



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 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. We will begin the daily routine.

The late debate topic has been chosen:

Therefore be it resolved that the government announce specific initiatives that would permit for readily accessible treatment options for individuals suffering with prescription addictions.

This was submitted by the honourable member for Kings West.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 772

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 April 26th marks the anniversary of the day in 1918 when Nova Scotian women received the right to vote in provincial elections; and

Whereas this year will be the 93rd Anniversary of these important gains in the rights of 51 per cent of Nova Scotia's population; and

Whereas the right of all citizens to full participation in the political process is one of the hallmarks of a democratic society;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize this anniversary of women's right to vote as an important milestone for Nova Scotia, and encourage the women of our province to fully participate in the electoral process as candidates as well as voters.

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. 773

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

Whereas on Thursday, April 21st, Nova Scotian Margaret Miller, a former national president of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving, launched her new book *The Gift - A MADD Mother's Journey of Healing*; and

Whereas this book is intended to help others deal with the tragic loss of loved ones, and to increase awareness of the personal cost of drunk driving; and

Whereas MADD Canada and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal work closely together to end drunk driving in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House support the publication of *The Gift* by Margaret Miller, and understand that the tragic stories presented in this book can help others deal with similar losses.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 774

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

Whereas National Immunization Awareness Week occurs in Canada between April 23rd and April 30th; and

Whereas immunization has long been a cornerstone of our public health system; and

Whereas immunization is a cost-beneficial health intervention that contributes to keeping Nova Scotians safe and healthy;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize the importance in marking National Immunization Awareness Week from April 23rd to April 30th, and thank all those in our public health and health care systems who participate in administering vaccines.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 775

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

Whereas in 2007 Jessica Bowden of Halifax founded *Teens Now Talk*, a magazine written and produced by teens, for teens; and

Whereas the magazine's mission is to help youth be seen, be heard, and be the voice of the future by giving countless Nova Scotian youth of all backgrounds an opportunity to share their writing, their photos, and their creativity with their peers; and

Whereas Ms. Bowden was recognized for being such a positive and empowering role model when she was honoured on April 2nd with a Haliward, a grassroots award which recognizes Haligonians who make their communities a better place to live;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Jessica Bowden for her inspiring work with *Teens Now Talk*, and thank her for helping Nova Scotian youth find their voices.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 776

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

Whereas National Medical Laboratory Week will be celebrated April 24th to April 30th and medical laboratory technology is the third largest health care profession in Canada; and

Whereas medical laboratory technologists conduct laboratory tests, which physicians and clinicians depend on to accurately diagnose and treat illness and to monitor patients' health; and

Whereas medical laboratory staff consists of medical laboratory technologists, medical laboratory assistants and medical laboratory clerical staff who work as a team to provide information about your health in a timely manner;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize National Medical Laboratory Week, April 24th to April 30th, and the effort and professionalism of medical laboratory technologists, assistants, and support staff who strive to help maintain the health and well-being of Nova Scotians and all Canadians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 39 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act, to Permit the Operation of Businesses that Assist Others in the Making of Beer, Wine or Cider. (Ms. Diana Whalen)

Bill No. 40 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 777

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Franchise Act was passed on April 26, 1918, thereby ensuring the right of women to vote; and

Whereas this historic legislation was made possible by the ceaseless efforts of Nova Scotia's suffragettes, including Edith Archibald, Agnes Dennis, Anna Leonowens, Eliza Ritchie, Mary Ritchie and May Sexton; and

Whereas many of these women were involved in the Council of Women, the Red Cross and the Women's Christian Temperance Union;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly note the historic significance of this day by remembering the hard work of these women and their organizations, and by encouraging more women to run for office and to participate in elections.

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. 778

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

Whereas the right to vote is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of our democracy; and

Whereas on this day in 1918, the right to vote in provincial elections was extended to women in Nova Scotia with the passage of the Nova Scotia Franchise Act; and

Whereas a fully enfranchised population of men and women is an absolute necessity for a properly functioning democracy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature acknowledge the importance of the right to vote for all people as we mark the anniversary of women's suffrage 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 member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 779

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

Whereas 25 years ago today, on April 26, 1986, a nuclear explosion occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant releasing radioactive particles over Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and other parts of Europe and the world; and

Whereas 500,000 brave firefighters, engineers, and emergency workers worked for more than six months to minimize one of the worst civilian nuclear disasters in history, many of whom died of radiation poisoning; and

