



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Charlie Parker**

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### Second Session

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Charlie Parker

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable members, we'll bring our session to order for a mid-week session.

We'll begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 103 - Motor Vehicle Act.**

**Bill No. 105 - Education Act.**

**Bill No. 109 - Weed Control Act.****Bill No. 110 - Animal Protection Act.**

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

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

**Bill No. 106 - Handicapped Persons' Education Act.**

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Workforce Development.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2600**

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

Whereas employers, employees and government share a responsibility to have safe, healthy workplaces in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Workers' Compensation Board and the Department of Labour and Workforce Development are committed to keeping Nova Scotians safe and secure from workplace injury; and



Whereas the department and the WCB introduced the Mainstay Awards to honour excellence in occupational health and safety;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the 2010 Mainstay Award winners: Safety Award of Excellence recipient - Black & McDonald Limited, Safety Transformation - Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited, Employer Safety Champions - Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited, CFK Inc., and Weston Bakeries (Amherst), and Employer Return-to-Work Champions - EastLink and Sobeys.

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

[1:15 p.m.]

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Emergency Management.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2601**

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

Whereas Nova Scotia experienced heavy rain and strong winds from Hurricane Earl in August; and

Whereas Nova Scotians once again heeded the safety warnings and were well-prepared for the hurricane; and

Whereas emergency preparedness is essential to ensuring the safety of all Nova Scotians and to making our lives better;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Nova Scotians for their preparedness before and during Hurricane Earl and for the efforts of emergency management and response professionals to keep everyone safe.

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 Finance.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2602**

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

Whereas HIV - the virus that causes AIDS - attacks the body's immune system, the body's main defence against diseases, and HIV/AIDS is a disease that can affect all Canadians, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status; and

Whereas as many as 65,000 Canadians are living with HIV/AIDS, with an estimated 2,300 to 4,500 new cases reported each year; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS, as well as other AIDS-related and community-based organizations across the province, have wrapped up a successful HIV/AIDS Awareness Week;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the importance of today, World AIDS Day, and congratulate the dedicated Nova Scotians who are working to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in our province.

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 Emergency Management.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2603**

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

Whereas the community of Meat Cove and surrounding area was struck by unprecedented rainfall, causing flash flooding in late August; and

Whereas members of the community banded together with the support of emergency responders and managers to help themselves and their guests; and

Whereas their response was a remarkable display of community character and Nova Scotia spirit;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the community of Meat Cove and the surrounding area for its response to the rainstorm in late August and its resiliency as it continues to recover.

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 Finance.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2604**

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

Whereas Nova Scotians receive exceptional emergency care from paramedics, nurses, and others through the province's ambulance system - Emergency Health Services; and

Whereas Emergency Health Services earned a perfect rating and a special commendation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services; and

Whereas Nova Scotia was the first jurisdiction to successfully complete accreditation in 2004 and Emergency Health Services is one of only two operations that are accredited in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Emergency Health Services on their Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services and acknowledge their ongoing dedication to providing better health care for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2605**

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

Whereas St. Francis Xavier University Faculty of Education is working with the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education to offer a part-time Bachelor of Education program for African Nova Scotian students; and

Whereas the program is offered in centralized locations across Nova Scotia where students can attend classes on the weekends and evenings throughout the school year; and

Whereas the three-year program is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia and is designed to increase the number of African Nova Scotian educators;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House commend St. Francis Xavier University and the African Canadian Services Division for partnering to create this opportunity, and wish the current part-time B.Ed. students a happy and successful school year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2606**

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

Whereas Chelsea Nisbett is a talented 24-year-old singer and songwriter from Lower Sackville; and

Whereas Ms. Nisbett has received high acclaim for her mix of R&B, soul and jazz music that she couples with captivating lyrics based on her personal experiences and faith, and her album, *Anchored Roots*, recently won a Gospel Music Association of Canada Covenant Award for Best Urban/R&B/Soul Album of the Year, and two Music Nova Scotia Awards; and

Whereas Ms. Nisbett is also a Compassion Canada spokesperson who is dedicated to improving the health and welfare of impoverished children in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Chelsea Nisbett on the receipt of a Gospel Music Association of Canada Covenant Award for Best Urban/R&B/Soul Album of the Year, and two Music Nova Scotia Awards, and wish her continued musical success and commend her for her continued dedication to eradicating child poverty.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2607**

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

Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour the province can bestow on its citizens; and

Whereas Dr. Chalmers Doane of South Maitland, Dr. Rocky Jones of Halifax, Mrs. Eva Landry of St. Peter's, and the late Mr. Jim Hill of Dartmouth and Reverend Bill Pope of Mount Denson, were invested into the Order of Nova Scotia today for their outstanding contributions to their communities and their province; and

Whereas with their talent, ability and ambition, qualities essential for ensuring change, the recipients have made a better life and future for Nova Scotia families;

Therefore be it resolved that this House congratulate Dr. Chalmers Doane, Dr. Rocky Jones, Mrs. Eva Landry, and the late Mr. Jim Hill and Reverend Bill Pope, the 2010 Order of Nova Scotia recipients, and thank them for the positive work they have done to make Nova Scotia a better place.

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. 123 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Ramona Jennex)**

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources on an introduction.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, in your gallery and in the east gallery, I am going to identify some individuals there. In your gallery, unless they've moved - they're there, okay. One individual, no stranger to this House of Assembly, is the past-president of the Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors, now the legislative liaison, Mr. Russell MacKinnon - I'll ask them to stand and hold applause until we get everybody; the director of Surveys Division with the Department of Natural Resources, Bruce MacQuarrie; and president of the association, Glenn Myra. (Applause)

In the east gallery I want to recognize Mr. Fred Hutchinson, executive director of the Land Surveyors; also a past-president - and Glen can correct me - Glen Crews, a constituent of mine from Enfield - nice to see you, Glen; and I also want to acknowledge Gretchen Pohlkamp, executive director of Land Services in my department. (Applause)

**Bill No. 124 - Entitled an Act Respecting Nova Scotia Land Surveyors. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

**Bill No. 125 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 199 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Heritage Property Act. (Hon. Percy Paris)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2608**

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

Whereas Peter Mallette of CTV News Atlantic is a trusted and familiar face to many people in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this veteran journalist has decided to make a major change in his career and has taken on a new challenge with Prostate Cancer Canada as the executive director for Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas Peter will take on this challenge with the same determination and positive attitude in which he took on his personal struggle with prostate cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Peter and wish him well at this exciting turning point in his career.

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

[1:30 p.m.]

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2609**

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's Jewish community will participate in an ancient tradition tonight as they celebrate the beginning of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights; and

Whereas Hanukkah is a celebration of rededication and renewal, of freedom over oppression, and of despair transformed into hope; and

Whereas the roots of the Jewish community in Nova Scotia reach back more than a century and in that time their vibrant faith community has enriched our province;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend warm wishes for a Happy Hanukkah and join with Nova Scotia's Jewish community in celebrating the miracles of the Festival of Lights.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2610**

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

Whereas November 27, 2010, marked the date of the annual New Ross Volunteer Fire Department banquet and awards presentation; and

Whereas when a firefighter receives a call to attend at a fire or accident, he or she is never sure if they will return home safe and unharmed from the callout; and

Whereas on Saturday night Barry Hiltz was recognized for 30 years of dedicated service, and Stephen Workman was recognized for 35 years of dedicated service to the New Ross Fire Department;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Barry Hiltz and Stephen Workman for their support of their fire department and their community of New Ross.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2611**

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

Whereas December 1, 2010, marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of World AIDS Day; and

Whereas HIV/AIDS continues to affect individuals and families and communities throughout Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this year's theme, Universal Access and Human Rights, highlights the importance of ensuring universal access to treatment, prevention and care, ensuring that they are recognized as fundamental basic human rights;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly commit themselves to the importance of recognizing World AIDS Day and support the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS, through prevention, education and research.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2612**

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

Whereas the Northern Victoria Community Centre facility has been looking for ice plant infrastructure and needs at least \$700,000 in capital upgrades to enable the facility to operate; and

Whereas practical funding partner initiatives are being sought to help reduce or mitigate the cost of enabling the community to realize their desire to provide a positive, healthy recreational facility for citizens, young and old; and

Whereas temporary infrastructure, such as ice plants for the Canada Winter Games, may be surplus and could potentially offer a solution for the Northern Victoria facility, maximizing benefits, short and long term, of taxpayer resources;

Therefore be it resolved that all member of this House of Assembly ask the government to explore partnership arrangements that may reduce projects costs, while maximizing tax dollars for recreational purposes, such as the Northern Victoria Community Centre.

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. 2613**

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

Whereas Shelburne's Charlotte Lane Café was the recipient of the Best Small Restaurant Award by the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS) on November 10, 2010; and

Whereas Charlotte Lane Café was selected for the award by the public and its peers, topping the 27 nominations in the RANS Best Small Restaurant category; and

Whereas proprietors Roland and Kathleen Glauser along with their staff continually strive to create the ultimate dining experience in Shelburne's historic district, taking great pride in the food they serve and the atmosphere they provide;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne's Charlotte Lane Café for receiving the Best Small Restaurant Award by the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS) on November 10, 2010.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2614**

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

Whereas tourism is of major importance to the economy of our province; and

Whereas many of the businesses and individuals who depend on the tourist industry stand out because of their excellence in ensuring that tourists receive the best our province has to offer; and

Whereas the Central Nova Tourism Association annually selects the region's best in various categories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Jim and Patricia Yorke, owners of the Hidden Hilltop Campground in Glenholme, Colchester North, for receiving the Central Nova Tourism Association Ambassador Award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2615**

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

Whereas Albert L. Peppard received his B.Ed. in Physical Education in 1949, his Masters in Education in 1967, has written three books, and has been both a teacher and a principal; and

Whereas Mr. Peppard, besides his academic accomplishments, has also been directly involved in various aspects of local sports including baseball, hockey and basketball, both as a player and as a coach; and

Whereas Mr. Peppard has previously been named the Nova Scotia Volunteer of the Year, was inducted into the Acadia Hockey Honour Roll, as well as having received various other federal and provincial honours, including his latest accolade of being inducted into the Colchester County Sports Hall of Fame;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Albert L. Peppard on his lifetime achievements including his recent induction into the Colchester County Sports Hall of Fame and thank him for his many years of community involvement.

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. 2616**

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

Whereas Marie Mullally has today been named the new CEO of Credit Union Atlantic; and

Whereas Ms. Mullally has provided many years of public service in Nova Scotia as CEO of the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation, among other roles; and

Whereas Ms. Mullally is a talented executive in our province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend their congratulations to Ms. Mullally and thank her for her service to the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2617**

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

Whereas the leadership development students at Sir John A. Macdonald High School are holding a walk-a-thon on December 12<sup>th</sup> to raise funds in the fight against brain tumors; and

Whereas these students have partnered with Brainchild, an organization dedicated to raising funds and awareness for children with brain tumours; and

Whereas this is also a community event with all encouraged to participate;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank the students of Sir John A. Macdonald High School and the community for their efforts in raising funds in the fight against brain tumours in children.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2618**

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

Whereas on November 20, 2010, the Pictou County Health Authority was named Pictou County Employer of the Year through the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce Annual Achievement Awards; and

Whereas the Pictou County Health Authority was also recently identified as one of Nova Scotia's top employers through MediCorp Canada; and

Whereas these distinctions are tributes to the leadership and collaboration of the CEO, staff, board of directors, unions, foundations, auxiliary, and community partners;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Pictou County Health Authority on its recent recognitions as Pictou County Employer of the Year and one of Nova Scotia's top employers at the local and national levels.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

### RESOLUTION NO. 2619

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

Whereas the Winds of Change presented *The Vagina Monologues* at the Astor Theatre in Queens County for the very first time with both seasoned actors and newbies in October 2010; and

Whereas *The Vagina Monologues* is a production used to serve as a message against violence and it has become a celebration of support for women and girls to have a voice; and

Whereas the play is a dynamic force in support of women and girls all over the world and the cast includes Kathryn Killam, Hannah Miller, Winnifred McCarthy, Libby Broadbent, Erika McMahon, Ashley Burns, Brittany Wentzell-Verge, Jen Samson, Sara McKinnon, Sue Beaumont-Rudderham, Pam Samson, Stacy Smith, Anne Swim, Karen Seamone, and Sandy Blaxland;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly of Nova Scotia recognize and congratulate the cast of the Winds of Change production of *The Vagina Monologues*, held at the Astor Theatre in Queens County, which serves the message against violence and has become a celebration of support for women and girls to have a voice.

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.

I want to point out to honourable members that some of the resolutions are getting a little bit long. I just ask that perhaps you keep them within a reasonable context.

The honourable member for Richmond.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2620**

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

Whereas the 2010 Richmond Amateur Baseball Association championship tournament was held at the Petit-de-Grat ballfield with teams from Little L'Anse, Petit-de-Grat, Louisdale, and Port Hawksbury competing; and

Whereas the Petit-de-Grat Red Caps won the tournament, capturing their 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive Richmond Amateur Baseball Association title; and

Whereas the Petit-de-Grat Red Caps team consisted of Mark Samson, Warren Olsen, Shaun Boudreau, Barry Marchand, Richard Boudreau, Julien Boudreau, Broady Samson, Don Fougere, Scott Samson, David Paupin, Maurice Boudreau, Jake Boudreau, Devin Landry, Real Boudreau, Hubert David, and Godfrey Samson;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Petit-de-Grat Red Caps on capturing their 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive Richmond Amateur Baseball Association title and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

[1:45 p.m.]

