



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Ms. Becky Kent, Mr. Leo Glavine, Mr. Alfie MacLeod

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The subject for the late debate has been chosen:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate this government for taking action toward achieving fairness and equity by working with African Nova Scotians in our province since June 2009.

It was submitted by the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the final report of ecoNova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the fee schedule for the environmental assessment. This fee schedule was requested by the Opposition during Question Period yesterday and I'm pleased to provide this information. This information is also available on our Web site.

MR. SPEAKER: The information is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 398

HON. FRANK CORBETT: 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 80,000 people attended the Grand Chief Membertou 400 celebrations last year during Her Majesty the Queen's visit to Halifax and the celebrations generated an estimated \$2.5 million in economic benefits; and

Whereas the event was one of three finalists for the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's 2010 national tourism event of the year; and

Whereas the Mi'kmaq Association for Cultural Studies recently confirmed Halifax will host the second International Mawio'mi from July 1st to July 3rd;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Mi'kmaq First Nation for their success in promoting their rich culture and heritage, and join me in wishing them all the best in this year's second International Mawio'mi.

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 Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 399

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

Whereas over 200 Atlantic Canadians committed to preventing and reducing crime will come together in May for the 25th Annual Atlantic Crime Prevention Conference, with the goal of making our schools and communities safer; and

Whereas an issue of recent concern is Internet bullying and the safety of our young people, and with a focus on school safety, this conference will be an opportunity to learn from others across Atlantic Canada and work together to make our schools and our communities safer; and

Whereas this conference will connect crime prevention and community safety advocates with educators and leaders to raise awareness of good practices and programs that can address, improve, and promote a safer school environment and provide tools to help improve community safety;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the commitment of all of the organizers, partners, and participants of the 25th Annual Atlantic Crime Prevention Conference.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: I'd like to make a brief introduction before I read my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring your attention to the gallery opposite me, and I'd like to introduce Dawn Baldwin and Geneya MacMillan, both representing Meeting Professionals International. I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all visitors to the gallery and hope you enjoy today's proceedings.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

RESOLUTION NO. 400

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

Whereas April 14th is National Meetings Industry Day, recognizing the value of the meetings, conventions and events business to our economy; and

Whereas the Atlantic Chapter of Meetings Professionals International is celebrating this day by acknowledging the leadership of the Province of Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipality in supporting the new convention centre, with the presentation of this year's Influence Award; and

Whereas the Atlantic Chapter of Meetings Professionals International is a strong advocate on behalf of the thousands of people employed by the region's meetings, conventions and events industry;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Atlantic Chapter of Meetings Professionals International on their work to promote the importance of their industry and the new convention centre in creating jobs and new business opportunities for Nova Scotians, while showcasing our province to visitors from around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: You most certainly can.

MS. JENNEX: The School Insurance Program recently extended accidental injury insurance coverage to registered school volunteers. This change will ensure that the many volunteers involved in schools all across the province are covered in case they have an accident while on duty. Joining us here in the gallery today, we have Ron Marks, the School Insurance Program chairman of the board of directors; Diane McRae, CEO; and we have Helen-Mary Green, a risk manager.

I would ask that the members of the House give them a warm welcome, and I thank them for being here. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors to the gallery and hope you enjoy today's proceedings.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 401

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

Whereas April 10th to April 16th is National Volunteer Week, and volunteers are the driving force of community-based learning and activities at schools all across this province; and

Whereas the School Insurance Program has been providing accident insurance to public school students for school hours and activities at no cost to parents or students since 1998; and

Whereas the School Insurance Program has recently expanded its insurance coverage to include accidental injuries for registered volunteers while they are participating with students at schools;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the School Insurance Program, their staff, and the countless school volunteers for helping us make our community-based learning and other school activities so effective for our students.

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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 402

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 ecoNova Scotia program supported 140 projects and programs, helping communities across the province reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions; and

Whereas ecoNova Scotia projects have resulted in hundreds of good jobs, contributing millions of dollars in wages and helping to grow our economy; and

Whereas the program resulted in cost savings for municipalities that lowered their energy consumption, savings that will continue for many years to come;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the ecoNova Scotia program for its success and remind the federal government that we would be happy to see more funding to create similar programs 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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 403

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

Whereas Nova Scotia organized and supported a delegation of companies to the Clean Tech Forum, held in San Francisco on March 14th to March 16th; and

Whereas this international forum gives clean technology companies the opportunity to network and to meet potential investors; and

Whereas of the five Canadian companies - including Carbon Sense Solutions, Green Power Labs, and Seaforth Energy - that made it to the final round of pitching their products and services to Silicon Valley representatives, three were from Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Carbon Sense Solutions, Green Power Labs and Seaforth Energy on their impressive showing at this highly-respected international event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, before I introduce my bill, with your permission I'd like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, in the gallery opposite, I would like to introduce and welcome to the House today: Marty Townsend, director of Materials Management, Capital District Health Authority; Gerry Wilson, coordinator of Procurement, Annapolis Valley Regional School Board; Diane McInnis, manager of Procurement, Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation; and Ann Janega, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters. I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 23 - Entitled an Act Respecting Public Procurement in Nova Scotia.
(Hon. Percy Paris)**

Bill No. 24 - Entitled an Act to Provide for the Establishment of Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement in the Government of Nova Scotia. (Mr. Allan MacMaster)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 404

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

Whereas today has been declared Day of Pink to mark the International Day against bullying and discrimination in schools and communities; and

Whereas no one should have to experience the negativity created by discrimination; and

Whereas Day of Pink is more than just a symbol of a shared belief in celebrating diversity - it's also a commitment to being open-minded, accepting differences and learning to respect each other;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize Day of Pink and support the continuing efforts in our schools and communities to overcome incidences of bullying and discrimination.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 405

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

Whereas today is Pink Shirt Day where people across Canada are urged to wear a pink shirt to indicate that bullying will not be tolerated; and

Whereas Pink Shirt Day was born in the Annapolis Valley in 2007 when Travis Price and David Shepherd took a stand against bullying and wore their pink T-shirts in support of a fellow student at Central Kings High School in the Annapolis Valley who was being bullied; and

Whereas with bullying in recent weeks we've all seen the tragic results of bullying here in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of Pink Shirt Day and remember that all of us have a role to play in supporting the victims of bullying and stamping out bullying 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 Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 406

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

Whereas Adrian Saturley of Terence Bay has been selected as the Male Athlete of the Year at Acadia University; and

Whereas Adrian was named the football team's most valuable player while also winning the AUS football conference's Lineman of the Year award; and

Whereas Adrian Saturley played minor football for the Timberlea Titans;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Adrian Saturley on his selection as Acadia University's Male Athlete of the Year 2010-11 with best wishes 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 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 407

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

Whereas this NDP Government conducted public consultations and convened a forestry panel and a steering panel in order to get advice about the long-awaited forestry strategy as mandated by the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act; and

Whereas the Minister of Natural Resources has now paid a Vancouver consultant \$98,000 to help him decide which advice he should choose; and

Whereas this inaction on the future of Nova Scotia's forest has created undue uncertainty among those who make their living in the forest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House call on the Minister of Natural Resources to end the uncertainty and get on with the job of tabling a balanced forest strategy for 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?

I hear several Noes

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 408

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 on January 21, 2011, the St. Margarets Bay Seniors Association opened their office in Tantallon; and

Whereas Heather Cochrane and Joan Murray stressed that the goal of the association is to help seniors live well and stay in the St. Margarets Bay area, by not only providing information to seniors but by gathering information from seniors to determine their needs and wants in the future; and

Whereas this office will be open each Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the St. Margarets Bay Seniors Association on their success and wish them all the best as they continue to assist seniors in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 409

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 Canada Winter Games were hosted in Halifax from February 1-27, 2011; and

Whereas Justin Barkhouse of Avonport represented Nova Scotia on the badminton team; and

Whereas Justin has played badminton since he was six years old and has won other titles such as School Provincial Men's Singles in Grades 10, 11 and 12 for Horton High, Mount Allison's most valuable player in badminton for the 2010 and 2011, played in the College Nationals, was awarded Canada-wide MVP for the Atlantic Provinces and the most sportsmanship-like team;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Justin Barkhouse on his past sports achievements and for representing Nova Scotia at the 2011 Canada Winter Games.

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 Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 410

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

Whereas the Kinsmen Club of Sackville has been serving the community's greatest needs since 1961; and

Whereas on April 23, 2011, the club will be recognizing its membership, past and present, as well as their community's civic leaders for their support and participation over the past 50 years, by hosting the 50th Anniversary Gala at the Kinsmen Community Centre; and

Whereas the club has provided ongoing support for a special needs development daycare facility for the past 30 years and are proud supporters of the local Boys and Girls Club, Scouts and Girl Guides of Canada, local minor sports organizations, the Autism Society, the Canadian Cancer Society, the MS Society, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Children's Trust Foundation, the Abilities Foundation, high school scholarship programs, the Kinsmen Community Fund and many other worthwhile charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Kinsmen Club of Sackville for hosting their 50th Anniversary Gala on April 23, 2011, and thank its membership, past and present, for the more than 45,000 hours of community service over the past 50 years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 411

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

Whereas Wendy Lill has been an active member of the Nova Scotia artistic community for 25 years, has written nine stage plays, 10 film screenplays and numerous radio documentaries and dramas, and her work has been recognized by a Gemini Award, Labatt's Canadian Play Award, four Governor General Award nominations and a Chalmers Award nomination; and

Whereas Wendy Lill is a founding member of Eastern Front Theatre, has been active in the disability community and served as Member of Parliament for Dartmouth from 1997 to 2004; and

Whereas Wendy Lill recently earned the prestigious 2011 Robert Merritt Legacy Award from Theatre Nova Scotia for her substantial contribution to the world of theatre in our province;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Wendy Lill on winning the 2011 Robert Merritt Award and for her diverse contributions to the rich tradition of theatre 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 Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 412

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

Whereas Education Week is a great way to honour our teachers and partners who are using innovative teaching practices for the benefit of our students; and

Whereas Queens educators provide students with opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and attitudes to become lifelong learners; and

Whereas Elizabeth Woodford Collins, of Liverpool Regional High School, is one of 23 educators who received an award for using innovative teaching methods to provide students with the tools to be successful in their studies and beyond graduation;

Therefore be it resolved that that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Elizabeth Woodford Collins of Liverpool Regional High School in Queens on having received an award during Education Week for using innovative teaching practices for the benefit of her students.

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. 413

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

Whereas the 4-H Program whose motto is, learn to do by doing, has been an integral experience in the lives of many young Nova Scotians since 1922; and

Whereas the Kevin Grant Rural Leadership Tour, held in memory of longtime 4-H participant, Kevin Grant, offers 4-H members opportunities to learn about leadership in rural communities; and

Whereas Tyler McLaren of Antigonish, was one of the 4-H'ers who participated in this year's Kevin Grant Rural Leadership Tour from March 15th to 16th, visiting several businesses and rural landmarks in Cumberland County;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House applaud Tyler McLaren and the other 4-H Kevin Grant Rural Leadership Tour participants on their achievements and wish them best of luck 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 member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 414

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

Whereas the Town of Amherst, Nova Scotia, recently held a curling event with the proceeds going to the palliative care unit of the Cumberland County Regional Hospital, a cause dear to my own heart; and

Whereas the Good Looking Guys team including members Don Smith, Robert Bird, Joe Dupuis, and Mr. Brian Wood, challenged the Better Looking Guys team members Carl Leblanc, Mitch Estabrooks, Stu Colson, and Curt Speight in this major curling event; and

Whereas this event raised more than \$13,000 to be donated to the palliative care unit of our local hospital;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating the Good Looking Guys, the Better Looking Guys and all of the people in Cumberland North who came out in support of the curling event for the palliative care unit at the Cumberland County Regional Hospital.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 415

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

Whereas Upper Hammonds Plains community member and Emmanuel Baptist Church member, Marko Simmonds, is well known in his community for his musical talent and contributions to Nova Scotia music scenes; and

Whereas he is a graduate from Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, and is an experienced music producer, arranger, director, singer-songwriter and choir director; and

Whereas Marko Simmonds has been nominated for two East Coast Music Awards this year and will perform his song, Rise Again, with the Nova Scotia for Haiti Artists at the televised awards show, in April;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate music producer, singer-songwriter, choir director and Upper Hammonds Plains community member, Marko Simmonds, on being nominated for two East Coast Music Awards in 2011 and wish him best of luck in his music 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.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution may I have your permission to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. MORTON: In the gallery opposite I'm pleased to draw the attention of the House to Gary Randall of Kentville. Welcome, Gary. Gary is a very active member of the Kentville community; he makes many contributions and is a valuable member of the Kings North NDP Riding Association. I hope the House will give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors to the gallery and hope you enjoy today's proceedings.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 416

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

Whereas Centreville's General Store has been a landmark in the community for the past 160 years; and

Whereas Ron and Bernice Ward were part of that heritage of service to the community as owners of Ward's General Store for the past 27 years; and

Whereas the Wards have opted to take a well-earned retirement after arranging with Shayne Nixon to continue the business under the store's new name, Copper Convenience;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Ron and Bernice Ward on their long association with an historic business and wish both the Ward's and Copper Convenience every success as the business continues to serve Centreville and the wider 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 Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 417

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

Whereas 2010 was the first successful year of Mahone Bay Pirate Festival and Regatta held in the Town of Mahone Bay to take the place of the Mahone Bay Classic Boat festival; and

Whereas the festival was such a success that many volunteers are coming forward with new ideas about what can take place during the second annual Mahone Bay Pirate Festival and Regatta to be held from July 29-31, 2011; and

Whereas committee chairman Rick Welsford is currently working on new proposals for upcoming festivals and encouraging volunteers to get involved as well;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes the enthusiasm and spirit of volunteerism displayed by Rick Welsford, the Mahone Bay Pirate Festival and Regatta committee and community members in organizing yet another successful festival for the year of 2011.

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. 418

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

Whereas Trinity United Church in Mulgrave will celebrate their 100th Anniversary on May 15, 2011; and

Whereas Trinity United Church has been an important spiritual, educational and social community gathering place in the Town of Mulgrave for the past century; and

Whereas the congregation will highlight this historic milestone with community celebrations from May 13-15, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Trinity United Church, the ministers and entire congregation on their 100th Anniversary with the very best wishes for future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 419

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

Whereas over the winter, business owners in Cole Harbour met to generate interest in a new business association and the Association for Business in Cole Harbour was established; and

Whereas the mandate of the group is to effectively market businesses in the Cole Harbour area, be involved in local planning process and improve public safety; and

Whereas the association was formed by members of the business community as a new initiative to drive more business to the growing area of Cole Harbour;

Therefore be it resolved that the House recognize the important contribution of the Association for Business in Cole Harbour to the increasing number of businesses in this growing 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 Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 420

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

Whereas Andrew Rowe of Timberlea was named to the World Football Team by the International Federation of American Football; and

Whereas the World team recently lost to the U.S.A team by a score of 21-14; and

Whereas Andrew, a graduate of Sir John A. Macdonald High School, played for the Vancouver Island Raiders of the Canadian Junior Football League during the 2010-11 season;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Andrew Rowe on his selection to the World Football Team, with best wishes 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 Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 421

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 on January 29, 2011 Lindsay Doucet, Sara Spafford, Meryn Avery and Ellen Graham travelled to Calgary to represent Nova Scotia in the Canadian Junior Women's Curling Championship; and

Whereas the Doucet team competed with teams from across Canada and finished with a record of four wins and eight losses; and

Whereas the Doucet team demonstrated the true spirit of all Nova Scotians as they quickly became known as the friendliest team and acted as true ambassadors for their club and the province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lindsay Doucet, Sara Spafford, Meryn Avery and Ellen Graham in their success at winning the provincial tournament and representing our province, and wish them all the best as they continue in this sport and strive to reach this goal again.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 422

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

Whereas Susan Leblanc-Crawford portrayed the character of Sam in Zuppa Theatre's 2010 production of *Five Easy Steps to the End of the World*, and Louisa Adamson was the lighting designer for this same production; and

Whereas the 2011 Robert Merritt Awards were presented on March 28th in recognition of excellence in Nova Scotian theatre; and

Whereas Susan Leblanc-Crawford earned the 2011 Robert Merritt Award for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, Louisa Adamson earned the Award for Outstanding Lighting Design, and in addition Zuppa Theatre Company also earned the 2011 award for Outstanding Production for *Five Easy Steps to the End of the World*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Susan Leblanc-Crawford, Louisa Adamson and the entire Zuppa Theatre Company on their nominations and the 2011 Robert Merritt Awards.