Whereas many Nova Scotian families over the past two decades have provided health respite to children whose lives were impacted from the contaminated areas by welcoming them into their homes;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and honour the memory of innocent victims and those families who continue to help.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 780

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

Whereas Judy Bristow-Roberts was born in England and is now living in Five Islands, Colchester North; and

Whereas Judy has lived in Canada for the last 40 years, but only recently decided to become a Canadian citizen; and

Whereas one specific right that Judy is looking forward to as a Canadian citizen is being able to vote in a general election;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Judy Bristow-Roberts for becoming a Canadian citizen and extend a welcome from the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 781

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

Whereas the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia and Nona MacDermid of Sydney Mines hosted a week-long Gaelic workshop that immersed participants in everyday aspects of our Gaelic language; and

Whereas during this workshop, 15 intermediate Gaelic learners from Pictou, Dartmouth, and other points from across Nova Scotia were placed in homes and completely immersed in the Gaelic language and culture; and

Whereas using total immersion during this workshop allowed the participants to develop and fully engage their vocabulary in the language that our ancestors fostered for generations through Gaidhlig aig Baile;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate those who participated in this week-long Gaelic workshop in Sydney Mines, especially the hosts, Nona MacDermid and Caroline Cameron, and thank them for their efforts to maintain an important link for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 782

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

Whereas Corporal Grant Webber of Liverpool has been a positive role model and active member in his community through his work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police since 1997; and

Whereas in addition to general policing duties, Corporal Webber was involved with community policing including teaching the DARE program in schools; and

Whereas after 30 years of service with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 14 years of which were spent with the Queens County RCMP Detachment, Corporal Grant Webber is retiring;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Corporal Grant Webber on his retirement from the RCMP and recognize his contributions and dedication to the safety and security of the residents of Queens County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 783

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

Whereas Anne Simmons, a social worker, volunteers as a Sunday school teacher and also with the St. Thomas United Baptist United Church Hallelujah Praise Choir; and

Whereas Anne is a long-standing member of the Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia and has served as president, chairwoman of the fundraising committee and is now

chairwoman of the personnel committee as well as serving on the board of the North Preston Day Care Centre; and

Whereas Anne was presented with the 2010 Human Rights Award during International Human Rights Day;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the significant contributions that Anne has made to her community of North Preston and to all of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 784

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

Whereas Grade 12 student Dylan Tobin, from Memorial Composite High School in North Sydney, has been accepted into the business program at Saint Mary's University this fall; and

Whereas Dylan recently got involved in ACTIVATE, a program offered by Motivate Canada which is about youth-driven development and healthy active living in communities across Canada; and

Whereas Dylan is one of only 50 ACTIVATE delegates who will be attending this year's conference from about 200 applicants from across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Dylan Tobin for his outstanding leadership abilities and wish him every success this summer in Ottawa at the 2011 ACTIVATE 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 member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 785

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

Whereas Feed Nova Scotia sorts and distributes nearly two million kilograms of food each year to Nova Scotians experiencing food insecurity, and every dollar donated allows Feed Nova Scotia to distribute enough food to feed one person for a day; and

Whereas Antigonish County resident Peter Jowett spent 84 of 90 nights this winter sleeping in his tent to raise awareness and money for Feed Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Peter Jowett raised more than \$4,000 for Feed Nova Scotia through his unique "Winter Sleep Out";

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly applaud Peter Jowett's efforts to raise money and awareness for the good work done by Feed 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 Bedford-Birch Cove

RESOLUTION NO. 786

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

Whereas Marilyn Sceles has devoted over 30 years of volunteer service to the Bedford United Church as a member of the church council, a church elder and a member of the Worship and Music Committee; and

Whereas this warm and giving woman has assisted countless individuals in our community through her work at Beacon House as chairperson of the local chapter of Grandmothers to Grandmothers and as an ESL tutor with the Bedford-Sackville Literacy Network; and

Whereas Marilyn has also volunteered to help many children in the Bedford area through local Brownies and figure skating organizations and has been an integral volunteer with the Halifax West Liberal Association and the Bedford-Birch Cove Liberal Association and its predecessors;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Marilyn Sceles for her ongoing contributions to the Bedford United Church and the community of Bedford and thank her for her efforts on behalf of so many others.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 787

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

Whereas the participation of many residents from Eskasoni in the 2011 Canada Winter Games added to the success of the Games; and

Whereas the Canada Winter Games showcased culture and local artistic talent from across Canada; and

Whereas Kalolin Johnson, daughter of Tom and Carol Ann Johnson of Eskasoni, is a talented young singer who played a large role in the closing ceremonies of the Canada Winter Games;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the contributions of the many young people who participated in the Canada Winter Games and thank Kalolin for her special performance of the Canadian National Anthem in both Mi'kmaq and English, making all of Nova Scotia proud.