**RESOLUTION NO. 2621**

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

Whereas Cow Bay resident, Jeff Domm, a well established artist and community activist, has illustrated over 30 wildlife books, painted portraits of endangered species and created various interpretive museum projects, working closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada; and

Whereas Jeff has been teaching and illustrating at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design for over 17 years and is the proud illustrator of award winning books such as *Atlantic Puffin - Little Brother of the North*, children's book and *Nova Scotia Birds*; and

Whereas Jeff was the primary artist in the reproduction of the Clyde Henneberry painting, *The Captain Kent*, a celebration of a local artist in Eastern Passage;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly commend local artist Jeff Domm of Cow Bay for his ongoing contributions to his local community and wish him every success in his outstanding artistic career, in particular his dedication to the natural environments in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2622**

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

Whereas Lucille Harper, Executive Director of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association, is a longtime advocate for women and girls within the community and across the province; and

Whereas on October 18, 2010, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, presented Lucille Harper with the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case for her work with women and girls; and

Whereas while the Governor General's Awards were presented to Ms. Harper and four other individuals, Ms. Harper emphasizes that her award represents the work that she and many others have done, both within the community and across the province;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House extend congratulations to Lucille Harper on being named a laureate of the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case and thank her for her dedication and continued work on behalf of women and girls across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MS. BIRDSALL: I'd like to welcome today one of my favourite constituents, David Young, in the gallery above. He is a member of our local NDP executive, a long-time employee of Canada Post, a very talented local actor who shares his time with the South Shore Players. I'd like everyone to give him a warm welcome today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2623**

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

Whereas Ms. Mae Forbes of Bridgewater celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 13, 2010; and

Whereas Ms. Mae Forbes, who attributes her longevity to a happy marriage, is still active in her community, volunteering two afternoons a week with the South Shore Regional Hospital Auxiliary with which she has served for 72 years; and

Whereas Ms. Mae Forbes exemplifies the very best qualities of a citizen of Nova Scotia, namely being kind, generous, unselfish and caring to all in her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Mae Forbes on the occasion of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and thank her for being such a valuable member of her community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2624**

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

Whereas Nikki Payne, one of Canada's more original comics, hails originally from Sackville Estates in Lower Sackville; and

Whereas she is the recipient of three Canadian Comedy Awards, two nominations for Gemini, her Comedy Inc. special on CTV was one of the network's most viewed programs and she has appeared on NBC's Last Comic Standing and various MuchMusic programs; and

Where she is truly an inspiration for young people and aspiring comics and is a perfect example of how, with hard work, determination and perseverance, the youth across our province can achieve their wildest dreams;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Nikki Payne of Lower Sackville on her unarguable success in the Canadian comedy scene and wish her continued success in her career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2625**

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 Royal Canadian Legion Cadet of Excellence is awarded in recognition of individual endeavours which meet or enhance the aims of the cadet movement; and

Whereas the selection process is based on factors such as the cadet's participation in providing community service events, being recognized by peers and supervisors and for providing comradeship and morale; and

Whereas Charles Huntley of the Kings 2444 Army Cadet Corps was recently presented with the Royal Canadian Legion Cadet of Excellence Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Cadet Charles Huntley on being a recipient of the Royal Canadian Legion Cadet of Excellence Award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2626**

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

Whereas Nova Scotians have a long history of generosity and community involvement, supporting those in their communities who have to go without; and

Whereas the Lunenburg Shoes For Kids campaign, which aims to provide high-quality footwear for children who cannot afford it, was started 10 years ago by Ann O'Dowd and has been carried on by many volunteers over the years, such as Janet Mason, Beverly Cluett, Chrissy Stubbs, Kevin Lohnes and Rose Ann Higgins; and

Whereas the Shoes For Kids campaign continues in its 10<sup>th</sup> year by providing Christmas wreaths to local homes and businesses, with all the proceeds going towards the purchase of high-quality footwear for children in need;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the importance of the volunteer work done by the Shoes For Kids campaign and commend this group on their dedication to providing for those in need in the 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 Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs on an introduction.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the attention of the House to the gallery opposite. We are joined today by Councillor Dawn Sloane and actually Councillor Sloane is with us today as she was hoping to witness the tabling of a bill but councillor, it has already been tabled with respect to the Heritage Act. The briefing took a little longer than expected and I'd like to ask the House to extend a warm welcome to Councillor Sloane. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2627**

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

Whereas for the past 50 years, Murphy's Camping on the Ocean has been nestled in the 7<sup>th</sup> generation historic fishing settlement of Murphy Cove on the Eastern Shore; and

Whereas over the years the Murphy family, according to folklore, provided a wide variety of goods that included salt fish, rum, moonshine, marine provisions, farm produce, lobsters and fresh fish to friends and visitors alike, and while they may still carry on a few of those fabled traditions, their guests now enjoy nightly campfires, complete with fresh steamed mussels, singsongs and storytelling from days gone by; and

Whereas Murphy's Camping on the Ocean marked their 50-year Anniversary with a special celebration held on August 20, 21, and 22, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brian, Marilyn, and the entire Murphy family for 50 years of treating tourists and visitors to their much-appreciated Murphy's Law, "We will do our very best to make your stay a pleasant one," and wish the Murphy family continued success in their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2628**

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

Whereas December 11, 2010, will be the annual Western Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department banquet and awards presentation; and

Whereas when a firefighter receives a call to attend at a fire or accident he or she is never sure if they will return home safe and unharmed from the callout; and

Whereas on December 11, 2010, Roger S. Hiltz and Michael C. Slauenwhite will be recognized for 25 years of dedicated service and Terry H. Zwicker will be recognized for 40 years of dedicated service to the Western Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Roger S. Hiltz, Michael C. Slauenwhite, and Terry H. Zwicker for their support of their fire department and the community of Western Shore.

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. 2629**

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

Whereas the Municipality of the District of Barrington was presented with the Model Volunteer Community of the Year Award at the Provincial Volunteer Banquet on April 12, 2010; and

Whereas this award is presented annually to the community that has shown ongoing continued support of its volunteers in a number of ways, including support of projects that have enhanced the community, making it a better place to live; and

Whereas the Model Volunteer Community of the Year Award is a one-time life achievement award;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Municipality of the District of Barrington for being presented with the Model Volunteer Community of the Year Award at the Provincial Volunteer Banquet on April 12, 2010.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2630**

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

Whereas Alan Syliboy is an accomplished artist whose creations draw from his Mi'kmaq culture and heritage; and

Whereas Mr. Syliboy was commissioned for a mural for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games; and

Whereas Mr. Syliboy was selected as one of five finalists for the Lieutenant Governor Arts Award;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Alan Syliboy for his beautiful, artistic creations that contribute to Mi'kmaq - and indeed, Nova Scotian - culture and heritage and thank him for having Canada and Nova Scotia beautifully represented through his artistic 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 Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2631**

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

Whereas Chad Liebold, a youth of Eastern Passage and local swimmer from the Dartmouth Manta Ray Swim Club, earned a silver medal at the 2010 Ken Dunn Championships held June 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> in Halifax; and

Whereas Chad qualified for the 2010 Group Nationals for his age group being held in July in Winnipeg; and

Whereas Chad Liebold's time of 1:16.08 earned him a spot in the men's 13-14, 100-metre breaststroke;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Chad Liebold of Eastern Passage for winning a silver medal at the 2010 Ken Dunn Championships in Halifax, and for earning a spot on the 2010 National Swim Competition in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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

[2:00 p.m.]

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2632**

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

Whereas in September 1997, 80 per cent of the world's nations entered into the Mine Ban Treaty, which established an international standard in rejecting anti-personnel mines; and

Whereas on November 24, 2010, members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines released Landmine Monitor 2010, an annual survey on the progress in efforts to eradicate landmines; and

Whereas the Landmine Monitor 2010 report indicates that landmine casualties in the previous year were the lowest since annual monitoring began in 1999 and nearly 200 square kilometres of land was cleared of landmines in 2009;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House applaud the work of the members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the signatories to the Mine Ban Treaty for their continued diligence and efforts to eradicate anti-personnel mines.

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 on an introduction.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, again, I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the gallery opposite. We had some time delays during a bill briefing today and they wanted to come over and witness the introduction of a bill pertaining to the Heritage Act. I can stand here in my place and say that the bill has already been introduced and with that, I'll introduce them instead.

We are joined today in the House by Carla Wheaton, cultural resource manager for Parks Canada Mainland Nova Scotia - I will ask them to stand as I call out their names; Peter Delefes, president of Heritage Trust Nova Scotia - and certainly Mr. Delefes is no stranger to the House; Brian Cuthbertson, vice-chair, Minister's Advisory Council on Heritage Property; Lyle Goldberg, policy analyst, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities; Halifax Regional Municipality's Maggie Holm, heritage planner; and Councillor Lorelei Nicoll, District 4. Would the House please join me and give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2633**

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

Whereas 12 African Nova Scotian teens, including Hammonds Plains residents Vernisha Matheson and Ariel Gough, have filmed a documentary entitled *Still Here: A Journey to Triumph*, which re-enacts the journey of the province's early Black settlers; and

Whereas the idea sparked from an educational visit to Birchtown, the place where in 1783, Black Loyalists first touched Nova Scotia soil; and

Whereas the documentary, which includes a title song from Cherry Brook's Gary Beals, will show three times throughout November in HRM and all proceeds go towards the Build a Bridge Youth Society to develop youth projects;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the 12 African Nova Scotian teens on the success of their documentary, *Still Here: A Journey to Triumph*, which re-enacts an important part of Nova Scotian history and benefits the Build a Bridge Youth Society.

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. 2634**

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

Whereas SOAR, Survivors of Abuse Recovering, is a volunteer-driven, community-based, peer counselling program for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, with a 17-year history of service to Nova Scotians; and

Whereas SOAR promotes insight into survivor issues through educational workshops, presentations and seminars; and

Whereas SOAR is a 2010 recipient of a Meaningful Involvement Consumers Award, established by the Nova Scotia Department of Health to recognize providers that demonstrate authentic, active and meaningful input in the planning, implementation and evaluation of mental health services;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate SOAR on being a 2010 recipient of the Meaningful Involvement Consumers Award and thank SOAR for its long and dedicated service to survivors of childhood sexual abuse and wish SOAR every success in its ongoing work with survivors and all Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, It is my absolute pleasure to bring everyone's attention to our east gallery to introduce Eric Smith. Eric Smith is an independent AIDS activist and, in my words, Eric, you are a Nova Scotia hero. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2635**

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

Whereas Mr. Vernon Oickle, Editor of Lighthouse Media Group, has always had a fascination with folklore, superstitions and ghosts, inspiring his latest book called *One Crow Sorrow*, taken from the popular superstitious phrase; and

Whereas *One Crow Sorrow* is the 13<sup>th</sup> book and second novel published by Mr. Oickle, having also produced works of non-fiction, photo books and collections of stories; and

Whereas *One Crow Sorrow*, published by Bryler Publications, based in Chester, was appropriately launched on October 30, 2010, just one day before Halloween;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Vernon Oickle on the publication of his second novel, *One Crow Sorrow*, which is sure to delight and scare his readers.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2636**

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

Whereas the Halifax Regional Municipality held a ceremony on October 6, 2010, to honour firefighters for their exemplary service; and

Whereas firefighters and volunteer firefighters dedicate many hours of selfless service to their communities; and

Whereas Sterling Burgoyne received his 40-year and 30-year federal Exemplary Service Bars, 20-year federal Exemplary Service Medal, as well as his 25-year provincial Long Service Medal at the October 6<sup>th</sup> ceremony;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly thank Sterling Burgoyne for his 40-plus years of service as a firefighter in his community and wish him every success 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 Queens.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2637**

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

Whereas Pamela Ditchoff has just had her fourth novel, *Princess Beast*, published digitally; and

Whereas the book brings closure to *Mrs. Beast*, an earlier novel, and *Princess Beast* has come full circle and completed the fairy tale; and

Whereas publishing *Princess Beast* digitally allows readers to download the e-book on to their computers;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Pamela Ditchoff on the recent digital publication of her novel *Princess Beast* and wish her luck with her writing career in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2638**

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

Whereas suicide is an entirely unnecessary and devastating choice by people in crisis; and

Whereas the Freddi Ford Award is given by the Canadian Mental Health Association, in partnership with the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention, each year to an outstanding volunteer who has been actively involved in supporting survivors of suicide attempts; and



Whereas Marie Sack of Indian Brook has been awarded the Freddi Ford Award;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Marie Sack and thank her for her outstanding work in counselling members of her community who are in crisis.

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.

As we get ready to go into Oral Question Period, just a friendly reminder that all questions and answers are to be directed here through the Chair, no electronic equipment is to be on at any time during Question Period. The time now is 2:12 p.m. - we will go then until 3:43 p.m.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTION PUT BY MEMBERS**

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

### **PREM.: UNION CERTIFICATION - SECRET BALLOT**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the matter of how unions are created in Nova Scotia is an issue that profoundly matters to organized labour, private companies and non-unionized workers. Approximately 90 per cent of businesses in the private sector in Nova Scotia are not unionized. The practice of a secret, private ballot is currently at the heart of the certification process in Nova Scotia. So my question for the Premier is, will you commit to keeping the secret ballot process for union certification during the term of your mandate?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're dealing now with some legislation that is before the House with respect to the Trade Union Act. We're going to wait until those matters are complete and they include, for example, matters with respect to reviews of trade union legislation.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, his response is why Nova Scotians are nervous about that bill. The vast majority of private businesses in Nova Scotia are non-union or open shop. With the exception of the Public Service, the vast majority of workers are not unionized. So my question to the Premier is, do you believe that an open shop or non-unionized workplace in this province can be the preferred option for workers?

THE PREMIER: Absolutely.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, if this government is committed publicly to making further changes to the labour practices in this province, it already made some changes earlier this Fall such as the definition of a union member. In some cases changes have been made without consultation with all Nova Scotians affected by those changes. So my question to the Premier is, will you commit to public consultation with non-union workers and non-union employers before any changes are made to the Labour Standards?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, as the member opposite knows, that is exactly what the substance of the bill is with respect to consultation; in fact, it sets up a committee whose whole purpose is consultation.

[2:15 p.m.]

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

### **PREM.: LAWS - LBR. FRIENDLY CHANGES**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. On September 7, 2009, Premier Dexter promised "a new relationship with the province's union." I have two documents, which I will table, that contain that quote.

Well, there is one promise that the Premier has, in fact, kept because we are now seeing the true impact of that promise. Political donations have been returned, government pensions have been topped up, total job security has been provided and now, this week, even more concessions. My question to the Premier is, what other labour-friendly changes to the province's laws is your government contemplating making, and can you assure this House today that there are none?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we are having a difficult time right now with the province's finances, and many of those things that you have mentioned, in fact, have not been warmly received by labour. In fact, it was difficult, particularly around the pension changes, to make what were very, very difficult decisions. I don't take any of those decisions very lightly. What I can tell him is that I intend to work as hard as I can to make sure that we have good, stable labour relations in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if “stable” means give them everything they want, then I suspect the Premier is correct. Nova Scotians are finding it very strange that this government over-consults on many things but then tries to sweep labour-friendly amendments under the rug - I guess that’s another way that we can interpret the Premier’s promise of a new relationship with organized labour, as I’ve already tabled.

My question to the Premier is, will you commit to full consultation with all groups, unionized, non-unionized, open shop, closed shop, before any more changes come forward to the province’s labour laws?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the whole point is to make sure that the kind of thing that happened with the Labour Standards Code never happens again in this province, that there is, in fact, appropriate consultation on changes that can affect the stability of this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what is important here is that someone stand up for the public interest and not some hidden special interest - and that is what the Premier was elected to do. Nova Scotians are now aware that it is they, the taxpayers, that will pay the ultimate price for this new special relationship that the Premier promised in the form of higher taxes, more bureaucracy and a bigger, more comfortable bureaucracy. So it turns out that what the Premier really meant in the last election campaign was a better deal for today’s unions.

My question to the Premier is, will you finally put the people first, including the over-burdened taxpayer, and stop the secret hidden agenda that was finally and luckily exposed this week for all to see?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if you call putting something in a bill for the Opposition Parties to see being somehow secretive, I suppose you’re willing to attribute that to absolutely anything. The reality is that the changes in the bill are good - they’re good for Nova Scotia, and they are good for labour stability in this province.

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

### **PREM. - EDUC.: PLAN - DETAILS**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, we are now into week five of this House sitting and this government has avoided discussing most of the major issues of concern to Nova Scotians; in particular, this government’s unilateral dictate to school boards to cut 22 per cent from their budget. This government has brushed off parents’ concerns, calling this 22 per cent cut a planning exercise. Meanwhile, school boards are discussing cuts to the classroom. My question to the Premier is, why are you creating chaos in our school system as an exercise? What is your real plan for education in this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, our real plan is to make sure that we get the books of this province back to balance.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, on the backs of our children. School boards are now in the planning stage for next year's budget. They need to make decisions now on what next year's school will look like for students. We have long advocated for multi-year funding for school boards to prevent last-minute chopping of programs, yet this government has made things much worse by dumping a 22 per cent exercise right in the middle of this year's planning for next year. My question for the Premier is, can you tell this House how you expect school boards to cut 22 per cent from their budgets without affecting students?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years the student population of this province has dropped by almost 30,000 students. What we want the school boards to do is to take leadership in understanding that we have to be able to balance the books in this province, that they need to be a part of that. We have asked them - in fact, we've asked the leadership in those wards to be part of the solution.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows, or he should know, that the Hogg formula takes into account that drop in student population and distributing that money equitably across Nova Scotia. In the first 18 months of this government they added \$1.7 billion to the debt. They've increased program spending by 9 per cent in year one, 7 per cent in year two (Interruptions)

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

MR. MCNEIL: That's okay, I'll start over, Mr. Speaker. In the first 18 months of this government they added \$1.7 billion to the debt. They have increased program spending by 9 per cent in year one, 7 per cent in year two, but now they've asked school boards to cut 22 per cent. My question to the Premier is, if you can't get your spending under control, why do you expect school boards to do your dirty work?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Leader of the Official Opposition is completely wrong with his numbers. In fact, it was those members over there, when we were trying to exercise wage restraint, who were bringing people into the gallery and pointing their fingers and yelling at us for making sure that we were bringing these matters back under control.