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. 423

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

Whereas Master Corporal Richard Dixon of Queens County has received the Mention in Dispatches Award from the Governor General of Canada for his bravery during his last tour of Afghanistan; and

Whereas this national honour is given to active soldiers or other individuals working with the Canadian Forces who display a level of bravery or commendable service; and

Whereas Master Corporal Richard Dixon, for receiving this honour, has been given a bronze oak leaf to wear upon that particular campaign medal or service medal ribbon;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Master Corporal Richard Dixon for receiving the Mention in Dispatches Award and for his courageous actions during his last tour in Afghanistan.

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 Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 424

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

Whereas Russell Gammon, formerly of Lyons Brook, Pictou County has been honoured with a Distinguished Achievement Award from the World Jersey Cattle Bureau while attending the World Jersey Cattle Bureau Conference in February 2011 which was held in New Zealand; and

Whereas Mr. Gammon has been an employee of Jersey Canada for 30 years and because of this, he has had the opportunity to travel to many countries to educate about and promote Jersey cattle; and

Whereas Mr. Gammon is passionate about his involvement in Jersey cattle and Jersey Canada and is one of the founding directors of Partners With Purpose, a Canadian charity involved in the provision of adult literacy training and micro-credit programs in Haiti;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate and thank Russell Gammon for his commitment and dedication to the Jersey cattle breed and to his community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for 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. 425

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

Whereas Education Week is a co-operative effort to recognize and honour teachers and education partners in their work with students; and

Whereas Bruce MacDonald of Antigonish has been a social studies teacher for more than 30 years, most recently teaching history and sociology at Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School; and

Whereas the 2011 Education Week Awards, with the theme of Innovative Teaching in the 21st Century, were recently presented to Bruce MacDonald and 27 other teachers and partners;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate Bruce MacDonald on receiving a 2011 Education Week Award, and thank all teachers and education partners for their dedication to educating Nova Scotian students.

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 Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 426

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

Whereas the Cumberland County Heritage Network is a fine example of the dedication and spirit of the people of our area; and

Whereas recently our government acknowledged this great spirit through the awarding of a \$200,000 grant from the Strategic Development Initiative; and

Whereas the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage has recognized the Cumberland County Heritage Network for having “excellent ideas for sustainable made-in-Nova Scotia heritage projects”;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Cumberland County Heritage Network on being awarded \$200,000 from the Strategic Development Initiative and wish them continued success 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 member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 427

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

Whereas giving high schools access to technology in the classroom fosters and advances learning; and

Whereas Best Buy Canada's Best in Class Fund is a community investment program that provides technology grants to schools across the country; and

Whereas Millwood High School was awarded \$20,000 in January to go towards the purchase of new school computers;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the students and teachers of Millwood High School on their winning application to Best Buy Canada's Best in Class technology grant.

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. 428

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

Whereas Edmund Wohlmuth, a 10-year-old resident of Port Williams, was one of over 150 athletes who competed in the Atlantic Athletics Indoor Track and Field Championships held in Moncton on March 5, 2011; and

Whereas Edmund practices with other members of the Launchers Athletics Club and at Central Kings Rural High School, and trained for the Pee wee Under 11 Triathlon which is composed of shot put, long jump, and a 60-metre dash; and

Whereas Edmund was the first-place finisher in a very hard-fought triathlon;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Edmund Wohlmuth on winning the Pee wee Under 11 Triathlon at the Atlantic Athletics Indoor Track and Field Championships, and wish him all the best in his future athletic 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 Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 429

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

Whereas Centre Scolaire de la Rive Sud is a first-class, modern school facility with classes from Primary to Grade 12, with 160 students, and offers special programs for 4-year-olds located in Cookville, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the French language school provides the space for the region's francophones to share their common language and culture in an educational setting and also provides community spaces; and

Whereas Centre Scolaire de la Rive Sud opened its doors in September 2010, celebrated its official opening on March 4, 2011, with the Education Minister Ramona Jennex in attendance, as well as provincial and municipal representatives;

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order. You cannot name a member by their name; you have to name them by either the minister or their riding, so I would ask that you actually change that resolution, please.

MS. BIRDSALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Whereas Centre Scolaire de la Rive Sud, which has been operating since September 20, 2010, celebrated its official opening on March 4, 2011, with the Education Minister in attendance, as well as provincial and municipal representatives;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the official opening of Centre Scolaire de la Rive Sud in Cookville, 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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 430

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 37th Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony and luncheon was held on April 4, 2011; and

Whereas each year the Province of Nova Scotia recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to their community; and

Whereas in recognition of his contribution to various community organizations, George Freer is one of the 2011 Representative Volunteer Award recipients;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate George Freer on his 2011 Representative Volunteer Award for the community of Mulgrave 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin now. It is 2:53 p.m. and will end at 4:23 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOV'T.(N.S.)/MUNICIPALITIES: MOU - COMMUNICATIONS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The MOUs signed with the municipalities in 2007 emphasized regular and ongoing communications with government, yet it wasn't until the morning of March 22nd, just a few hours before the press conference, when the government backed out of this agreement, that the Premier notified UNSM of the changes.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier not contact the UNSM to inform them of changes until a few hours before he tore up the agreement?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the memorandum of understanding in and of itself sets out the procedure. We followed that, in fact, the notice that was required by the memorandum of understanding itself is being followed. This demonstrates, I believe, our commitment to the memorandum that was signed with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier had asked municipalities, they would have told him that they are already facing tough challenges. HRM would have told him that the residents will be forced to make up a \$44.7 million shortfall; CBRM would have told the NDP that the people of Cape Breton municipality will have to make up a \$3.2 million shortfall. The municipalities would have told the Premier they were going to be forced to raise property taxes and cut services.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier act unilaterally, instead of working with the municipalities, to prevent this tax increase?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, with all respect, the reality is that we meet frequently with the municipalities, I certainly do, and I can tell the Leader of the Official Opposition that the process that is in the memorandum of understanding sets out a notice period, which is exactly what we gave them, so that they will have an entire year to prepare for the end of the upload from the municipalities to the province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be absolutely clear, not a single cent of cost will be transferred from the province to the municipalities.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier meets with municipalities regularly, why did he wait hours before he tore up the MOU to tell them about it? If he had been meeting with them regularly he would have told them long before that. By not working with and listening to municipalities, every property tax bill will be going up because of this reckless decision. They didn't listen when Nova Scotians said they didn't want the NDP to hike the HST and they didn't listen when they hiked 1,400 user fees. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier intent on using municipalities to impose yet another tax increase on Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is quite different than the Leader of the Official Opposition paints. The reality is that there was a comprehensive consultation with Nova Scotians who told us that they understood the government had to get back to balance and that the government had to control its costs as well as finding new revenue sources. We have shown considerable progress in getting back to balance. We are not in a position any longer to continue to absorb costs from the municipality. We can no longer afford to take those costs on so we, in fact, have shown respect and commitment to the memorandum of understanding with the municipalities by giving them the one-year notice that is specifically provided for in the MOU.

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

PREM. - GAS: TAX ON TAX - ELIMINATE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In the Fall of 2008 - otherwise known as before the election - the then-Leader of the Opposition wrote, I quote and I will table, "Governments should ensure that the cost of gasoline is as fair and low as possible, at a time when so many families see their standard of living threatened by sky-rocketing energy prices." At that time, that member's advice was to change the HST so there is no tax on tax when you buy fuel at the pump. He said, "It is high time we stopped taxing the tax on gasoline." Well, with gas at over \$1.30 a litre, it's time for the now-Premier to take his own advice. My question for the Premier is, will he, in fact, now take his own advice and give Nova Scotians some much needed tax relief by eliminating the tax on tax on gasoline?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe this question was actually asked some time ago. The reality of the situation is that if we take the tax off gasoline at this time, that will mean that the deficit of the province will grow. I'm sure the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party would not want that to happen. We had said that there are a number of tax measures that we would like to do to give further relief, as we already have. Like taking the HST off home-heating, taking it off children's clothing, and the other fairness measures that we have put in place. Unfortunately, because of the horrendous financial mess left behind by the former government, we are not in a position to do that today.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, when he was in Opposition, the Premier did his own math on eliminating the tax on tax. He said, "The end result would only mean that government doesn't accrue quite as high a windfall at commuters (sic) expense every time the price of gas rises." My supplementary question to the Premier is, why won't he do what he said he would do then and stop accruing this windfall at the expense of consumers and this unfair tax method?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out previously, unfortunately the government is not in the position to do this at this point in time. We have a number of tax fairness measures that we would like to be able to implement. We have already implemented many of them. We are helping, particularly, small businesses, by reducing the small business tax rate. I'd like to point out that at this point in time, unlike in past governments when the royalties of gas were increasing and they were running up surplus after surplus that they were then spending just before the end of the financial year, unlike that, any revenue that this government has to give up, of course, adds to the deficit, does not become a windfall and a surplus as it did to previous governments, unfortunately.

MR. BAILLE: Mr. Speaker I guess that the Premier, when he was in Opposition, forgot to put that magic asterisk at the end of his promise to Nova Scotians at that time, which explains, in small print, that he didn't actually mean what he said he meant.

Leaving his word for a moment, I would just like to point out by way of final supplementary to the Premier, the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank in October 2008 - in other words before the last election - said "the federal excise tax and motive fuel tax is applied to gasoline before the HST - an unfair taxation method." I've just tabled that. If he felt that way when the HST was 13 per cent, I can only imagine how he feels now with the HST at 15 per cent.

My final question is this, if the Premier won't take his own advice from the past will he at least consider the advice of his Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and get rid of that unfair tax?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, with all respect, that demonstrates the problem with a prewritten supplementary. You already had the answer to this. There are many tax fairness measures that we would like to be able to undertake, if we had surpluses I'm sure that that's what we would do. We have to manage deficits created by the former government where they had surpluses.

The Leader of the Conservative Party should understand that reality is not an asterisk; it's an exclamation point, Mr. Speaker.

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

FIN. FEES: INPUT COSTS - INCREASES

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: The NDP has increased 1,400 fees on services that Nova Scotians use every day. What this government has done, and what they continue to do, is to make life more expensive for Nova Scotians, yet not one NDP minister can explain why these fees were increased. Increases that go beyond cost recovery are a tax, Mr. Speaker, and this government has not been able to produce one piece of evidence that this is based on a cost recovery and not another way for the Finance Minister to take money out of the pockets of Nova Scotians.

My question for the Minister of Finance is, can the minister produce any evidence that individual input costs have gone up or will he finally admit this is just another hidden NDP tax grab?

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Another day, same question, same answer, Mr. Speaker, all required reports have been filed. Every bit of information that is required by the law has been filed and if the honourable member opposite wants to know about increase in the cost of government I would suggest he examine the budget.

MR. MCNEIL: When will the NDP learn you simply cannot tax Nova Scotians to prosperity? Mr. Speaker, this minister has made it more expensive to go fishing, hunting or camping. In fact, youth admission to the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park has gone up 29 per cent under the Minister of Finance. This government has made it more expensive to get permits; they have made it more expensive to use a ferry. This government has made it more expensive every time someone interacts with a government service. The minister has made it more expensive for Nova Scotians to access the Government of Nova Scotia.

My question to the minister is, why did the minister choose to use user fees as another way to tax Nova Scotians?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, in an ideal world nurses, paramedics and teachers would all work for free; hospitals and roads would build themselves; but in this world, Mr. Speaker, they don't and that is why the government requires revenue. When the government requires revenue it has two choices, one is to get it from the general tax base, the other is to get it from the people who are actually using the service. Our choice was to increase the fees for the people actually using the service and perhaps the Leader of the Liberal Party could explain why he would add these costs to the general tax base so everybody is paying for it whether they use the service or not.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'd be up front and honest with Nova Scotians. Hard-working families have to pay more, this minister has hiked the HST; he is taking more and more income from Nova Scotians each year. The minister is forcing hard-working families to pay more every day. There is no doubt that no minister in this government has any idea why their user fees went up because the idea didn't come from their staff. This was a directive from the Finance Minister, Mr. Speaker, another directive from the Finance Minister that takes more tax money out of the pockets of Nova Scotians.

My final question to the minister is, will the minister confirm that this was his directive to hike the fees and not based on a cost-recovery model identified by staff in the departments of the other ministers?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer, if the Leader of the Liberal Party would like to know what the cost of government is, I recommend to him that he examine the budget.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**SNSMR - FEE HIKE: FIN. DEPT. DIRECTIVE
- CONFIRM**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in debate on estimates, I asked the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations if he could tell Nova

Scotians why fees went up in his department. He said that it might be a better question for the Minister of Finance because it was his department that imposed these changes on the fees.

The minister has no idea why these fees went up except to say that the Minister of Finance told him to do it. My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is, were these fee hikes indeed a directive from the Minister of Finance?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member opposite, when he reviews Hansard, will find there will be a slightly different analysis there. What I conveyed to the member during estimates was that the fees went up as the result of requests by the Minister of Finance. It's cost recovery. Those fees go up by consumer price index.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, indeed, yesterday during the estimates I heard very clearly and I asked very specifically twice - twice I asked - and it's in Hansard. The minister indeed said it was a directive from the Minister of Finance and his department. This is not leadership. Senior staff should know exactly what everything costs in every part of the department. They should know immediately what it costs to do everything in every department. But the minister didn't know.

He didn't know if these hikes were cost recovery or if they were to clean up the finances of the province. That's from Hansard. My question to the minister is, did the minister at any time ask the staff if these fee hikes were related to cost recovery?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was a minister in a long-forgotten administration. He obviously would recognize the way the estimates process works. I have my staff around me so if I don't have the answer at my fingertips or on the tip of my tongue, I refer to my staff. Certainly, the staff provided me with the information and, yes, I asked my staff that question - then.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, maybe he didn't understand what I was saying. What I said was, did the minister ask his staff prior to the meeting before this new tax was imposed on Nova Scotians? The minister said clearly that he takes direction from the Minister of Finance without question. Hard-working Nova Scotians are paying more and this minister doesn't even bother to check with his staff prior to a tax being increased. The minister couldn't tell Nova Scotians why they were paying more for services which his department delivers. He can only say, ask the Minister of Finance because he told me to do it. The question to the minister is, who is in charge of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations - the minister or the Minister of Finance?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, that's a question I ask many times.
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations has the floor.

MR. MACDONELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that all members of Cabinet, all members on this side of the House rely on the good advice of the Minister of Finance. The government's plan is to bring the books back to balance by 2013-14. If the member was paying attention during estimates when he asked the question, then he should have noticed that he got an answer during the estimates debate.

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

PREM.: IMMIGRATION PLAN - PROVIDE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It is a fact that immigration is a key to the future success of our province. As the Premier's former minister responsible said in an opinion piece published last July: Newcomers not only bring social and economic benefits to Nova Scotia but they promote openness to new ideas, experiences and creativity, creating a stronger province. Those are great words, but the time has long come for actions and not just words.

In three consecutive Throne Speeches this government has promised an Immigration Strategy. Now this is a government that loves strategies and yet we remain in limbo, waiting for action on this important area of our future prosperity. My question to the Premier is, will he finally commit to actually getting on with the job of providing us with an immigration plan for the future of the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party soon, very soon.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking for the asterisk after that "soon" - we've been waiting awhile. For example, the member for Queens, a member of his Party, rightly pointed out way back in April 2007, four years ago: We have serious problems in rural Nova Scotia with population decline, aging population, outmigration of youth, and immigration to rural Nova Scotia is going to be so important in the future to not only increase our population base, but also in terms of our economics. Very wise words spoken by the member for Queens four years ago. I have that and I will table it.

My question to the Premier is, why have you done nothing, after two years in office, to take the advice of the member for Queens and get on with the job of providing us with a true plan for immigration?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary, I always try to take into account the advice of the member for Queens. She is very wise in these matters. I can tell the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that, in fact, the Immigration Strategy for

this government is very important. We've been working on it. I have read through many of the foundation documents for our coming Immigration Strategy. We have had what I think is a very comprehensive strategy for bringing together all of the stakeholders. I've managed to receive that advice and we are in a position where we will soon be able to release the Immigration Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make sure that the Immigration Strategy was not like the one that failed. The previous government did not have an Immigration Strategy that was meeting the needs of the Province of Nova Scotia, so we wanted to make sure that we got it right.

MR. BAILLIE: Way back before the last election, the Premier in his Better Deal plan promised that the government would double immigration targets, if they were elected. If you look, it is actually checked off as a year one promise of the government and I will table that. With great reluctance I let it go, Mr. Speaker, but I will table it for you, sir.

As it turns out, the only thing that has doubled since that time is that the government has twice more made the same promise, so the time is long past for nice words and for promises. We are all still waiting for the government to do the right thing. So my final supplementary is, isn't this just another example of an NDP broken promise?