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. 788

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

Whereas the Rosedale Home for Special Care opened in New Germany in 1984 to provide long-term care for 29 residents in the New Germany area while providing employment opportunities for the local community; and

Whereas the Rosedale Home for Special Care, with the help of many supporters and volunteers as well as provincial funding, has been able to add 10 new beds and two replacement beds, bringing the total number of beds to 39 with a complete and extensive renovation to their kitchen, which has tripled in size; and

Whereas the 27th Anniversary of the Rosedale Home for Special Care, the grand opening celebrations of their newly-expanded home will take place on Saturday, May 7th at

2:00 p.m., welcoming current and former board members, residents and their families and the community at large to celebrate this special event;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Rosedale Home for Special Care, its board members, staff, residents and surrounding community on the grand opening celebration for the newly-renovated expanded home and recognize its benefits to the community of New Germany.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 789

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

Whereas Kentville Police Chief, Mark Mander took it upon himself to notify three government Cabinet Ministers over 15 months ago in concern of the prescription pill problem in the Annapolis Valley; and

Whereas Chief Mander has and continues to express great public concern over the prescription pill problem, not only in the Annapolis Valley, but province-wide; and

Whereas Chief Mander is eager to find a solution to the growing number of premature deaths related to prescription pill abuse;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly not only recognize Chief Mander for his leadership skills, but all Kentville police officers for their dedication to the citizens of not only Kentville, but all of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 790

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

Whereas for many years, the Royal Canadian Legion has sponsored the Annual Essay, Poem and Poster Contest that is open to all Canadian school children; and

Whereas Anika Moser, a student at Three Mile Plains District School, took first place in the Poster Contest Primary Colour Division at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 9 in Windsor; and

Whereas the primary goal of the contest is to foster the tradition of remembrance amongst Canadians by instilling in youth the importance of recognizing our veterans and the sacrifices that were made and are still being made today;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anika on her award-winning poster and wish her all the best in future competitions.

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. 791

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

Whereas from April 29 to May 1, 2011, the Knights of Columbus Sydney Council 1060 and Special Olympics Nova Scotia will host the first Bi-annual Knights of Columbus Provincial Special Olympics Basketball Tournament; and

Whereas 57 athletes from across the province will take part in this event; and

Whereas the Knights of Columbus Sydney Council 1060 raised a grand total of \$20,000 to stage this prestigious event;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Knights of Columbus Sydney Council 1060 and Special Olympics Nova Scotia for their dedication and commitment to Special Olympians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 792

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

Whereas Perry Colley, a Chief Petty Officer in the Canadian Navy, has been part of the Canadian military for over 33 years, grew up in East Preston and started military life with the army reserves and served as a member of the Princess Louise Fusiliers, transferred in 1977 to the naval reserves, and is presently serving as the chief administrator on board the HMCS Summerside; and

Whereas his career has taken him across Canada and throughout the world, and in 1992 he went on a six-month UN mission to Cambodia, where he was part of the United Nations Transitional Authority as a naval observer; and

Whereas he was also part of the Canadian Remembrance Guard on the 50th Anniversary of D-Day, where a 100-man guard visited all towns and cities the Canadian Army helped liberate during World War II;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the many contributions that Perry Colley has made to Nova Scotia and to all of Canada.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 793

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

Whereas the Baddeck Bobcats clinched the Nova Scotia Bantam B Provincial Hockey Championship in Cole Harbour late last March; and

Whereas the Bobcats advanced out of the Cape Breton region by defeating the Sydney Steelers and earning a berth in the provincial championship event, where they finished round-robin play with a 2-1 record and were forced into a sudden-death game against Pictou; and

Whereas the Bobcats' win over Pictou advanced them to the Nova Scotia Championship game against the Cole Harbour Wings, where they jumped in front 4-0 before finally defeating Cole Harbour 5-3;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate coach Sandy Watling, his assistants Andy Whitty, Lenny Keigan, and goalie coach Jim

Organ, and the entire Bobcats organization and players for an outstanding 2010-11 hockey season, and wish them every future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 794

