difficult for them. Certainly they are the most vulnerable and we are not going to forget that we continued to claw that back for the last year. At the same time, we'll never know how many people gave up and put their loved ones in nursing homes and other care facilities as a result, because they just couldn't continue to do this.

Mr. Speaker, we really believe that was the right thing to do, certainly to take that off. It's a little late in coming, but we're glad to see that the review was done and that did take place.

One of the major changes we see in this program as it is being rolled out is a name change. That's always nice to make it look like it is repackaged and that it has come forward as something that is now new and improved, but it's not much different from a marketing change with a name, when you look at products that are sold. All of a sudden it is the Caregiver Benefit, not the Caregiver Allowance Program, so we'll all have to just change our terminology there. It falls short, is what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker. I don't see anything at all that addresses the stringent criteria, really, for the approval of the program. There are thousands of people - we have 160,000 seniors in this province - there are thousands of people who are striving to stay in their homes.

I appreciate that we've seen a little improvement here but we're talking in the manner of a couple of hundred more people who will now be eligible. I'm just saying, don't kid yourself, the need is still much greater than what we're seeing in front of us. I see a repackaged name, something that we can all become aware of in terms of our terminology, but it is not going to make a big difference to people on the ground. It's a very limited expansion of the same program and that's the bigger question there.

I wanted to speak a little bit about the personal alerts because this ministerial announcement covers two things: the slight expansion, modest expansion of the Caregiver Allowance Program, and now an ability to fund some personal alert systems for Nova Scotians. Again, it looks like the figure is about 200 Nova Scotians who will be getting the cost of a personal alert system paid for. We should all look at the criteria that are named in this statement because you already have to have been somebody who falls, you may already have been incapacitated, had a broken hip or what have you. Just to go over what the minister said, you have to be over 65, live alone and be financially needy, you cannot afford the service on your own, and it's for people who have a history of falls or use a cane, walker or wheelchair, especially if they have a history of falls, that means they may already have been injured and incapacitated. You also have to already be receiving publicly-funded home care services, that was the third criterion, so you're already sick enough that you have somebody coming in every day. This is not just trying to avert the problems and catch it before you've already fallen, this is going to be after the fact when you already have the VON or other home care services coming in and they must be paid for publicly, not because your family have arranged home care or anything like that.

I'm just saying that's pretty limited; 200 Nova Scotians is not much. I wanted to draw the minister and the members' of the House attention to the Liberal bill, Bill No. 57, which is on the current order paper. It was a bill brought in by the honourable member for Digby-Annapolis after, in fact, some consultation with the member for Dartmouth East who, during the last election, had discussions with constituents in his area about the need for some government support for people who are paying for these up front. As the explanatory notes say, "This Bill implements a senior independent living tax credit for costs associated with the installation and maintenance of a life or medical alert system." That, in fact, makes the support available to anybody who is actually having to dig into their pocket.

I go back to the fact that we're only going to be able to provide 200, even if we do 200 a year. Again, put it in perspective, we have 160,000 seniors right now. Every month, there is something like 1,000 new people turning 65 in this province. It's a growing and increasing need for people to remain safe, confident and able to remain in their own homes and be independent. Having one of those personal alert systems is one of the best ways to do that because it gives peace of mind. Not only to the senior, but to the senior's family, to their neighbours, people knowing that there is a system in place to help you if something happens. That can make all the difference between staying in your home, which we know is the preferred solution for seniors. It's what people want, staying in their own communities

where they have a social support network and perhaps the alternative, which is having to move to a care facility of one level or another, which is not what people want.

If the minister would look at that, I think our bill is another step in the process. It would not be expensive. It's talking about a tax credit, which would just give people that encouragement and that recognition that they're making those out-of-pocket expenses, which really ultimately, helps our province and allows more people to stay in their own homes. With that, we hope to hear from Nova Scotians as they apply for this new Caregiver Benefit. We want to know whether it is actually going to help more people than it did before. Again, the criteria looked very stringent. We will be monitoring this as it unfolds to see whether or not Nova Scotians are going to be supported in their own homes when they are disabled or infirm. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for the advance copy of her statement. I would also suggest though, that getting the revision three minutes before she started delivering it caused a bit of a scramble to try and find out what was different. I did find a little bit of language change, which we will certainly have to follow up on to see if it is semantics or if there truly is a change in the meaning. But I do appreciate getting the copy of the first statement and will comment later on what we believe we have found as the difference.

I do want to speak to the caregiver allowance and to the need for support for those who give care in their homes. I think, as the minister when she was in Opposition would remember, as we certainly do, what happened originally with the caregiver allowance that was introduced through the Department of Community Services. I believe - and I will say in this House - that the strength of any program is in the implementation. When that first program was introduced as a pilot, monitored, we recognized back in 2008 that there were some flaws and there needed to be some changes. One of the changes was that program moved from the Department of Community Services to the Department of Health. I know the minister, in her role at that time, was very familiar with that program.

We began to implement that program and, of course, there should always be constant monitoring of any implementation plan. I think if you fail to do that, you don't make any improvements. What I see the minister doing here is continuing to monitor and continuing to try to address problems that may have developed during that implementation. I'm pleased that monitoring is taking place and I'm pleased that there is an attempt to try to address some of those problems.

It is a progression. It's taking longer than anybody would want. I think every member of this House recognizes they have constituents, they may even have family members, who

are in need of care in order for the seniors to stay in their own home. As the member from the Official Opposition has stated, many people have not been able to keep their loved ones in their own home because they did not qualify for support from the Caregiver Allowance. This does go again to the implementation.

We know the scale that was used, the MAPLe as it's referred to - Method for Assigning Priority Levels. We know that the condition of seniors who would qualify for that and who would score a five on that MAPLe were few. We also recognized that there were many who were in need but they didn't score a five. I think that is where one of the biggest challenges has come with the implementation of a Caregiver Allowance.

We heard stories of many people who were bedridden, who were not able to function, who did require care and who required a caregiver but they didn't score a five so they did not get any support from the caregiver allowance. We also heard stories and I can't confirm them, but we did hear stories in this House that perhaps people were assessed without even a personal visit from the person who was assessing their need.

Again, it goes to that whole question of implementation. When you have a scale that is so rigid and when you have an assessment model that doesn't allow true needs to be assessed, then you quickly reduce or eliminate those who should be getting the care from the allowance.

I do stress to the minister, something that I know she knows and something that I commend her for doing - she is trying to make improvements. It will remain to be seen with the implementation under the new guidelines how many more people who are in need will benefit from this Caregiver Benefit. I look forward to monitoring that. We will be monitoring that. We will be going through both the original and the revised statements to see if it is a matter of language. One part in particular that we have to follow up on is the change in language from caregivers eligible for benefits changed to caregivers eligible for income assistance.

I think we need to do a little bit of research on what is the difference. How many people will either be added to or taken away from the eligibility list because of that change in language? With those few remarks, I commend the minister for bringing this forward if it will in fact, through implementation, give greater care to our seniors who deserve to stay in their own home, who want to stay in their own home and who have a caregiver who can only make that happen if they get some financial assistance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Before I go to the Government House Leader, I have been asked to announce that the flu clinic is on downstairs for members who want to take advantage of it. The VON is putting that on and it will be on until 12:00 noon. Just a reminder if you want to take advantage of that.

[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 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. 81.

Bill No. 81 - Oak Island Treasure Act.

Bill No. 90 - Auditor General 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 the bills be engrossed.

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.

[10:20 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Mr. Leo Glavine in the Chair.]

[10:28 a.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Charlie Parker, resumed 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:

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

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 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 bills:

Bill No. 93 - Motor Vehicle Act.**Bill No. 94 - Motor Vehicle 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 a third time on a future day.

[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.

[10:30 a.m.]

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 111.

Bill No. 111 - Motor Vehicle Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making a few comments on second reading of the “yield to bus legislation”, as it has been called. I would like to point out to members opposite and to members of this side of the House that I do, in my riding of Timberlea-Prospect, have a number of very prominent Metro Transit drivers who are well-known in our community and who are outspoken about the fact of the need of

this particular piece of legislation. I thank them because this is the sort of legislation that's going to make it easier for them in their place of work.

I am pleased to rise to bring forward these amendments that will help improve transit efficiency, support road safety, and make sure the people behind the wheel of those big buses have a better way to move citizens around safely, not just in the HRM but in other metro areas throughout the province. The proposed amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act will require drivers to yield the right of way to a transit bus that is signalling its intention to re-enter traffic.

I've heard from members opposite that that's just common sense - well, transit bus drivers are telling me that it might be common sense but a lot of people aren't paying attention to them. This legislation has the support of public transit in communities across the province. The amendment was initially proposed in the Fall of 2007 sitting of the Legislature as a Private Member's Bill by the MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, and hopefully he'll take the opportunity during this debate to make his views known on the Private Member's Bill in this current piece of legislation.