THE PREMIER: No, Mr. Speaker, there aren't broken NDP promises. Of course, we intend to keep all of our commitments - and I don't blame him for not wanting to let go of that document, it's a road map for success.

I want to point this out to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party - we have already instructed the departmental officials as to the target with respect to immigration. But there is one serious deficiency and that is that into the economic stream, the Province of Nova Scotia is capped at 500.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Province of Manitoba, which has roughly 250,000 more people than Nova Scotia, has 5,000 nominees under this program. If the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has any influence with the Prime Minister, if the Prime Minister continues in his place after the election, then I would ask him to ensure that the Immigration Strategy is able to access more nominees - that would make for a successful Immigration Strategy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

PREM. - IMMIGRATION: CAP - DETAILS

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in 2010 the Harper Government placed a cap on the number of provincial nominees Nova Scotia can recruit, under the provincial

Nominee Program, to 500. Now this is significant for a couple of reasons: the cap restricts Nova Scotia's ability to recruit skilled labour for jobs that are tough to fill - in other words, it's a double-whammy in that it stifles both economic and population growth; and the cap also reduces the amount of funding our province receives for immigrant settlement services - services needed to ensure that when an immigrant makes a choice to settle in Nova Scotia they stay in Nova Scotia.

So my question to the Premier is, why has he failed to publicly denounce the Harper Government's cap on the number of provincial nominees our province can accept?

THE PREMIER: Well, I would very much like to thank the member for Richmond for that question, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Never thought you'd say that, did you?

THE PREMIER: Yes, that's true, I didn't think I would ever say that, but the reality is I think he would understand what I just said with respect to this. I think it's wrong that the Province of Nova Scotia faces the kind of cap and, in fact, I raised this very question not only at the Council of the Federation but also with the Atlantic Premiers' Conference. In fact, we publicly talked about the need for a revamped Immigration Strategy, one that benefits not just Nova Scotia but, in fact, all of Atlantic Canada - other provinces face the same kind of problem with the cap that we face.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, today is probably the first day Nova Scotians have heard this Premier actually speak publicly to them about his concerns over this cap because, while he was whispering it to some of the other provincial Premiers at meetings, apparently they were having a bit more success in dealing with the actual issue because, as the Premier has already acknowledged, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, have all successfully lobbied the federal government to raise the initial cap numbers that they were being presented with, yet Nova Scotians are still stuck with a 500 cap limit.

So my question is, again, why has the Premier failed to take on the Harper Government and demand that the 500 cap be increased for Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have raised this issue with the federal government, and in addition to raising it, the member opposite would understand that the freeze on these programs was put in place before we came into government. It has not been lifted. We believe, therefore, those provinces that were better organized earlier, those ones for example like Manitoba, who quite frankly have one of the best immigration programs in the country, were able to get a larger designation of nominees.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, in this province we have a government that is actually taking immigration seriously. We're putting together a comprehensive Immigration Strategy and I want to assure the member for Richmond that we intend to do everything we can to get an appropriate designation among the immigrant nominee stream.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this government has been in power for almost two years and we've heard from day one how important they took immigration and how they would have a new strategy, yet today we still wait for that to happen. Regardless of what's in their strategy, if the cap remains at 500 by the Harper government, one has to question what success we can expect the strategy to have here in Nova Scotia under those types of restrictions. My final supplementary to the Premier is, what strategy do you have in place to fight for Nova Scotians so that the federal government removes that 500 cap.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we have been raising this issue through the department and through my office with the federal government because it is a matter of grave concern to us. I would point out that the nominee stream is only one stream among many others. One of the things that the new and more comprehensive immigration strategy will do is position us to take advantage, not only of a nominee stream but of the other immigration streams that bring new Canadians to this country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER - INTERVENTIONISTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday's introduction of the new action plan and the government's investment in helping those who suffer from Autism Spectrum Disorder is a great step forward in helping reach Nova Scotians diagnosed - or soon to be diagnosed - with autism. However, like many other plans or strategies that this government has produced, the plan lacks a timeline for when it will be implemented. In the plan, the government announced an expansion of the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention program that was brought forward by our government a number of years ago.

My question to the minister is, assuming the expansion of the program means there will need to be more early interventionists, how many early intervention teachers does Nova Scotia need in order to administer this program province-wide and what is the plan for recruiting and training these specialists?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. Yesterday was a great day in Nova Scotia for families with children with autism. We announced the most comprehensive action plan for children with autism in our province's history. I want to assure the honourable member that staff in my department, prior to that announcement, had already begun the work at looking at what

personnel will be required to implement fully, the EIBI program for all families and children with autism in the province.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my first supplementary is very basic. When can we expect the expansion of the EIBI program to be fully implemented? What is the timeline giving every child access to this great program?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we can fully expect this program to be in place over a two-year period. The work has begun now on making that a reality.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, will the program be standard across the province? Meaning that, would a child in Argyle have the same access to the same standard program as a child in Windsor, in Halifax, in Antigonish or anywhere else in the province?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, one of the features of this program has been the evaluation, which tells us that there is a very significant success rate for children who are enrolled in this program. The quality and the standards will be uniform across the province. All families will be receiving the same high-quality program with the evaluations that have demonstrated its effectiveness.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - LUCENTIS: C.B. SPECIALIST
- INJECTION PRIVILEGES**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. When government finally announced the coverage of Lucentis, they immediately set out to establish protocols aimed at limiting access. Not only did they restrict injection privileges to retinal specialists, they limited the delivery site to one location, Halifax. For residents from your community and other communities in Cape Breton, travelling to Halifax when a retinal specialist is available in Cape Breton seems illogical. My question to the minister is, why did the minister fail to grant the retinal specialist in Cape Breton injection privileges, starting January 1st?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I think you would recognize, as most members of this House recognized, how hard we worked to make Lucentis, a very expensive drug, available to people in Nova Scotia. Prior to our announcement of expanding a program making Lucentis available January 1st of this year, people were paying about \$2,000 per injection per eye.

Mr. Speaker, most people in this province who were receiving treatment were receiving it here, at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, through the retinal clinic. Our announcement was that we would initiate our program here in Halifax, January 1, and

that has been the case. At the time of the announcement I indicated that we would be looking at how we would roll that program out to perhaps satellite clinics around the province but we were starting here and that has been the way we've introduced the program.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think what is important to note is, it is good that we've got the service, finally, in this province and it's important to note that we were the last province in Canada to offer Lucentis to our residents.

When the government announced the program last Fall, we expressed concerns about access and so far those concerns are founded. Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about a situation where injection privileges were denied because a professional does not have the requisite qualifications. We're talking about a specialist in Cape Breton whose qualifications are no different than the specialists injecting Lucentis in Halifax.

My question to the minister is, can the minister confirm that the retinal specialist in Cape Breton has received training in Halifax to prepare him to begin injecting Lucentis in Cape Breton?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the status is of the retinal specialist that she makes reference to but I would certainly be happy to look into that.

It is the case that when we did the work and we established the program here at the QEII, at that time our information indicated that all of the retinal specialists in the province, in fact, were here at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, that's not the information that we have. We understand that there is a qualified retinal specialist in Cape Breton and that the people of Cape Breton would rather have the service there than to travel to Halifax.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, since she has indicated that there will be a plan or there is a plan to roll this out further, when can residents in Cape Breton expect to receive Lucentis treatments closer to home?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm very well aware of the importance of attempting to have services that are appropriate for people in their regions. That's why I was so pleased to be in Cape Breton to expand the cancer program up there.

As I indicated, this program at the retinal clinic here in Halifax is relatively recent, only since January 1st. As we work through the implementation of that program, we will be looking at how we might provide this in other locations of the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: ER BOTTLENECKS
- REDUCTIONS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, just last week the Minister of Health and Wellness stood in her place to tell members how her government's policies are reducing emergency department bottlenecks at the QEII and providing Nova Scotians with better access to emergency care sooner.

Only one week later, on Monday, a Code Census was called at the QEII, exactly the same time when the CBC was doing an interview on that very issue, at the very facility that the minister was bragging about only last week. My question through you to the minister is, was the minister premature in providing such a positive update about the situation at the QEII?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, since we opened the rapid assessment units and the additional general medicine beds at the QEII, more than 1,200 people have been diverted from the emergency room at the QEII. I would say that the honourable member, if he spoke to any one of those 1,200 people, they would tell you that they have been the beneficiaries of the work of this government and the changes that we have brought to that situation at the QEII.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my first supplementary is again to the Minister of Health and Wellness. We know that the dedicated health care professionals are working very hard and that they're very frustrated by events like Code Censuses. What added steps is the minister taking to investigate what happened at the QEII on Monday and what to ensure that code censuses do not become a common occurrence.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I think in an earlier Question Period - perhaps not in this session, but some time ago - I indicated that I went and met with the Capital District Health Authority Board and I told them my number one issue and priority for their district health authority was a solution for the emergency room here in the Capital District Health Authority. As part of their accountability to me for what it is that they are doing to address this issue, I get a regular report from the chair and the CEO every three months, on a quarterly basis. I look very carefully at the information that's being provided to me.

What I'm very pleased to say is that things are moving in the right direction. There are improvements. There is more work to be done, but the trend line is heading in the direction we want it to head in.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, last week the minister told this House that the rapid assessment unit is only the first step in solving overcrowding, and of course, talking about more medical beds. We saw, on Monday, that this is not foolproof. Is the rapid assessment unit model going to be evaluated in response to the setback?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there is no setback. The assessment and evaluation is ongoing in that unit. We will constantly look at flow; we will look at what's occurring in other parts of the hospital. I want to remind members that we will be implementing the first ER standards in the country and that work is well underway. They will contribute to a better quality service and a much more efficient and effective emergency health care system in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CCH: FOIPOP REPT. - TABLE

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, last Spring the Minister of Finance told Nova Scotians that they would not be able to review a socio-economic study, which was done on the true and full costs of gambling in Nova Scotia. This report was completed by Mark Anielski but was suppressed by the NDP because they didn't like what the report had to say. Today the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner has made her ruling and stated clearly that the report must be released to the public of Nova Scotia.

My question to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage is, now that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner has told the government in no uncertain terms that this report should be released to the public, will the minister table this report in the House today?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question but I would have to refer that to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education because that freedom of information request is under her department.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, yes, we have received the review officer's report very recently. We're going to take time to review it and the recommendations very thoroughly and we will not be making any comment until that time.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first time that this government has been called out by an independent official for hiding information from the public. It was this time last year when the Auditor General was forced to withhold an opinion because the NDP wouldn't release documents from the IEF and now they're being called out by the freedom of information officer for withholding this document. My question to the

Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, what was this government hiding and will the minister table this report in the House today?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind members of the House that we inherited that particular situation. We were very concerned and received advice from three departments that the process being used, the methodology being used to do this research, was considered to be flawed, quite frankly, and that the information and the conclusions would not be helpful. The contract was terminated. There was no finished final report and those were some of our concerns. Again, we take the recommendations from the review officer very seriously. We will be carefully considering that and will make a decision in due time.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this information needs to be made public and it needs to be made public now. It should have been there, of course, before the most recent strategy was put forward. The government refused to provide the document according to the commissioner's report today. They refused to provide a document a year ago saying it wasn't being released because of problems with its research techniques. She rejects the province's argument that the document is exempted under the freedom of information law because it may provide advice, recommendations or draft regulations to a Cabinet Minister or public body.

By hiding this report, the NDP has called into question the validity of the entire gambling strategy. My question to the minister is, once again, will the minister table this report in the House today?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, this government takes its time to make sure that it has the highest level of decision making based on accurate information and careful consultation. Certainly we will continue to use that process in the best interests of Nova Scotians.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PATIENT PLACEMENTS - SOLUTIONS

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday our caucus spoke of the pressure that the Capital Health District is facing when it comes to the efficient flow of patients from hospital beds to alternate levels of care such as nursing homes and residential care facilities. Media reports from last November had stated that as many as 100 nursing home beds from across the province were empty at that time while hundreds of people were waiting for placement in nursing homes and waiting in hospitals. One can easily see that there was a big problem, a big disconnect at that time, and it still isn't corrected.

My question to the minister is, other than assessing patients on weekends and attending ribbon cuttings for nursing homes previously announced, could the minister tell us what solutions her department have implemented to ensure patients are placed in more appropriate health care settings, faster?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it's important that members realize that the opening of new nursing home beds in this province represents a significant investment in our senior's population and in our health care infrastructure. I don't think that the people who work in nursing homes and who operate homes will appreciate being belittled when they get these fine new facilities up and running. Seniors are able to come off wait lists and out of transitional care units and get the care that they deserve and need.

MS. WHALEN: I think what we are asking about here is what plans is the department put in place to speed this up because the problem is languishing. Mr. Speaker, yesterday there were 101 patients within the Cape Breton District Health Authority waiting for placement in an alternate facility. That doesn't include people waiting at home in the community or in their own homes for nursing home beds.

November 15th of last year the Cape Breton District Health Authority was dealing with 96 patients requiring placements in alternate facilities. Clearly the challenge is not going away, we have in fact a few more people waiting today than we did then. Nursing homes and residential care beds announced by the precious government have opened in Cape Breton and one can only assume that they have been fully filled.

My question to the minister is, would the minister table before the end of business today the number of vacant beds in nursing homes and residential care facilities within the Cape Breton district today?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we want to insure that seniors have options to stay in their homes or in their communities longer. We also want to make sure that they have access to long-term care beds and that there is an appropriate utilization of hospital bed. For that reason, this government is investing \$21 million this year in 169 additional new long-term care beds in our health care system, as well as more than 500 replacement beds. This is a tremendous investment at a time when it is a very fiscally challenged situation for a government in our province.

MS. WHALEN: We appreciate hearing those numbers, I'm always pleased when there are new beds coming. But I would like to know how we're dealing with the disconnect between the vacant beds in nursing homes and the smooth transition of people from transitional beds into those beds. That was an issue last November and I'm asking the minister today whether she can tell us how many vacant beds in nursing homes and residential care facilities there are today in Cape Breton district.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member indicated earlier in her question and I believe yesterday in a question, we have a number of initiatives underway in the department. Analyzing how we can approve the efficiency of moving people from a hospital bed, for example, into a nursing home bed. A report is being finalized right now as we speak, and it will soon be on my desk to consider the various options that are being outlined. I look forward to receiving that report and sharing it with the public and with the members.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV.: LOCAL 47 - WAGE PARITY

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: My question today is for the Minister of Community Services. Mr. Speaker the Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority is the largest housing authority east of Montreal. Metro Regional Housing Authority maintains more than 5,000 homes for people who cannot afford market rent. Upwards of 20,000 HRM residents rely on the housing authority for their basic need, shelter. But today, 33 members of the NSGEU Local 47 are in a position to strike which threatens valuable services to many marginalized residents of HRM. My question to the minister is, Local 47 members are asking for wage parity - does the minister and her government believe that they deserve this?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. The employees of the Metro Regional Housing Authority do extremely good work; we know that and we recognize that. We also recognize the importance of their work for the seniors and that this is an issue that is in the process of collective bargaining and that's where it should be.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, if we are to see these valued employees take to striking, more than 20,000 low-income Nova Scotians will be without adequate administrative support to answer their inquiries, assist with applications, send maintenance workers to fix problems, collect rents, pay contractors, and purchase much-needed supplies to keep units habitable.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. It has been a two-year effort to get a contract, the ask is for wage parity. Do the minister and the government believe that the efforts of Local 47 members should be as valued as other housing authorities in the province such as Cape Breton, Yarmouth, and Pictou?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the member has to understand that he pointed out a variety of different areas throughout the province. There are many areas in the province that there are negotiations and will be negotiations. As I said, it's so vitally important that we let that process play out. We, as a government, respect the negotiations

and the collective bargaining and we will be watching and knowing that they will come to a satisfactory conclusion.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, every day the employees of Local 47 do their jobs with great pride - they take care of poor, vulnerable people whom most of society turns their backs on, and they offer them shelter and security.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, is the NDP Government of Nova Scotia turning its back on Local 47 because of who they help? Doesn't Local 47 deserve wage parity?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it's very important to know that and we have shown this over and over within this government and within the Department of Community Services that we care and that we know and we make plans, we have a contingency plan ready to roll out in case the collective bargaining breaks off with a strike, but we have faith that both will come to the table and come to an agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENERGY - ELECTRICITY GENERATION: BIOMASS - AMOUNT

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. On Monday the minister announced the NDP would lower the cap on the annual amount of virgin forest biomass that can be used to generate electricity, from 500,000 to 350,000 dry tons. (Applause) I'm actually a little bit surprised they are clapping, since we told them it was too high last Fall and they said we were wrong; in fact lowering the cap to 350,000 dry tons is little more (Interruptions)

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

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, furthermore, lowering the cap to 350,000 dry tons is nothing more than a token gesture announced because of the protest today. As we previously said, any forest biomass allocation before the forest strategy is released is premature.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the minister isn't even really sure how much biomass is already being used to generate electricity in the province, so would the minister please tell this House exactly how much biomass is currently being used to generate electricity in the province today?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. We're taking a very cautious approach to the use of biomass for renewable electricity. We listened to the steering panel who recommended that we be cautious on this issue, and in light of that we reduced our amount of dry tons from 500,000 to 350,000.