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

**PREM.: POST-SECONDARY EDUC. - O'NEILL REPT.**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, when asked about his plans to raise tuition the Premier said last week that Nova Scotia has "... one of the worst student aid programs in

the country . . . What we intend to do is ensure that accessibility to education in this province remains a priority of the government.” Now, the Premier specifically avoided the question of raising tuition. My question to the Premier is, how does the O’Neill report, in specifically allowing tuition to increase, promote access to post-secondary education?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if you don’t have the money to pay tuition, if you don’t have access to funds to be able to support your education, it really doesn’t matter what the tuition levels are. They can be as low as you want. If you can’t afford to go and you have no access to assistance, then you don’t get in. That is why it’s important to ensure that there is a proper student assistance program.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I’m assuming that the Premier is implying that the O’Neill report, which is what I asked him about, actually does address access. That’s pretty funny, because last week at a public meeting O’Neill told the audience that he did not address access to post-secondary education. In fact, the O’Neill report focuses on raising the debt cap for higher debt burdens. Allowing higher debt levels will not encourage more of our young people to access post-secondary education. So the student financial aid review the minister is doing does not look at tuition fees, and student groups are saying that the government is spinning the consultations as being adequate for outreach to students.

Just four short years ago, the Leader of the Official Opposition and his caucus launched an on-line petition site, [cutthefees.ca](http://cutthefees.ca), and on September 23, 2006 (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. Honourable member, do you have a question?

MS. REGAN: I do. Well I hope I get an answer, Mr. Speaker. On September 23, 2006, the member for Cole Harbour said that more government funding should go to tuition and there should be needs-based grants put in place so that students with even the most modest income levels don’t graduate with a huge debt . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please. Question.

MS. REGAN: Why is it okay to be on the side of students when you are in Opposition and then ignore them when you go into government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, thanks to this caucus over here when we were sitting over there, we brought forward a bill that ensures that the federal money that was brought to the province went to the benefit of the students. That’s what we did in order to bring down tuition rates in this province - that’s the record of this Party.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, a few of the people on this side of the House were there then and they know the truth, and that wasn’t it.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we don't know what the Premier's intention is when it comes to the future of our post-secondary education system because he won't respond to the O'Neill report, he won't tell us what his plans are for pending MOU negotiations, and students are left wondering whether they're going to get a seat at the table.

Since the O'Neill report was commissioned by the Premier, my question to the Premier is, will he give us a formal response to the O'Neill report before this House rises?

THE PREMIER: It's amazing, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand they complain about the lack of consultation and on the other hand they complain about too much consultation. We're going to continue the consultation on that report and we are going to make sure that we have an appropriate response, one that takes into consideration the views of all the stakeholders.

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

#### **TCH: TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY - DETAILS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. In July of this year the Province of Prince Edward Island found a unique way to attract visitors to the province and the rest of Atlantic Canada by embarking on a creative tourism endeavour. By bringing Regis and Kelly to the Island, P.E.I. boosted their position in the Atlantic market, as reports indicate there was \$22.9 million in direct economic spinoffs created in the province. This all happened with the economy in decline, yet P.E.I. Tourism led the way by thinking outside the box. So my question to the minister is, are events like this part of your broader tourism marketing strategy?

HON. PERCY PARIS: I'm proud to say that tourism figures in the Province of Nova Scotia, as to the end of October (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, tourism numbers to the end of October are slightly up overall, all over the province. There are some places within Nova Scotia where they were down; there are some places that were up. Overall, tourism is up. Tourism is a \$1.8 billion industry in Nova Scotia. This year tourism will likely approach \$2 billion. The visitation of cruise ships in Halifax is up 22 per cent; the cruise ship traffic is up 15 per cent in Sydney. As far as special events go, we do that.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, on May 26<sup>th</sup> I sent a letter to the minister asking if Nova Scotia had placed a bid on having the Regis and Kelly show come to Nova Scotia. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, I received a response from the minister where he indicated that, indeed, his department did not participate in the process. He also said that given the fiscal environment, funding for such an initiative would have to come from existing budgets and he felt that this would negatively impact other areas of marketing and programming.

Well, Mr. Speaker, those areas of marketing referenced by the minister are nothing to be proud of this year. In fact, the return on investment is a paltry 8 per cent decline in the U.K., 7 per cent fewer western Canadians and 2 per cent fewer Americans. My question through you to the minister is, please explain how such a unique investment such as the one embarked upon by P.E.I. is any worse for Nova Scotians than the dismal numbers you're so proud to stand by this year?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member opposite is quoting some numbers, and he quoted some negative numbers, but he didn't quote that the German visitation is up 5 per cent. He doesn't quote about Atlantic Canada, how the visitation is up with the stay home vacation. The honourable member talks about Regis and Kelly. As he quotes about Regis and Kelly, I'm surprised he's not talking about the final analysis. What was the final outcome with that endeavour by the Province of Prince Edward Island? Do you know what? We are different. What works in P.E.I., may not work in Nova Scotia and vice versa. We are doing a good job at tourism. In the last two days we just had the annual meeting with TIANS and our stakeholders are very happy with what we're doing.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, if the minister had been listening about figures, he would have heard that there were \$22.9 million in direct economic spinoffs created in P.E.I.. Again, my question through you is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. While we congratulate P.E.I. for having the foresight to improve their tourism numbers, we feel it's necessary for this government to be able to think outside the box as well. My question to the minister is, have you consulted with tourism operators to hear what innovative and unique ideas they might be suggesting to improve Nova Scotia's stagnant position relating to tourism in this province?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I normally don't stoop to this level, but I'm going to go there. The honourable member talks about me not listening, well, I wish he'd listen because we have thought outside of the box. I made an announcement last month here in the House - maybe he wasn't here that day - with respect to the African Diaspora Trail coming here next year to the Province of Nova Scotia for the first time. For the first time, we've got a major event (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage has the floor.

MR. PARIS: For the first time, we've got a major event involving people of African descent from all over the world. Now, he may not see that as a big event, he may not see that about (Interruptions)

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

MR. PARIS: He may not see that as thinking outside of the box, Mr. Speaker, but we do.

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

**HEALTH - ROSS REPT.: IMPLEMENTATION DELAY  
- EXPLAIN**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Nova Scotians recently paid \$100,000 for the Ross report, a report which was announced with great fanfare and one that even had an interim report released in the Spring. Here we are in December and we have yet to hear back from government as to the status. That has Nova Scotians wondering whether all of it will be implemented, only certain sections, or perhaps none at all. My question to the minister is, could the minister tell us if the delay in responding to this report is a result of government attempting to calculate cost savings associated with the report's implementation?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It has been about five weeks since Dr. Ross released his report. A piece of that report which is yet to come are the standards, the emergency care standards. Dr. Ross will be releasing those standards tomorrow and shortly after that we will be responding to the totality of Dr. Ross' report.

MS. WHALEN: We're pleased to hear about tomorrow's announcement although we want to see the full response to the Ross report which the minister told us recently was coming soon. We've had that interim report, as we've said, and communities have been waiting ever since the final report came out. DHAs are also waiting and health providers are waiting for answers. My question to the minister is, will the minister's response when it comes in its totality provide answers to communities as to the status of their emergency rooms or will they, once again, be left waiting for clear direction from the government?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I said and I've said in previous Question Periods, our response to Dr. Ross' report will in fact come before this House rises for the Christmas break.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, there's no question that in the minister's response we'll be expecting to see a full implementation timetable. We know the job is multi-faceted and it will involve ensuring access to primary health care, access to emergency rooms 24/7, standards and funding decisions. In other words, the report truly illustrates how integrated our health care system is. My question to the minister is, who will be responsible for implementing the Ross report? Will it be the minister herself, the DHAs, or someone else?



MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member and other members know, we have a system of providing health services where the planning and policy arm is generally in the Ministry of Health and the actual implementation is at the DHA level and with a variety of partners around the province. We will be working very closely with all of our partners in the implementation of this report. EHS, as the resolution read in this House earlier today, that has had phenomenal success in their re-accreditation, will be intimately involved as will 811 and our physicians and health care providers.

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

### **TCH: TOURISM POLICY - DIRECTION**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, again my question through you is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. Two days ago the minister spoke at the annual TIANS summit. The minister's mixed messages left many in the crowd uncomfortable and concerned about the government's vision for tourism in Nova Scotia. He talked about high risks and high rewards while covering up the fact that the tourism industry does not share his optimism.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, large properties say the room nights are down about 4 per cent to 5 per cent while the minister says they're steady. During his speech the minister talked about doing things differently. Yet when his executive director was asked by reporters what plans were in place to improve the 8 per cent decline in U.K. visitation, he responded that there were no plans to change the department's market focus.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, what rule do you actually have in the department when it comes to directing tourism policy that generates revenue and improves the stagnant tourism numbers we see before us?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I remember a couple of nights ago, I remember it very well, I remember the speech I made to TIANS. I was there again yesterday and everyone I met up with last night and the day before congratulated me on the speech. (Applause) They congratulated me on a great speech and they reminded me that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. PARIS: . . . it was refreshing to them to have a minister come to their meeting, not only with fresh ideas, but with honesty and integrity. (Applause)

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, during what some tourism operators are calling the minister's "do more with less" speech, he admitted his government's failure and abandonment of The Cat ferry and southwestern Nova Scotia. While the minister listed off his government's investment checklist, I have to wonder if he actually remembered that the very tourism operators he put out of work weren't actually there to hear it.

My point is that while this minister has indicated that change is coming, he sat by for 18 months and did nothing to promote the industry. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what has taken you so long to realize that the numbers are stagnant, tourism operators are fed up, and that tourism shouldn't be the poor cousin to his jet-setting ways? (Applause)

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we've spent \$400,000 that we invested in Team Southwest.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. PARIS: We invested in Yarmouth 250. Yarmouth is celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We invested another \$150,000 in that. We are investing money in tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia. Despite what the Opposition may say, the more they holler, the better job I know I'm doing.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my final question, again through you, is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. While the minister preached his personal "high risks equals high rewards" philosophy during a speech, others sat stunned and confused, wondering how his words will actually translate into action. My final question to the minister is, what does he mean by "high risks," and what rewards does he expect to see come out of those risks?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, it seems like there's a lot of emphasis placed on my speech that I made a couple of nights ago. One of the things that I said in that speech was that we will work with the industry. We will collaborate with the industry. That's what we have been doing and that's what we will continue to do as we build tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

### **IMMIGRATION: STRATEGY - LACK EXPLAIN**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have been without an immigration strategy since July 2006. On Tuesday, November 17, 2009, the Minister of Immigration appeared as a guest speaker at the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, where she stated she hoped to have an immigration strategy for attracting people to the province ready by Spring. On March 25, 2010, the Speech from the Throne promised a new immigration strategy to be launched later this year. Meanwhile, on July 24, 2010, an op-ed at the Cape Breton Post had the Minister of Immigration stating, "The province's new immigration strategy, to be released later this summer, will help grow our economy by significantly increasing the number of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia."

My question to the Minister of Immigration is, given that Nova Scotians have been promised a strategy by your government on three different occasions, will you tell us why we haven't seen a new immigration strategy?

[2:45 p.m.]

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Thank you for the question. I would like to say that I recognize the question is a valid one. We have been working on the immigration strategy and I did say it was coming forward. We missed those timelines because we're just making very sure that all components and all aspects that we can add to that strategy are in that strategy and that we've done appropriate consultation around that, which we are continuing to do.

What I will say to the honourable member is that we will be seeing the immigration strategy launched in the winter, I would say at the end of the wintertime period. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this government made a commitment to actually double the number of immigrants coming to our province. They have set a target and yet despite commitments on three separate occasions, they have yet to produce a road map as to how they will get us there. We know that in 2008, 2,600 immigrants landed in Nova Scotia, although the numbers who actually stayed here in our province remain unknown. What we do know is that in 2009 these numbers declined to approximately 2,400.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think any Nova Scotian would consider that to be progress, so again my question to the minister is, why do you continue delaying the implementation of a new immigration strategy?

MS. JENNEX: I am saying we are not delaying it. There are many issues around implementing an immigration strategy and one of those is that we have to work with the federal government around our numbers. As you know, there is a limit to the amount of numbers across the nation that each province can tap into, so we've been working provincially, we've been working with all the other provinces, and at the federal level to get agreements around our levels. So that is one aspect of why there's been a bit of a delay on that particular thing.

I would like to let you know, though, that we have been working on this immigration strategy. I have weekly meetings and was talking with the executive director this morning. This is something we are going to be putting forward in the winter and it will be a very good strategy that we and all Nova Scotians can be proud of, to make sure that when people land here they feel welcome and that we're able to make sure they are settled appropriately. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this government set a target to actually double the amount of immigrants coming to our province - from 2,600 to 5,200 - which is quite an ambitious target, difficult to achieve when you don't have a strategy as to how you are

actually going to get there. To make matters worse, since assuming power, which is almost a year and a half now, this government has actually seen the amount of immigrants coming to our province decline, rather than increase.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to build our economy, bring skilled workers to our province, address labour shortages and deal with both our population decline and the fact that our population is getting older, we clearly need a new plan and we need it now. It has been 2006 since we have had an immigration strategy in our province, so I'm wondering if the minister would be so kind, since she has missed three previous dates, could she be a bit more specific as to what exactly she means by before the end of winter, when will Nova Scotians see a new strategy from her department?

MS. JENNEX: Just because the immigration strategy is not out in the public domain does not mean that immigration has been sitting idle. I would like to push back on the comment that our numbers are down. We have actually met our targets already this year. The retention rate of immigrants in Nova Scotia is at 62 per cent and we want to make sure that increases over the next couple of years. Because we don't have that immigration strategy does not mean that we are not working, on a daily basis, to make sure that we are attracting immigrants to come to Nova Scotia.

We've added a new stream, with the agri-food sector stream, in the last couple of weeks. People have been over in the U.K. and Wales - well, they've been in the U.K. We've been doing marketing, we have people landing, we've been meeting with the ISIS group which has been providing excellent settlement. We are working very hard to make sure we're welcoming, and we're also making sure that when people land here they feel they're part of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

#### **PREM. - FED. FERRY STRATEGY: REQUESTS - DETAILS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. We finally have a decision on ferry services in Nova Scotia worth talking about. However, that decision did not come from the Premier, it came from the form of a \$51 million announcement from the federal government that strengthened links to other Atlantic Provinces. Obviously this was a federal decision with little input from the province. My question to the Premier is, will you inform this House what you had asked the federal government regarding a ferry strategy for Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, obviously what we wanted to see from the federal government was a long-term strategy for the constitutionally protected ferries, the inter-provincial ferry system, which we have said is the responsibility of the federal government. We would like to see it funded over the long term. In fact, other than a press release, we don't actually know what the elements are of their agreement, or their proposal is. As I said

earlier today to the press, obviously any assistance, any agreement which solidifies those services is a welcome announcement.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the federal government's announcement regarding ferry services in Pictou and Digby will go a long way in supporting the regional economy and transportation network in eastern Canada. This is the kind of investment made by partners who think long-term and respect vital links between eastern provinces. My question through you to the Premier is, do you agree that the Northumberland Ferries service that was announced is good for regional co-operation, that it contributes significantly to the economic sustainability of the Pictou region?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've already said, I'm pleased to see that the government is undertaking its responsibility to support that service. Of course, everything that the federal government does to fund those services is welcome by the province.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Spencer economic report which was commissioned by the local Chambers of Commerce - and I'll table a copy of that in a few moments - clearly indicates that the provincial government is foregoing a significant source of revenue in Nova Scotia by abandoning the Yarmouth ferry service in New England. This is a loss of over \$22 million of revenue to the residents of Nova Scotia. Now that the federal government has invested in ferry linkages in the Maritimes, the Premier is surely prepared now to lobby on behalf of southwestern Nova Scotia, at least this is the logical next step in solidifying all ferry systems to the province. My question through you to the Premier is, what are you doing to lobby the federal government to restore, invest in the future of the Yarmouth ferry and the economy of southwestern Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, the position of the federal government has not changed with respect to that area. They have said they're not interested in funding the service. One of the chronic problems was that the entire burden of that service was falling on the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. The State of Maine has said that they're not interested in supporting the service. I know that in Yarmouth the Industrial Commission - I have said that they've asked for proposals. I know they're having a look at them but we have not seen a business case for a sustainable service at this point.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **PREM.: FERRY FUNDING - STANCE**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, last night the federal government announced that they would offer \$51 million for three Maritime ferries, something that the Premier on the record has lobbied for. In today's The ChronicleHerald, the Premier is quoted as saying that, "... businesses would be more likely to invest in the provinces if they could rely on long-term ferry funding." The Member of Parliament for Saint John was quoted as

saying that, “. . . the federal government is in talks with the three provinces about their contributions to the arrangement . . .”