Currently buses must rely on the courtesy of drivers - and they are most drivers who are using the roadways of Nova Scotia - I want to compliment them on their courteous way of approaching this issue or others. But this is an issue where buses are re-entering the traffic stream which can lead to schedule delays, for one, and it can lead, unfortunately, to some aggressive behaviour and frustration on behalf of the motorists and bus drivers as they continue to face this problem, on some occasions, at every stop along the route.

Mr. Speaker, drivers will only be required to yield to transit buses displaying the appropriate signage, and that of course will be taken care of in the regulations, with input from Metro Transit, and it will only be appropriate where the posted speed limit is 60 kilometres or less. This legislation supports the government's goal to help make it easier for families and Nova Scotians to build sustainable transportation into our lives - and I know those people who regularly count on Metro Transit are well aware of how important it is - and a safe way to get to and fro as they move around the busy parts of our province and our city.

The fines will range - and we've got to come down to this - from \$167 to \$340, including court costs. Police officers are pleased with this piece of legislation - one particular police officer complimented me at the bill briefing saying that this is something that's needed because he has seen this, unfortunately, happen a number of times where there have been accidents resulting. Let's just use common courtesy, and let's allow these buses to stick to the schedule and get in and out of traffic.

More importantly, this legislation is modelled after similar legislation in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. This legislation and, as well, last week's bike legislation are examples of concerns expressed by suburban communities. I want to compliment the

members who are on the suburban committee of MLAs from this caucus, they've brought this issue up before, whether they live in Sackville, Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, or other areas in the HRM. This is a simple idea. It will make life better and greener for suburban communities by improving transit flow and making transit service more reliable, efficient and, of course, safer for all involved.

Mr. Speaker, we've consulted with transit agencies across the province and they are supportive of this legislation - and of course, consultation with transit agencies will continue in the development of the required regulations. This is making good, common-sense legislation that has been requested and is required by transit operators. I am sure it will be well received and I look forward to hearing the comments from the members opposite.

With those comments, I move second reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for his remarks in bringing forward this bill. I don't have any problem with the bill itself - I'm not sure whether maybe it could have been done by regulation or not, but I am going to give the minister the benefit of the doubt that it couldn't have been done by regulation and had to be done by an amendment. It strikes me there have been a lot of small amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act that could have been rolled together into one bill amending the Motor Vehicle Act.

I agree with the minister that this is an issue and this is an issue that transit drivers have talked about. I know I have had transit drivers talk to me about this issue and it does need to be addressed. In fact, my hope is - there are certain traffic authorities in the province that have refused the construction of lay-bys for buses because this legislation didn't exist. My hope is that, since the excuse has always been that lay-bys couldn't exist because this didn't exist, once this legislation passes, those will become part of the new road construction standard, in some cases, which would also provide increased safety for bicyclists on the road because it would create that separation and the buses wouldn't be in the way.

I find it intriguing that this was announced as one of the projects of the suburban priorities team, yet it was brought forward by the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island a while ago and it is an issue that crosses province-wide. It is interesting to me that it's important province-wide, it's important in the urban area, and yet it was advertised yesterday as just a suburban issue. In the minister's own remarks, on the one hand, he said it was an important suburban issue, and then he said it is important province-wide. I agree, it's important to both, and it was brought forward initially by a member who isn't even a member of that suburban priorities team, so it was a little bit of a weird communication yesterday that didn't seem to make much sense. (Interruptions)

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

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, we are scheduled to be here until 3:00 p.m. and I don't mind standing here and taking my whole hour and talking on this if the members wish to be here until three o'clock. We certainly listened respectfully to the minister as he talked about this. We are trying to point out the questions we have about it, despite the fact that we have stated that we support it. I know there are other members here who would be more than happy to get up and speak for an hour on this as well, if that's the direction the House wants to go in.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I completely agree with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal when he says that transit drivers have brought this forward. I am glad that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island brought this forward a number of years ago. I know that this was an issue, and I just think it's important that when the minister looks at the road standards on provincial roads - because obviously the construction standards on the provincial roads would be under his jurisdiction - that the promise from staff that this would result in the consideration of lay-bys for buses will actually happen.

The second issue on this is going to be making sure that it is enforced, because just telling people that they should give way to buses isn't going to be enough if it's not enforced. I think the minister probably recognizes that. Maybe that is part of the job of the transit authorities, to have the advertising campaign on their buses to remind people when this first rolls out, because that is going to be the biggest challenge with this. We know there are people - and I'm sure the minister is one of them - who give way to buses trying to pull out into traffic now, and those same people will continue to do it. Those are going to be the people who will pay attention to this, unless it is enforced.

Mr. Speaker, certainly we will support this moving forward. As I say, I would have liked to have seen this as part of an omnibus bill that would have included a lot of these smaller motor vehicle amendments going along. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes today to speak to this bill. I guess I'll start off by saying I can't believe we even have to bring this bill forward. The minister spoke about common sense, and I think I probably mentioned this in this House before, perhaps we should have a store where you can go and buy such things, because you can't. (Interruption)

HON. FRANK CORBETT: No one would know how to open it.

MR. PORTER: No one would know how to open it. Well, Deputy Premier, I guess that would include - no, I won't say it.

In all seriousness, it seems like a small thing, pulling over for the bus and I just think about small car/big bus, it should be pretty straight forward. I guess also having come from a previous employment where I dealt with these sorts of emergencies, I realize that small car/big bus come together on occasion.

I guess, like I said, I would have thought it could have been done in regulation, perhaps, maybe it could have been, I don't know. I'm not the legal counsel putting all this together and so on but in building on some of the other comments that have already been made, it's good to put it out front. I guess I'll stress what I have in the past when it comes to bills regarding common sense, there's a huge education piece so I hope that the minister and his department are planning to - I guess it will get some media, at least I hope it will, that people will be aware that they probably shouldn't run into the big bus ahead of them and they should give way.

This is not just an HRM issue, this is not just a suburban issue, this is very much a rural issue as well. We have, believe it or not, in the small community of Hants West, in many areas, a bus. We have Kings Transit that travels all throughout the Valley and those buses are kind of big too. I don't think we've had any incidents, I'm pretty sure, I'm not aware of any anyway that we've had but I guess, again, I would have just liked to think that common sense would have prevailed and you would have allowed the bus to pull in ahead of you. I know here in the busier places like the HRM and downtown Halifax and so on that there are a lot more vehicles and people are busy going about their business and maybe not quite paying attention when they should be and maybe they're using cell phones and handheld devices and such. I hope not, the minister has certainly made his points on that as well, previously.

Like I said, just a piece about education, we always talk about these small minute things or what appear to be small and minute when they're really quite severe. Along with his bicycle safety lane, which is another good piece, he should just toss this right in there and put something out, nothing glossy and costly but something out to the public, where people can go on-line or maybe an ad in the newspaper or something like that to make people aware of what might seem like small changes but if you run into that big bus, it could have a huge impact on yourself and certainly your vehicle and so on and so forth. With that, I'll take my seat and thanks very much for the opportunity to speak to the bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to take a few minutes here to rise and speak to Bill No. 111, also known as the "Yield to the Bus Bill". Let me begin by thanking the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for listening to what people in my community have been saying and listening to what people right across Nova Scotia have been saying about the need to improve our transit system, to make life better for people in our communities and to do it in an environmentally sustainable way. One way to

do it is to create a balanced transportation system that includes public transit, that includes active and alternative transit. This is one step on the road to that objective.

The members opposite have described this as a small step but really it should be seen as part of a larger project that we on this side have to make public transit more effective, more accessible, more affordable. I want to say that a number of the initiatives that the minister has been involved in, have been aimed in that direction. The five-year paving strategy is part of that transportation strategy to make transportation reliable, to make it more effective. The minister has also committed that where numbers warrant, where there is construction underway already, where there are opportunities, where the fiscal means allow for it, we will also consider creating more opportunities for cyclists along the roads and highways of Nova Scotia.

The law that was introduced last week, for example, that creates a one-metre space for cyclists makes it safer for cyclists. These are all small steps but taken together they move us in that direction of developing an affordable, accessible and safe public transit system and an active transit system.

[10:45 a.m.]

In my constituency, there have been a number of initiatives that have gotten a little less attention. The Halifax Urban Greenway that Mark Poirier and his group have been involved in was just constructed over the last year and already people are starting to use it and we're looking at expanding it. I would like to thank both the federal government and the municipal government for being partners and committing to completing the Halifax Urban Greenway.

There are studies underway to look at the development of an integrated transit service in the rail cut and the municipality says they're going to report very soon on that. We have monies allocated for new bus terminals. That point is that, yes, they're all small steps, but taken together, they underline our commitment to developing a safe, affordable, accessible, reliable, public transit system and active transit system.

I would be remiss in not talking about some of the groups that initiated this discussion. A few years ago, I was at the Metro Transit offices and a bus driver came in and he was cursing, as only bus drivers can, he was very upset. He had spent the day with buses that were parked in the bus space (Interruptions) I could name that bus driver, but the point he was making was that people are parking in bus stops, people are racing ahead to get ahead of buses, to drop off passengers or they're racing ahead so they don't have to be behind a bus. They're creating a dangerous condition.