Biomass is a very small portion of our renewable energy going forward and it's a way that we can get off of imported dirty coal, coal that comes all the way from South America; it's a way to get off of imported oil from halfway around the world; and it's a way that we're going to reach our 40 per cent goal by 2020.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised the minister would use those talking points after the rally today and the information he has been provided that shows that forest biomass can hardly be considered a renewable resource that should be included in renewable electricity. At the time we demanded that the former minister table the decision that justified including 500,000 tons of forest biomass for electricity generation, the science behind it, and the minister refused to do so.

We have a new minister, a new announcement, so I'll try with the new minister - will the Minister of Energy table, by the end of today, the scientific evidence that supports 350,000 tons of dry forest biomass being used to generate electricity in Nova Scotia?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, biomass is really a by-product in our forests. It's used in the highest and best use of the resource that we have. It allows new trees to grow for the next generation of trees. It's really about using the best possible use - the mature trees are harvested, whether for logs or pulp wood or stud wood or firewood. Biomass is really the end product that gives the woodlot owner another opportunity to clean up his woodlot and make it more sustainable going forward.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting to know if the member for Halifax Chebucto agrees with you on that one.

The fact of the matter is the minister's own science given to his department disputes what the minister just said. This is a government that is making decisions on economics of biomass instead of the sustainability and economics of our forests and our forest industry, and the many different types of jobs that come with it. There are many other biomass options, including supporting our struggling agriculture industry through the use of marginal farmlands or waste materials. These are proposals being pioneered in Nova Scotia, yet the government is failing to support these ideas. Will the minister agree, today, to change the Renewable Energy Plan to guarantee that the primary source of biomass-generated electricity comes from non-virgin forest sources?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, biomass can come from different sources - forest products are certainly one of them, and agricultural waste is another. It's a renewable resource and it's going to get us off of coal, it's going to get us off of oil, and it's going to allow us to use 40 per cent renewables for electricity before this decade is out.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East on a new question.

NAT. RES.: NAT. RES. STRATEGY - TABLE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Further to his previous comments a moment ago, I'm sure that he is aware that all of the research out at the moment indicates that biomass from virgin forest stands actually has a higher carbon footprint than many of the energy sources being used in Nova Scotia today. However, here we are with the Minister of Energy who is making decisions based on biomass without a forestry strategy in place.

Since the Minister of Energy couldn't answer, I'll ask the Minister of Natural Resources. The province's Natural Resources Strategy was due, by law, on December 31st - where is it?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, the Natural Resources Strategy has been a long time coming, but it's going to be worth waiting for. I'm excited about the prospects that will be in the strategy. It has a lot of good policies. We've already announced the 50 per cent reduction in clear-cutting; there is going to be no whole-tree harvesting; there will be no public funding for herbicides; and there will be an annual allowable cut. Biomass will be under the forestry code and there are just a lot of good things in that strategy. It's going to be coming very soon.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the protestors didn't believe him when he said it today and I don't believe him now, that it's coming soon. The minister announced on Monday that they would lower that cap for biomass, yet he did not talk about how that would affect hardwoods and high-value timber. He said that biomass comes from the lowest value, yet he only needs to go to Guysborough County to see that is not the case and, in fact, hardwood stands that hardwood producers would like to have are being destroyed for biomass.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: What thought has his department given towards ensuring that high-value trees and hardwoods are not affected by biomass use?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member remembers, in our budget that was announced last week, there is \$5 million in there for the Forest Strategy moving forward, mostly around silviculture and certification and aspects of Category 7

silviculture in particular that will allow for more selection harvesting and better management of our forests on a sustainable basis moving forward.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr Speaker, the minister can talk all he likes about putting money in for silviculture and so forth and improving forestry practices, but the fact is this government has not put their money where their mouth is.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned the fact is this department was, by law, required to deliver a forest strategy to the people of Nova Scotia by December 31st and they have not done that. Recently we learned that a large paper company was purchased by an Asian consortium, a conglomerate that is actually known for some of the worst harvesting and ecological stewardship on the globe.

We now know that the company, that the government is looking at what to do with the \$90 million loan that this government gave to Northern Pulp. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, is that \$90 million secure? Will Nova Scotians be on the hook for a slush fund donation to a company in the minister's riding?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit down with the new owners, Paper Excellence, that are purchasing the Northern Pulp mill, and I was very glad to hear that they will be moving forward with sustainable forestry practices. We double-checked on that, we talked to some of the mills that they operate and some of the governments in the Provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and want to reassure that they will be moving forward in a sustainable method.

I asked them specifically, the air quality issue that was promised to Pictou County, they will be spending that money for environmental cleanup, so at this point I have every confidence in the ability of Paper Excellence to be a stable environmental company here in our province.

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

**EDUC. - BADDECK ACAD.: RENOVATION PROJ.
- DETAILS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. During estimates last week I asked the minister if she could provide an update about the renovation project underway at Baddeck Academy. I want to thank the minister and her staff for providing me with additional information about the current status of the project; however, I've had a number of calls from concerned parents and community residents about possible cutbacks to the project. Originally the project was supposed to be completed in 2012 and the community had agreed to an extended timeline of completion by 2013-2014, and expected the project to proceed as planned.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, since the timeline has been extended, is it forcing the costs to increase and the scope of the project to be cut back?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Thank you very much for more information on the Baddeck School. I am not able to provide that information; I don't have that detail here, but I will ask staff. I can say that when a project has been approved, there are no cutbacks or any changes to the alterations without going through my office. I would have had to look at those and that has not been brought to my attention. So the member can be assured that there has been no discussion around that at the department. But I will make sure that the staff review that to see if there's anything we can provide the honourable member with at a further time.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. The plans for the project were originally presented to the school community in November 2009. In March 2011, revised plans were presented that would create a reduction of classroom space in the junior high and the elementary wings. Also, the concerned community members believe the improvements to the elementary wing are now purely cosmetic and no longer encompass the needed renovations. My question, through you to the minister is, has the department created a Band-Aid solution to cut costs, or is it still committed to the renovations initially agreed to in its first plan?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the member opposite that when a project is agreed upon, that is the project that the community will be receiving. The school boards are the ones that tell the Department of Education what alterations, repairs, what new projects need to be taking place in their community. So I don't have all of the detail. I would like to assure the member opposite that if the project was approved, that is the project that they are going to be receiving.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for her assurance that project and renovations will take place as planned in 2009. I do know it was a department representative who presented the revised plans to the school community in March of 2011. Some parents believe the school is losing program space and that it will not receive the technological requirements it needs for education in the 21st Century.

My final supplementary through you to the minister is, what assurance can the minister give that the school would not lose program space and it will get the technology requirement it needs?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it's very, very important that when we are doing our renovations and alterations in the school that we meet the needs of our students. The needs of our students have changed significantly over the last number of years. Technology is a component that we need to be making sure that our schools, when they do get their renovations, that they're up to date. I would like to assure the member that I

will go back to the department and I will personally review this file just to make sure that everything is in place that that school needs.

I would like to say that everything is based on making sure our children get the best, healthiest, safe and technologically updated program space that is absolutely needed in their community. I will stand here and promise the member that we are going to make sure that we deliver the absolute best spaces when we renovate for our students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

JUSTICE: FEE INCREASES - ANALYSIS

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this NDP Government increased taxes in Nova Scotia by hiking the costs of 1,400 user fees. While Nova Scotians expect to be charged the cost of delivery of a service by government, any additional costs are clearly a tax grab. The Department of Justice has increased the fees for dozens of services provided by the department. My question is will the Minister of Justice advise the House what analysis was carried out by his department to justify this increase in fees?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the member for the question. (Interruptions) I was feeling lonely, feeling dejected - I was actually almost snoozing away at some of the answers. However, I do thank you (Interruptions) It has been a long day. I will stand to be corrected and side with the questions.

The question here is on the costing and I'm a firm believer, and this government is a firm believer, that if you use it, you should pay for it. Unlike the Opposition that believe that everyone should pay for someone else's services, this government stands by its position and the fees that are charged.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, while I understand the minister may have been snoozing when I said in my question that Nova Scotians expect to pay the cost of delivering a service by government, but if the cost being charged is more than the cost of delivery, that is a tax grab. I want to ask the minister, he knows there are dozens of fees under his department that have increased, but let's look at one for example - under Private Investigators and Private Guards Act, under Application Fees, for a business licence for private investigators and private guards, the cost went from \$693.86 to \$707.74, for an increase of \$13.88.

I'm wondering if the Minister of Justice could tell us, what exactly changed in his department to justify the need to increase the fee for a business licence for private investigators and private guards by \$13.88?

MR. LANDRY: A \$13 increase on a \$693 item is not much above the inflationary rate of last year, so the cost of doing business does go up from year to year and I think it's very much within reason. I think the average person who has to pay those fees, looking at that would say, well, it's probably about time.

MR. SAMSON: Well, I'm sure the Minister of Finance would love to hear the answer given by the Minister of Justice to say that most Nova Scotians would agree that this government should have increased the fees and it's about time that this government increased the fees. I think the Minister of Justice may have wanted to go with the Minister of Finance's response of, I filed the necessary notice under the Fees Act and I have followed the Act and the required notice. That might have been a safer political answer for the minister to give, but since I'm asking the Minister of Justice a question, let me end with my final supplementary.

It is my understanding the fire marshal has instructed that the Burnside correctional facility should not have double-bunking on the upper levels of the correctional facility. My question to the minister is, can you confirm that the Burnside facility is not undertaking any double-bunking on the upper levels of each of the pods at that facility?

MR. LANDRY: As the member across is aware, through his tour of the facility recently and some correspondence that has gone to him, the fire marshal has assured us that all processes have been followed and that our department is in constant consultation with the fire marshal to ensure that there's the utmost safety within the institution.

MR. SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable member for Richmond.

IMMIGRATION: STRATEGY - RELEASE

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians certainly believed that actions speak louder than words and when it comes to this government, they've heard a lot of talk about immigration and a strategy, but unfortunately they have yet to see any real action. The previous minister informed us in November 2009 that the immigration strategy would soon be released. Then again in July 2010, we were told by the former Minister of Immigration that the strategy would soon be released. Well, it is now April 13, 2011, and we have yet to see an Immigration Strategy for the Province of Nova Scotia. My question to the new Minister of Immigration is, when can Nova Scotians expect this long-delayed Immigration Strategy?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat the answer that the Premier gave earlier today - soon, very soon. We're taking our time. We're in the very final stages of consultation and developing the details. I think the citizens of Nova Scotia will be very pleased with the results. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: I appreciate the response from the minister and one thing we can agree on is, you're right - this government is taking its time. It's certainly taking its time on immigration; it took its time on gambling; it's taking its time on biomass issues; it's taking time on a whole host of issues, but at the end of the day, what's worse than the government taking its time is what impact it's having on immigration numbers in this province.

Now, the last time I rose to ask this, the former minister said that my numbers were wrong when I indicated to her that the numbers were actually declining in this province, under this government's watch, and the former minister said that the government was on target to have 2,600 new immigrants in the province. Well, the former minister was wrong and I'm curious as to whether the new minister will confirm that Statistics Canada has actually indicated that the numbers for 2010 were 2,408 - almost 200 less than what the government target was. My question to the minister is, how do you explain the fact that under your watch, and under your government's watch, that the number of immigrants to this province is declining?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly be prepared to talk about the numbers during estimates but I don't have those figures in front of me. Certainly I understand if there has been any change, it's the result of stopping the economic nomination stream, and certainly the Office of Immigration has been working full out in terms of the other streams, with what's under the responsibility of the provincial Office of Immigration. You may be interested to know that Nova Scotia has the co-lead with our federal partners in terms of immigration issues and that we work very closely with the federal government. After the election we expect to start sort of a bipartite development of long-term range in terms of the caps and trying to equalize or make more equitable the nominee streams in terms of numbers. So there's lots that's going on behind the scene.

The fact that we haven't announced the Immigration Strategy in no way affects our efforts towards bringing more international immigrants to Nova Scotia and we're very pleased with our results.

MR. SAMSON: Well, the challenge is, Mr. Speaker, when you don't release a strategy, the only people in Nova Scotia who know what this government's intentions are is the government itself and they've been very good at keeping that a secret for over a year and a half now, from Nova Scotians. The problem is, is that we are now seeing the impact of this lack of action by the government in that numbers are going down.

At the same time, while the Premier lauds Manitoba for having a cap of 5,000 new immigrants, Nova Scotia has a cap of 500 and we're left to wonder what impact that cap will have on the strategy, the yet-to-be-announced strategy that the government is currently working on for immigration. So my question to the minister is, what efforts are you undertaking to ensure that the Harper Government, or any other government after

May 2nd, is going to allow Nova Scotians to bring more than 500 new immigrants to our province?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Premier actually tabled the numbers earlier in this session and we are on target, but certainly I'll be able to confirm that again during estimates. Our government, we understand the potential of a revitalized immigration strategy. We're planning to take the leadership and provide the accountability and direction that perhaps former governments have not in this province. We appreciate the value of bringing immigrants to our province. They are necessary to allow us to move forward with our economic plans and our jobs here, and we'll make sure that the supports are in place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**ENERGY - FRACKING MORATORIUM: LACK
- EXPLAIN**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. When the Minister of Energy announced his review of fracking, he refused to place a moratorium on the process. The minister said there were no applications before government but he well knows, and members of the House know, that we feel it makes perfect sense to put it on at that time, when there are no applications yet filed. In the SEC filing that I tabled yesterday, which I'm sure the minister has read in detail, Triangle Petroleum said it has been conducting fracking both under the previous Tory Government, in Hants County, and under the current NDP term. It further suggests more fracking is planned this year.

So, Mr. Speaker, would the minister please answer whether the reason the NDP refuses to put a moratorium on fracking is that it knew companies were planning to continue fracking operations, just as already happened?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we have a good handle on what companies are doing out there. There are a few at this point in time that have some exploration underway and others that are getting towards drilling but at this point in time there has been no commercial development of a well on the mainland onshore in Nova Scotia. It certainly takes time to develop applications to allow for any of these processes to occur. So at this point in time there are no applications out there to allow fracking.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister is very careful with his words. He notes there's no commercial development - true - and yet the fact is he would also be aware that there has been fracking underway last year, and there's some plan for this summer as part of exploration activities. There is no application before him, and I take his words that there is no application before him for other activities, but he refuses to

indicate whether he expects one forthcoming, despite the fact that SEC documents indicate there are.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister announced the review, he suggested that all views would be taken into consideration, and yet the review terms that are on the government's Web site today essentially say that fracking will happen and be allowed in Nova Scotia and that this review will only consider the terms under which that will happen.

The government statement also clearly states the review will focus on water issues, which while we agree are very important, are not the only issues associated with the process, not the least of which are the 500 or so chemicals used in the process. Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us why his review of fracking is not open to equal consideration of the views of all Nova Scotians and why he's not demanding the release of the chemical list to be a prerequisite for any fracking applications?

MR. PARKER: I'm glad the honourable member brings up the review. We're in the process now, through the Department of Energy and the Department of Environment, of putting together the scope of that study, and certainly through our Web site all Nova Scotians, all interested parties, will have an opportunity to have input into what it is we want to look at, what we want to study. Certainly a protection of groundwater is important and the last thing we want to see is damage to our environment or to our drinking water. I would invite, through the member and all members, if any of their constituents or interested parties want to bring forward ideas on what it is the scope of the study should be looking at, we would certainly welcome that.

MR. YOUNGER: I think Nova Scotians have been pretty clear they want an open review that starts with the premise of whether fracking should happen at all and the review terms on the minister's department Web site indicate that's not where they'll be starting.

Mr. Speaker, this review, according to that document, will also not be an independent review, it will be an internal committee of officials from the Departments of Energy and Environment. I know the department has very credible staff, and I don't dispute that; however, in the interest of transparency and openness, this government must make sure that this is an independent review that has no preconceived results.

Mr. Speaker, many of the staff that will be part of this review have already sent letters to constituents throughout Nova Scotia indicating that they believe the process is already safe. Will the minister agree to replace his stated review with a truly independent review of fracking in Nova Scotia?