This Premier has not only lobbied for ferry subsidies, he continues to give them out himself. My question to the Premier is, why does he recognize that funding for ferries is an essential economic investment on one hand but with the other, cut funding to a ferry, the one from Yarmouth, that was a vital economic engine for Yarmouth, southwestern Nova Scotia, and the entire province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen the proposal from the federal government with respect to our own ferries. What I can say is that there's a large difference between inter-provincial ferries where you have more than one partner at the table who are providing assistance, where you have a long-term responsibility on behalf of the federal government, and where that has, as I pointed out, an important commercial impact for southwestern Nova Scotia. I'm sure he's had an opportunity to have a look at the transportation study that was done, which indicated there was not a business case for that particular route.

I wish that were not the case. I wish there was a sustainable ferry service that Yarmouth and Portland or Bar Harbor could put in place. If there is one, I'll tell the member we'd be happy to help make sure that happens. But at this point the federal government has said it's not interested, the State of Maine has said they're not interested in it. The taxpayers of Nova Scotia would be left bearing the entire burden of a service that is not sustainable and had increasing costs.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this Premier can stand up in this House and blame the federal government, blame the Government of Maine, ask them to live up to their responsibilities to Nova Scotians, or he can accept his responsibilities as the Premier of Nova Scotia, to fight for them. (Applause)

The fact is that the Premier does recognize the importance of ferry links in the province but has refused to recognize the importance of an international link that connects Nova Scotia to our largest, most important trading partner, ally, and international friend. He does say that he's interested in supporting our community in establishing a sustainable ferry service, so my question to the Premier is, now that the people of Yarmouth are working to secure one, what tangible efforts has he made to make sure that happens?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to assure the member of the Opposition that I take to heart my responsibility to all of the people of Nova Scotia and understanding that the taxpayers of the entire province have to pay for the decisions that we make here in this Chamber.

When I was last in Yarmouth, I met with the head of the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission. I asked him about the submissions that they have received to date. My understanding is that so far there is not a proposal that they feel comfortable in advancing.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the decision to cut the Yarmouth ferry has impacted our tourism industry, our local businesses, and many families. We in Yarmouth face the reality that we could lose our hotels, more businesses, our port status, our Customs jobs, and more people. A new sustainable ferry service will help the people of Yarmouth and southwestern Nova Scotia, and will bolster the economy of the entire province if done right.

The Premier says he's waiting to see proposals for a ferry service and then decide if one will work. My question to the Premier is, why is he not taking a leadership role in securing such a vital service for the economy of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have, in fact, instructed my minister and members of Economic and Rural Development to work with the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission to analyze any proposals that will come forward. They already did an expression of interest. I'm afraid that the answer to that is simply that there hasn't been an expression of interest that the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission feels comfortable advancing as a sustainable solution.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

### **TCH: DEPT. CUTS - DETAILS**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. In recent years the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage spent in the vicinity of \$13.5 million marketing and promoting Nova Scotia to the world. In fact, the Travel Media Association of Canada conference met here in the HRM in February 2008. My question to the minister is, when he abides by his Cabinet colleagues' directive to trim departmental spending by up to 10 per cent, what areas of the world will be cut off from Nova Scotia where the province will no longer be promoted?

[3:00 p.m.]

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, right now as we speak, we are going through budget deliberations. No decisions have been made, it's a back and forth thing. When it's appropriate and when decisions are made, everybody will know about it. We are looking at all things. Our goal is, as everybody knows, to get back to balance, is to stop what we've done in the past, and get the books of the province back to order.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, his department is being cut by up to 10 per cent and this covers three critical components - tourism, culture and heritage - in this province. My question to the minister is, how much does he actually feel is being cut from his marketing

and promotion budget - 1 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent, or all 10 per cent? He obviously has some idea in light of his address to TIANS this week that he so proudly spoke of moments ago in this House.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate. When we make the decisions, everybody will know about them. We've got nothing to hide. We are deliberating. We're talking to all the departments and there's nothing secretive about this. Our goal is to get back to balance. We will do that in a fair and appropriate manner and once it's done, certainly during budget debates, and I hope this year - well, it will be next year - I hope next year, certainly maybe for the first time in many years, that tourism, culture and heritage get to be debated on the floor of the House.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, we'll soon find out considerably more detail when the minister's departmental estimates are tabled here in the Spring, but there's always a "but", as the minister is so fond of saying. The Minister of Finance has no difficulty in telling departments how much less they will spend. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage should be able to provide Nova Scotians, today, with an estimated figure as to how much of a hit marketing and promotions will take in the upcoming year.

My question to the minister is, keeping in mind the value marketing plays in the promotion of this province, how much of an impact will the reduction in marketing have on our \$1.8 billion industry?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, our goal is to increase that \$1.8 billion industry. We can go back and forth about this all day. When it's ready to be tabled, it will be tabled. There's a process that we've got to go through here. It's a legitimate process. We are going to follow that process and our goal is to increase that \$1.8 billion industry.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **COM. SERV.: POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY/ ESIA - TARGETS**

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Community Services. Last week a report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives suggested that there was a downward trend in child poverty since 2003 and 2008. However, in Nova Scotia, we still currently have 14,000 children living in poverty.

Even more interesting, Mr. Speaker, there was a suggestion made that many of these children are living in families who are in receipt of Income Assistance. So my first question to the minister is whether or not she can tell the House that in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the review of the ESIA Program, there will be targeted goals to further lower these numbers?



HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the honourable member for the question. Certainly what we look at in the Department of Community Services and as a government is the fact that to lift people out of poverty isn't just a one-item solution. There are many things that we have to bring together to do that and so what we do is we target our Income Assistance Program and other programs that we have in the Department of Community Services and within other departments. So we can bring those numbers down. Certainly the number of children living in poverty is not acceptable to us or to anybody in Canada. We all need to work together to make sure that number is reduced someday to zero. Thank you.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, everyone here in the House and in society understands the benefits of a quality education. With the recent announcement by the government to have an exercise of 22 per cent cut out of the school board budgets, I'm wondering if the minister is concerned that those cuts may, indeed, affect those marginalized families in receipt of income assistance and their children?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you to the honourable member. As we've all stated here, this province is in a critical financial state. However, we care about the people in Nova Scotia, we care about the children of Nova Scotia and, like anybody's financial situation, it's always a good exercise to go through and see where you are overspending or where you are underspending and to be able to realign that. That is what the process is that we're going through in all our departments to make sure the dollars are spent where they should be, and that will be on the people of Nova Scotia and the children of Nova Scotia.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, another report entitled *See Dick Grow Old, See Jane Retire* was also released by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies last week. That report calls for the poorest families to receive fully-subsidized daycare, to provide a nurturing environment for children while helping their parents while they are in the workforce. I'm wondering if the minister has read this report and if her department is looking at this suggestion as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Once again, thank you for the question. The important factor to know is that, yes, we are very knowledgeable on any reports that come forth. Once again, it is not a one-type of solution where we have invested millions and millions in child care in this province and in terms of subsidies. That is one factor. That is why it is very important that we go forward with our strategies that we have in place and the many changes we have done within this province today to help people get off income assistance and to become more employable or, for those who cannot get off the system, that they do have a future in this province.

Therefore, what I would like to really stress is the fact that we do have a plan, we do have a strategy. We have made many, many changes and we are making a difference. Those changes, I can proudly say, are changes that have been made to policies in this system that

have sat there dormant for decades. We have come in and in a short period of time we have moved things along. Thank you.

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

### **HEALTH: WAIT TIMES - LEVEL 2 PATIENTS**

MS DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Currently Level 2 patients accessing emergency rooms are experiencing conditions which are a potential threat to life. While the national standard target time indicates these patients should be seen in 15 minutes, the most recent data from the Dartmouth General Hospital indicates these same patients are seen in an hour and a half. Those at the QEII are faring just marginally better, at one hour and 15 minutes. That is one hour longer than the prescribed standard.

My question to the Minister of Health is, can the minister please indicate what specific actions her government will take to ensure wait times for patients experiencing potentially life-threatening conditions at Dartmouth General Hospital and QEII are reduced? Thank you.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The member is absolutely right. The wait times in our ERs, at Dartmouth General and the QEII, are absolutely too long. That's why this government hired Dr. John Ross, an experienced Emergency Room physician from the QEII, to deliver us a report, and we have that report.

Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member and other members will know, we have not been sitting on our hands, just waiting for the outcome of Dr. Ross' report. We have introduced eight new general medicine beds at the QEII and a rapid assessment unit there, and that unit has helped divert 280 patients from the emergency department, to date, improving substantially the flow-through through the emergency room there. The Capital District Health Authority is engaged in a planning process to address the Dartmouth General wait times as we speak.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, Level 2 patients are patients who belong in an emergency room; these are not people with colds or sniffles. While these stats are alarming, it's more alarming to note that they have actually become worse since this government assumed power, and not better. Current wait times for Level 2 patients have increased by 20 minutes at the Dartmouth General since last summer, and by five minutes at the QEII. My question to the minister is, does the minister consider wait times that are more than four times the national standard to be acceptable?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I've already told the honourable member that I consider these wait times to be unacceptable; I've told the CEO of the Capital District Health Authority and the board that they're unacceptable. I've asked them to deliver to me, on a regular basis, quarterly reports of the wait times in the emergency rooms, and I've asked them to tell me what they're planning to do to address the long waits in the emergency rooms. All of those pieces of work are very much underway. I'm very much engaged in them, and we are committed to improving the wait times in those emergency rooms.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, we understand that it's a huge task to try to make the changes that are needed, but the point of raising the question today is the fact that the Level 2 patients are patients who have potentially life-threatening conditions. Now, national standards already exist, which emergency rooms are trying to meet, and those standards I've mentioned today - 15 minutes for Level 2 patients. Given that the minister stated today that she'll be bringing forward emergency room standards tomorrow, can the minister assure us today that the standards that are put in place for Nova Scotia will be as high or higher than the national standards and that we won't see these watered down in order to make them easier to attain?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to introducing emergency room standards, and the standards will be designed to raise the bar in emergency room care right across this province. We believe that Nova Scotia will be a leader in terms of having emergency room standards when this is introduced.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**HEALTH - DART. GEN. HOSP.: WAIT TIMES  
- ALLEVIATION PLANS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague, the member for Halifax Clayton Park, has raised the issue of emergency wait times and, following up, my question is also to the Minister of Health.

I asked the minister about wait times and Code Orange at the Dartmouth General last session, but wait times have actually gotten worse since then - and I will table the documents showing that the wait times have actually lengthened. Wait times, as the minister admitted, are already well over target and yet she just answered saying that she has ordered or asked that there be a planning process at the Dartmouth General. The minister knows that the Dartmouth General has repeatedly submitted plans, which haven't been accepted. So what is the Minister of Health doing to address the critical situation at the Dartmouth General for wait times, a situation that has only become worse since the Spring, not better?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my earlier question, the Capital District Health Authority is in the process of planning some particular interventions that will be designed to ease the pressure on the emergency room at the Dartmouth General Hospital. When those measures are fully developed, we will be making announcements with respect to their implementation.

[3:15 p.m.]

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the minister's answer, I'm sure she will not be surprised to say that I don't think it's enough when it's the same answer she gave in the Spring session that they would be planning to solve the issues at the Dartmouth General, and nothing's happened except it got worse.

The government has yet to call this House to a debate on the Ross report. Today the minister committed that the Ross report recommendations and response will come before the House before the House wraps, but what will that be, two minutes before we wrap? Both the Ross report and the 2008 analysis show that - this is what people in Dartmouth are concerned about right now - the NDP promised that they would keep the Cobequid Centre open 24/7 which will cost money. Yet the Ross report and the 2008 analysis note that while extending hours at Cobequid may be viable, operating 24/7 is not recommended. Will the Minister of Health please tell this House today whether the NDP plans to open the Cobequid Health Centre 24/7 despite the recommendations in the Ross report not to do it at all?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I said, Dr. Ross will be releasing his emergency room standards tomorrow and I will be responding to his report in its entirety before this Legislature rises for the Christmas break. At that time, there will be ample opportunity to discuss the measures that we will be bringing forward. Thank you.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think Nova Scotians think that it's good enough to have a response to the Ross report five minutes before the Lieutenant Governor sits in that Chair, signs the bill and sends us all home for Christmas. That's what it's all about. (Applause) When it comes to the Dartmouth General, the minister is well aware that the Dartmouth General has repeatedly submitted a plan for the fifth floor which would help alleviate overcrowding in the ER at a lower cost than keeping people in the beds at the ER.

The fact is, as the minister agreed - I will table these documents as well - that the issue at the Dartmouth General is that semi-urgent cases this week were waiting 20 hours to get admitted when across the harbour they were waiting 4 hours. I asked about this in the Spring and yet things got worse. I will ask again, when will the minister put in place the necessary resources to address the critical issues at the Dartmouth General Hospital?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what members of the public that member is talking to but I can tell you that I'm not convinced that the public has been that impressed with the quality of the debate coming from the Opposition benches (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order. Order, please.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: . . . that they think we should stay here having debates about emergency departments rather than having the minister in her office working on the action plans to implement the methods to get our issues in emergency rooms addressed.

Dr. Ross's report has given us some very good recommendations. It's a road map toward addressing the problems in our emergency rooms. I can assure the members of the Opposition, I will not run away from debating the implementation of these recommendations. I will be having the conversations with communities across the province. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

#### **FIN. - BUDGET BALANCING: CONTRACT-WORK CONSIDER**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. One way we can reduce the size of government and to help balance the budget is to use contract employment to assist government to complete a strategy or a new direction. Often when new full-time equivalents are hired for this purpose, they end up finding ever new policy directions for government. There have even been comments from the small business community that have said, please don't hire people full time to develop regulations because once the task is finished these people will spend their time drafting unnecessary regulation to keep busy.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, why not use this strategy of using project-oriented contract work to help balance the budget?