It was really initiated by this conversation at the Metro Transit office where the bus driver said, could you do something to make it a little bit safer? People talk about motorists having road rage, well bus drivers have road rage as well and I witnessed it that day.

I also met with the Trax project at the Ecology Action Centre, Jen Powley and Laena Garrison in particular and they were talking about public transit and making it faster. There were people in the communities and residents for sustainable transportation in my community who said, we need to reduce the number of cars coming onto the peninsula. We don't need to build more bridges or underpasses or widen roads, the public has said very clearly; they don't want communities undermined and threatened. They would prefer to reduce the number of cars coming in and make it easier for people to use public transit.

The initiative for this legislation lies in all of those groups in my community who said we need to do something different, we need to do something about the number of places in our city that are being turned into parking lots and the number of roads that are being widened.

I know the members on the other side have said that we don't need legislation for this, that it just makes common sense. Unfortunately in the world that we live in, you have to sometimes legislate common sense. Sometimes you have to legislate common courtesy because people don't do what they are supposed to do and what the right thing to do would be.

I want to say that I was talking with the people at Metro Transit about this and they told me that a typical transit bus operator will pull in and out of about 400 stops in an eight hour shift. The drivers can often not see pedestrians boarding or disembarking or sometimes chasing the bus. It's best for all concerned that when they're making these 400 entrances and exits, that we make it as safe, as reliable and as comfortable as possible.

Lori Patterson, Corporate Communications over at Metro Transit, said to me, a bus is a big vehicle, it has to stop and start a lot and once you pull over to the side of the road, it's very difficult to get back into traffic. You're trying to operate on a schedule and carry as many people as possible. This proposal makes sense because it allows public transit to do its job.

There are a number of good reasons for doing this. It's important to take this step on the road to developing a more effective, safe and reliable public transit system. It's important for us to send a signal to the public that we do care about public transit and active transit. I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for taking this initiative and I look forward to the public consultation phase that will follow and eventually, enforcement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure I stand and speak on this bill. I want to correct the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island when he said we said that the bill wasn't necessary. We do believe the bill is necessary. We think it's a good bill and it's a good idea, we said that earlier. So I just want to make sure that his prepared

script that the researchers did for him is corrected and maybe they'll do a little bit better job next time. (Interruption) I always like giving him a hard time anyway, he's a great guy.

I was really upset though with this new Councillor Replacement Program that the NDP has with the urban MLAs, why the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island wasn't on that because he has been very active in the community. This bill that he suggested, which I will give him full credit for and I think it's a good bill, gives you an indication of his dedication to his community and the necessary things that have to be done to really help.

I can tell you about transit buses. I know sometimes when I'm travelling, because unfortunately I can't take a transit bus from my home and get to work here at any reasonable time, so I do take a car. Every time I see a transit bus, I say, oh, there's that transit bus going by and you look inside the transit bus and it's full of people. If every one of those people had a car and were driving a car, what a traffic jam we would have. We've got a big enough traffic jam now. So I think this is a very positive bill. It will mean that the buses will hopefully keep their schedule a bit tighter and make it more convenient for people to travel on the buses, and I think that's positive. Past that, it will be interesting to see if it increases the ridership. Again, one of the biggest problems that I know the municipality has is ridership on the buses in order to pay for them because it is an expensive operation.

The other issue in this whole thing is the province doesn't really contribute anything to the bus service in HRM and it's the lowest contribution in the whole country. So I think that that's something that the province should really consider and really try to help the process of eliminating traffic on the streets.

As you look at this whole system, I've talked to many bus drivers and they have a tough job, there's a lot of things that they have to deal with. Some of the passengers aren't as polite as they should be when they get on the bus. Indeed, in traffic, when they're trying to get around and trying to keep a schedule, it's very difficult for them. Anything we can do to make their job better and indeed improve the ridership of this, is an excellent move forward.

We will be supporting this bill. I can't say that much about the next two bills you're going to have, Bill No. 112 and Bill No. 113. Those have a little different topics and we'll have some very lengthy discussion on those as we move forward, but this bill is a good idea. We have to, hopefully, increase the amount of people who are going on the transit service in the area. Our area is so huge and so stretched out. I know in my area, we have a community transit bus which really doesn't serve the community very well and we pay an area rate for it. Hopefully the service on that bus will be improved so they can make proper connections, travel back and forth to work more regularly and take a lot of the cars off the road that are there now, that's one of the very positive ways.

With those few words, I again want to commend the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island for bringing this idea forward. I think it's very positive and indeed the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for listening to his colleague, even though he's not on this new MLA team that's going to replace councillors, doing their job, I think that it's a good bill and the minister should be commended for that as well.

I can't say that about all the bills. It's a tiny bill, it should have been included in another bill, you know, there are lots of bills coming forward here this time. I think the NDP is just trying to see how many numbers of bills they can put through this time and I don't think that should be the purpose of this Legislature. It should be that we provide bills in a very concise form that indeed doesn't waste our time talking about one single topic. Although this is a very good topic and not a waste of time talking about this, but it should have been an overall bill that covered many issues instead of this one single bill.

Again, congratulations to the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. He doesn't believe I'm saying this because I'm always giving him a hard time - in good fun - but it's really good to see him to be able to say something and go from there, get up and stand up for a change. (Interruptions) So with those few words, I'll take my place.

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

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to make just a few comments on this particular bill - Bill's bill, as it's now known. But I am glad that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island was able to pony up to the debate here today. I do know one thing, it must be public transit, when it talks about buses re-entering, because the Dexter bus, Nova Scotians are jumping out of the way. There is no need of worrying about legislation for that because the Dexter bus has been rolling through and is something Nova Scotians are desperately trying to get away from. And that bus will come to a halt when next a general election's held, so I'm not worried about that bus being dealt with; no legislation required, it will be the people of Nova Scotia who will deal with that, to take the wheels off that bus.

Mr. Speaker, I must say, you know, the . . .

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Next stop, Sydney- Victoria.

MR. CLARKE: That's a good thought there Deputy Premier, Sydney-Victoria is a very good stop. I like that Mr. Deputy Premier. That you can put in legislation if you'd like. But again, what we have are a number of bills that have come before the House that quite frankly - while you do not want to trivialize them, because they are important, if you're a bus driver having these things recognized, are important. I want to go to the Minister of Finance and say, where is the proclamation clause?

Of course, if you look at this it's not on Royal Assent, so I mean, consistent to what they said in Opposition, it was not (Interruption) I do believe the good Minister of Finance now, on many occasions lamented about the clauses that were either there or not there in legislation. I also know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal takes his role very seriously and I also know the regulation-making authority of the minister in Cabinet to see to these things. I'm wondering if he's going to be bringing forward the new left- turning lane bill for legislation?

These are things - and not to trivialize the work, and the safety, more importantly, of drivers or their passengers, but it is consistent with a pattern that is very disturbing to Nova Scotians that here we are in this Chamber, supposed to be debating very serious topics for the benefit of Nova Scotians and we have the government piecemealing everything, just so they can count the number of bills, as was stated by many others, and try to suggest that they were very busy here at the Legislature; it's not the case. Quite frankly, any transportation bill, this could have been provided and consolidated, as an omnibus, with many of these things that we would not, by the way, in Opposition, oppose if they were actually structured in an appropriate manner.

The government, I know, feels a need to have to count and make bills that they could otherwise do through the regulation- making authority that they currently have. So Nova Scotians need not think that this piece of legislation was necessary to deal with the matter of assisting the transit bus drivers and improving public safety because the minister in Cabinet has that authority already and that's within their regulation- making purview and they chose to have a piece of legislation.

Now I think we are spending very valuable taxpayers dollars to be here in the Chamber. If what the minister wanted, and the government, was to invest money in public education rather than wasting taxpayers dollars to go through a myriad of bills that don't require coming here, then that would have probably been something we could support for public education purposes. I'm sure the minister is going to say that the reason there is no proclamation clause date in here is because they want to deal with public education, but Cabinet could have done that already. At the same time I do support the good work that the minister has been doing, but just for the record, this is just again a disturbing pattern that we're seeing, but at the same time, of course you cannot be against what the principle is and hopefully the practicality will mean safer travels.

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructural Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members on both sides of the House for their comments. I would move that this debate on second reading be closed and we move on to the Law Amendments Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No.111.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.

[11:00 a.m.]

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 108.

Bill No. 108 - Nova Scotia Museum Act.

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

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I am rising to move second reading of Bill No. 108, to amend the Nova Scotia Museum Act. I shan't be long.

Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Museum system gives Nova Scotians and visitors access to our unique and diverse history and culture. The 27 museum sites that make up the Nova Scotia Museum system are distinct, but function in very complementary ways - 11 sites are managed directly by government and 16 sites are managed locally by independent societies, municipalities and commissions. All of these sites are administered under the authority of the Nova Scotia Museum Act.