MR. PARKER: We have some very qualified people in the Department of Energy, in the Department of Environment, and if necessary we're willing to call in experts on any particular topics to get advice. Really in the end we're looking for the best

practices, the best possible protection for drinking water and for environment. During the period of the review there are no applications for any fracking. We're listening to Nova Scotians. The people of the province will have two opportunities, certainly, during the scope. We want their ideas on what should be studied and certainly, before any regulations go forward, we will ask them again for input from Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

PSC: CIVIL SERV. REDUCTION - COMMITMENT

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of the Public Service Commission. Mr. Speaker, this government has promised to save money by reducing 1,000 civil service positions over four years through attrition, yet this Legislature has no evidence of progress to date. How can Nova Scotians take this NDP Government seriously about their promise to spend less when they have made no effort to achieve this commitment?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: To the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we've been working at it; we're reducing the size of the civil service. We said we'd reduce it by 1,000 and we will.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this Opposition will hold government accountable for their promises. We know about 600 people leave the Civil Service every year for their own reasons. This expenditure restraint will not hurt anyone, it will mean better use of tax dollars. When are departments going to get hard numbers and targets for civil service reductions, so they can get on with the job at hand?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, as I answered in the first question, we are doing just that. If they would let us get on with it, we will lead and we will make sure that there will be the vacancies we talked about. We will move forward, that government will be in balance and those 1,000 jobs will be gone. Thank you

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we'd be more than pleased if the government would get on with this. They've been in power now for two years and we've seen no evidence. In fact, just this past week, I learned that in the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations no FTE targets were set for the past year for reduction. I'm sure if we asked other ministers in the Legislature today, they would give us the same answer. How can the NDP be serious about their commitment when they are not directing departments to do it two years after they've been in this Legislature?

MR. CORBETT: Quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. We have been advising and telling departments to reduce, where necessary. The problem is that we had a system that was broken. We inherited this system where there were departments that had empty FTEs that we had to corral and we had to find out what was going on. Their reaction - the

previous government's and the Liberal Government's - their idea of downsizing government was to attack employees and fire them and chase them out of the province.

What we're going to do, Mr. Speaker, is do it in a thoughtful way. We're going to do it through attrition and we're going to do it right.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENVIRON.: WATER STRATEGY - ACTION ITEMS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. He finally announced a water strategy, close to deadline in December. Some of the strategy had actions that had to be taken immediately. Will he table in the House today the outcome of the action items which have to be taken immediately?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite; I want to thank the member opposite for bringing up this question. Really we take this issue very seriously. I want to end on this here - the members opposite, including both Opposition Parties, actually talk about the environment, but this Party actually takes some action. Thank you very much.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, during Question Period the member for Richmond, when asking questions of the Minister of Justice, in his second supplementary certainly changed the whole view and subject matter of his questioning. It is usually - in the history of this House, as long as I have been here, that all questions had to be related. You can ask various ministers on the same subject but it should be all related when you ask the same minister.

Mr. Speaker, my point would be if you would look into that and see the veracity of it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on the same point, the point raised by the Government House Leader. I don't know what history books he was looking at but in the past you were allowed to ask the minister anything you want, as long as it is related to the minister's portfolio.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I would simply point to you and the Government House Leader to - I believe it was in the mid-2000s when the former member for Cape Breton The Lakes sat as an Independent member and was permitted a question on Opposition Day, on Wednesdays. If I am not mistaken, at the time he actually would ask a different question to different ministers - his first question, first supplementary and second supplementary.

This question that I asked was to the Minister of Justice, on a justice issue. It has been done before and I have to say I am actually surprised to see the NDP Government looking to block questions from the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I've always felt that the supplementary question generally flows from the first question, but I think there has been some switching of topics in the past so I will take this under advisement and consult with my Chief Clerk and get back to you as soon as possible.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During my questions to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, he indicated that I should check the record in Hansard that indeed he didn't say some of the things that I suggested in my question that he did. In my hand here I have Hansard from that time and I would like to read from it and place it on the record . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That's not a point of order. It's a difference between two members; it's not a point of order. (Interruptions) No, it is not a point of order. (Interruptions) No, no, by no means.

Before we go to the Opposition business, I would like to remind everybody and advise the members in here, we have some technical problems with some of our television broadcast today. Our television staff replaced the malfunctioning equipment in time for us to go on air, but there's no captioning to identify those speaking. That's probably a good thing today. (Laughter) Those viewing on TV will already know that, so I just wanted to advise the members in here.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During a previous Question Period, I had asked the Minister of Environment to provide the House with a breakdown of why the user fees for an environmental assessment went up by \$300. All he passed in today was a list of the fees, no explanation provided. If he were truly environmentally conscious, he wouldn't have wasted the paper that he passed me today.

MR. SPEAKER: That's not a point of order. I'm going to tell you that I'm not going to recognize members pretty soon on those types of points of order. That'll be the end of it today.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

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

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 280 and I would suggest that we take a minute off each one to get back on schedule.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Res. No. 280, re NDP: Gas Regulation - End - notice given Apr. 11/11 - (Hon. M. Samson)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: I will first read Resolution No. 280. I know lots of times I hear from people that when you jump up and start in on a resolution, 280 doesn't mean a lot to many people who may be taking a look today. I did this on behalf of the member for Richmond:

“Whereas the failed policy of gas regulation in Nova Scotia has resulted in higher prices at the pumps for consumers and has restricted the ability of retailers to compete for customers; and

Whereas while they were in Opposition, both the Premier and the Minister of Finance said that it was taxing the tax on gas that was unfair and should be removed from the calculation of the final retail price Nova Scotians pay; and

Whereas now that the NDP are in power, they have broken yet another promise and are continuing to nickel and dime Nova Scotians at the pump;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly urge the “Nickel and Dime Party” to get their hands out of the pockets of Nova Scotians, take the tax off the tax at the pumps and end their failed policy of gas regulation.”

Madam Speaker, since (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It's very difficult to hear. I think the chatter's getting a little too high, if I could ask you to be mindful of that please.

The honourable member for Kings West has the floor.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Gas regulation is still a failed policy. It's just that the NDP decided to shield themselves from weekly or certainly monthly hit back on this regulation by passing it on to the URB to do the regulation. We know that Nova Scotia taxpayers still pay a very high cost, in fact, more than it was done by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

So it ensures that we don't get the most competitive price because, first of all, we're paying - it was close to 1 cent a litre for the administration for the weekly analysis of gas prices in order to set the price for a week. That way the province calculates the final price at the pumps is unfair as it ensures an artificially high price by putting the HST on top of the flat motor fuel tax. I'll just break that down. If we take a look at Amherst, for example. Amherst seems to be a lightning rod for this whole issue because it's so close to Aulac, which I believe we also have some of the information for.

If we take the base wholesale price of - which was the case on April 8th - 86.03 cents; federal excise tax, 10 cents; provincial tax, 15.5 cents; the wholesale selling price, \$1.11.08. The minimum margin was .4 cents. The maximum, 5.5 cents, a sub-total of \$1.15.08 and the HST of 15 per cent, gives us 17.4 cents for \$1.33.02 cents. Now, if we take a look at removing the tax on tax, of course the figures that I just gave you remain the same except that the sub-total becomes \$1.03.8, federal excise tax then added on a 10 cents provincial tax, 15.5 cents for \$1.29 per litre of gasoline so the difference being 3.82 cents. So every time we fill up in Nova Scotia, it costs the consumer 4 cents more because of the tax on tax.

That is a significant impact. Four cents on every litre of gas over the course of a year is, in fact, what causes some people - very low-income Nova Scotians - not to drive a vehicle at all. I believe the Minister of Finance is going to have an opportunity (Interruptions) It's costing 3.82, I can't be any more specific, Mr. Minister. Over the course of a year, this is a burden on Nova Scotians. As the overall price rises, we know we're hearing each week how much of a burden it is and, in fact, which is good from the point of view of the people starting to carpool again, it's a good conservation measure. We know that back on two or three occasions when gas went to \$1.35, \$1.40, \$1.45, Nova Scotians had to take quick action because when they looked at the cost of getting to and from work, the impact on their weekly income or monthly income, it was having a substantial effect. That's very clearly the difference if we were to remove that. The tax on the tax . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I believe the time has elapsed. (Interruption) Forgive me, folks, I just had the numbers wrong here on the paperwork. The honourable member for Kings West has the floor. He has until 4:37 p.m.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just to give a little further information here on how the government felt about the tax on tax when in Opposition: the tax on tax was always an immoral application of taxation powers, said the NDP Leader, now the Premier in the Daily News, August 19, 2005. That's a pretty powerful statement and I'd like to repeat that. The tax on tax was always an immoral application of taxation powers, said the NDP Leader of the day, now the Premier of the province.

When an Official Opposition said the government should stop applying the 13 per cent harmonized sales tax on top of the gas tax and the federal excise tax, you essentially pay tax on tax, the Premier said. I think the Department of Finance, the last time I heard them talk about this, had this phrase; they called it a tax cascade, as if that is supposed to make us feel better about it.

So the New Democrats said the HST should be put on the commodity price of gas instead, and that was reported in the ChronicleHerald, April 25, 2008. So this is a tax that does remain. We know that the border experience highlights this and, in fact, we were looking at coming up with new boundaries in Nova Scotia to deal with this troublesome difference in the price of gas between the Nova Scotia border, or close-to-border towns, and what the experience is in New Brunswick, so we hope to get rid of the tax on tax. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very pleased to participate in this debate today. I appreciate this resolution coming forward by the Liberal caucus. In trying to get their facts straight on this, they forgot to mention it was a previous Liberal Administration that actually placed the tax on the tax that they're complaining about.

Today my colleagues in Opposition want to try to convince the Nova Scotia public that regulation isn't working. Regulation is working, Madam Speaker, and I ask you to look back to the days before regulation was in place. Many of us have been members of this House for several years and we can all remember the days when we received calls from the public concerned that their local gas station had closed.

Mr. Speaker, remember the calls from consumers that gasoline was one price when they went to work in the morning and a different, usually higher, price when they went home in the evening. I think we all shared in the frustration that these prices seemed

to bounce around without any real reason, or for reasons that nobody could explain in a way that was understandable.

I note with interest that in the summer of 2004 there were meetings conducted by an all-Party Select Committee on Petroleum Product Pricing. This was in response, Madam Speaker, to public concern over gasoline prices that seemed to rise and fall every second day, often without clear reason and rarely with any explanation. The result of those hearings, for those who have forgotten, was a report endorsed by members of all three Parties, that recommended the re-introduction of gasoline regulation in Nova Scotia, something the Liberal Opposition seems to have forgotten about. They participated and still recommended regulation.

After a series of five regional meetings, the committee returned a report which had, as one of the recommendations, that gasoline regulation should be based, in general, on the P.E.I. model, and that is what we have today.

Again, Madam Speaker, the Gardner Report indicates gasoline regulation has addressed price stability by providing motorists with prices that are generally consistent for a week at a time.

Madam Speaker, there was a time when more than 900 retail gasoline stations served the public in Nova Scotia. Today there are roughly 415 gas stations and in many areas, rural remote communities, people face the prospect of driving 20 or 30 kilometres to buy gas. Security of supply in their local area is still a concern for many Nova Scotians, especially for those who live in rural, remote areas. Nova Scotians need access to what has become an essential service and regulation is working well for those communities and consumers. I prefer to focus on the benefits of gas regulation and, in particular, on the impact that it has had on individual Nova Scotians and rural communities.

Madam Speaker, when consumers pull up to the pump, it's easy to see the price, but what else do they see? Do they see a place where students have a summer job pumping gas or working behind the counter? Do they see a small business person who is contributing to the community, maybe sponsoring a local soccer or hockey team? Do they see a business person who belongs to the local Lions Club or volunteer fire department, or supports school fundraisers?

Madam Speaker, when people criticize gas regulation, do they consider people such as Lisa and Brian Boudreau who founded Caper Gas? Lisa and Brian represent a success story for all Nova Scotians and one that we should all take pride in. Caper Gas is a small family business. It has opened stations that are operated by other small independent business people. While the larger wholesalers are pulling out of smaller communities, Lisa and Brian Boudreau are investing in their communities. They are

hiring people, creating jobs in rural Nova Scotia, and injecting capital into the economy, which translates into work for other companies.

Madam Speaker, they are doing all this while making a living in their local community and all of this is possible because of the stability that gas regulation provides them as they operate their business. It is also important to note that while the Boudreau business is growing, in part due to gas regulation, they are also a fine example of business people who are giving back to their community - a community that has supported them and helped them to succeed. My job, government's job and the job of all members of this House is to help them succeed because they are contributing to Nova Scotia's economy and to their community. This is why maintenance of rural infrastructure and giving those small businesses a fair opportunity to succeed is one of the primary objectives of gas regulation. The goal is being achieved as evidenced by the findings of a report by Michael Gardner.

Madam Speaker, this government intends to remain consistent in its position and keep the commitment we made to Nova Scotians. In October 2009 we removed the politics from gas pricing when we transferred the responsibility for gasoline pricing to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. The URB is an arm's-length, non-political organization. It is the proper body to perform this regulatory function. This is in keeping with gasoline regulation in other provinces.

Another point I would like to address today, Madam Speaker, is around the cost of regulation which Mr. Gardner estimates to be roughly \$6 million a year. This is saying some people know the cost of everything but not the value of it. The cost of regulation for an average Nova Scotian is less than the price of a Tim Hortons' coffee each month. With gas regulation we have put a stop to the average two to three gas station closures per month and gas regulation is doing exactly what it was intended to do. With it, there is more price stability, protection of supply in rural areas, and a reduction of regional variation in price. It is for these reasons gas regulation in Nova Scotia is a success. Gas regulation was not intended, and never was intended, to bring lower prices but it was to address those three points I mentioned earlier.

The final point I would like to address today, Madam Speaker, and I guess I'll reiterate that the previous speaker, the member for Kings West, indicated the tax on tax issue and this was introduced by the previous Liberal Administration in the mid-1990s. The sad reality is that the fiscal situation that we inherited, coupled with the duty to provide Nova Scotians with health care, education, community services, along with many others, makes tax cuts impossible if we are to get Nova Scotia back to balance.

I want to just indicate to the members, and for the member for Kings West, when he mentioned the price of \$1.33.2 per litre, this puts Halifax perhaps in the range of the four higher cities but we are not the highest, Madam Speaker, we are actually the lowest, if you look at St. John's, Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver as of April 12th. The 1.33.2 is

the lowest of those four and that's certainly not to say that we're the lowest across the country, but the gas regulation has done what the government has expected it do.

It would be great if it could lower gasoline pricing but where gasoline pricing starts on the New York spot, for us here in our formula, that is something that the governments don't have any control over. To deliver a good service to Nova Scotia at a reasonable price and the fact that there's no competition really in Nova Scotia for delivery, really does make it necessary to regulate, Madam Speaker. With those comments I look forward to hear what my colleagues across the floor will have to say on this topic.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Resolution No. 280 with mixed feelings about the clauses put forward by the Liberal members of this House. We, the Progressive Conservative members of the House, believe that government should take the tax off tax when the budget is balanced. We do believe that gas regulation has served Nova Scotians well for the purposes for which it was implemented.

Let's start with the tax on the tax. We say that the budget must be balanced first and it's time the government gets on with balancing the budget. To put it into context, we've had a deficit this year of about 5 per cent and we have an HST increase which is also about 5 per cent of the budget. That's about 10 per cent different from where we were two years ago and we have another billion dollars in debt, Madam Speaker.

It is time that government starts trying to use the method of controlling costs, saving money to get this budget balanced. Maybe we need to bring back Dr. John Hamm out of retirement, he had a 10 per cent deficit in 1999 and in just three short years that budget was balanced.

Madam Speaker, today this budget should be balanced but instead we see no improvement over the last two years and Nova Scotians are paying 2 per cent more in HST. With a balanced budget, much like in 2002-03, Nova Scotians could begin to enjoy the prosperity that follows. For it was Nova Scotians who made the sacrifices. If only we could have that same leadership today we could enjoy that same prosperity again.

One of these things Nova Scotians could enjoy today with a balanced budget is a break on the money they pay when they fill up with fuel at a gas station. But Nova Scotians won't get to enjoy this break because this government chooses not to give it to them even though they said they would while they were in Opposition. That has been established today during Question Period and in previous remarks here.

But really Madam Speaker, this is no different than what Canadians are faced with in the upcoming federal election, to maintain a Conservative Government that has steered our country through one of the worst recessions since the depression and has steered us through better than any other G-20 nation. All, Madam Speaker, while maintaining an environment of lower taxes. They have in fact been even lowering taxes throughout this period. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Inverness has the floor. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I think actions speak louder than words and if we can see what we've seen from this government we can expect to see continued increased taxes. If Nova Scotians are expecting to get a break at the pump, perhaps they should look to the Progressive Conservative members of this House because we believe this budget could be balanced, we would balance it and the cost of this measure to take the tax off the tax is about \$37.5 million. As a percentage of the budget, that is not significant.