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Agricultural College has gained international fame for the excellent academic standards it maintains; and

Whereas students must be enrolled in four or more courses per semester, must be in the top 10 per cent of their program of study, and must have an average of 80 per cent or higher to be included on the President's List; and

Whereas Nova Scotians can be proud of the academic excellence of these students and look to them as skilled, creative, well-prepared future leaders;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Thomas Harrington, Debert, Colchester North, for the prestigious honour of being named to the President's List for the Fall and winter semesters of 2010.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 795

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

Whereas Gord MacDonald will be inducted into the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame on May 28, 2011, at Centre 200; and

Whereas Gord MacDonald's teenaged snowmobile races on the frozen ice of Sydney River unleashed a competitive spirit; and

Whereas in 1994, Gord MacDonald captured the World Snowmobile Championship in Wisconsin, capping off a racing career that spanned 20 years of winning competitions locally, nationally and internationally;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the competitive spirit that drove Gord MacDonald to succeed and congratulate him for being inducted into the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 796

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

Whereas Yarmouth resident Loretta Pilkington, who has complete visual impairment in one eye and only 2 per cent vision in her other eye, has been an active volunteer for 45 years; and

Whereas Mrs. Pilkington devotes her time to many organizations including the HOPE Centre of Yarmouth, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Yarmouth County Ground Search and Rescue, and the Yarmouth Lionettes; and

Whereas Mrs. Pilkington, an avid knitter, also devotes her time and talent by, in her own words, “knitting and giving”, knitting countless creations and donating them to the Yarmouth Hospital Hullabaloo and Yarmouth local church fundraisers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Loretta Pilkington for dedicating her time, energy and talent to her community for 45 years and thank her for being an inspiration for all those facing visual impairments.

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 Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 797

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

Whereas Louis Deveau of Petit-Etang has moved back home to become the new owner of the Acadian Pharmacy in Cheticamp; and

Whereas Louis has always been confident he would work in the health care system, graduating from Dalhousie as a pharmacist in 2005; and

Whereas Louis has returned to his hometown to bring up the next generation of Deveaus;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Louis Deveau and wish him continued success in his new business venture.

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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 798

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

Whereas Prince Andrew Players is the renowned and long-standing drama group of Prince Andrew High School in Dartmouth; and

Whereas every Spring, family, friends and fans mark their calendars for Prince Andrew Players annual production, which showcase the theatrical talents of students, staff and community volunteers; and

Whereas Prince Andrew Players presented *Grease* from April 13th - 16th, 2011 at the Prince Andrew High auditorium;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the cast and crew of *Grease* on their heartening performance and acknowledge the good work of Prince Andrew Players, wishing the collective many more years of success.

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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 799

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

Whereas volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and talents; and

Whereas Avon View High School students Kelsey Hubley, Grade 8, and Austin Shaw-O'Leary, Grade 9, volunteered their time at their school's annual Christmas craft sale in support of the school's music program; and

Whereas volunteering their time and efforts to support a program they believe in shows great initiative and helps these students understand the importance of volunteers in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Kelsey and Austin for their efforts and wish them all the best with future fundraising events.

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 Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 800

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

Whereas Amy Graves of Kentville has been extremely active in raising public awareness about the dangers of prescription drug abuse; and

Whereas Amy lost her brother to a prescription pill overdose in March and took it upon herself to initiate a proactive campaign in hopes of obtaining more help for addicts who are suffering; and

Whereas Amy has committed to continuing her public education campaign;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Amy Graves for continued dedication to addicts and their families in memory of her late brother Josh Graves.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 801

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

Whereas since 2003, the Stephen Lewis Foundation has supported and funded grassroots organizations that work to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa; and

Whereas student council presidents from 10 Halifax Regional School Board high schools, including Prince Andrew High in Dartmouth, organized activities over the week of March 21st - 25th, 2011, entitled Red Week, promoting the Stephen Lewis Foundation; and

Whereas during this week-long event, student leaders organized events and community activities to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in their schools and raise funds for the Stephen Lewis Foundation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the student leaders responsible for the success of these events and recognize the significance of their collective humanitarian contributions.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 802

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

Whereas 11-year-old Brittany Paulick, a Grade 6 student at Yarmouth Central School, was so moved by the devastation that the people of Japan suffered at the hands of the recent tsunami and earthquake that she decided she had to do something to help; and

Whereas Ms. Pollock began asking family and friends for donations of used books and also encouraged her fellow students to participate in a book sale fundraiser on the morning announcements every day for two weeks; and

Whereas on Tuesday, April 5th, 2011, Ms. Pollock hosted a book sale at her school for the entire school day, inviting all classes as well as their parents and families to participate and shop for books, and raised \$370.35 for the tsunami victims of Japan;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brittany Paulick for organizing such a meaningful fundraiser and recognize her compassion, selflessness and determination to help those in need.