The amendment we are introducing to the Nova Scotia Museum Act today applies to the 11 provincial museums that are directly managed by government. The proposed amendment to the Act is necessary and, I must say, somewhat overdue. It is the housekeeping step which reflects government's longstanding practice of charging museum fees. To that end, we propose that the wording in Section 12 of the Act be changed to follow the practice already put in place and to allow government to establish regulations for museum admission fees and any other fees related to the operation and administration of its directly-managed fees.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that there is no increase in fees for admission or use of the museum facilities because of the proposed amendment to the Act. We do not intend to change the way Nova Scotians and visitors enjoy our museums. Museum fees generate revenue to support the operation of each museum site. It assists in helping them in performing their roles as steward and interpreter of Nova Scotia's heritage. In addition to fees for admission and use of museum facilities, museums charge other fees on a cost-recovery basis - fees for parking and Collections Unit services as an example.

Clearly, introducing an amendment to follow the practices already put in place simply makes good sense. In 1992 a memorandum to the former government Management Board sought approval to change admission fees. This approval was granted and in 1994 directly-managed museum sites began to charge admission fees, and other fees, initiated on a cost-recovery basis. Despite these actions, Mr. Speaker, language around the practice of charging fees was not written into the Nova Scotia Museum Act. The purpose of this is to correct that oversight.

By this government taking a leadership role, Nova Scotians will know that government has the proper authority to administer fees charged by the Nova Scotia Museum system, because of an amendment to the Nova Scotia Museum Act. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will now take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, we don't have any problem with this legislation. The only question that immediately comes to mind on it - and certainly is not a criticism of the current government, this has been around since 1994 as far as I understand, as an issue that needed to be resolved and it makes me wonder why it took this long to resolve and whether the museums have been charging admissions in that intervening time period of 16 years and whether those fees were allowed to be charged during that time period, and if they weren't, where do we line up for our refund?

Mr. Speaker, obviously this is important, that this be corrected. We certainly will take the minister at his word that there's no intent to raise fees, obviously. It would be nice, in fact, to be able to move in the direction that we've seen in some of the U.S. museums where they have managed to create a situation such that they can get a corporate sponsor to make certain nights at the museum free, for example, so that those who - even if the museum admission price isn't that expensive, it still actually gives them an opportunity to go. I think that would be something that would be wonderful to promote.

We already know that in the education system it's very difficult for schools to pay for buses now, to take kids to museums and so forth. It's certainly a financial challenge for some families as well, and yet there are some very exciting programs that go on at museums across this province.

I believe the honourable member for Digby-Annapolis will be speaking very briefly on this in a few minutes. Nonetheless, we certainly support this going forward. I don't know if the minister knows the answer to my question, but it would be interesting to know whether the fees charged between 1994 and whenever this bill gets proclaimed were permitted to be charged or how that happened?

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

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today just on behalf of our caucus colleagues with regard to the bill before the House with regard to the Nova Scotia Museum Act. It's interesting how the minister says that there's going to be no change in fees, but he wants a piece of legislation to change fees. If you look at the criteria or the language here, it gives them that discretion. So if he wasn't going to change fees, why is he bringing a piece of legislation forward? I mean, there's obviously some reason and some rationale, but I'm sure the minister in his closing remarks will detail and articulate so people can understand what exactly he's doing this for, other than we haven't done it in a while.

Well, if you're not changing the fees and we haven't had a change in legislation, is this just more smoke and mirrors from a government desperate to have some bills before the House? As they scramble to take a look at what they could do to try and legitimate, that in their second year now in government, one would think they would have, according to their election brochures, some weighty topics and issues that would be paramount and at the forefront of issues Nova Scotians are really interested in and are affecting their day-to-day lives. Or is the minister just bringing forward another way of taxation, an ability for the Minister of Finance to grab some more bucks from Nova Scotians and visitors? I mean, if this is a veiled tax increase, I would like the minister to articulate that, and again, if fees are not going to change, why does he have a bill indicating that they're going to change and providing authority to do so?

I haven't heard that from the minister. His comments were very clearly that there won't be changes. One, like most things, Nova Scotians are getting suspicious about the motives of this government and, indeed, what their longer-term plan is going to be. This bill is just another example on a few fronts with regard to bringing something forward and saying we're not going to do something, but clearly they are. It really speaks to taxing Nova Scotians visiting museums more and taking more dollars away from them to do whatever it is. Or is this a way for museums to displace budget cuts that are coming to the museums?

I did not hear the minister say that they would be maintaining funding for museums in Nova Scotia. So is this a clawback? Is this a backfill? Is it a tax increase? He didn't indicate what those fees would go for. Obviously, the museums might articulate to him a clear path forward with their capital plans that the minister might have suggested that these funds will go for, but he's not saying that. The minister is not saying that. He said in one way fees aren't going to go up, but he's not saying budgets are going to be maintained or improved to assist the museum, and we know what the answer is. This is just another way to tax Nova Scotians and to again put some smoke and mirrors out there so that people don't realize, and hopefully they won't pay attention to what's going on. This is just tucked in with a myriad of other nebulous items that are coming forward from a government desperate to try and make themselves look like they're actually doing something when we know - and Nova Scotians are recognizing - is quite lightweight.

I would be more inclined to want to support this bill if the minister had actually had a vision and plan. Then again, he'd probably just go out and hire more consultants, fancy consultants, to give very expensive dollars, as we've seen, that are being misdirected and are not going where they're most urgently needed, especially during a time trying to come out of a recession, a time when prudence would be one of the guiding elements. This government has abandoned any of those things and again we have a bill before the House that exercises the authority, through regulations, no different than the last one about transit buses.

When they brought a bill forward, the minister already had the authority, but they needed to try and fill the docket with some bill numbers and I suppose they're accomplishing that but they're not accomplishing what they said they would do and that's make life better for Nova Scotians. In fact, we're seeing this is actually going to tax Nova Scotians more. It's just showing clearly that the government, in trying to deal with some housekeeping items, are not being, quite frankly, upfront about what they're truly up to.

As every bill that comes past - because we know they have the numbers - as every measure that comes forward, with every inconsistent action the government makes, we, not only in Opposition - but we know as we go around the province - are hearing clearly from Nova Scotians that don't buy what they're trying to sell.

What they're selling here today is more taxes, more fees, more charges, likely to try and cover up more cutbacks in areas where hard-working women and men put and can make a commitment to ensure that the integrity of our museum system, and our history, and our culture and the heritage is preserved and more importantly, it's a living one. One would hope, on an ongoing basis, we would have heard the minister speak to those things, but he hasn't.

I'm hoping when he has his opportunity to close remarks, he'll provide some clarity and certainty that, again, he will actually fess up to what is not being presented to Nova Scotians. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my place.

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand and speak on Bill No. 108 here today just for a few minutes. I'm sorry I was a little late getting here. As the job of the Whip, it's even a job to keep the Whip in place sometimes.

I just wanted to confirm, I think, what is already being said. This is a bill that's been before the House, it was passed in this House in 1994 under legislation. The only thing that was never put in it was the fees that could be charged but there are already fees being charged at museums. There are admission fees being charged, there are fees for rental at museums already being charged, so why the government is trying to legislate that more fees can be put in place here, I'm not sure.

It will be interesting to see this go to the Law Amendments Committee and see if there are any people out there who work at museums and run museums, do come forth and question this legislation. Until then, we'll just hold off and see what happens at the Law Amendments Committee. With that, I look forward to this bill going to the Law Amendments Committee, thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this bill going to the Law Amendments Committee and I am rising to close debate on Bill No. 108.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 108. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

[11:15 a.m.]

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 112.

Bill No. 112 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

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. 112, amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. Changes to this charter will allow HRM to begin an exciting new project. HRM wants to encourage its residents to install solar hot water heating systems by letting them pay for them through their municipal tax bills. This is the first project of its kind in Canada. HRM asked us for this enabling amendment and we are delighted to help.

Mr. Speaker, here's how it works. HRM will do the research, order the solar hot water heating systems and have them installed for anyone who opts into the program. Homeowners will decide how long they want to take to pay for it and HRM will add the amount to their municipal taxes over a number of years. It would work something like an area improvement rate.

Normally, if you or I signed up for a solar hot water heating system, Mr. Speaker, it could take anywhere from seven to 15 year for the energy savings to pay off. Many families just can't afford to make that investment all at once. This way homeowners can pay for their system over years, while saving energy right away.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said, amendments to the HRM Charter are necessary to allow this kind of financing. We are pleased to support HRM as it offers this innovative program. This change to the HRM Charter is an example of the suburban priorities initiative. Homeowners from Sambro to Sackville are looking for ways to help them reduce their impact on the environment and they know the cost of electricity is not going down. They want us to help them keep their bills in check.

The province and HRM are listening. This is a very good example of how governments working together can help make life a little easier, and a little greener, for families. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate HRM for leading the way to greener living. Because this is an amendment to the HRM Charter, this amendment only applies to HRM, but my department will discuss the amendment with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to see if we can support other communities in a similar way. I hope to see many other solar panels popping up all over the municipality in the years to come. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, to start with, this law seems pretty good on the surface. It sounds like it is a good idea and I think it is a good idea any time we can encourage people to have solar units, or anything that saves energy in a green manner, appropriate and available to them.