Note I say that after we balance the budget - and we will balance it before . . . actually I'll skip that part, Madam Speaker.

I would like to now focus on how we would differentiate ourselves from the Liberal members of this House. I hope I do have some support from some of the other members on my remarks here. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACMASTER: We believe that gas price regulation has served its intent in this province for two reasons. One, it has smoothed out the volatility in the price that Nova Scotians pay at the pump and two, it supported the retailers of gasoline in rural Nova Scotia, ensuring Nova Scotians have access to gasoline, close, either in their communities or close to the communities in which they live.

I know a rural retailer who expressed to me in person that he would not be in business today if it were not for gas price regulation. (Interruption) Actually it's not, one of the members has referenced Caper Gas but it's actually another retailer in a constituency of a colleague of mine. I felt very happy when I heard him say that because there's a time when government made a change that worked for Nova Scotians. My colleague is correct, it is the station he was thinking of as well.

This is significant. I'm going to focus on this section for the rest of my remarks. I only have about two minutes left, but in 1997 I had a chance to visit Scotland. I stayed with a farmer there and he had to travel 60 miles to get gasoline. He had another tank in the back of his truck and every time he'd fill up, he'd fill up that tank as well. We don't want to see that happen in Nova Scotia and we believe that gas price regulation can help.

We've seen in North America, a trend where much of the profit in gasoline sales is taken before the retailer gets the product. Many retailers are owned by big oil and gas companies and refiners and they use retail outlets to sell gasoline, sometimes as a loss leader to attract business into their convenience stores. I can think of a particular company that's done very well with this and we can't begrudge them for this because they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, earning profits for their shareholders.

What we have to look out for in this legislation is security of supply for Nova Scotians in rural areas. I think we need to be looking at protecting these rural retailers by carving out a reasonable margin for them, much like we do with Nova Scotia Power that provides us with electricity and energy for our homes. We need to be looking at a similar measure to protect rural retailers and gas price regulation provides us an avenue to do that.

With those remarks, I conclude my - how much time do I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have until 4:57 p.m. if you'd like to take it. If not, we can . . .

MR. MACMASTER: Well, Madam Speaker, since I do have a couple more minutes. We do know that many of the rural retailers, and we look at Caper Gas that had been mentioned earlier here, they've had to move out away from the big oil companies because their business models are different.

Companies like Caper Gas in this province are trying to earn a profit at the retail level. I think it's important that we protect them. I do have further detail here, but I think I've made my point. In the interest of expediency, I'll take my place. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: I don't want to get into a federal election debate, but let me just say I find it amusing that the Third Party is defending Prime Minister Harper, sorry, the Prime Minister, and then goes on into a defence of regulation when that particular Prime Minister is actually against the regulation of private industries and business. I don't think the Prime Minister would actually agree with the honourable member's remarks, which makes it rather interesting. In fact, he has spoken out against regulation of similar industries, previously, and I'm sure that he would not wade into a

provincial matter in Nova Scotia such as this, so he probably has not commented directly on this.

Let me start with a quote from the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank where he said, "Another step is to eliminate the 'tax on tax'. Right now, the federal excise tax and motive fuel tax is applied to gasoline before the HST - an unfair taxation method. Eliminating the tax on tax would automatically drop gas prices by about two cents per litre." Then he goes on to talk about the National Gas Strategy and I'll table that. That is from that member in October 2008, not long before the election. Let me go on to quote the gentleman who is now Premier. He said that the tax on tax was always an immoral application of taxation powers and that was the member for Cole Harbour. He went on to say that the NDP not only wants to eliminate the tax on tax, but wants to drop the GST from fuel purchases entirely, which actually goes even further than what we are suggesting.

I must question that if the member for Cole Harbour was so sure, not long before the last election, that tax was an immoral tax, that one of his first actions - those were his own words, an immoral tax - that would be one of the first things that he would find it necessary to remove and deal with it otherwise. The government, the NDP, did make other decisions on other taxes and fees that it felt were wrong. Immoral is probably the strongest language he used to describe any of the taxes and yet that was the one he did not remove.

There has been some talk about whether regulation, in fact, saves local gas stations. This is certainly a debatable issue because even the retailers themselves - and there are two reasons for that; one, the retailers themselves have indicated that most of the ones that would have been saved were already closed by the time regulation started. Second of all, they've now come and said, actually, regulation is not working and they have made an application to the URB for a 2.5 cent increase in their margin on the basis - in their filing - that the regulation system and structure at the moment is not working for them and is not protecting them, so they want an increase. Do I take from that that the government and the Third Party will be at that hearing advocating in favour of further higher gas prices since those retailers have said it will only work for them if they get another 2.5 cents?

Furthermore, this government approved something which we were perfectly happy with, the approval of gas coupons. Gas coupons actually fly in the face of regulation and the very gas stations, including Caper Gas, which was mentioned by the minister in his remarks, actually came out and said that gas coupons make the whole regulation process ridiculous and yet the government approved it. So they either support the idea that these gas stations are promoting or they don't. It appears they're trying to have it both ways. We certainly supported having coupons from retailers and discounts available for gas pricing because we don't support regulation, yet this government seemed to try to have it both ways.

The whole argument for regulation at the time was that the gas prices should be predictable, and we heard the minister allude to that, that the price changes once a week. Well, originally it was once every two weeks, if I recall correctly, now it's once every week.

Madam Speaker, the regulated price goes up or down once a week, but if, in fact, it was a truly transparent system, then when all the various media outlets make their calculation of what's going to happen on Friday with gas prices, you would expect that would happen, that they would be correct. Yet how many times have we seen lately where the price actually increases when the prediction was for a decrease or a decrease when there was a prediction for an increase?

Mr. Speaker, that's because the system isn't as transparent as the government would like to make it out to be and isn't as open and accessible to members of the public as the previous government had promised it would be. The minister in his remarks actually gave a higher number for the cost of regulation than I had thought it was. So I'll take the minister's number, he said \$6 million is the approximate cost to Nova Scotia taxpayers of regulation. During Question Period today, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Justice and perhaps another minister too, I'm not sure, indicated that they felt that the user should pay for the system and that was their argument for the fees. They said it shouldn't be on the general rate but they have just put \$6 million on the general rate to cover gas regulation when not everybody in the province drives a car. That doesn't make any sense. It flies in the face of the exact comments that members of this Cabinet said during Question Period today. It's the exact opposite argument. They're trying to have it both ways.

Madam Speaker, when we look at this, it's about fairness. The member for Cole Harbour was exactly right when he said the tax on tax was an immoral tax, he was exactly right, because that's exactly what it is. He seems to be suggesting that it was wrong when the HST was 13 per cent but it's okay at 15 per cent and that simply makes no sense. When we look at regulation, the minister trumpeted the fact that on April 12th, or April 11th, I can't remember which date he used, that the gas prices in Halifax were among the four highest but they weren't the highest. I'm not sure that that's something that I necessarily would want to aspire to.

The goal should be to allow these industries to compete. When we look at somewhere, for example, like Colchester North, where they had and they continue to have some challenges, but they had significant challenges with gas price differentials between Amherst and in New Brunswick. (Interruption) Cumberland North, I'm sorry. That was an opportunity to deal with that issue – take the tax on tax off. If we look at that price today - and I'll table this document in a moment, Madam Speaker - the minimum price for the Halifax region, zone one, which obviously covers an area greater than just the municipality of Halifax, it's a minimum of \$1.33.2 and a maximum of \$1.34.9 for regular unleaded fuel in self serve. If the tax on tax was removed, we would be talking

about \$1.29 to \$1.31. Even the highest price would be lower than the currently allowed lowest price.

That's a big difference, Madam Speaker, and it's one that affects the pocketbooks of Nova Scotians. The member for Cole Harbour, when he was in Opposition, not only suggested - what time do I have until? (Interruption) Oh, I'm sorry. Well, obviously, regulation is not working in the way it was promised and the tax on tax is an immoral tax just like the member for Cole Harbour said and so we believe it should be removed.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time allotted for Resolution No. 280 has elapsed.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 295.

Res. 295, re NDP Gov't.: Educ. Cuts - Stop - notice given Apr. 11/11 - (Hon. K. Casey)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place today to speak to Resolution No. 295 and for refreshing the memory of the members here, I just want to read the Therefore:

"Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House ask the NDP Government to stop balancing the books of this province on the backs of Nova Scotia students."

Madam Speaker, this is not something new for us to speak about. It's not something new for me to stand and speak about and I am pleased on behalf of all the students in our province to be their voice here in the Legislature.

I wanted to talk a bit, Madam Speaker, about the decisions that have been made around balancing the budget. My comments are not to suggest that we should not balance the budget, my comments are to suggest that there are ways that the books of this province could be balanced without the huge cuts to public school education that have been proposed by this government. One of the arguments the Minister of Finance uses, continually, is to suggest that with declining enrolment, there should also be a corresponding decline in spending. That myth is, in fact, just that, it is a myth. Anyone who understands education and who knows what has happened in the public schools over the last 15 to 20 years would recognize that the composition of the classes has changed significantly. Even though there may be fewer students in our schools, the demands of those students have changed and have increased.

A few things that have happened, Madam Speaker, that have caused that composition of the class to change began with the acceptance of the inclusion policy in our schools. Again, this is not an argument about whether inclusion is good or not good, but it is to suggest that with the policy of inclusion we have had to - and we will continue to have to - enhance our programs and put more human, financial and material resources into our schools in order to attempt to meet the needs of all students.

As classroom teachers will tell you and classroom teachers at all levels in public schools, P to 12, will tell you that the challenge before them now is much greater and it is much different than it was 15 or 20 years ago. We had the Youth Training School, as an example, attended by students who had some severe learning challenges. They went to that facility with highly-trained teachers who were able to meet their needs in a very small student-to-teacher ratio. Those students were able to learn to the best of their ability and to their full potential in that environment. It was an appropriate environment, the curriculum was appropriate, the instruction was appropriate and the dollars that supported that particular facility were dollars that came from the Community Services budget line.

When the decision was made to close that facility, Madam Speaker, and to transfer those students into our public schools, public schools welcomed the students, as we always do, we welcome all students. We understood when those students came to our schools that they had challenges. There would be some professional development that would be required for teachers so they could better understand the learning styles. Every student, as we know, has a different learning style and not all students respond to the same strategies. So there was a steep learning curve for many classroom teachers but they took on that challenge because they wanted to be the best they could be and to provide the best for all students.

However, when the students moved into public schools, there was a commitment that the funding would follow, but it didn't. After two years, all the responsibilities for funding programs and positions in our public schools fell under the Department of Education budget, so it immediately started to drive up the costs for public education.

I raise that as an example - it's just one of many - to help explain that the composition of the classroom has changed. Another decision that was made back in the 1980s was a decision to close vocational schools. I'm sure that the decision was based on some research and it was based on some belief that it was the right thing to do. I want to talk about how that decision had an impact on the composition in the class and on the costs for education. Many students are more inclined to work with their hands, to the more skills-related vocations that they are interested in. The vocational school provided an opportunity for them at the end of Grade 9 to move into that kind of a program, Madam Speaker. With their closing, those students were less engaged, less attentive to the academic programs that were being provided in public schools. Many of them dropped out of school - bright young people who did not see any relevance in the courses they were taking.

In order to respond to that, the Department of Education, at the time, began to look at how they could introduce some new programs which would help keep those students engaged, which would be meaningful, relevant and keep those kids in school. We have seen over the last 20 years a significant increase in the graduation rates of students in our public schools. That is something of which everyone should be proud and I'm sure everyone in this House is proud of the fact that we are providing programs that will allow more students to reach Grade 12 to graduate.

We know out in the work force if you present a resumé to an employer and you don't have a Grade 12 graduation certificate, you may not be the first person they want to hire. Most employers are looking for a minimum of a Grade 12 graduation certificate. So we have been able to keep students in our schools so that they will reach Grade 12, they will graduate and then they have some choices. They don't have any obstacles in front of them for getting employment - you have to have your Grade 12 graduation certificate to go on to post-secondary - so that is a critical piece, Madam Speaker, of providing opportunities for students, but it doesn't come without a price tag.

Options and Opportunities is one of those programs that was introduced into our public schools to try to help students, as I said, who perhaps weren't fully engaged and didn't see the relevance of what they were studying in Grades 10, 11 and 12. Options and Opportunities has proven to be an extremely successful program. I commend the minister. I know that she, in estimates, indicated that she is very supportive of that and that the program would be expanding. That is absolutely essential if we are going to hold those kids and have a meaningful program for them.

As we know, those students are given an automatic seat into the community college so it's a seamless transition for them and some of the barriers that were there in the past that might have hindered their progress have been taken down.

The other thing we've done is to look at Career Exploration which, again, is an opportunity for students to explore beyond the academics and yet still graduate with a Grade 12 certificate. For those students they have the ability to earn some of their credits, some of their hours towards their red seal. All of those programs that I've mentioned, Madam Speaker, are what has driven up the cost of public education. Therefore, I think it's very unfair for this government to suggest that in order to balance the books, they have to reduce funding for public education. It will not work. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to speak this afternoon in support of public education, specifically the challenges we face in protecting the most vital of public services. Education is a priority of my government, it underpins two of our other key commitments: growing the economy

and jobs. Every child deserves a quality education. Every Nova Scotian family puts their trust in public schools to provide their children the resources they need to develop literacy and language, math, science, social studies and others, to become critical thinkers and to be engaged citizens. It is an investment government is working to safeguard.

Madam Speaker, this government's vision for the future is a public school system that is well-funded, nimble and responsive to the needs of students and their families and the demands of an ever-changing workforce. That's why decisions are needed now to ensure the viability and effectiveness of public education long into the future.

Nova Scotia has had - and is having - a demographic shift. We have an aging population and we have fewer and fewer children enrolling in our schools. The decision we make today must be realistic and position the students and the province for a success. Reducing our spending and investing in important services like education are not incompatible with each other. Demographics are driving necessary change, which will result in a strong, modern, streamlined model for the future. We need to make decisions that will start us on the path to right-size a school system to be more effective in meeting the needs of a smaller school population in the 21st Century. We need to examine all of the possibilities such as: expanding use of on-line learning, distance education, streamline course options to better engage students, and to make better use of our school infrastructure, just to name a few.

We have 128,000 students in 426 schools across Nova Scotia. Now, over the past decade - and I want that word to be very clear, decade - student enrolments have dropped almost 30,000 students. At the same time, spending increased by more than 40 per cent and administration grew by almost 20 per cent. Almost 300 more teachers and other personnel were hired to teach fewer students. At this point, I would like to make it very clear that this inclusion had already been in the system for many years, at this time. We're talking over the last decade. The student-to-administration ratio increased from 205 students for every administrator to 143, a one to 30 per cent jump since the year 2000. Non-classroom teachers who now work as administrators and consultants have increased by 145 or by 19 per cent. Enrolment trends will continue. Enrolments will drop by another 7,000 students over the next three years. What we've made clear to school boards is that when you look for savings, you look to administration first, not to the classroom.

The honourable member's resolution today quotes Robert Zoellick who said, "tough economic times are not the time to cut education spending." While I suspect that most people would probably say that there is actually probably no good time for any kind of interference with education spending, however, I think everyone would agree that there is always a right time to ensure that the money we spend on education is invested wisely. That is what this exercise is about and if I can rebut Mr. Zoellick's quote with my own, tough economic times are exactly the time when governments must get education spending right. I would also like to point out that the province's economic forecast is

growth. We are through the recession and well into recovery. The fact is that we have fewer students and six million square feet of unused school space that we are paying for across this province. That is spending that is not benefiting the children in the classroom. Is it fair to the students? Is it fair to Nova Scotia taxpayers? I believe not. We are right-sizing the public school system, we are not cutting it. We are putting our children and learning first.

In another 10 years, there will be only 112,000 students in our schools. That is the same as in 1910. Again the question is, do we continue to pay for the empty desks? Are we funding a structured design for a generation long since graduated? Are there opportunities to explore that will improve the way we deliver education? Those schools were built for us, the baby boomers and we're not in school anymore.

Dwindling enrolments are not new to Nova Scotia. They have been occurring every year since 1970, when 215,000 students headed off to school after a summer of watching Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin – sorry, member for Yarmouth, you might have have to learn that in your history book – walk on the moon and then splash down to Earth. Well, the reality is, is whether we like it or not, we must come down to Earth and ground ourselves in a new reality.