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, we do.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that the minister would say that he would look to do more of that kind of work to balance the budget. What is the alternative to a government that chooses not to address the size of government? This government has asked school boards to find savings, yet 82 per cent of the costs of school boards are determined for them through labour contracts negotiated by government. So my question to the Minister of Finance is, why is he asking school boards to shoulder the entire Education budget reduction when you only give them power to control 18 per cent of their costs?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the member for Inverness still doesn't understand that under the Progressive Conservative Government the budget of this province nearly doubled in size in only 10 years. If the Progressive Conservative Party, during its 10 years in government, had shown even a modicum of restraint, we wouldn't be facing the difficult decisions that are currently before us.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, many of the members on the opposite side, or the government side of this House, voted against measures to balance the budget in 2002-03. Today I'm trying to suggest something that they could look at to help balance the budget and they refuse to look at it.

Mr. Speaker, school boards will have no choice but to increase the number of students in each classroom, yet I hear that today we need fewer students per teacher because there are more children coming to school nowadays than, say, compared to 25 years ago; nowadays we're seeing children who have special types of allergies, diabetes and learning disabilities that make teaching in the classroom more challenging.

So my question to the minister is, why aren't we optimizing our resources for the good of Nova Scotians instead of growing big government through protection of FTE positions we may not need through concessions during collective bargaining?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, of course, optimizing our resources is exactly what the back-to-balance process is all about. As I've said, we on this side will be disciplined and focused, which are exactly the traits that crowd didn't show when they were in government. They created the mess and we are going to fix it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

#### **ERD - FRITO LAY PLANT: LOCAL POTATOES - USAGE**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, in August the NDP Government announced a payroll rebate to Frito Lay worth up to \$500,000. Now, encouraging and helping business is one thing, but encouraging and helping our farmers is equally important. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development is, why did you not work the assistance around increasing the percentage of Nova Scotia-grown potatoes going to the Frito Lay plant - real investment in our province's farmers?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, that's a question more appropriate between the farmer as the grower of the product and the company itself.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this was an opportunity missed to help keep potato farmers running and sustain our agricultural businesses, also missing, of course, from the most recent agricultural strategy. It seems the NDP Government is only interested in helping big business. After all, Frito Lay is part of the \$62 billion Pepsi empire and not the workers

who keep our economy going. Less than 25 per cent of the potatoes used at the Frito Lay plant come from local sources, the rest come from Prince Edward Island. So my question to the Minister of Agriculture is, what is this government doing to ensure competitiveness for our potato industry with Prince Edward Island?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that if the producers in the province presently ramp it up to their capability, they couldn't supply all that that plant would require. The issues around the potatoes necessary and so on, that's between the producer and the company. I'm sure that when they engage in that dialogue there will be an opportunity for local producers and, hopefully, for more local producers.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, just for the record, Nova Scotia once produced 70 per cent of the potatoes going into Frito Lay. Government hasn't come through with insurance programs that cut down on the risk.

The member for Kings South, who made the announcement in August, said that the rebate is to ensure that businesses are happy and content in Nova Scotia. Today there are no happy and content employees at Larsen Packers, who will lose their jobs in April 2011. There is no one happy and content in Westville, where last week it was announced that 40 people would be out of work by December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Speaker, just ask the nearly 40 people who will lose their jobs at Oland Brewery if any of them are happy and content. Job by job our agriculture industries, our primary industries, are in jeopardy. This government is doing little to stop the bleeding. My final question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development is, what are you doing to stop job losses in our agricultural manufacturing sectors?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'll try not to make this answer too long because we have done a lot in Nova Scotia with respect to employment activities. You know, the first thing I will admit is that, yes, there have been job losses in the Province of Nova Scotia, but in the same breath, Economic and Rural Development, NSBI, and the IEF have created and maintained 7,400 jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia.

We have invested money to the tune of \$221 million. That's not just chicken feed. That's actual money being invested in Nova Scotians to maintain and create jobs. We've done a number of things. For the first time in years, we lowered the corporate tax for small businesses.

You are signalling, Mr. Speaker, that my time is up. As I say, I could go on at length.

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

**TCH: BOSTON RED SOX/N.S. - TOURISM PROMOTION**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. On September 27<sup>th</sup> a letter to the editor written by James Nicholson lauded an idea floated by the member for Victoria-The Lakes about the province partnering with the Boston Red Sox. The letter stated, "I congratulate MLA Keith Bain . . . on championing a tourism idea that shows a bit of forethought." He further adds, "Tourism ads in Nova Scotia for quite a few years have been stuck in the same old cycle. In my opinion, we have fallen behind our Atlantic counterparts in originality and appeal."

My question to the minister is, as a former hockey scout and someone who enjoys sports, are you willing to consider a potential partnership with an organization such as the Boston Red Sox to promote Nova Scotia?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, this government is more than willing to consider anything and everything that makes good business sense for the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in June and August of this year the country of Bermuda, a close trading partner with Nova Scotia, chose to partner with the Boston Red Sox, highlighting four Bermuda theme nights. Through the investment Bermuda has seen some staggering tourism numbers come out of Boston, New England, and New York. According to the Honourable Premier Brown, bookings out of Boston were at an increase of 16 per cent in August, up 16 per cent in September, and a very pleasing 40 per cent after that. New York numbers are equally encouraging, as August and September increased by almost 50 per cent and 27 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, considering these numbers, do you recognize the potential of this idea and will you at least consider being more creative in your approach to improving tourism in Nova Scotia?

[3:30 p.m.]

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I've already said once today and I'll reiterate - we are very open to new ideas. I think I, myself, in particular, am very open. I've introduced some things to the staff at the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage that they'd never heard before. We continue (Interruptions)

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

MR. PARIS: Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? I will not be intimidated, nor will I be bullied. If you would let me continue.



MR. SPEAKER: Yes, please, continue.

MR. PARIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to investigate and use all those means we have available to us to boost tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia. What we do has to make good business sense for the citizens of this province. We will entertain everything - there's nothing that's off the table.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. Fenway Park sells 40,000 tickets a game. The Red Sox have unlimited promotion and marketing potential through NESN TV and WEEI radio affiliates. The Red Sox have millions of fans across the world. I believe the saying goes, "The Red Sox nation has no boundaries." I believe this idea warrants further investigation. If this minister is serious about his high risk equalling high reward, then this is a great opportunity. He could champion an innovative idea that puts Nova Scotia in front of the very people we are trying to market.

My question to the minister is, will you hike up your red socks, lace on your cleats, aim for the green monster, and begin investigating what has proven to be a successful venture for other regions?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not a Boston fan; I'm certainly not a Red Sox fan. You might see me having orange socks on, but I'll never wear red.

I'm not going to say what the opposite member raised is a good idea; I'm not going to say it's a bad idea. It's an idea. I've said here time and time again, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is in the business of elevating tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia. It wouldn't make good sense or common sense, if something was presented in front of us that had a good business case for it, that was within the means of the Province of Nova Scotia, that we would deny it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

#### **TIR - ST. MARGARETS BAY CONNECTOR: HOMES - SAVE**

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Families in Ingraport are afraid their homes will be destroyed to build the proposed St. Margarets Bay connector road, even though there are four other routes for the connector that would not require paving over homes. It makes no sense that the government would destroy homes when it isn't necessary. My question to the minister is, will the minister promise not to destroy homes unnecessarily if the government builds the connector?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question; I truly do. This is an issue close to the community where I live. It's an issue that crosses more than constituency lines. There's a process underway, as the people in the community are aware, a process that involved an open house hosted by my colleague for Chester-St. Margaret's in the Black Point Fire Hall that was well attended, and there was a good, healthy exchange of ideas. Subsequent to that I've heard from various constituents of the member for Chester-St. Margaret's who have expressed their opinions in various ways, in really responsible ways that at times it has been really positive to hear from them, whether they're speaking to me in the local hockey arena or they're speaking to me in the stores in the community.

I can assure you that we're continuing to listen to all of those constituents. More specifically, however, with the process underway, particularly involved with the environmental assessment of five proposed routes, those five proposed routes, that information will be brought to the attention of that constituency sometime in February, at which time there will be a further opportunity and an open house format at that time. We're looking forward to continuing to hear from the residents from the Head of St. Margarets Bay, Ingramport and Hubbards. It's a topic of conversation and interest. I look forward to continuing to hear from them.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, the minister has been asked repeatedly by residents, by media and others whether he will promise not to destroy homes. On Monday the minister's five-year highway plan confirmed the decision to build the connector has already been made, despite his insistence that he hasn't yet decided. Families in Ingramport deserve a straight answer, an answer that will put their minds at ease over the holidays. My question to the minister is will the minister promise not to pave over homes in Ingramport?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the fact that the twinning project between Exit 5 and Exit 6 is of some real consequence to the community that I represent and for many of you who travel that dangerous section of Highway No. 103 as you make your way to and from Halifax. Part of that process will be that generally when you twin a section of highway that's longer than 20 kilometres - in this case, 22 kilometres - communities along that route want to have a connector road, an interchange that will allow people to get either on or off the twinned highway in a faster way.

I can assure you that I've heard from first responders, I've heard from the fire chief, and I continue to hear from the community. But there's a process underway, and it would seem to me that as the minister who is ultimately going to make the final decision, would I want you to stand in your place, honourable member, and not that you would attack me, but that you would criticize me for interfering in the process, for making sure I didn't allow the process to go completely the way it should be - hands off, arm's length, let the process take place, let the engineers and the environmentalists make their recommendation to me and at that time I will make the decision. Thank you.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to stand up for process when he should be standing up for the people; he continues to stand up for the highway when he should be standing up for homes; and he continues to stand up for the connector when he should be standing up for common sense and the community.

The minister would not consider this acceptable if this were his home that would be unnecessarily destroyed. Families in Ingramport certainly don't think it's acceptable. There are four routes that won't harm homes and only one that will - so my final question for the minister is, will the minister announce his department's decision on the Highway No. 103 connector road before the end of this House?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. At no time in this House, while I've been sitting on this side, have I ever answered a question yes or no. I'm not prepared at this time to do it either.

Now I would expect people of Ingramport in particular - and I had the opportunity to go to the Sir John A football game on Sunday where Steve Gilbert, a resident of Ingramport, and I sat down and had a conversation on it. I like the conversation, I don't necessarily like the wanted poster that peers have sent to me. I'm not too keen on some of the other manoeuvres that have been used recently to bring attention to it. I want the people of that community and the people of the Head of St. Margarets Bay to understand on this, this Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, as their neighbour and as the local MLA, will make the right decision when the time comes.

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

#### **PREM.: MS FUNDING - TIMELINE**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. We've heard a lot about regional co-operation lately. One of the issues that has been on a lot of people's minds in the last year has been CCSVI, the Liberation treatment. We've seen the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador put money forward to help look after the interests of people with MS. We've seen the Province of New Brunswick, in a very dire situation, put money towards helping people with MS. We have over 3,000 people here in the Province of Nova Scotia who suffer from MS. They and their families deserve some leadership from this government.

The minister has offered follow up but the question I have for the Premier is this, when is his government going to actually put some real money in place to help those people in Nova Scotia, and their families, who suffer with MS?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, from very early on we have said that we are prepared to participate in national trials when they take place. We understand there is, of course, an appropriate procedure underway. You want to be very careful that you are providing the proper process for therapies like this one to be brought into mainstream treatment.

We care very much about sufferers of MS and the manner in which they receive the benefit of the medical system. We want to be certain that the treatment they are receiving and the assistance they're getting from the system is the very best that they can hope to receive, under very difficult circumstances. Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a disease that is extraordinarily debilitating and is one that entire families struggle with.

The minister has said she intends to follow up and ensure that they receive the appropriate follow-up in . . .

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

Before I go to the order of business, Opposition Business, the honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party on an introduction.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we are often called upon in this Chamber to make important introductions. I know that members will understand in a moment why I say I am about to make the most important introduction that any of us could ever make in this House because I'd like to draw the attention of the members of the House to the west gallery where I would like to introduce the following individuals: Channie Vincent, Judy Young, Kay Hodgson. I'd ask them to stand and, if I may say so, most importantly of all, my mother, Bev Baillie and thank you for coming here today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors here this afternoon.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, during Question Period the Minister of Immigration questioned the figures I provided which showed there has been a decrease in the amount of immigrants to Nova Scotia. I wanted to table here the 2009-10 Accountability Report, which is available on-line from the minister's department, which shows that in 2008 the number of arrivals was 2,651 and in 2009 Nova Scotia experienced a slight decrease in arrivals, with 2,424 immigrant landings.

Mr. Speaker, this clearly shows there has been a decrease in the amount of immigrants coming to our province. Therefore, I believe that my comments were accurate when I made them. I just want to table this document to assist the minister, for her to see for herself that there has been a decrease in the amount of immigrants under her administration.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for tabling that. It's not a point of order but we thank you for the information.

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, will you please call the order of business, Motions Other Than Government Motions.

[3:45 p.m.]

**MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Res. No. 2489.

Res. 2489, Ross Rept. - Recommendations: NDP Gov't. - Response - notice given Nov. 29/10 - (Ms. D. Whalen)

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased today to be able to put this resolution before the House because this resolution relates to emergency rooms in Nova Scotia and it relates to the Ross report, which was released in October in this province. As all of the members of the House know, and I think people in the public, well, particularly in rural areas where there's a great deal of insecurity around the access to emergency rooms, this report by Dr. John Ross has been much anticipated. It took more than a year to come out and we had an interim report last Spring.

Our concern is that this has not had an opportunity to come to the Legislature, that there has been no discussion around what was in the report or what the government intends to do with it. As you know, today, during Question Period, we had two questions on the Ross report looking for where it's headed. We learned today that standards are coming and that we're expecting them from Dr. Ross tomorrow. That will be something to see and we're pleased to see that.

My point in bringing it here today is to really raise concerns we have around where the report is going, how this is going to be rolled out and implemented, and of particular interest to us will be how we're going to see and ensure that primary care access is in place before any changes are made that will make emergency rooms even more difficult or perhaps even unavailable for people in certain communities. I know that reading the report by Dr. John Ross, it is predicated on the stronger model of primary health care, a model that will ensure that people have family practice physicians and that those physicians will be working in collaborative practices. This, of course, is the ideal and the model that we're striving for.

Now within Nova Scotia there are a few such models and maybe it is getting a toehold and beginning to take shape, but there are not many that are fully collaborative models that are working and supporting their communities. As much as I can see the benefit of them, I feel it's very important that there be a commitment from government that before major changes are made to emergency room hours and the expectations of people in communities, that primary care access be ensured for every Nova Scotian.

Right now the report actually said there are some communities that even if you have a family doctor, you may be told you have a six-week wait for an appointment when you call for an appointment. As a citizen of the province, as a mother, as somebody who helps with the health care of my family, I know that six weeks is not acceptable. Many communities have no other option, no other place to go but the emergency room when you have something that you know with your own health record needs to be attended to. It may not be an emergency, but if there's no door open for you, you will be at the emergency room. We need to ensure that is put in place.

I would be remiss, as well, if I didn't start by mentioning the large number of hours that emergency rooms have been closed. We figured out in the last fiscal year we had 19,116 hours of closures of our emergency rooms in this province and over 10,000 of those hours were unscheduled and unplanned. That's a major concern, again, for those communities where I said people can't access primary care, they're being told, even if they're lucky enough to have a doctor, that it's weeks to wait, yet when they are turning to the emergency rooms, there are rotating closures and unplanned closures, which are even worse.

These numbers are actually rising and have gone up somewhat since the government changed. I know they are primarily a factor of human resources, of doctor availability, but the NDP knew that. When the election was held in June 2009, there was no secret around what the causes were of emergency room closures. Yet, the NDP made a promise - not a promise to study - that there would be 24/7 access to emergency rooms around the province. That led to high expectations from the public. It may have, in many instances, helped to get this government elected. Yet that promise was either very naive, because either the government or, at that time, the Party running for office, did not realize what the problems were and I don't really believe that was the case - or it was, perhaps, cavalier because they knew that that was a promise people desperately wanted to hear. Why did they want to hear it so badly? Because it has caused so much trouble in communities, so much angst over those unscheduled closures, over the feeling of insecurity in communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the case here in HRM. As you know, the report talks about both urban centres where the trouble is long waits and too much difficulty in being seen, but there are no closures in HRM. The issue really here is the long waits, but the closures were an issue and very much, I would say, a campaign voting point - a point that would have influenced people's vote because people desperately wanted to know that their ERs would be secure and left open.