Unfortunately, probably most of the members in this Chamber don't realize what HRM is talking about, costing the finances. If it is anything like the local improvement charge would be for paving, and I'm going to give you some examples of that later that aren't very (Interruption) They might have asked for it, they may have asked for it.

I can tell you how it works. If you get your street paved, typically you can't even decide whether you are going to get it paved anymore now that HRM decides for you. Then you get a bill at the end of it, probably about the same as this solar heating system is going to be, probably \$8,000 to \$10,000, average range. It sounds really good, you get your street paved, you are driving on a nicely paved road, then you get your first bill, it is \$10,000 over 10 years, the first bill is \$1,000. You pay your \$1,000 in your property tax bill. Really good, sounds like a real good deal, and boy, number two year comes - this is fact - your bill is \$2,000, not \$1,000, it's \$2,000. Because in the second year they start charging you interest on the money that they borrowed to pay this and each year, you still pay your \$1,000 and it slowly depreciates over time, so the last year, you might pay \$1,200 on your bill. At the end of your time you double the money that you're paying over 10 years.

The first thing HRM staff will tell you - and I've gone through this over and over and over again - is if your mortgage opens up, pay this darn thing off, get rid of it because it's cheaper. If you've got a line of credit with a reasonable interest rate on it, which is usually a whole lot less than HRM charges, then get it financed that way and pay it off because it's too expensive to do it this way.

This bill will not make it cheaper for people to put solar panels in their homes, it will not. It's just another way that HRM now is going to become a banker and I have a little bit of concern about this. This is an answer I want from the minister - does this mean that possibly, HRM can come to a small community and say, okay, we're going to put a solar heating system in here and we're going to put an area rate on for everybody around here, a local improvement charge, to pay for this?

The reason I'm asking this is I'm very concerned about this because in my area we have a councillor who gets roads paved, doesn't ask anybody, doesn't consult with anybody and all of a sudden, bang (Interruption) I think that could be the name, doesn't consult with anybody and the people all of a sudden get a bill.

Now there's supposed to be a consultation process with this whole thing - there isn't. I think that this could be another one of those ways that the rights of people are violated, we've seen that - and they're shaking some heads over there that this is not the case, but it doesn't say that, the bill does not say that. (Interruptions) I can tell you the other bills about road paving don't say it either and guess what, that particular councillor and other councillors now are putting area rates on and local improvement charges where people aren't even consulted and you tell me that's part of our democratic process?

I look across the way there and I see the first responsible government in the British Empire, the first responsible government. That means you listen to people, so this could be a very, very serious issue as this moves forward.

I believe the more that we can support the efficient use of solar energy, the better. The problem is, this bill should be thrown out and that government should come forward with an interest-free loan for people to buy these things. If that were to happen, then you would see a lot of people use them and it would be province-wide, not just in the HRM. If they were serious about that, that's what should happen and that would be province-wide and away you go, then everybody could afford to buy these things.

You really have to look at the numbers of this, I'm telling you from experience. I've had people who had water and sewer put in their properties, they weren't advised of exactly how much was going to happen and, guess what, it comes on their property tax bill, local improvement charge, the same as this is. Guess what problem they have now? They're faced with possibly losing their homes because their taxes have gone so high that they can't pay them.

Thanks to the previous government who had come along and said, if you don't pay your property taxes in three years, you could lose your home - that's a fact. I deal with this every day here in the HRM, people coming in with back taxes. You talk to the HRM, the tax people, who are really good people to deal with, but they say we can't do anything about it. When you look at this whole scenario you're going to load a bigger burden on the taxes and people won't realize what has happened to them until it's too late.

I would love to see this government scrap this bill and come forward with a bill or a program that would allow people to buy solar equipment at either no interest, and owe the province, or at a very modest interest rate, to make these possible for people to buy. That is a real solution to this. This is just for the HRM and the HRM is becoming a banker which I believe they should not be doing, they're already into too many things and our taxes are way too high.

When you talk about taxes in HRM, if you look at the services you get for the taxes you pay - anyone here who doesn't live in HRM could not possibly understand what's going on. I mean, I live in an area where the Province of Nova Scotia owns and clears my street; I have a composite fire department - that's a regular and volunteer fire department - the main part of a city doesn't have a composite department, they have a full-fledged, full-time fire department; I have RCMP service, which is police service; I have building inspection service; I have bylaw enforcement service; and a few others. If you compare my taxes for the square footage of my house, where it is - it's not just me talking, but my neighbours as well - and you take that to the south end of Halifax, I would bet you that per square foot we pay almost dollar for dollar taxes, where everything is provided in the city and isn't provided to us in a rural area.

If you take this and add this to the people's property taxes, unbeknownst to them, they're going to have tax bills that they simply cannot afford. It sounds like a great idea to make a place greener, and it is, but this is not the way to do it. This is not a bill that is going to provide any real positive gain in that area. It's okay if you decide you're going to sell your house - and here's another scenario: if you're going to sell your house and you decide you're going to put this solar heating system in, it will cost you somewhere between \$8,000 and \$10,000. And by the way, the payback on these things is really, really slow - it's not something you get payback on in a year or two years because, if that was the case, everybody would already have them. So you put the system in to make it a selling point for your house - great - so you put your house up for sale for, say, \$300,000 or \$100,000, whatever it is and, lo and behold, there's a local improvement charge attached to that house for that \$10,000, in addition to what you're selling the house for.

So this big bonus that you're going to get with this new solar hot-water heating system isn't a bonus at all, because you get another bill on your transaction when you bought your house that's going to cost you money. So this is not the way to go for this purpose. The purpose is good; the idea of putting more solar heating in the home is positive, but it should be the province doing this province-wide for all Nova Scotians.

What is to stop the municipality from abusing this? That's the other thing. They're going to go buy solar panels, right? Who are they going to buy them from? There's no requirement here, there's no conflict of interest in this that says a municipality can't buy it from somebody from China, for instance, or they can't buy it if it's connected to somebody in the municipality. There needs to be a conflict of interest in this bill that says I'm going to go to the municipality and they're going to give me the best system there is. It may not be the best system if they don't do their homework right - it may be bought from some friend of somebody which, again, I wouldn't want to see. I want to see this thing to be reasonable and fair; there's no protection in there for that, absolutely none. So if you see this thing move forward - and I know the government will pass it anyway, but I can guarantee you within five to 10 years you're going to have trouble with this bill - it's guaranteed you're going to have trouble with it.

Now, anybody over there sitting and shaking their heads, no, we're not going to have any trouble with it, well, I can tell you you are. I know because I deal with that, and the member who's shaking his head over there doesn't live in HRM, doesn't know how it operates here, and I can tell you I would rather be living where you are, where your home is, because you don't have these kinds of problems. This is serious - and I mean, this is serious.

When we get talking about the next bill, the Clothesline Bill - well, anyway, we'll talk about that, again it's the same as talking about chickens and cats and all that stuff, but anyway, we'll go there later. But this is not a solution. I wish the government would come forward with a program so you could put these types of units in homes, that people can afford to do it, so you can go and negotiate a deal. You're going to have HRM come and negotiate a deal for you, because I can tell you, after being on regional council, being a recipient of some of the deals that HRM has imposed upon me as a citizen, and my neighbours, and everyone in HRM, I don't have much faith; I have very little, or no, faith.

I can tell you HRM is always looking for money, right? Always looking for money. When I was on council, I think the total budget in HRM was \$450 million and everything was looked after, balanced the books and away we went - and even had some capital money out of that. Now we're approaching \$900 million, seven years later, of revenue and the mayor is still looking for money. Every time he shows up, it's, I need more money. Well, if you stop spending money, you don't need so much money.

[11:30 a.m.]

I know the minister sent out, in a recent newsletter from the department, that you're looking for a municipal auditor general - I think it's a damn good idea. Over time that should happen, because maybe we need to check and see what these guys are spending money on and what is going on - so I don't have a lot of faith there, and after you talk to some citizens in my area you would see that they don't have much faith either. So the more you see about this, the more that you will understand what is going on here.

The minister really has to take time, and I know she is very busy and she is doing a good job, but she has to take time to understand what is going on in the Halifax Regional Municipality. There are some very, very serious issues coming. We have people losing their homes because they can't pay property taxes, and you have property taxes that now, with this thing added to it - and if the council can twist this in any way, which they have with the paving and some other local improvement charges, if they can twist it in any way they will - all of a sudden people are going to be paying for something they don't even have or don't even get.

I think it is very important that the minister really look at this. I would suggest that she look at possibly putting some accountability in this, and conflict of interest in this if the municipality is going to buy these things. I know you are going to pass the bill anyway, but if you are going to do that, put those protections in there for the people, and protection in there that they cannot take this sort of thing and allow the municipality to ride roughshod over everybody and impose something on them that they don't want, and, indeed, if they come up with a local area one to do this thing, they should be very, very careful how they do this.