The time is now upon us to ask some very hard questions and make some strategic choices. School boards, parents and students are understandably apprehensive. We all are. We have a bumpy ride ahead of us, but we have our eyes firmly fixed on the road. Our goal is to put our resources where they are needed most and that is on student learning. I am confident that the funding we are providing boards will result in realistic budgets that will ensure a strong public school system and protect what is most important in the classroom.

We must ensure our considerable investment in education, almost \$1.1 billion, matches the needs and the numbers of our students. The funding targets we shared with boards achieve a reasonable balance between the need for restraint while providing boards with the means to maintain quality. We will work 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 and social reality. We will work together to resolve this and to work with the best interests of the children in this province. Student success and quality education come first.

How many more minutes do I have?

MADAM SPEAKER: About one and a half.

MS. JENNEX: I just wanted to make a comment that having had the honour of being a teacher in the system for a 30-year period, I was in the school system when our schools were being built. To tell you the truth, they were busting at the seams, they built a

new school in my area and within two years – you build a new school, they will come – the school ended up having to put portables in.

The day that I walked out of the school to run for this very honourable position in this Legislature, we had empty classrooms throughout the school. We were using the school as a daycare centre, which is an absolutely wonderful way to use our school facilities, by the way. But, we had so much excess space available in our school and we have to make sure that the decisions that we make are not funding for the empty spaces, we need the funding for the spaces where we have the children that funding needs to go to the children we have in school now. Thank you. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It's my pleasure to stand and maybe speak a few moments on Resolution No. 295. I'm sort of stuck in the middle of two great members of this House, very well-schooled individuals who have been teachers in our system for a very long time. (Interruptions) You're like me, you didn't have all these great opportunities that these two had.

I want to sort of boil it down just a little bit for the folks maybe watching this at home tonight. It's sort of the issue of (Interruption) if you only think two people are watching, why do we even bother doing this? I know there are a number of people that do watch this on a regular basis and I'm glad that they do.

Madam Speaker, I have two children, of course, in the system, I have a wife who is a resource teacher and it wasn't that long ago that I was in school and saw a change of the system. I have the comparison of how school was dealt with when I was, because I'm an echo, I may not be a baby boomer but I'm an echo, when our schools were full. (Interruptions) Full of what? The member for Hants East is really having a lot of fun with this one and I appreciate that this evening because this is a serious issue that we should not, should not ever try to balance the budget on the backs of students.

The minister was very right in saying we need to be here about one thing and that is about the student. If we try to put the student at the top of the pyramid, to understand and I think from talks that we had in estimates earlier, was the issue of spending somewhere near \$10.3 thousand per student in our system. If you end up working all that stuff back, ultimately we need to find ways to maintain that level of funding, if not a little bit more.

The theory that the NDP government takes on this one is that because over the 10-year period we've lost 30,000 students but the funding, of course, continued to rise is one that we started at the low end when it came to results. Again if we put the student at the top of our pyramid, we want them to succeed with marks and outcomes that allows them to move on into the next levels of their lives whether it's post-secondary, whether it's the

work force, or what have you. What we had, is a system that was not responding to the needs of the workplace, of post-secondary education. Our math skills were way down, our literacy skills were way down, our sciences were way down, but over the 10 years of losing children, if you want to say it, losing that school population, and trying to increase the funding so that we have results that our children can continue to succeed in a new and modern world.

I don't agree with the premise which has been put forward by the NDP Government that we have to start cutting back on them because we are finally today seeing the results of those investments. It continues to happen over time, a lot of investments that are put into a system are not seen for a number of years. Whether that be in educating the educators, making sure that programs are the correct ones in place, that are going to respond. Over the last 50 years when the first modern education system was really put forward and put into practice, we haven't seen a lot of change to it. We went from one-room schools, where all grades were taught, in many of our communities to one that had consolidated schools, that was trying to react and trying to have a modern teacher as they went through the Normal College, the Teacher's College in Truro and then becoming the profession that it is today with in some cases six years baccalaureate programs in order to teach our children.

To stand and say we need to find efficiencies, I can agree with that. If it says that we're going to find a new way to fund our education system, well, okay, I want to see the detail on it. I want to see the theoretical work. I want to see the data that supports cutting funding from an education system. I don't necessarily believe that if you cut you're going to make things more streamlined or more effective. I think it forces the school boards to necessarily cut corners, to do things more cheaply and that does not, in my mind, bring itself to a better education system.

What are students learning today and how are they learning today? I just have to go to my 12-year old and see what he's doing today differently than what I did in Grade 5. In Grade 5, even though I do remember my English courses, my French courses, my science courses, the issue today is they are talking about many other things. They're talking about how computers work, how media is working. They are learning about bullying, that was a discussion that was never brought forward when I was a student. So how they're learning is far different than what it was 50 years ago, what it was 20 or 30 years ago when I was in the system, even compared to what it was 10 years ago as that system started to evolve into what we have today.

I can say over that period of time for our government, our Progressive Conservative Government, those investments were made, again, with the child in mind and trying to find a way to get better results from our system. I will continue to believe, in my heart of hearts, that was the right thing to do even if we did lose 30,000 children out of our system. Unfortunately, Nova Scotia has been very stagnant when it comes to its population growth.

MS. KELLY REGAN: I did my share.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, I gave my two, it's the best I could, I'm keeping the pace, and I know the member for Bedford-Birch Cove is trying to say she put her share in of trying to keep the population up. Ultimately around Nova Scotia, if not in Canada, it is a bit of a phenomenon that we're just holding our own. This is not the baby boom that I know the minister was talking about earlier, of really trying to make up for that population. (Interruption) I'm trying not to turn around and look at them, I can tell you. (Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I think the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island really wants to say something, I know he really wants to say something because I think he believes, in his heart of hearts as well, that cutting education is the wrong thing to do. So all I can say is that it is time, maybe, that we relook at what our system is, not just try to change a little bit here, trim around the corners, but truly look at what our education system is, see what our children are, see how they're learning, and see how we can make sure that they have the results that they need to succeed in their lives.

If it means more O2 programs, if it means more portable dollars when it comes to different learning modalities that they require, then let's do that. Let's make our system better, let's not try to make it worse, and with those short words, I'll take my seat and listen to the rest of this discussion.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, today we're here and we're talking about the NDP Government balancing the books of this province on the backs of Nova Scotian students or, as the Minister of Education refers to it, right-sizing the education system, but we prefer to refer to it as, without the jargon, we refer to it as a cut. In fact, when we look up the meaning of the word "cut", it is exactly what's going on. There are eight different words, eight different versions of the verb to cut. Number one is to divide, sever or penetrate with a sharp instrument and, folks, let me tell you, that that's exactly what's going on here. We're talking about dividing, severing and penetrating a good chunk of what we need in our Nova Scotia school system; to harvest, to trim, to shorten or reduce, to dilute, to ignore, to absent oneself from, or to move or cross.

So when we look at what the NDP's plan is for education, we have to ask ourselves how (Interruption) Sorry, I can't table my BlackBerry, but I could print it off later; it's from dictionary.com. When this whole idea of cutting the education system first reared its ugly head back in November/December, we began asking the then Education Minister about, what's your plan? What's your plan? And we didn't get any answers. So we moved on to the Premier. I remember a day when the Official Opposition Leader asked, what is your plan for education and the Premier answered, we will balance the books. That was the plan for education. It had nothing to do with the quality of education.

It had nothing to do with raising kids who could read, raising kids who could do math; it had to do with balancing the books.

Now on that particular day we were quite shocked at that answer so the next day I asked the Premier, given your sort of flip answer, really, what is your plan for education. The Premier repeated it again, we will balance the books. So it had nothing to do with quality education, it had everything to do with money.

The minister says the demographics are driving change and she's right. The demographics that they've chosen to focus on are driving the change that they've decided is going to happen. What we don't know is which students' needs are not going to be met.

In the 10 years where education funding spending went up, we saw changes in the education system, we saw capped class sizes. As a parent, I saw an improvement in what was going on with my children in school. I have a daughter who is now 23, who is about to go off to law school in the Fall, I have a daughter who is now 20, who is in her third year at St. F.X. and I have a son who is 14. We saw changes, positive changes during that 10-year time. I credit the former Education Minister, who is the member for Colchester North, for a good chunk of what went on during that time because I think it was money that needed to be spent.

When the minister talks about consultants and cutting consultants, I just want to point out that some of those consultants are autism consultants. When we began focusing on autism, teachers didn't know how to deal with it, they did not have the training, so those consultants came in. That's how we do Reading Recovery, there are people there who are training teachers, who are overseeing teachers to do Reading Recovery. Teachers need specialized assistance and if you cut that out, you're cutting out the quality control in the system.

Back when my youngest daughter, my middle child, went off to Primary, Halifax County School Board decided that it would experiment, that it would change Primary from full days to half days. Now her older sister, two years older, had benefited from going to school for a full day and when our oldest daughter Kate came out of Primary, she was reading books at an amazing rate. That first summer afterwards she read 100 books at the local library, it was great, but when Nicole went, it was only a half day.

When I first heard the announcement I thought okay, this is going to be all right because they are going to have smaller classes because classes had been growing exponentially since her sister had gone. We thought okay, it will be like it was in the Waterloo County Board of Education, where I grew up, where the teacher taught in the morning and in the afternoon two different Primary classes.

That was not the case, so Nicole had 31 kids in her class, it was a half day. Let me tell you, I used to go out and help out in that class and the poor teacher, about every minute and a half, would have to say, shhh, because the class was so jammed they couldn't get anything done. And what was the result? At the end of her school year Nicole couldn't read.

Now we were fortunate, we were able to send her for extra help. My concern is that there are children whose parents are not going to be able to make up for the shortfalls of the changes that we are going to see implemented here. When we look at funding for literacy and math mentors, it has been cut by 50 per cent, math mentors by just over \$1 million, literacy mentors cut by about \$775,000.

I just have to say that we should not be cutting money to programs that are so needed. We can talk about a declining population but the fact is if you need a school in X community, it doesn't matter whether there are 20 kids there or whether there are 40 kids there. You still have to have the same facilities, you still have to heat the building, you still have to have the bus. You cannot just say, well, you know, we're not going to heat the building because there aren't enough students.

The department has said that cuts will not impact students, but this simply isn't possible because board costs are very low and for example, HRSB's central office cost is below 4 per cent. They had a choice - to paraphrase a former Prime Minister from a debate - you, ma'am, you had a choice. You could have used \$7.6 million from the surplus that just magically appeared, you could have left it in the education system, but that didn't happen.

The South Shore Regional School Board took a 2.47 per cent cut according to the government, but in reality this is a 4 per cent cut when the cost pressures are added in. The government doesn't like to talk about this, but even maintaining the status quo would have meant significant cost pressures, negotiated salary increases negotiated by the government, upgrades to teachers' licences, inflationary increases and operating costs.

If we look at the South Shore, for example, the regional school board there has been forced to cut library services and this government hasn't given them a choice. The library school staff will be cut by half, school libraries will only be open half the week or less in many cases. I can tell you, growing up, I spent all my free time in the library. I wasn't particularly athletically inclined, but it was a haven for me. I could tell you the name of my school librarian from back then - Miss Dorothy Crusp - and to not have Dorothy Crusps in schools, I think, is an error.

Students will not be receiving the same literacy support they have received in the past and we know that boards are doing far more than they've ever done before. They've increased special education legislative requirements, which, let's face it, comes from this

place. That's not from the school board, that's from us and we say that you have to do certain things and now we're saying, well, we're not going to pay for it.

Schools today in many areas have a diverse student population and there are more supports to allow for greater student achievement and targeted government initiatives. All of that costs money.

With those few remarks, I will just say that we have a choice. We can take money from the surplus and use it to help our students or we can penalize them, but just remember, if we don't pay now, we're going to end up paying later.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. The time allotted for Resolution No. 295 has expired.

The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, that completes the Opposition Day business for today. I'll turn it back to the Government House Leader for tomorrow's agenda.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, after the daily routine and Question Period tomorrow, we will be going into Supply debate and after Supply, if time permits, we will do Public Bills for Second Reading and they will be: Bill No. 7, the Justice Administration Amendment (2011) Act; Bill No. 13, the Pharmacy Act; Bill No. 15, the Electricity Act; Bill No. 17, the Fair Drug Pricing Act; Bill No. 19, Nova Scotia Business Incorporated; and Bill No. 21, the Public Archives Act.

I move that the House now rise to meet from the hours of 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that we now rise to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, April 14th, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have arrived at the moment of interruption. I now call under Rule 5(5) as read earlier today a resolution put forward by the honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs and this reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate this government for taking action toward achieving fairness and equity by working with African Nova Scotians in our province since June 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

GOV'T. (N.S.) - AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS: FAIRNESS/EQUITY - CONGRATS

HON. PERCY PARIS: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise in my place to speak to this issue. I consider it a great honour to be the first African Nova Scotian to serve as minister responsible for the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

I'm very proud of everything this government has done in the last 22 months to work with African Nova Scotian communities around the province. I stress the word “with” because I'm sure we can think of past occasions when various governments and other organizations had set out to do things for the African Nova Scotian community without consultation. This has not been this government's approach.

We have visited communities from Whitney Pier to Yarmouth, just as recently as last month, to ask African Nova Scotians how they would like to see their contributions and experience honoured and recognized. One of the comments we heard over and over was, “Thank you for listening. Thank you for seeking our ideas.” We received dozens of good ideas and I look forward to analyzing that feedback with staff, in moving forward with something communities around the province can be proud of.

We have accomplished much already, not just through the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs but across the province and across government. I'm proud of the steps we have taken as a government to address some of the injustices of the past. I'm excited about the measures we're undertaking to ensure that African Nova Scotian youth, families and communities have brighter opportunities for the future.

I'll start with the past. One of my proudest moments since I became a member of this House occurred last April 15, 2010 when the honourable Premier issued a formal apology to the family of the late Viola Desmond. Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor,

signed a free pardon which cleared Mrs. Desmond of all wrongdoing for her stand against racial injustice in a New Glasgow theatre in 1946. This was an historic moment.

The first time a posthumous free pardon was granted in Canada. It was also an important acknowledgement that we had made mistakes in our past. It shows we are committed to doing things differently in this province as we continue to fight against racism and inequality in its many forms. (Applause)

I'm also proud of another moment which occurred last February 2010. It was very moving for me to stand with officials from HRM and former residents and descendants of Africville as this government recommitted \$1.5 million toward a fitting memorial for the community of Africville. This project was long overdue. Former residents and their descendants had pushed for decades to receive some form of recognition that what happened to their community was wrong. I'm very pleased we were able to play a role in addressing this injustice. The staff at African Nova Scotian Affairs continues to work with the Africville Heritage Trust and we are committed to seeing the Africville memorial through to completion.

This project is one of many which aren't only about recognizing the past but it's about making a better way for the future. This government is making a concentrated, collaborative effort to promote African Nova Scotian culture and heritage, not only within the province but to visitors from across Canada and beyond.

If I could put my Tourism hat on for just a moment, Madam Speaker, my Tourism staff have worked closely with African Nova Scotian Affairs, federal partners, and several community groups as we develop a niche market initiative designed to attract visitors interested in African culture and heritage. We are tapping into a huge opportunity that has been virtually unexplored until now. The tourism sector is the key driver in our economy, and we are creating good jobs and brand new possibilities in African Nova Scotian communities throughout the province.

We were able to help several community groups attend a Tourism Best Practice Mission in Virginia last October. We continue to work with and support organizations like the Africville Genealogy Society, the Black Business Initiative, the Black Employment Resource Centre in Yarmouth, the Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association, the Glace Bay United Negro Improvement Association, the Black Loyalist Heritage Society of Birchtown, and the Black Cultural Center which this government has supported with hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding since 2009. Those are just a few of the organizations we work with. We've been able to introduce many of them to international heritage experts like John Franklin of the Smithsonian Institution and Edmond Moukala of UNESCO, who had visited Nova Scotia in the past four months.

I am extremely pleased that we will host the 7th International African Diaspora Heritage Trail Conference this coming September. This prestigious conference brings

together government ministers, tourism operators, scholars and cultural organizations like UNESCO and the Smithsonian. It has been held in the Caribbean and in Africa but we, Halifax, Nova Scotia, will be the first host on continental North America.

Madam Speaker, this is an opportunity to shine a world spotlight on African Nova Scotian culture and heritage. It will have a lasting effect that goes far beyond the end of the conference. We are investing in resources and opening doors that will benefit African Nova Scotian cultural sites in communities for years to come.

There is so much more I could mention. I could talk about Skills Up!, a new program from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Skills Up! will help more than 300 African Nova Scotians over a three-year period to develop the skills they need to attain good jobs.

I could discuss our work with the Department of Health and Wellness and the Health Association of African Canadians. We are finding ways to ensure African Nova Scotians have access to health care services which address their needs in a culturally-sensitive manner.