This report does not now guarantee that in any way because it points out some of the major problems that underlie the closures. The minister knew that, and the Premier of this province knew those problems when they made that promise in 2009. Now, in the last year we've seen a waiting period, a chance for the government to catch its breath and get Dr. Ross out working. I should say, Mr. Speaker, that I think all members of the House have a great deal of respect for Dr. Ross and we know that he undertook this job with the greatest of intent to do an honest assessment, and I think we have that. From his point of view, he has done a thorough job of researching the problem.

It has given the minister and the government another full year, and then some, to catch their breath and decide how they're going to move on this problem. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, we remember that a promise was made to Nova Scotians that all ERs would be open 24/7, and that is a promise that I don't believe the government can keep. I think that there should be an acknowledgment from them that they have learned something in the interim and that they can't keep that promise, because they're not being frank with Nova Scotians when they now have used language to misconstrue it, to say oh, no, we just said we wouldn't close them entirely.

They talked about round-the-clock, 24/7 access to emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that, if they're going to back away from, they should darn well acknowledge that it's a change, and not just try to play with the language and semantics of the whole issue.

Mr. Speaker, this point of access for many - and I go back to some of the smaller communities in Nova Scotia - is very important. We have to make sure that there are clinics of some sort that are taking the place of emergency rooms, that overnight access is ensured through some other means - and that has to be clear before anything is done that changes the current system. So I just think that this would be the major concern that we have - how is the government intending to implement primary access in every community of the province?

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, in the Clayton Park area having access to drop-in clinics has been tremendously beneficial. When I speak to people in our area about the need for any kind of urgent-care facility, I was actually told they are quite satisfied with the drop-in clinics which are open on the weekends and 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the weekdays. Parents, anybody, even the infirm, feel that they are comforted by knowing they can get in there really, you know, within the day that they require service or require to see a doctor.

We need to provide that same level of access so that people can see a doctor that day or the next day. Dr. Ross talks about this in his report, that a lot of conditions you need to see somebody within a day or two at the most, and we do not have a system in place on the primary health care level that will address that. That, to me, is the most pressing need that comes out of the Ross report - how do you provide that assurance? We need a commitment from government that there will be no changes to the emergency rooms in rural Nova Scotia

and smaller towns in Nova Scotia without ensuring that the people of that area have access to doctors or medical professionals.

I will also go to nurse practitioners because I don't believe we have been aggressive enough in extending our network of nurse practitioners - it's something that other provinces have done much better. I think that we need to be a much more open province in terms of using nurses and nurse practitioners in the delivery of primary health care. They are sometimes missed. If doctors are in too short a supply, we need to create that collaborative care model that will meet the needs.

Mr. Speaker, we're anxious today to certainly hear from the minister about her reaction to the Ross report and about the plans for implementation of this.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand and speak on this resolution, although I find that the ten-minute timeline that you have to speak to such an important topic is rather constraining in many ways, particularly given the various points that the former speaker touched on.

It's hard to respond to them all, but I want to start first of all by saying that I, and this government, did make a commitment to Nova Scotians in the last election to keep ERs open, and it's a commitment that we intend to keep. The first thing we did in moving toward keeping this commitment was to hire Dr. John Ross, whom everybody acknowledges is a very respected and experienced ER doctor and an individual with a lot of integrity and courage. Frankly, that is why we hired him to be our ER adviser - we felt we would get from him an intelligent and comprehensive look at our ERs across the province.

Mr. Speaker, all ERs aren't created equally. We have different problems in different parts of the province - for example, here our emergency department at the QEII has a very different set of problems than, let's say, the ER in Pugwash. In small, rural community hospitals the difficulty tends to be having the doctors available to work around the clock. If something occurs to any of the physician supply in those small communities - a physician is ill, a physician leaves the community and a recruitment to replace that person still isn't in place, a doctor retires or semi-retires - it can throw that whole emergency department into complete chaos in terms of the availability of physician coverage. We certainly see that in the small hospitals.

In the larger hospitals, here at the QEII, we have quite a different problem - we have the volume of people coming in through the emergency departments and unable to be moved at an appropriate rate through those emergency rooms. It creates an extraordinary amount of backup and difficulty, so, indeed, it is complex. Dr. Ross gave us what I think we all can acknowledge is a very comprehensive and good, common-sense look at our emergency departments.



So the first thing we did, Mr. Speaker, was to hire somebody with the competence to be able to give good advice. Part of the report that he issued, though, also talked about the need to have standards so that we have a baseline of acceptable, equitable expectations for what we will get in our emergency care system right across the province, regardless of where you live. As I said earlier today, Dr. Ross will be releasing those standards tomorrow and, subsequent to this, then we will have the full body of his recommendations and advice which will then allow me, as Minister of Health, to respond and lay out the steps the government intends to take in terms of actually moving on the recommendations.

Now the Opposition has talked about the need to have debate and discussion about the implementation. I am very confident that we will have many opportunities to have debate and discussion about the implementation of Dr. Ross' report, and I remind the members that the question of emergency room closures and wait times is not a once-in-a-lifetime issue. This is an issue that has been around for a long time. It is a problem that unfortunately was not addressed, and in fact, was allowed to become worse by previous governments. It is a problem for which the solutions will require some period of time to put in place.

[4:00 p.m.]

While perhaps the members of the Opposition don't recognize this, I know from the conversations I have with people who are providing health care and receiving health care and members of the public, the public are very aware that this is not a problem that will be solved overnight. They're very aware that the problem of emergency room medicine is, in fact, a problem that is being seen right across the country in other health care jurisdictions. What they are expecting and anticipating is concrete actions and plans that will make a difference, and we have already started to take some of those actions in terms of reducing the pressures on emergency rooms.

For example, in his report Dr. Ross indicated that one of the first places we have to start is with the tertiary care emergency department at the QEII. We have already taken some steps there to reduce pressure on that ER. We have added eight general medicine beds to reduce the bottlenecks, to move people through faster. We also have created a rapid assessment unit there, which to date has seen 280 patients diverted from the emergency department. It's so important to understand that our emergency departments, that particular emergency department, has been used as more than an emergency department. It has been used as a place to send patients from all across the province when they're coming here to get a consult in our system. That isn't what an emergency department is for. It's not a throughway into the hospital.

It's also frequently the case that people go to that emergency department with mental health - it's the path of least resistance when they're having a mental health crisis. That's why we have the mobile crisis units here to divert people out of the emergency departments. Those crisis units are having some impact. These are things that are already happening with respect to our big emergency department, but we do need to do more.

The honourable member spoke about the need to do more around primary care. Absolutely, it is true that the thing that we most need to do, I think, is be able to provide people more rapid access to primary care. People should not have to wait six weeks, four weeks, three weeks to see a family doctor. Members of this House may know that yesterday I wasn't here because I had an eye infection. I got up in the morning, I went to the North End Clinic on Gottingen St. It opens at 9:00. I walked in through the door and at 9:10 I saw a family physician who was able to take me immediately. We need to have that kind of access to health care so that people - My only alternative, if I couldn't have done that, would be to go sit in an emergency room, which is not an appropriate use of an emergency department, and probably I would have sat there all day.

We need to have more community health centres like the North End Clinic, for example, that have people available to see people like myself who have an immediate need but not an emergency. We are opening new clinics. Mr. Speaker, we opened one in your area, your neck of the woods - maybe not in your constituency, but in New Glasgow, a new collaborative clinic.

I can't wait to unveil the government's response to Dr. Ross' report. I think people in this province will be very pleased at the fact that they're going to get better health care, faster, in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have a few minutes today and the minister is right - 10 minutes is by no means enough time to speak about this topic but I'll try to cover a few points in that time frame.

I want to start off with those who are out there working right now. We have fabulous staff working in this province whether they be paramedics on the streets, nurses and doctors in the emergency departments and generally in hospitals overall, and all of the staff who work there, but the nurse practitioner was mentioned a little bit earlier as well, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that I've talked about in this House before. We're fortunate enough to have Dawn Lowe working in my area after much debate and working hard to get it done by a couple of different members actually in this House, including myself as one of them, and I'll give that credit where it's due.

Mr. Speaker, it works very well and I think most people in the Hantsport area who are serviced by that individual and by Dr. Wile are doing very well and are pleased at the service they're getting. So she's quite right, there is a lot of room to improve that circumstance. I know the finances are always a part of that issue, but it is money well spent.

Now, here we are, we've been talking about this problem for a long time. We've been hearing about emergencies. This is not something that is specific to Nova Scotia, in case anybody has missed that. This has been going on in other provinces. Ontario had this

problem long before we did. We're seeing the backups with emergency departments and wait times and ambulances waiting to get free, and the whole likes of it now. That was going on in Ontario, in downtown Toronto and places years ago, and it has just evolved to Nova Scotia and to other provinces. This is not new.

So in the early days, in the business I was in previously, in the 1970s the ambulances were mostly run in conjunction with somebody else - a funeral home, you name it, the taxi services. We said, along about the mid-1990s, we want to make this better, and it got better. It really did. Ron Stewart was a big part of that and I give credit and have the greatest respect for Dr. Stewart who brought in a lot of what is now in existence today, then with EMC coming onboard and EHS and so on, but they didn't just dream that up overnight.

This system already existed. What did we do? We didn't reinvent the wheel. We went out and we sent people around the world and we looked. We looked at places that functioned and functioned well and, today, we have one of the very best - in my opinion we have the best in the world - systems when it comes to emergency services on the streets with our paramedics. Not only are they out on the streets, they are in hospital emergency departments doing things. We have had trials in Digby Neck and other areas that have worked well.

We need to go back to that and we need to consider, again, some of these - not trials though - they worked well, why aren't we going back and looking at that. These are not new issues and these are not specific to Nova Scotia. We have solutions in other parts of the world that work. Why aren't we going there and looking at them? They exist. Let's not spend a whole bunch of money and wasted effort reinventing things that aren't working. We have to go out there and put it in place.

We talked about doctors where you just can't go and drag a doctor. I'll be critical when I need to be in this House, I'm going to say that I know from my experience, doctors generally speaking want to work - especially right out of school - they want to be in the urban areas where all of the nice equipment is, and it's new and functioning, and it's busy, because they've got skills that they just learned that they want to put to work, and they need to put to work, so that they can be good at what they're doing. We have to have some kind of an incentive to get physicians to come to rural Nova Scotia, but I keep hearing about the wait time and the wait time.

Well, the clinics are a great idea too. We have a clinic in Windsor and we're fortunate. The only problem with it is it's for two hours, three nights a week, and they're busy, but the minister is quite right, she spoke about a 10-minute wait time. That's probably fairly accurate. I can go over to my local clinic, myself, one of my kids, and generally speaking you're in and you're out because they are minor things. If you need a prescription for a sore throat or something like that, that's all fine, it works very well. It's a system that works well that we are not building on enough, and perhaps that's where the report will take us, I don't know.

These promises in past campaigns about keeping emergency departments open - well, in all honesty they weren't worth the paper they were written on. It's not possible, not with the plan that's in place today because we're too busy throwing money at something that's not working. There have been no solutions to Glace Bay, there has been no solution to Shelburne and other places - the Valley has issues with emergency departments not being open. There are no solutions to those that we have seen so far.

Now, I am also awaiting Dr. Ross' report. The minister spoke a few minutes ago that she felt that Nova Scotians would be very pleased with what might be delivered in that. Well, I hope so. I hope that there's something that works. I hope that she has a plan that is going to be sustainable, financially sustainable, that people can go and get the service they require. Now, in having said that, I don't know anybody, I don't think I've ever talked to anyone who has had a severe illness, an incident that has not been treated appropriately in this province, who has not received the care when they've gone to an emergency if they are sick with something and have not called an ambulance, that they've been turned away.

Now, there may have been incidents. I don't know of any right off the top of my head. I'm sure over the years, people have gone away and maybe have been mis-diagnosed or something, but fortunately we have a good EMS system in place that works. 911 works well. The other things that are now in place, the 811 - I still think that the nurse practitioner is not fully utilized. We have other opportunities. We have pharmacists who are doing a little bit more now by way of prescribing drugs. These people are also very knowledgeable when it comes to medicine. We're not building on that.

I would ask the government, are you looking at other countries, are you looking at other services to say, there's a plan that works well? There are all kinds of jurisdictions around the world that are of equal size to Nova Scotia, that have population figures that would be the same, who have the same issues that we have. People get sick, it happens. We need to continue to seek these people out, seek these provinces and these countries out, and say, here are some ideas that work well. I think we could quickly determine what doesn't work. We know what doesn't work - we're sitting around that right now. It doesn't work well, we throw a lot of money at it. We spend millions of dollars in administration, and in my opinion - you've heard me on this rant before - over-administration.

We have nine health districts, can you believe that? Not even a million people in this province and we have nine administrative health boards making decisions. Why are we doing business differently across the province? There's everything from procurement and so on. (Interruption) Now there's nine. Well, I've harped about this. It didn't matter to me who was in government. I'll say this, it doesn't matter who made it nine. In the days when it was going to nine, I argued it then, and it didn't matter to me who was in government. I'll argue it forever.

I disagree with the fact that we have health districts that need to manage small quantities of people. It's an administrative cost that we see. These are all very qualified people, but why are we doing business differently? It's like the school boards. Why do we have so many? We keep tossing all the responsibility back to them. We hear government say, it's not our responsibility, the boards are in place to manage it. Well, they don't let them manage it in some ways. (Interruption)

Oh, there are a couple of paramedics. The honourable member is mentioning perhaps we should be back there working and doing the job that needs to be done. There are probably some good ideas when it comes to treating the people that could be put forward on the table here and some good debate - no doubt in my mind at all, some very good debate. I'm disappointed that I haven't seen more come from that member on the other side now that he's on the government benches - put forward some good ideas and some good pieces.

Now, I know he knows it, and the reason I know that he knows it is because he had a really good teacher. He may not admit that, but I know that he did, and we spent many hours together, not only in that fashion but as partners working on the street together and looking after sick people - and looking after them well, because we had a good system. In the old days we may not have had such a great system, but we had a good team. Darrell Bardua, there's a name from way back. It's important that we get back on track here, and it's hard to do sometimes because of the distractions.

We have to create emergency rooms that service people appropriately and the minister spoke to it to some degree by way of, if you're not sick, you should be going somewhere else. Well, it's great to say, and I know she spoke - well, a different Speaker was in the Chair - to the Speaker maybe representing Pictou West or somewhere in that neck of the woods where clinics have been set up. The clinic is a great idea, a fabulous idea - but not for two hours a day, three days a week. It has to be available much more than that and we have to build on that. We have to build on the nurse practitioners. They could be in the emergency departments where we see them close. We've had paramedics working in emergency departments for years.

More importantly, we have to keep focusing on all of Nova Scotia, not just the HRM, not just the QEII and the wait times there. Wait times exist in Nova Scotia in many facets, not just in emergency departments, trying to find a physician. They exist everywhere. We need to treat people fairly across the province. You should be treated fairly in Middleton, perhaps, as you are in the HRM. Why are people treated differently? They shouldn't be. It's just as important to solve those issues as it is to create shorter wait times in the HRM.

Not that I'm against the HRM. I live in the Capital District, but we have to remember equality across the board. The shortages and the emergency closures are not in the HRM. They're in rural Nova Scotia. We need to not forget that. We need to work on that. We need to go and find plans that are already in place, not try to create the wheel over again and the expenses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ten minutes goes way too fast.