I am very upset about this whole bill. Again I stress, this should be something this government should do. They come out and they talk about sustainable development, meeting the emission goals, and the high standards they've set - which they've dropped back and reduced so that Nova Scotia Power could survive - if they would do this sort of thing and maybe make loans available to people, and I don't say grants, I say loans, at low interest or no interest so they could buy solar equipment, not just hot-water equipment, but solar equipment to help heat their homes, indeed it would really go a long way to cure this problem and would make it possible for people to do this.

This system here where you can't pay on your taxes - well, you can pay on your taxes monthly in HRM once you get behind, and they'll do that, but I can tell you it's a hard road once you get behind. You get some of these big bills, you have some houses out there that have huge bills for property taxes and it is difficult for people to get caught up. You get a few thousand dollars behind and you see how hard it is for people to get caught up and they're at risk of losing their homes.

I think that bill should be reversed and give the municipality more options, to ensure that people indeed keep their homes. You may get an unsuspecting senior who doesn't understand what this means, as most people don't, because the reality doesn't set in until the second year, and you get that second bill and it is double the first year on your taxes. When that happens, then it hits home and it's too late, you've got this thing in your home, it's not paying enough money back on it to pay for itself, because they typically don't in a short time - it takes a long time to do it, but they do pay themselves back.

Over time, in reality, if you look at this, how positive is this going to be? I don't think it's really going to be very positive; I don't think it's going to be the golden thing that

cures the whole energy crisis in this province - I believe the clotheslines would do more than this will do, and I've got some serious thoughts on the clothesline issue.

I think this is a bill that shouldn't be here, it's a bill that should be addressed by the proper programs, put in place by this government, that won't cost you money - they will actually save money in this province and will help people in this province to have a greener footprint and also lower energy costs, if they can do it in an affordable way. This is not an affordable way to do it. Thank you.

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

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am just rising to speak to Bill No. 112 with regard to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. I do want to look at - and we have to be supportive of things that will help improve energy efficiency, to ensure people have access to alternate forms of helping to diffuse some of the costs and stabilize, and also in this case be willing participants in a process. If the HRM has looked at this - I know they have their strategy and, of course, we brought that before this House, to bring this forward.

The one thing about this bill, it was couched as part of the three items - the solar, the clotheslines legislation and transit - that the minister rolled out with her new glee club of MLAs. The glee club now, after watching the news from last night, people are feeling like something is getting hung out to dry. The glee club's refrain, M-i-c-k-e-y M-o-u-s-e, is what people are seeing about this legislation. The minister now has a glee club or the Cabinet "couldn't-bes" - there's a glee club in place now of members and depending on what they can or can't do, if they're unable to do anything because council is going to stand up and say - maybe they'll become the phantom five, that they'll operate stealth.

Quite frankly, the minister, in trying to do one good initiative, couches it with something else that has been looked at very cynically, it has been something that has not engaged or had dialogue with the other Parties. The minister didn't even choose to speak to the Parties about this, to look at if there was an appropriate process. Also, now that the minister's glee club has been formed - and I'm sure they're working on their routines as we speak, as to what formations will be put in place to cheer on the minister and the efforts here in the HRM.

Now that the glee club or under the code name, the Suburban Priorities Team, that is operating obviously from a partisan point of view, using what I recall - and I'll go back about the baby ministers that were put in place. You know we don't hear much about the baby ministers anymore. So I don't know if the glee club will be negated and put back - but the baby ministers at the time when they were there - is this is just another example?

What I do know is what we've been able to track - of course, with the baby ministers, the Premier suggested at the time that no public resources, no Cabinet resources would be used, we now know that's not the case. We know people are using expenditures so, again,

a case of the government saying one thing and doing another, this is the practice of the Dexter NDP. (Interruptions) I can say to the honourable Deputy Premier, I recall when he was on this side of the House, along with his co-cheerleader of the glee club of Opposition days, being the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, so he need not tell me about what side of the House and refrains of the day were.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you when you look at this we now have this glee club of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations that is going to be using departmental resources, ministerial resources to go about doing whatever it is they're going to do. I'm sure their uniforms will be paid for by the minister's budget as well. I don't know, like I say, they're probably working on their routine and their chants of support for what the minister is trying to do.

Again, as this came out, Nova Scotians have looked at it and have seen the partisanship side that has come about. I can tell you (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Cape Breton North has the floor.

MR. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Deputy Premier takes your sage advice to recognize that Nova Scotians are seeing through this. The other thing that Nova Scotians are saying is that all of these things that come forward - now that the minister has her glee club in place and the Mickey Mouse routine is going to continue - what the minister has to recognize is the cynicism of Nova Scotians about what they're doing. As well, we do know that Nova Scotians will be footing the bill for all of these things that the minister, in couching these things you are going to do.

Now, this is something that, again, speaks to a government desperate to have some sort of an agenda. As I say, the baby ministers have kind of disappeared and faded off. Now the glee club has been appointed and we're going to see what resources they can do as was indicated by one of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, you know, how they can go out and try to compete with council. But it suggests as well, what we haven't heard from the minister, is with regard to our rural strategy and supporting rural Nova Scotia. Well, you know I'll be interested to see the other Cabinet "couldn't-bes" that will be appointed to the glee club for rural Nova Scotia.

But again, the minister will probably do as she has done, and what her government has done, is not consult across Party lines, not look to find consensus, not look to build support for what she was trying to do, not reach across Party lines as they do within the HRM council. We do know that councillors who have political persuasions that they identify with, go into that council and work together, come down to this Legislature to look for support. We do not see that from the minister.

We do not see that from the Premier. If she's coming up with a rural strategy, maybe, as she indicates now across the floor, Mr. Speaker, she might want to start consulting. She may find that things will be less cynical in this House for her, because using more taxpayer dollars, to try to use it as a way to pacify members of the government caucus to go out and spend those taxpayer dollars is something Nova Scotians are looking at in a cynical way because there are other priorities that Nova Scotians have that are much greater than doing that.

Mr. Speaker, again, the minister refused - never, never that I'm aware - consulted across Party lines in doing this. I mean I understand, they just say the heck with it. We've got our numbers, we're going to do whatever we want. So the fact that media personnel cannot even keep a straight face trying to file a story about this yesterday tells you how much this government has reduced the agenda of this House, how much this government is trying to look busy, and all they are doing every day we're here, is costing Nova Scotians more precious dollars they can ill afford.

The Minister of Finance, yesterday, when he got on about - what would you do to reduce cost? As I say, when we offer something up that's trying to be constructive, he just passes the buck. He won't stop the bucks from being spent, he just passes them, which is very different from his "telling Nova Scotians tour" last year, because he didn't go to listen to Nova Scotians, he went to tell Nova Scotians, that's the Minister of Finance's thing.

Obviously, when it came to a measure of what he would do or wouldn't do to try to control expenses, he couldn't speak, he deferred it, because I guess Dan O'Connor in the Premier's office didn't approve the Minister of Finance actually being constructive and helping to reduce costs at a time where prudence would be necessary. So nothing the Minister of Finance now says - because he's sitting there letting taxpayers' dollars be wasted on this at the same time we have a bill. There is sort of a theme because they come to it.

So now I'll move on to the actual solar component and what the HRM was trying to look at, of which I do support, and we do support, moving forward. The problem is that when you always couch it with cynicism, when you always deal with burdening the taxpayers more, we see why this government is falling short of what it is they said to Nova Scotians versus what they are now doing.

I know if we can employ solar technology - there's a company in Dartmouth - if a Nova Scotian company can benefit from an initiative on a basis that allows people to freely buy into that and amortize that throughout their tax, people will look at those measures. I know my honourable colleague in the Liberal caucus talked about some of the concerns he would have that maybe go to a bit more extreme than I particularly would look at.

I do think the minister has brought something forward, on behalf of HRM, that is worthy of support, is worthy of moving forward, and will have an impact. So on that basis the minister knows that we will support this measure to go forward. At the same time, it's

unfortunate they have to cloud it with a political agenda and a political face on all of this rather than one that speaks to the HRM Council's willingness to work in a non-partisan way with the Legislature on behalf of HRM citizens and the government's response is to spend more money to try to see if they can get some more credit rather than actually building on what were good initiatives that came before this House through the Charter. We know about that, because we brought that forward to this House - the former government.

[11:45 a.m.]

We understand, Mr. Speaker, about the collaboration it took. We understood the importance to HRM. We also heard at the time calling for potential other Charter requests but we knew it was important to update and to deal with this matter in a serious manner and in a sincere way and that was brought before this House in that manner.

So what we have is the minister being very willing and free to go out and play politics with this and that's unfortunate, because I actually do believe the minister is sincerely trying to do everything she can within her portfolio, and I give her full marks for being open and willing to do that, but I also know that obviously the political directors of the NDP Government, whether that's Dan O'Connor in the Premier's office telling them you can or can't do this, whether it's the spin doctors in the communication unit that are doing it, they are taking and diminishing what should be things that you could laud here and support the government and go out in the HRM and compliment them on that, but I know they're hoping that the refrains from the Legislature will diminish with the cheers from the new glee club the minister has now appointed at taxpayers' expense to go out and cheer her on and to do the work that HRM councillors were elected to do instead of this Legislature empowering and enabling HRM to do what they see through the Charter.