I could talk about our partnerships with the Department of Justice. The department recently made a \$15,000 investment in a display at the Black Cultural Centre which honours unsung heroes in the field of law enforcement and corrections.

I could go on, I think you get the message loud and clear. We have changed history, we are proud of that, I am proud of that.

I'll close, Madam Speaker, by saying I truly believe we have shown great leadership in recognizing and honouring African heritage and culture, a leadership that extends beyond our provincial borders. In December we had representatives from the United Nations congratulate us for the way we celebrated the launch of the International Year for People of African Descent.

In the past four months alone, my office has fielded calls and e-mails from Vancouver, Los Angeles, Texas, all over the world, the list does go on. These are individuals who see what we're doing as we celebrate African Heritage Month, as we mark the international year, and as we prepare to host the African Diaspora Heritage Trail Conference. They're asking questions about Nova Scotia; in some cases they're seeking our advice and many of them are planning to visit this summer.

We are making life better for African Nova Scotians and their families. We can't rest, we still have a ways to go, and we're putting our culture and our heritage on the global map. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on this very important topic. First of all I want to recognize the minister for the contributions he and his department have made towards projects in my community and in the Black community. Again, it is very much appreciated and it does go a long way to preserving and improving the recognition of the very rich culture that African Nova Scotians should be celebrating.

I've said in this House before it has been a real privilege for me to work in a Black community, and I'm learning the culture every day, and so many wonderful people have accomplished so much with very little recognition. It has been very, very unfortunate over the years that that has been tolerated, and I'm glad to see that the government today is really moving forward to eliminate those problems.

Wouldn't it be wonderful in our province - as it should be in our province already - that we wouldn't have to worry about any organization, any group, any person with different sex, whatever the case may be, would have to worry about being not recognized for the person they are, instead of the colour of their skin or their sex or whatever the case may be? Maybe someday that will happen, and I hope it's sooner than later. I believe the minister has moved forward in a very positive way to, indeed, help that situation and move it forward.

I'm also very pleased to see that the Department of Education has accepted the recommendations of the reality check that was put forward in 2009 from the BLAC Report of 1994. There are many recommendations there that have had a very serious effect on my community, and I spoke before about in the mid-1970s the community in East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook took the province to court because the children in the Black community were not getting a proper education. That is in our lifetime - that is totally unacceptable.

I truly do believe that some of the difficulties we see in our community today can go right back, prior to 1970 when people didn't get an opportunity, in a lot of cases, to get a proper education in this province, something that everyone else took for granted and, indeed, today everybody takes for granted, and should take for granted because that's the way it should be.

As we go through and we see what has happened in the past, hopefully we're learning more and more for the future. The tourism that the minister talked about a few minutes ago is very exciting to me because when you go in the community and you see the rich culture and the heritage that people from my community - and from all over the province - of African Nova Scotian descent have to offer people from outside of the province, it's incredible, absolutely incredible, the hospitality they can offer and the things they can do.

The only issue I have with that is unfortunately over the years we haven't built the beds and breakfasts in African Nova Scotian communities that would be used to house people when they come to visit, not only from African descent but all descents. I think it would be an enriching experience for anybody from anywhere in the world to come and enjoy this wonderful heritage and, indeed, the incredible hospitality in the community.

I would encourage the minister to really push this forward in every way you possibly can, because this is very important. As he indicated, tourism is one of the key economic drivers in the province and with the Canadian dollar very high and with other factors in the economy and in the U.S., and in some other areas of the world, people are more and more reluctant to travel, but if they were offered a truly cultural experience, they would reconsider - I'm sure they would.

I recently visited the U.S. and I've seen a lot of people of African descent whom I dealt with, people I'm sure who would love to travel to Nova Scotia and find out what Nova Scotia is like and what the communities here have to offer, people who have resources to do this. I think if the government can really push this forward, I think it would create a lot of jobs in the community, good jobs and jobs that people could really work and show their heritage and the culture that they enjoy so much.

I'm always amazed every time I'm invited to a birthday party in the community. The whole community comes out, celebrates a very special birthday, whether it's a 65th birthday or a 100th birthday, the celebration is the same. In any other community I've ever represented that seldom happens. Everybody is there, everybody enjoys the evening, everybody really takes the time to talk about the individual and the things they've accomplished in their lives and the things that they've done to make their family and the community a lot better. I'm pleased to see that we're finally recognizing that some of the people have contributed so much to the community and really, in the past, never got recognized for it. A lot of the things that have happened in Nova Scotia, indeed, have been from the African Nova Scotian community. The Victoria Cross was won by William Hall in the 1800s. It's unbelievable that wasn't recognized sooner.

As you move forward and see the many things that people in my community that I deal with everyday, the things that they do. The trail they're building through Preston is incredible and the work that the community has put into that and the results they're getting from it, over time, as that is finished, that will really help in tourism. It will help the local community enjoy the area and visit some of the sites that are very historic, that have not been documented to this point very well. The local community is well aware of them and they make sure that the children in the community are aware of them. That's something that we should really push forward.

As we go through the process of making sure our community has every possible avenue available to them to do what they and their families want to do; I think that in some cases in the past that hasn't been true and I'm ashamed to say that because I believe

- and I've always believed my whole life - that you should judge a person on who they are, not where they came from or the colour of their skin or what gender they are.

If we can come to the conclusion in our lifetime, or before many of the lifetimes of the younger members here in our Chamber - that we talk about people in a very positive way. When you go to the places of employment, you see people there who are hired because they're very capable, not because they were hired for other reasons, or weren't hired who should have had the job, who were very capable, but because of the colour of their skin or their gender, they weren't hired. Hopefully that's been eliminated in Nova Scotia and I'm sure it has. I've only seen a couple of experiences in the time I've been MLA in the area that that may not have been the case so far. If any of my constituents, indeed, have that situation, I'd be very interested to hear from them because I'd be very willing to work with them and make sure that never happens again. Indeed, if it did happen we could put a stop to it immediately.

Again, the minister has made some very good points of the work that they've been doing through the province and I think those things have to continue. I would encourage the minister to continue the important work he has started, and continue through there, and I enjoy his visits to the community. Sometimes I don't manage to get to the functions because of other things, but please encourage him to keep coming to my community often and ensure that the people in the community see you and talk to you and have an opportunity to express their concerns and support for what you're doing and the things that the government is moving forward with. With those few words, Madam Speaker, I take my seat, thank you.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Madam Speaker, I too am pleased to rise in my place today to speak to this resolution. We're pleased with the support this government has shown for all African Nova Scotians, but it's also important to remember that consecutive Progressive Conservative Governments have been the pioneers of working with African Nova Scotians to provide them with fairness of opportunity and the ability to live and work as equal partners, with all other residents of this province, to build a better Nova Scotia for all of us.

It was a Progressive Conservative Government that began the modern process of working to provide fair and equal opportunity for African Nova Scotians by establishing the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission in the late 1960s. This initiative came after the unfortunate Africville shutdown experiment, which while undertaken for all the proper motives by provincial and municipal leaders of all three political stripes and at the urging of provincial media, was found to have been a mistake. Further to that, it was the Government of Premier John Hamm that established the groundbreaking Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs through legislation in 2004. Dr. Hamm appointed our

former colleague, Barry Barnet, as the first Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs and Wayn Hamilton as executive director of the office.

Madam Speaker, it should also be noted that at the recommendation of Nova Scotia's federal Cabinet representative Peter MacKay, Prime Minister Harper appointed Nova Scotia's first African Nova Scotian Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Mayann Francis who incidentally was previously the executive director of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. Lieutenant Governor Francis has been performing excellently in her role for the past five years.

Madam Speaker, a few years ago, Premier MacDonald and Mr. Barnet opened an African Nova Scotian Affairs office in Cape Breton. In 2007, the MacDonald Government assisted financially in the cost of the model of the original slave schooner *Amistad* to Nova Scotia. It also funded the presence on that vessel at the time of a number of young African Nova Scotians who learned to sail on this vessel, and it helped with the return of the *Amistad* in 2009. The office also worked with members of the newer African Diaspora in Nova Scotia, forming an association that would enable them to work together with other African Nova Scotians and culture groups to develop positive and significant lives here in Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, the MacDonald Government worked with Nova Scotia's biggest employer - Michelin - to develop the African Nova Scotian Employment Partnership Collaboration Agreement. Through this agreement, Michelin works with government offices and departments, along with the Black Business Initiative, in developing programs and initiatives to provide opportunities for African Nova Scotians to be part of the Michelin workforce.

Both the Hamm and MacDonald Governments worked hard to strengthen our African Nova Scotian communities to ensure genuine inclusiveness in our workforce among government employees and in the professions to establish real opportunity across the board for African Nova Scotians. We are very pleased to see that the current government and the current Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs are working hard to build on the foundation our former government has helped to put in place and we strongly hope they will continue to achieve real success because all Nova Scotians deserve an equal opportunity to succeed economically and socially in Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, it's only appropriate that I remind honourable members that successive Progressive Conservative Governments over the last 45 years have put in place the foundation for the current government to build on. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Seeing as there are no other speakers, if there are any other speakers who could stand, could rise, is there anyone who would like to finish off the time allotted? Hearing none, I would like to thank all the members for a terrific debate this evening.

The House now stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 12:00 noon.

[The House rose at 6:09 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 431**

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas CentreStage Theatre, of Kentville, was selected Best Entertainment Venue by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of CentreStage Theatre for being named Best Entertainment Venue in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 432

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas D.M. Reid Jewellers Ltd., of Kentville, was selected Best Jewelry Store by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of D.M. Reid Jewellers Ltd. for being named Best Jewelry Store in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 433

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas Glow Hair & Body, of Kentville, was selected Best Hair Salon by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of Glow Hair and Body for being named Best Hair Salon in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 434

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas K-ROCK 89.3 FM, of Kentville, was selected Best Media by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of K-ROCK 89.3 FM for being named Best Media in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 435

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas Pulsifers Flowers & Foliage of Kentville was selected Best Florist by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of Pulsifers Flowers and Foliage for being named Best Florist in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 436

By: Mr. Jim Morton (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce (EKCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations and individuals in Eastern Kings County; and

Whereas the EKCC held its annual Best of Kings Celebration on Tuesday, February 27, 2011, at the Old Orchard Inn in Greenwich; and

Whereas Rockwell Home Hardware, of Kentville, was selected Best Hardware Store by online voters in this Chamber competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the management and staff of Rockwell Home Hardware for being named Best Hardware Store in the 2011 Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 437

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Shelburne resident Judy Hemeon has been nominated by the Roseway Hospital Auxiliary to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne resident Judy Hemeon, who has been nominated by the Roseway Hospital Auxiliary to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 438

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Shelburne resident Wayne Dooks has been nominated by the Roseway Manor Resident Council to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne resident Wayne Dooks, who has been nominated by the Roseway Manor Resident Council to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 439

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Sandy Point resident Kevin Smith has been nominated by the Shelburne and Area Minor Baseball Association to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sandy Point resident Kevin Smith, who has been nominated by the Shelburne and Area Minor Baseball Association to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 440

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Sable River resident LaVern Lloyd has been nominated by the Sable River Women's Institute to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sable River resident LaVern Lloyd, who has been nominated by the Sable River Women's Institute to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 441

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Shelburne resident Leona Harris has been nominated by the Roseway Hospital to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne resident Leona Harris, who has been nominated by the Roseway Hospital to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 442

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas East Jordan resident Mark Holden has been nominated by the Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate East Jordan resident Mark Holden, who has been nominated by the Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 443

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Lockeport resident Mary Anne Turner has been nominated by the Lockeport Friends of the Library to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport resident Mary Anne Turner, who has been nominated by the Lockeport Friends of the Library to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 444

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Clarks Harbour resident Michelle Swim has been nominated by the Town of Clarks Harbour to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Clarks Harbour resident Michelle Swim, who has been nominated by the Town of Clarks Harbour to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 445

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Shelburne resident Mike Scott has been nominated by Shelburne County Special Olympics to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne resident Mike Scott, who has been nominated by Shelburne County Special Olympics to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 446

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Clarks Harbour resident Minnie Atkinson has been nominated by the Beulah Burman Memorial Animal Shelter Society - PET Projects to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Clarks Harbour resident Minnie Atkinson, who has been nominated by the Beulah Burman Memorial Animal Shelter Society – PET Projects to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 447

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas East Green Harbour resident Nicole Cotter has been nominated by the Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate East Green Harbour resident Nicole Cotter, who has been nominated by the Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 448

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Sandy Point resident Pearl Hemeon has been nominated by the Hope Wesleyan Women's Group to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sandy Point resident Pearl Hemeon, who has been nominated by the Hope Wesleyan Women's Group to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 449

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Clyde River resident Samantha Brannen has been nominated by the Shelburne Re-Enactment Association to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Clyde River resident Samantha Brannen, who has been nominated by the Shelburne Re-Enactment Association to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 450

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Lockeport resident Sandra Brown has been nominated by the Lockeport Pentecostal Church to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport resident Sandra Brown, who has been nominated by the Lockeport Pentecostal Church to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 451

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Allendale resident Shirley Townsend has been nominated by the Holy Cross Anglican Church Women to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Allendale resident Shirley Townsend, who has been nominated by the Holy Cross Anglican Church Women to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 452

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Shelburne resident Tanya Dooks has been nominated by the Roseway Manor Resident Council to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne resident Tanya Dooks, who has been nominated by the Roseway Manor Resident Council to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 453

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Sandy Point resident Teresa Huskilson has been nominated by the Shelburne Country Figure Skating Club to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sandy Point resident Teresa Huskilson, who has been nominated by the Shelburne County Figure Skating Club to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 454

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Lockeport Pastor Tim Garren has been nominated by Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups an organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport Pastor Tim Garren, who has been nominated by Lockeport Elementary Home and School to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 455

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Barrington resident Vicki Holland has been nominated by Forest Ridge Academy to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Barrington resident Vicki Holland, who has been nominated by Forest Ridge Academy to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 456

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Lockeport resident Vicki Huskison has been nominated by the Ragged Islands Historical Society to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport resident Vicki Huskilson, who has been nominated by the Ragged Islands Historical Society to be recognized as a representative volunteer during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 457

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereby Sandy Point resident Wayne Butler has been nominated by the Shelburne Historical Society to be recognized as a representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011; and

Whereas volunteers play an integral role in every community in Nova Scotia on a daily basis, unselfishly contributing of their time, passion and expertise for the betterment of numerous community groups and organizations; and

Whereas volunteers are indeed the heart of each community, helping to enrich the lives of those they know and come in contact with through their actions, words, kindness and support;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Wayne Butler, who has been nominated by the Shelburne Historical Society to be recognized as the representative volunteer for that organization during National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 458

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Denise Amiro of East Pubnico who will be recognized for devoting her time and effort to so many organizations in and around her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Denise Amiro on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish her continued success in all her endeavours, and thank her and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 459

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Alfred Boudreau of Upper Wedgeport who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Alfred Boudreau on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish him continued success in all his endeavours, and thank him and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 460

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Cassie Amirault of Middle East Pubnico who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cassie Amirault on being honored by the Municipality of Argyle, wish her continued success in all her endeavours, and thank her and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 461

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas two of the 21 volunteers who will be honoured are husband and wife, Shirley and Paul Deveau of Tusket, who will be recognized for devoting their time and effort to so many organizations in and around their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Shirley and Paul Deveau on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish them continued success in all their endeavours, and thank them and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 462

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas two of the 21 volunteers who will be honoured are husband and wife, Cheryl and Eddie Madden of Surettes Island, who will be recognized for devoting their time and effort to so many organizations in and around their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cheryl and Eddie Madden on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish them continued success in all their endeavours, and thank them and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 463

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Johnny Boudreau of Upper Wedgeport who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Johnny Boudreau on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish him continued success in all his endeavours, and thank him and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 464

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Marilyn Wallace of Wedgeport who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Marilyn Wallace on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish her continued success in all her endeavours, and thank her and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 465

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Betty Cottreau of Wedgeport who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Betty Cottreau on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish her continued success in all her endeavours, and thank her and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 466

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Jolynn Muise of Rocco Point who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jolynn Muise on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish her continued success in all her endeavours, and thank her and all volunteers for their dedication to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 467

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 National Volunteer Week ran from April 10-16, 2011 and this year's theme for the national campaign was *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.*; and

Whereas on Friday, April 15th, the Club Social des Isles on Surettes Island will host the 29th Annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Argyle; and

Whereas among the 21 volunteers who will be honoured is Ron Doucette of Quinan who will be recognized for devoting time and effort to so many organizations in and around his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ron Doucette on being honoured by the Municipality of Argyle, wish him continued success in all his endeavours, and thank him and all volunteers for their dedication to others.