[4:15 p.m.]

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand and join the debate around Resolution 2489. We've been talking a lot about emergency care and really, the real issue facing many communities across this problem and many health care facilities is access.

The reason the long wait lists are happening in emergency rooms from one end of Nova Scotia to the other is because, quite frankly, it's the only portal into the health care system that Nova Scotians have to access primary care. As the minister would know, one of the facilities that was pointed out in the report was the Annapolis Community Health Centre that Dr. Ross had referred to as being a care model, which means that basically they would reduce the hours of access, close it earlier in the evening.

What happens to those citizens who are using that emergency room as their access to primary health care? I would have preferred if Dr. Ross had been hired to go around the province to deal with the issue of how to prevent people from going to the emergency room. How do we create a model of health care that would allow Nova Scotians to access health care in the right place in the right time and see the right health care professional.

When Dr. Ross was looking at the Annapolis model, for example, no where in the report does he say how much money will be saved by creating these care models. I think that's an important question. He suggests in my constituency of Annapolis, for example, that the Middleton facility would be open 24/7 along with the Digby General. Both of those are experiencing emergency room closures. Ironically, a few weeks ago I was invited to a public conversation about the Ross report. The minister met with constituents of mine and citizens of the community and the health care providers and I thank her for that.

But during that evening, there was the conversation about closing that emergency room in Annapolis Royal at 10:00 p.m. and having patients go to either Digby or Middleton. Ironically, the following weekend, Soldier's was closed. When I asked the question about how much money will you really save, I believe it will be very little. What we'll be doing is distributing our health care professionals in a different way. Those doctors who we will not allow to work in the community health centre that they actually practice in, will have to go and cover those emergency rooms in Middleton or in Digby.

I think what Dr. Ross was trying to say in his report around emergency rooms is that we need to do a better job of distributing our health care professionals in a more equitable way across Nova Scotia so that more Nova Scotians can reach an emergency room that would be open in a timely manner. This is not about saving money.

Quite frankly, the government did say they were going to keep emergency rooms open 24/7. Let's be clear about that. When you say you're going to keep them open 24/7 - not from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. - they told the people of my constituency and all across the province they were going to keep them open 24/7.

One of the other things Dr. Ross talked about, and the minister and I have had a conversation about this, was that when you close an emergency room or an outpatients' department, as I think may be a more appropriate reference to it at 10:00 p.m., then 911 and the EHS need to be called upon and Nova Scotians need to rely on the EHS more frequently.

One of the issues is, as we start this conversation, if that's the road we're going to go down, we also have to start discussing the fees Nova Scotians pay when they call for an ambulance. There are Nova Scotians who refuse to call when they should be calling because they're afraid of the bill when it arrives. The other issue with that is - I know the member who spoke earlier and the member for Sackville-Cobequid would know - when EHS transfers a patient out of my constituency, for example, and the ambulance comes into Halifax, what happens is we begin to bump, ambulances start moving towards the capital. For example, when an ambulance leaves Bridgetown, one will come up from Annapolis, leaving Annapolis vacant, which is a real void in that system and it will be a real challenge to lay out the delivery of the model that Dr. Ross is talking about without looking at those challenges and making sure that the holes in the system are being protected.

Mr. Speaker, it was spoken to earlier about some solutions for how we deal with the health care professionals and deal with the shortage of health care professions. We have laid on the table what we think is a very positive one for the Province of Nova Scotia, that is we would designate 20 medical seats a year at Dalhousie University and for us, as a community, as a province, paying for their education, those physicians would go to communities where we need their help, where we have a shortage of physicians.

I was actually accused by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of being too forward-thinking in the by-election. God forbid, Mr. Speaker, that a government and a province and people who are elected actually thought beyond a political mandate.

The minister and I have had a conversation about another issue which is the residency seats here and the fact that those seats, we don't have enough of them, Mr. Speaker, we need more residencies here. We need more residency seats for Nova Scotia students, for those students who are being educated here, who get their complete training here, they are more likely to stay and work and live in this community.

The third year of a residency program - and I know the minister and her department are moving on this and I think this is a very positive step. Shortly after Dr. Marrie became the Dean of Dalhousie Medical School, I went down and met with him and we talked about this issue of third year residencies actually moving outside of the capital city, moving out into rural parts of the province to do their internship in the third year. That is a positive step

forward, it is one of the positive solutions that I believe will help us deal with the challenges of accessing primary health care in rural areas.

I believe that when a number of those residents go out and start working in rural Nova Scotia, they'll want to move there and work there. They'll want to live there because they'll see a quality of life for themselves and they will also see a quality of life for their children, that they might want to raise them in a rural part of our province.

To me, we are looking at this whole issue around emergency rooms in a backward way. It really is about access to health care. How can we best deliver a model of health care that will allow Nova Scotians to have access to that health care?

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency of Annapolis we have a collaborative practice, a nurse practitioner, we have a number of physicians who work there. There's an RN in the facility, there are dietitians in the community health centre. But there are some challenges around the structure of some of those collaborative practices, and I know the minister and I have spoken about this, that there needs to be measurable targets in the building of that clinic. We need to make sure that the physicians are working those 40 hours in the clinic, making sure that those Nova Scotians are getting access to their primary health care in the clinic. If they work an evening shift in the emergency room, we want them to work the next day in the clinic, to ensure that those Nova Scotians are going in the appropriate place to get health care.

The real savings in this entire system will be, quite frankly, when we build a system that allows Nova Scotians to have access to primary care outside of the emergency room. Everyone in this building, and I would hope all Nova Scotians know, we're allowing Nova Scotians to access health care through an emergency room, which is the most expensive portal to provide health care in. We need to redirect the patients, not close their access by shutting down the emergency room at 10:00 p.m., we need to redirect them to a nurse practitioner, to a diabetic program, chronic disease management, all of those things. The fact that we're going to allow pharmacists to widen their scope of practice is a positive thing.

You may find this hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, but there are people going to the emergency room in my constituency to have a prescription refilled. That is a poor use in accessing health care. I look forward to seeing the minister's response to the Ross report and making sure that we have timely access to health care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 2490.



Res. No. 2490, re Educ.: Prog. Cuts - Planning Exercise - notice given Nov. 29/10 - (Ms. K. Regan)

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place this afternoon to discuss this, although I'm not pleased that I have to do it. As the government well knows, school boards can't touch about 80 per cent of the funding that comes to them because that's already earmarked for salaries and that leaves boards with about 20 per cent to manoeuvre with for things like programming. It might be, in fact, slightly less than 20 per cent, as my colleague mentioned yesterday. The province needs to take responsibility for the parts of the school board budgets that it runs up. It has been telling school boards to cut programs while telling them not to cut staff, as if programs run themselves and as if the biggest cost of programs isn't, in fact, staffing them.

The realities are that the schools of today are experiencing better retention rates than we have had in the past. Our schools are serving more students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and other physical issues. Intellectually challenged students who graduate high school are now eligible to remain at those schools for several years until they're eligible for training programs and we're asking our schools to take on far more than they have in the past.

Nova Scotia is on the cusp of facing a major labour shortage. We do not do our future workers any favours by slashing a system that already has the lowest rate of funding in the country. The impact of cuts - we're talking about cuts that matter to students. We're talking about programs that matter to students. Now, just last night the member for Dartmouth East was attending a Christmas concert at a local school and the parents were coming up to him and saying they were concerned that if the province goes through with its cuts, there may not be a concert next year, there may not be a music program next year.

In Yarmouth we know the board has sent home a letter with students asking their parents to check off the school services they can live without. Parents are being forced to choose between closing schools and having fewer programs. Some of the things they've been asked to give their thoughts on, everything from bus service, maintenance service, cafeteria services, it says all students would be expected to bring food from home or to eat off-site. Now, granted, not all students have these in all boards but the parents are being forced to make hard choices that, in fact, the government should be making. Professional development for school staff, technology services, anyone who has a computer knows that they break down and if you start eliminating that kind of thing from a school, you're going to have problems.

Grants to school libraries, this would mean less access to materials beyond basic classroom material and would inhibit the ability to research projects and to teach our kids how to read for pleasure. Studies show that the better you read, the more likely you are to

finish your schooling. Extra and co-curricular busing, again, some boards do not have that and in many cases - and I know that's certainly the case at the school where my son goes for after-school band - in fact, the parents pay for after-school busing.

We could be looking at a reduction in the number of school support staff, so you'd have fewer EPAs or PSAs, student support workers, library personnel, custodians and bus drivers, a reduction in the number of teaching staff, which would lead to larger classes, more and larger combined classes, fewer course options for students and more teachers teaching outside their areas of expertise.

I can tell you that I had two children go to school two years apart when there were major changes made in the school system in the former Halifax County. In one case, my oldest daughter went to school and there were 22 kids in her class and they went for full days and that child came out at the end of Primary ready to read chapter books. Her sister followed two years later, when there were over 30 kids in her class and they had moved the Primary back to a half-day. We had to put my daughter in extra classes to help her out because she just did not have that kind of intensive one-on-one time with her teacher because her class was so jammed.

[4:30 p.m.]

The 13<sup>th</sup> thing that the Yarmouth board asked about was the number of substitutes - no school for students whose bus driver, PSA or teacher, is unable to report for work. All students whose regular teachers are unavailable could be gathered in one room with a supervisor and school would be cancelled if custodians were out.

Mr. Speaker, that is a huge implication and it also goes on to talk about the possibility of the number of French Immersion Programs being reduced, the number of schools being cut, that there would be fewer programs. Then you start looking at things like O2, co-op and Reading Recovery cancelled and no new initiatives to help engage students, resulting in more failure and closure, fewer programs, less choice for high school.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the Speech from the Throne in 2010, the government promised education and training would be its answer to the impending workforce shortage. How is it keeping that promise? We haven't seen it. I must say that past remarks that the then Opposition Leader made, for example, Saturday, November 13, 2004, "School fundraising goes back a long way . . ." Dexter said, "But that's money that should be used to pay for extracurricular activities." He said that student fees were increasing, ". . . but they're paying for things that should be funded through the Department of Education." Do you think that won't happen if we start making cuts that add up to 20 per cent or 22 per cent? He went on to say, ". . . school fees for some families are just not affordable."

The Premier made it clear at that time that he was against school funding for core education materials, that a 22 per cent cut is going to make that situation in our schools even worse. In *The ChronicleHerald* on Friday, May 26, 2006, he said, “We have a school system that is the most underfunded in the country . . . At some point in time, I think the government just has to recognize that moving funding for schools up to the national average and providing the children of the families of this province with the proper resources is what has to happen.”

Mr. Speaker, what has happened in those four years? Why has the Premier abandoned the families, abandoned the students of this province? I just want to say I think our students deserve better than this.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Resolution No. 2490 and the road ahead for public education.

Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise to anyone that Nova Scotia, like the rest of the world, is facing some very difficult financial challenges. Our costs are rising. Our revenue growth is slowing and the course we are on is not sustainable. This is not a position any government wishes to be in, but we recognize that Nova Scotia is at a crossroads. Action is needed to get the province’s finances in order and our budget back to balance. There will be some very tough choices ahead for this province.

Nova Scotians expect their government to live within its means. They read newspapers, they watch the news, they see with their own eyes that Nova Scotia is not immune to economic wave and demographic shifts sweeping the world. Nova Scotians are ready for us to make some tough choices so long as they are smart choices. I believe Nova Scotians would be extremely disappointed with us if we did not explore all the options and challenge all public sector partners to find savings and efficiencies where they can.

Now, I don’t know about others in this House but I am here for one reason - to watch out for the best interests of our young people and to make life better for families. Mr. Speaker, every government department, every agency and board, every public sector entity that receives money from the taxpayers of this province is being asked to look for ways to make things better, and public education is no different.

School boards are being asked to carefully examine their spending, to determine the potential impacts of our budget scenarios, and to look at all options to achieve savings, while minimizing the impact on the classroom. They have been presented with budget scenarios totalling \$197 million over three years. That’s about 6 per cent a year on public school budgets of just over \$1 billion. We’ve asked boards to examine what a reduction of 5 per cent might look like over three years and what the potential impacts would be if they had to absorb or were asked to absorb the normal inflationary and wage pressures. We have also

asked them to give some careful consideration of other expenditure measures, to reflect the fact that we have a public school system that continues to expand while our enrolments shrink by almost 3,000 students a year.

These are budget scenarios our education partners, and indeed the public, are not used to seeing after a decade of funding increases. Given the dramatic enrolment decline in our schools, contrasted with the 51 per cent rise in investment over the past 10 years, we don't believe these budget scenarios are an unreasonable starting point for discussion.

I'd like everyone to look at the big picture. On the first day of classes in September 1970, more than 215,000 students headed off to school. It was our highwater mark. We have been losing students every year since. In the last decade alone, student enrolments have dropped by almost 30,000 and today we have about 127,000 students in 426 schools. Despite this dramatic decline in enrolment, government continued to invest and expand programs and services and targeted additional funding to keep community schools open. Government has maintained the number of teachers, expanded core professional services, increased the number of system consultants at the board level, and supported those services with additional bureaucracy, all to support the teacher and the student in the classroom. By 2020 we will have 17,000 fewer students still.

I am proud of the work that our boards do educating our students and the work that the staff of the department does to support them in student learning, but as the world shifts beneath us we must ask ourselves if there's a better way to ensure our investment is reaching its intended target. Do we have a school system that is positioned to meet the needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century or are we funding a structure designed for a generation long since graduated?

I don't have the answer to those questions, at least not yet, but it is my duty and the responsibility of this government to ask those hard questions and to take the necessary steps to fulfill our obligations to students, their families, and the people of Nova Scotia. This is the exercise we are on now. Nothing is more important to families than the education of their children, and I know that personally. I have a grandson who just started school a bit over a year ago and a granddaughter who will be starting next Fall, so I have a personal as well as a higher-level responsibility and interest in all this. That is why we need to make sure that the money we invest in public education gets to where it is needed most: the classroom. We are working closely with boards to make sure that at the end of the day, we make the best decisions for students and for public education within the current financial climate. We are being transparent and accountable.

Boards are understandably apprehensive. As a former school board member I've been in their shoes and I appreciate the position they're in. They're currently in the process of working with their budget scenarios and identifying the potential impact. Once we have that information, we'll sit down with them and go over the impact so that we fully understand the implications before any decisions are made. We are still in the very early stages of this

budget exercise. No decisions have been made. We want to explore all the options, want to work with boards, we want to seek their input and expertise, we want to find savings where we can while minimizing the impact on students. We need to look for every possible saving in offices and administration before looking elsewhere.

This is what we're doing and we expect our partners to do it too. There's no doubt there are difficult decisions ahead, but my hope, my expectation is that we will emerge with a strong public education system that we can all be proud of. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place tonight and speak to Resolution 2490. In particular, if I could refer to some of the whereas statements in that particular resolution, it is a resolution that our caucus supported.

I want to speak to some information there that I think is critical. This 22 per cent reduction will have a negative impact on programs that we are able to deliver for our students. That is a fact. We know that. Secondly, the Minister of Education claims that this need for budget cuts to education is a result of declining enrolment and that is absolutely false. We know that enrollment is addressed in our schools through the Hogg formula. Any decline in enrollment and assignment of teachers is calculated with that formula. So this budget cut exercise has nothing to do with enrollment and decline. It's misleading to tell people in Nova Scotia that is the real reason.

Lastly, the worry that this exercise, as it's being called, is presenting for parents, teachers and administrators. We know that school boards, at this time of the year, are already well into their budget planning exercise. Their budget year ends March 31 and they begin that process once school is in session and they get into the Fall, they start that budget planning. Now, in the midst of that planning, this bomb has been dropped on them.