Again, I do believe if this moves forward, it will help strengthen a Nova Scotia company, a Dartmouth-based company, other heat recovery processes, any of those things that the HRM and others are willing to do, those are good, but we have something good that's clouded in a very negative process and that's unfortunate. I really do believe it's unfortunate but it is indicative of what Nova Scotians have now come to see as the face of this government, and again to say one thing and to do another, but on the matter of the content of the bill beyond the other subset there, with the glee club, that will now go out and make sure the Mickey Mouse agenda of the Dexter NDP continues to be sung, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to impede the HRM from moving forward in a constructive way so we will be supporting the HRM in supporting this.

I hope, and I would call upon the minister to take time and provide more consultation and actually look to depoliticizing some of these things that should not be political and at times you cannot avoid that. The minister had an opportunity to reach across Party lines and she chose not to because we know the NDP are desperate to hold on to a metro base, and so, damn the Opposition in the process, because it only matters about what we do for ourselves and we'll spend as much taxpayers' dollars as we want. The Minister of Finance will sit

there and cut cheque after cheque after cheque and increase taxes to Nova Scotians to see the NDP Dexter agenda, you know, and I've said it clearly, the minister has said one thing, do another. That's what the Minister of Finance is known to do and his telling Nova Scotia tour last year is now very telling to Nova Scotians that this minister says one thing, again, and will do another. This minister cannot take constructive recommendations forward to say he will pass the buck but he won't stop the bucks from being spent.

So while these measures are coming forward from HRM, the NDP Dexter socialist regime, I have to get that in, Mr. Speaker, has been consistent. (Interruptions) Again, it's truly unfortunate that they would play politics with the HRM's work, here at the Legislature but that's what they've done, but we won't impede that work and we will support this bill moving forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for bringing forward this bill. This is one of those interesting situations and I certainly listened to my honourable colleagues and I know the members of the Legislature listened to the member for Preston and I think many members in this Legislature will understand that he has had some challenges, or he has witnessed challenges that residents in his area have faced because of the way that certain local improvement charges have been levied by the municipality. I think we need to respect where that concern is coming from and some of the hardship that has resulted in that area.

Mr. Speaker, personally I'm in favour of this bill. I understand the history of it and I actually chaired the energy committee when this was starting to work its way through at the municipality. I think we need to understand that this does differ from local improvement charges for roads and so forth, in that it's not going to be forced on anybody or it will be an individual's choice at the end of the day. We're probably talking - the last numbers I heard were probably between 300 and 500 solar panels to start with.

Now I'm obviously very hopeful that the project will be successful. We won't know until time - and that's always the challenge with solar, we're fortunate to have one of the best solar regimes in the country.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of public meetings on this hosted by HRM and I did attend some of the information that HRM did on this. I think the key here is before somebody gets involved that they do understand exactly what the costs will be each year and I hope the minister will work with HRM to ensure that people do understand what the costs are going forward for them and certainly the hope is that once it is paid off, there is a payback and there is certain evidence to suggest that at least with the solar hot water heating that there is a payback.

It has been suggested that there are opportunities for some people, whether on a line of credit or otherwise, to do this themselves at a better interest rate because we've got to remember the municipality does not charge the cheapest interest rate out there. What this bill does is, it potentially provides an opportunity for residents who otherwise wouldn't be able to get other financing or other options to do this, to look at that option. For that reason, that's why it's very important that the numbers be very clearly laid out.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the government - I mean I'm glad to see that the government moved so quickly on a request from HRM. The previous government would take years before they would ever move on one so I've got to give you credit for that. However, I would remind the minister that there is a book about that thick of requests still sitting on the table and if we were going to amend the Charter we might have thrown some of those in there at the same time.

I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal isn't so keen on omnibus bills but the fact is that there's a long hangover from the previous Tory Government, because we know full well that the previous Tory Government liked to use HRM as a punching bag for political gain elsewhere in the province. That's a shame, so I'm glad to see that - I know this request came in only a short while ago, it hasn't been sitting on the books for a long time and I do want to give the minister credit for acting on it quickly.

It's interesting that the government moved so quickly on this one and yet when they announced the energy regulations, they didn't include solar as one of the opportunities - or geothermal, or any of those - when they were looking at the energy regulations, because it's sort of one hand doing one thing and the other hand doing the opposite: on the one hand we support solar, on the other hand we don't support solar. That's more than a bit troubling, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly concur with the member for Cape Breton North when he talked about trying to find a way to promote innovation at home and construction at home of things like solar panels, wind turbines and so forth. He was quite right in saying that there are, for example, companies in Dartmouth doing that. I believe there's a company on the South Shore that is also either doing it or looking at it, especially with some of the polymers around solar panels.

I'm glad that the member for Cape Breton North brought that forward. I think that's important and maybe the government will consider looking at the bill that I brought forward in the Spring and previously, which looked at tax credits for solar installations, geothermal installations and so forth by residents, because that's another way to make it inexpensive. We're actually one of the only provinces in Canada that does not offer that as an option.

Which is a shame, it puts us behind the pack when it comes to a relatively simple way to encourage people to make these investments. That's important because we know that some of these technologies can have a long payback and sometimes the tax incentive

provides us an opportunity to reduce that payback period as well as reducing energy cost and so forth.

The other thing that it would be interesting for the government to begin looking at, is when we look at the cost of energy generally, the cost of energy is going up and on the one hand, you can always argue that the cost of energy going up can serve as a demand side management tool. The problem is when you have lower-income families who are already struggling and using power and other heating sources as little as possible, when power goes up, there's very little they can cut back on and they often have to choose between having the lights on or having food.

It would be worthwhile for the government to examine opportunities to upgrade, or to assist, lower-income families, co-op housing and so forth with opportunities to upgrade their homes with some renewable energy technologies and improved insulation and things like that, that would actually reduce the cost and not only serve to reduce our carbon footprint, but would also actually have a direct benefit in reducing the cost of living for some of these families.

It seems to me that those are very simple things that the government can do and, in fact, the bill that I'd introduced in the Spring session mirrors one that Manitoba is already doing, because looking across the country at the time, that struck the Liberal caucus as one of the best tax credit systems for green energy alternatives in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this goes forward and doesn't require a whole lot of amendments at the Law Amendments Committee. My experience with most of the charter amendments is that Ms. Donovan from HRM usually comes with a few amendments after they've read the final wording and I hope if they do so, that the minister will be open to whatever they might bring forward.

I would like to close and just reiterate that I think one of the tools in addressing the very real concerns that the member for Preston has faced in his own riding, is making sure that the minister is working with HRM to make sure that accurate information is given to residents who decide they want to enroll in the program, because it is an important program. It has the opportunity for real benefits, but if somebody enters it without really understanding what they're getting into, it could also cause them difficulties. It's a personal choice, and I recognize that it's a personal choice, but the key is making sure the people have accurate information going forward. So I am pleased to support this bill going forward and maybe the next charter amendment will have the whole list of the ones that have been waiting in the queue for a couple of years.

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

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I almost feel like singing when I say this. I recognize the speakers from the opposite part of this House and I have to say in closing I am pleased to support this initiative and work with HRM. I think it's a wonderful initiative they brought forward and with that I close debate on Bill No. 112.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is for second reading of Bill No. 112. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

[12:00 noon]

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. I move that we rise to meet again on Monday between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., where after the daily routine we'll do Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 87, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 108, 111, and 112. If time permits, we'll do Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 88, 113, 114, and 115 and, if time permits, we'll do bills that were referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise, to meet again between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that we do now adjourn, to meet Monday at the hour of 4:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until Monday at 4:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 12:01 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2445**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide an invaluable service to the citizens of their communities by giving freely of their time and talents to keep others safe; and

Whereas Billy MacKinnon, known to everyone as Pinky, from Belmont, Colchester North, has been a member of the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade for 44 years; and

Whereas Pinky presently serves as training officer, keeps records on training, attendance, emergency calls, and statistics on members past and present, and gives fire safety talks at local area schools;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend their thanks and appreciation to Pinky MacKinnon for 44 years as a volunteer firefighter and for his continuing service as a member of the Onslow Belmont Fire Department.

RESOLUTION NO. 2446

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas September 2010 was a very important time for the Queens County Fair, in Caledonia, as they were celebrating their 130th year; and

Whereas the event is a family-based agricultural fair based heavily on the old traditions from the early 1900s and organized by a large number of volunteers; and

Whereas the old traditions of horse and oxen pulls, cattle displays and various equestrian challenges continue today with over 400 ribbons presented for first, second and third place prizes;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes 130 years of the wonderful Queens County Fair and all the hardworking volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 2447

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas for 10 years the Brooklyn Marina in Queens County has been hosting the Queens County Seafest; and

Whereas the three-day event offers a row for charity, a fishing derby, food, craft market and music; and

Whereas all the events over this three day period would not happen without the wonderful crew of volunteers who put it together, set it up and take it down;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the hard work of the volunteers for the 10th Queens County Seafest recently held at the Brooklyn Marina in Queens County.

RESOLUTION NO. 2448

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas each year during the Queens Seafest teams are invited to enter the Cole Ford Charity Row to compete and donate their winnings to a local charity; and

Whereas each team is required to sell 50 tickets on a gift basket as an entry fee, which raised a total amount of money, in the summer of 2010, of over \$3,000; and

Whereas Veinot's Print, the second place team, donated \$1,100 to the Queens Community Health Board;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Veinot's Print for having placed second in the 2010 Charity Row and for their support of community charities.

RESOLUTION NO. 2449

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas each year during the Queens Seafest teams are invited to enter the Cole Ford Charity Row to compete and donate their winnings to a local charity; and

Whereas each team is required to sell 50 tickets on a gift basket as an entry fee, which raised a total amount of money, in the summer of 2010, of over \$3,000; and

Whereas The Great Whites, the third place team donated \$750 to the S.P.C.A.;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize The Great Whites for having placed third in the 2010 Charity Row and for their support of community charities.

RESOLUTION NO. 2450

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas fundraising and home safety awareness are so very important to our volunteer fire departments throughout Queens County; and

Whereas the Liverpool Volunteer Fire Department and their Ladies Auxiliary hold a Garden Party each summer to bring the residents of Queens County to the fire hall for games and activities; and

Whereas the monies raised at the Garden Party contributed to the upgrade of equipment and the awareness of how important our volunteer fire departments are to our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the Liverpool Volunteer Fire Department and the Ladies Auxiliary for their fundraising and home safety awareness through their annual Garden Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2451

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the volunteer fire departments throughout our Nova Scotia communities are so important for the safety of all of our citizens; and

Whereas it was so important that the North Queens Fire Department have a medical first response vehicle; and

Whereas through the many volunteer hours that produced breakfasts, dinners and many other events, the funds were raised for a new-to-them replacement vehicle;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes the North Queens Fire Department for their volunteer hours to support their community and for all the hard work to raise funds to purchase a medical first response vehicle

RESOLUTION NO. 2452

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute of Queens County was awarded the Silver Salamander Award from the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network; and

Whereas the award is in recognition of a specific contribution to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in Canada; and

Whereas the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute was recognized for the program they have conducted in conjunction with Kejimikujik National Park, coordinating volunteers to protect the endangered Blanding's Turtle;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognizes and congratulates the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute on their Silver Salamander Award from the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network.

RESOLUTION NO. 2453

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Mark Allison, a Hunts Point, Queens County student, recently helped mark the 35th Anniversary of CHAMP in Halifax; and

Whereas the seminars held in conjunction with this anniversary dealt with all aspects of growing up as an amputee; and

Whereas Mark participated in a seminar session to demonstrate standard and recreational artificial limbs and devices where he demonstrated his waterproof swim leg;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognizes Mark Allison, Queens CHAMP, for having participated and shared his experiences during the 35th Anniversary of the organization in Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 2454

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas library staff and board members from across Nova Scotia gather together annually to strengthen their skills and share knowledge; and

Whereas in September of this year the South Shore Public Libraries, led by Conference Chair, Lynn Robart, and Chief Librarian, Troy Myers, hosted the 2010 *Living Well By The Sea* conference at White Point Beach Resort in Queens County; and

Whereas the conference provided a wide range of workshops and seminars on professional and lifestyle topics for participants from public, school and university;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes Chair, Lynn Robart, and Chief Librarian, Troy Myers, for all of their hard work to bring the *Living Well By The Sea* conference to Queens County.

RESOLUTION NO. 2455

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the La Leche League, a mother-to-mother support group, will be holding meetings in Liverpool, Queens County, after a long absence; and

Whereas the league encourages, promotes and provides mother-to-mother breastfeeding support and educational opportunities as an important contribution to the health of children, families and society; and

Whereas Natalie McMaster has become the leader and will be hosting meetings in Queens County;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes the work of the La Leche League and, in particular, Natalie McMaster, of Queens County, for providing the mother-to-mother support group.

RESOLUTION NO. 2456

By: Ms. Vicky Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas a North Queens Rural High School teacher was the recipient of an Education Week Award; and

Whereas the teacher was a strong advocate for student equity and global peace which permeated her approach to teaching and the lessons she teaches; and

Whereas Julie Ramey also played a large role in getting North Queens Rural High School recognized as a member of Oprah's O'Ambassadors Club whose mandate is to promote global equity and peace.

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognizes and congratulates Julie Ramey, a teacher at North Queens Rural High School on having been the recipient of an Education Week Award.

RESOLUTION NO. 2457

By: Ms. Vicky Conrad (Queens)

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

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

Whereas the Milton Dambusters completed in the Summer Swimming Provincials held in Bedford in August; and

Whereas Hannah MacNeil-Dixon, 15 years old, placed 30th in the 100 metre Free, 29th in the 100 metre IM and 26th in the 100 metre Back.

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Hannah MacNeil-Dixon for her wonderful accomplishments at the Summer Swimming Provincial Tournament.

RESOLUTION NO. 2458

By: Ms. Vicky Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the importance of having the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources firefighting crews prepared at all levels is important to all citizens; and

Whereas in September of this year a training exercise for the fire response team in the Western District took place at the McGowan Lake depot in Queens County; and

Whereas all eight members of the team spent the day hauling gear, dealing with broken equipment, creating a firebreak and debriefing following the exercise.

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources firefighting crews for working on their skills to enable them to assist citizens in their areas.

RESOLUTION NO. 2459

By: Ms. Vicky Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas heritage societies and their role in our communities are so important to pass along to our families and visitors the history and experiences of all our past; and

Whereas during the past summer the North Queens Heritage Society recognized the many years of support that a former president of the society provided to enhance the role of history in their community; and

Whereas past President David Crooker was recognized for all of his years of support with the planning of a lilac shrub on the grounds of the Milton Douglas House, which serves as a Society's Museum.

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize David Crooker of Queens County for all of his years of support to the North Queens Heritage Society and wish him well in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2460

By: Ms. Vicky Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas a graduate of the Nova Scotia Community College tourism program has taken over the helm of the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers (CAPS), Atlantic Chapter for 2010-2011; and

Whereas Dan Tanner, White Point Beach Resort's Food and Beverage Services Manager is the new president; and

Whereas the role will allow him to give back to his industry, create awareness of the profession and work to help the Nova Scotia wine industry as much as possible.

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Dan Tanner on his new appointment as President of the Association of Professional Sommeliers Atlantic Chapter.

RESOLUTION NO. 2461

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas each year during the Queens Seafest teams are invited to enter the Cole Ford Charity Row to compete and donate their winnings to a local charity; and

Whereas each team is required to sell 50 tickets on a gift basket as an entry fee, which raised a total amount of money, during the summer of 2010, of over \$3,000; and

Whereas Cole Ford, the winning team, donated \$1,900 to the Queens General Hospital;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Cole Ford for their sponsorship of the Charity Row and for having placed first.

RESOLUTION NO. 2462

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

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

Whereas the Milton Dambusters competed in the Summer Swimming Provincials held in Bedford in August; and

Whereas Bronwyn Thompson, 15 years old, placed 32nd in the 200-metre free, 27th in the 100-metre breast, 32nd in the 50-metre fly, 34th in the 100-metre IM and 28th in the 100-metre back;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Bronwyn Thompson for her wonderful accomplishments at the Summer Swimming Provincials tournament.

RESOLUTION NO. 2463

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has a strong and growing energy sector in which many Nova Scotians are employed in rewarding, well-paying jobs in the petroleum industry; and

Whereas the Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship Program encourages students graduating from Nova Scotia high schools to pursue a career in the energy sector; and

Whereas a recent Liverpool Regional High School graduate, Ashley Lohnes, won a scholarship and is enrolled at Acadia University in the Bachelor of Science program;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognize and congratulate Ashley Lohnes on having won a Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship.

RESOLUTION NO. 2464

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the students of Liverpool Regional High School of Queens County showed support for Anti-Bullying Day by wearing pink on September 9, 2010; and

Whereas it is important and outstanding that two Nova Scotia students made pink an anti-bullying statement; and

Whereas addressing bullying in schools throughout Queens County is an important statement for our students to make and they are encouraged to make anti-bullying a daily statement;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the students of Liverpool Regional High School for their support of anti-bullying on September 9th by wearing pink to school.

RESOLUTION NO. 2465

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas a Well Man Clinic was held in Queens County in October; and

Whereas it was a collaborative effort between local male physicians and the Queens Community Health Board, where males could ask questions and receive information on conditions commonly associated with male health; and

Whereas the clinic offered health checkups for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol checks and skin cancer, along with doctors answering questions about sleep apnea, diabetes, heart disease, erectile dysfunction and more;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognize the efforts of the local male physicians and the Queens Community Health Board, as well as volunteers, for putting together the Well Man Clinic in Queens County.