How can school board staff and school boards address the issue of planning for their next year when they're scrambling to try to find 22 per cent cut in the funding that they have. The timing is terrible and some of the information is a bit questionable. Let's look at this. We have parents who are anxious. We have teachers who are trying to do their best, but it's uncertain what their future is going to be. We have administrators who are trying to determine what their budget will be so they know what their staffing allocation will be, and yet we're hearing that this is an exercise. I'm sorry, but this exercise is causing a lot of unnecessary grief.

I want to talk a little bit about what has happened within the Department of Education. Over the last number of years, there have been needs identified and programs planned for and implemented that would address the different learning styles and different needs of students in our school system. Many of those programs are part of that targeted funding. I'd like the minister to listen to some of the targeted funding and ask herself the

question, what happens to the students who will benefit from that targeted funding if in fact it's gone? I understand that boards are allowed now to look at targeted funding and that scares me because targeted funding is put in place to meet the needs of students

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter's getting a little high in the room.

[4:45 p.m.]

MS. CASEY: Targeted funding was put in place because there were individual student needs that were not being met through the regular program. Let's take Options and Opportunities as an example. In one particular board, Chignecto Central School Board - the second largest student population of all the boards in the province - Options and Opportunities is a \$1 million targeted budget line. Easy to take that out but look at the students who are still in our public schools because of the Options and Opportunities Program. These are students who would not, may not, and sometimes have not been able to benefit from a regular classroom program. They go into the Options and Opportunities, they are able to pick up some of those courses, along with their academic program, and they graduate with a Grade 12 graduation certificate. Those kids are motivated and interested in a program through O2. It's gone, it's an easy cut but what does it do to the students in this province who are benefitting from that?

Let's look at another targeted fund, a budget line for autism. Now anyone who has had the experience of being the parent of an autistic child, being the teacher of an autistic child, or having any close relationship with a child with autism would recognize that their needs require special attention in our classrooms. So the department has targeted funding to school boards to help them deal with children with autism. It's targeted. If it's gone in this particular board, it is a \$33,000 budget line and that is support for students with autism. Easy to cut that because it is part of targeted funding.

Let's look at another one, math mentors. Everyone in this House knows the problem that we have in this province with math scores, so the department has put in a program where people can be mentored, to help teachers with teaching math. It's targeted, it's gone. This particular board, \$364,000 to support math mentors to try to get math scores up to an acceptable standard. It will be gone if boards have to take a 22 per cent cut and they can cut into targeted funding.

You can be sure, Mr. Speaker, that the needs of students that are currently being met through supports in targeted funding, will be left and they will be lost. They will drop out and the math scores will show that. We will not be providing quality education for our students in this province and we have made significant gains and a 22 per cent cut is going to slash everything that this province has gained, everything we have done to public education, to help our students to be better qualified, keep them in school, better educated so they can go on.

We brag about this being an education province and we have to educate our young people. We know that and yet we're going to slash the very programs that allow us to do that. Mr. Speaker, a 22 per cent cut in education is something that will destroy and devastate our education system. It will be the kids of our province now and the future people in our employ in this province who will not get what they deserve. They will not get what they deserve because this government feels that they need to cut 22 per cent from a department that is already down to less than 15 per cent of discretionary funding.

We have teachers' salaries, we have targeted funding and now we're going to slash the funding so that these student will pay a price and, Mr. Speaker, they will pay a price. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in my place tonight to speak about a resolution put forward by my colleague and addressed so well by the former Minister of Education.

As an MLA who came to the House, getting toward the end of his career, a teacher by training, by experience and, as some have said, by temperament, it's very difficult for me to get up and speak in such a short time on such an important issue in this province.

Now first of all, Mr. Speaker, I think that this Minister of Education missed an absolutely glorious, a needed moment in time in Nova Scotia to review the Hogg Formula. If she had done that 18 months ago, in fact it would have helped her to address some of the inequities within the whole system of Nova Scotia because some boards get a bit too much, others get less. Dr. Jim Gunn worked for his entire last few years to help the Department of Education realize that the AVRSB system was underfunded, the HRM system underfunded. Address those and you start to look at evening out and a greater equity.

We're a province that has one of the lowest levels of funding for education in the country. We can't be looking at a 22 per cent cut, it's totally unrealistic. One of the things that the minister is absolutely wrong - ask any educator in this province about it - in saying we've dropped from a couple of hundred thousand to 133,000 students therefore we now need less money. Twenty years ago, the drop-out rate in Nova Scotia was 17.8 per cent. Today we're at around 7.8 per cent. To get down to that 7.8 per cent was not an additional million a year, it was exponentially more to arrive at that kind of figure, in fact, a good national figure that we're at. Now she's going to jeopardize one of the great achievements that we've made in this province.

The Gunn report said that in our junior high years, we need more people in the hallways. More people assisting teachers in the classroom, identifying the children in trouble that would help them early and keep them in school. We need EAs and those kind of trained people to get into our schools.

Take a look at our national and international testing. It's not bad but it's not where it needs to be and where it could be. In our national testing we were always in the top five at one point in the history of our province, now we're usually in the bottom five. We have a lot of work to do and good, targeted placement of dollars can, in fact, help us raise our standards. We need more EAs, not less, I hear every September in letters from parents whose children are not getting the kind of assistance they need. I talk to teachers now and unlike the old days, guess what they're doing? They're making four lesson plans. We've modernized in our classrooms, we're meeting some of the modern strategies and approaches to teaching.

Could you imagine preparing four lesson plans and then in your class you have two autistic children? Do you know that in HRM alone, 50 autistic children entered the system this year. That's costly to meet their needs but if we don't pay now - I also go into small option homes where there are adults who are autistic and they have a vocabulary of five, six, seven, eight words - we will pay much later to keep somebody in an institution for 50, 60, 70 years of their life.

There's a whole different way of trying to accommodate learning styles and it's no question that it costs more for our system to run. We're now down to one vocational school. and I know the new modern community colleges are outstanding but vocational school education has built-in enormous strengths and we have one left in the province. The Options and Opportunities, which my colleague opposite mentioned, we know how this has helped lift a number of students to gain an insight into their potential and the kind of career that they could go on to and an actual direct assist because those courses can be used when they go on to community college. We don't need a single cut there. In fact, there are many boards not meeting the current needs. We need to be able to have more O2 in our schools. It's a dynamite program. Teachers are getting better training to deliver it and the success of students staying in school, to have this program available, we need to expand it.

Alternate schools, look at the school boards with an alternate school, maybe two or even three, as AVRSB has. Last week I had one of the most heartening letters since becoming an MLA, thinking that perhaps this kind of school may be jeopardized. It's the first time that her daughter is enjoying school, is learning, is discovering some of her potential. These are things that we cannot jeopardize with a 20 per cent to 22 per cent cut potentially in funding.

I would encourage the minister to start a province tour and go into our schools, go into the classrooms, look at what is going on, talk to teachers, talk to administrators. This would be a wonderful reality check before she and the department get down to having to review this.

I can assure the minister that she will be saying we have to at least remain at the status quo of the dollars that we're currently putting into education. Are there a few little places where some adjustments could be made? Absolutely, but they're very, very minimal



indeed. To take a serious bite out of the front-line teachers and EAs in this province is not to move at all in the right direction. So I would really encourage the minister to take a very serious look. We don't want to remain a have-not province, and education is one of the areas that we can, in fact, teach and train the next generation of Nova Scotians.

I'll just end off with a note, my last little paragraph in my last article to the newspaper - education is the answer to our problems, not the symptom. Education is not causing us financial problems in this province. Further cutting funding to our schools is not an option. I ask the Dexter Government to work with everybody, no matter their political affiliation, to make decisions that will strengthen our economy now and in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, that completes the Liberal Opposition Business for today. I would now turn it back to the Deputy Government House Leader for tomorrow's business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the hours for tomorrow will be 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m. After the daily routine and orders of the day, we'll have Public Bills for Second Reading - Bill Nos. 88, 121, 122, 123, 124, and 125, and also the bills that are in the Committee of the Whole House on Bills - Bill Nos. 103, 105, 106, 109, and 110.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We are now adjourned until noon tomorrow.

[The House rose at 4:57 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2639**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas anniversaries are occasions for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it has been said that: A marriage anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance and tenacity, but the order varies for any given year; and

Whereas on August 6, 2010, a very special occasion took place when Dennis and Doreen Pottier celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Dennis and Doreen on this remarkable milestone in their life together and in wishing them many more happy years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2640**

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 Royal Canadian Legion Branch 38 of Liverpool continues to support and provide funding to so many causes in the community, year after year; and

Whereas funds are raised through the annual Poppy Campaign, their Friday night suppers, darts, Friday Night Fever dances, variety shows, flea markets and a number of other activities; and

Whereas the funds raised through these events are donated to groups and organizations throughout Queens to enable them to purchase additional equipment, give away a bit more food or make someone's day a bit better;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and thank all of the members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 38 in Liverpool for all of their financial support to groups and organizations throughout Queens.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2641**

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 company of OLS (On Line Support) came to Queens County a few years ago, opening a customer support service which employs people who can share, grow and thrive during their career with the company; and

Whereas OLS takes pride in their employees and recognizes the successes of employees for their outstanding achievements with the Awards of Excellence every year; and

Whereas Cindy Swinimer was recognized during the 2009 Awards of Excellence presentation as the Team Leader of the Year, Canada wide;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Cindy Swinimer on having won the Canada wide 2009 Awards of Excellence for her outstanding achievement in winning the Team Leader of the Year.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2642**

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 Shakira Joudrey, 12 years old, placed 52<sup>nd</sup> in the 100-metre Free and 56<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Back;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Shakira Joudrey for her wonderful accomplishments at the Summer Swimming Provincial Tournament.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2643**

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 Jacob Chandler, 13 years old, had all personal bests and placed 19<sup>th</sup> in the 200-metre Free, 19<sup>th</sup> in the 100-metre Free, 15<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Fly, 19<sup>th</sup> in the 100-metre IM, and 11<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Back;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Jacob Chandler for his wonderful accomplishments at the Summer Swimming Provincial Tournament.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2644**

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 Jessica LaRocque, 14 years old, placed 47<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Breast, 53<sup>rd</sup> in the 100-metre Free, 46<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Fly, 52<sup>nd</sup> in the 100-metre IM, and 28<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Back;;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Jessica LaRocque for her wonderful accomplishments at the Summer Swimming Provincial Tournament.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2645**

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 Rachel MacNeil-Dixon, 12 years old, placed 37<sup>th</sup> in the 100-metre Free, 39<sup>th</sup> in the 100-metre IM, and 18<sup>th</sup> in the 50-metre Back;

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2646**

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 Arriel Tucker, a student at North Colchester High School, is known for her many volunteer activities; and

Whereas Arriel is a member of the girls' leadership program, a student council representative, a member of the Police Advisory Committee, an active member of Guides, and a Junior Brownie leader, a student representative who organizes and supervises activities for the after school program for elementary-aged children; and

Whereas Arriel is a 2010 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal, is currently working on the Duke of Edinburgh Award, as well as planning and fundraising for a trip to Equador, through the Me to We organization;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Arriel Tucker for being named North Colchester High School's student of the month for May and commend her for the many contributions she makes to benefit the lives of others.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2647**

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 the Ada Mingo Memorial Teen Writing Competition is sponsored by the Colchester-East Hants Public Library; and

Whereas the competition is held each year to encourage creative writing by teenagers; and

Whereas the competition is open to any teen from ages 13 to 19 years who possess a library card;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica Shortt of Tatamagouche, Colchester North, for winning 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 16-19 age category of the Ada Mingo Memorial Teen Writing competition.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2648**

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 the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition provides an opportunity for young equestrians to show their skills; and

Whereas training and looking after a horse develops commitment, responsibility, leadership and dedication; and

Whereas 19-year-old Erin Groves, from North River, Colchester North, has been training and working hard at honing her skills for the past 12 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Erin Groves for placing first in the Colchester Equestrian Class at the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2649**

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 school athletes must be well organized to be able to participate in sports and still maintain good academic grades; and

Whereas leadership, good sportsmanship and cooperation are only a few of the valuable skills learned by being part of a team; and

Whereas Adam Sandeson, a student at Central Colchester Junior High School, in Onslow, Colchester North, was presented with the Coach's Award for Cross Country Skiing, MVP for Boys' Volleyball, Rookie of the Year for Curling, Coach's Award for Badminton and NSSAF Sportsmanship Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adam Sandeson for the many awards he received at the Central Colchester Junior High School Awards banquet and especially for being named Athlete of the Year.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2650**

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 motorcycle racer Gary Miller from Debert, Colchester North, was Canadian champion in 1999; and

Whereas Gary Miller is a nine-time winner of the Maritime Vintage Class Championship from 1988 to 1999; and

Whereas Gary formerly ran the Race School at the track at Atlantic Motorsport Park in North Salem, lived at the circuit as caretaker and still continues to race;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gary Miller for being honoured by his counterparts during the final round of the ARL series for 40 years of motorcycle racing and wish him continued success with this sport.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2651**

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 Carol Dexter and Arthur Haskins of Great Village, Colchester North, have been exhibiting dahlias and winning multiple awards throughout Nova Scotia for a number of years; and

Whereas Carol and Arthur decided to join about 250 other exhibitors at the North American Dahlia Show held in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and

Whereas they picked over 200 blooms on the day before they left and used ice packs to keep them cool on the back of the truck for the 1,600 mile trip;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Carol Dexter and Arthur Haskins for the multiple awards they received at the very prestigious North American Dahlia Show, including Sweepstakes Awards for most overall points in various sections.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2652**

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 the Eastern Canadian Softball Championships were held in North Colchester in August 2010 at the Leo Blair Memorial Fields in North River; and

Whereas the North River Inglis Jewellers Diamond Gators hosted teams from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island; and

Whereas North River's Holly Denny struck out 15 hitters to lead the Gators to a win of 2-0 over Ontario's Port Perry Angels to put the Gators in the finals against New Brunswick's Saint John Selects;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly offer their congratulations to the North River Inglis Jewellers Diamond Gators for becoming the Eastern Canadian Midget Girls Fastball Champions and for bringing this honour to Nova Scotia for the first time.



**RESOLUTION NO. 2653**

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 young dancers from Colchester County continue to carry on the tradition of Highland dancing; and

Whereas Camryn Rieksts of Valley, Colchester North, competed in the Antigonish Highland Games in the Beginner Eight Division; and

Whereas Camryn also competed in the Festival of Tartans in Beginner Eight and Nine;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Camryn Rieksts for her excellence in Scottish dance, having won awards in both competitions.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2654**

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 Drew Bezanson from Onslow Mountain, Colchester North, won the Simpel Session in Tallinn, Estonia, the Toronto BMX Jam and the Jomopro in Missouri; and

Whereas Drew, even with an injured shoulder, qualified for his first X Games (the most popular competition in the sport), competed on the AS Dew Tour, and did lots of filming and Internet videos, performing some tricks that had never been done before; and

Whereas the winner of NORA Cup, the most prestigious award a BMX rider can win, is chosen from competitors from all over the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Drew Bezanson for being named by those in the industry as this year's NORA Cup winner for best ramp rider of the year, the Oscar of the BMX world.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2655**

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 Abigael Brownell of North River, Colchester North, competed in the Pugwash Gathering of the Clans in July and also at the Gaelic College in St. Anns, Cape Breton; and

Whereas in August Abigael competed at the Festival of Tartans in New Glasgow and at the Hector Festival in Pictou; and

Whereas Abigael also competed in the Prince Edward Island Highland Games where she earned the high aggregate trophy for the Beginner Nine and younger category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Abigael Brownell for her outstanding achievement in winning awards at each of the numerous competitions in which she participated during the summer.