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: As we begin Oral Question Period Put By Members, I remind all honourable members that the use of BlackBerrys, laptops and any other electronic devices is not permitted during Question Period, they are to remain off during that time. Thank you.

It is now 2:43 p.m. and we will end at 3:43 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: NSP RATE HIKES - STANCE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that Nova Scotia Power is seeking another rate increase. Since 2002, power rates have increased by more than 36 per cent and now Nova Scotians face yet another increase. Nova Scotians can simply not afford another increase in their power bills. So my question to the Premier is, does the Premier believe that these new proposed rate hikes from Nova Scotia Power are fair and justifiable?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, that's exactly why there is the Utility and Review Board. They look at the rate case that is put to them on behalf of Nova Scotia Power. They look at all the evidence and they decide whether or not the rate increase is justified. I believe that, in fact, is the very function of the Utility and Review Board.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, life is much more expensive for Nova Scotians under this government. The HST is up, user fees are up for over 1,400 fees and services that Nova Scotians access, property taxes are on the way up and now power bills are going up again. As usual, the most vulnerable in our society are being hit the hardest by these increases. So my question to the Premier is, will the Premier tell Nova Scotians what his government plans to do to reign in power bill increases in the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did was to make sure that the HST was taken off of all of the energy bills in our province. In fact, we brought in the Affordable Living Tax Credit, which not only offset the HST increase, but it put more money in the pockets of those who are least able to afford it. I understand that 51 per cent of Nova Scotians qualify for the Affordable Living Tax Credit. We brought in the Poverty Reduction Credit. We brought in the largest single increase in income assistance rates in more than a decade. This government is very much concerned about those who can least afford increases.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the answer is simply that they're not going to do anything. The Premier knows that Nova Scotia Power is regulated by legislation and this government has substantial control and say over the operations of Nova Scotia Power. There's a precedent for audits to be done on certain aspects of Nova Scotia Power's work, such as the fuel cost estimation, but a performance and value audit has not been done on the operations of this monopoly. The time is now and I hope government will agree that Nova Scotians deserve answers on the operational costs of Nova Scotia Power. My question to the Premier is, will the NDP Government order a performance audit on Nova Scotia Power's operations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it is ironic, given that the privatization of Nova Scotia Power took place originally under the Progressive Conservatives, but then supported by the Liberals when they came into power. There are two functions at the Utility and Review Board: one is to ensure that all the costs that go into the base rate are audited, that there is sufficient information to justify whatever rate case they intend to make; and there is also a consumer advocate who is at the Utility and Review Board for the very purpose of ensuring that the interests of ordinary consumers are represented. I assume and would desire that they, of course, fulfill their respective roles.

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

**PREM. - NSP RATE HIKES: GOV'T.
- INTERVENE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is also on power rates. Last week, Nova Scotia Power announced that they may file for a rate increase as much as 8.8 per cent for Nova Scotia residences. That increase could be as much as 20 per cent by the year 2015. Nova Scotians have already had their pockets picked enough by this government and so my question to the Premier is, will his government intervene at that rate hearing? Will they stand up for the people of Nova Scotia and their pocketbooks, yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. Certainly, there will be representatives of the Government of Nova Scotia who will be at the Utility and Review

Board hearings. We will be asking questions and we have the same kind of interest to make sure that we protect Nova Scotians, that the Power Corporation is able to make the rate case that they are proposing and it requires a thorough examination. This is one of the reasons we have done everything we can through the Renewable Electricity Plan to say we have to get off of fossil fuels, we have to stop being hostage to the international fossil fuel market, and that's why this government is doing something about it.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, intervening means a lot more than just showing up and listening in. Intervening means standing up for the people of Nova Scotia when they're facing these kinds of increases - not just individual Nova Scotians, but Nova Scotia small businesses are also struggling under higher power rates and higher fees. Now the government gave itself the ability last fall to ensure that a small-business advocate is appointed as intervener. My question to the Premier is, has the government ensured that a small-business advocate will be there to intervene on behalf of Nova Scotia small businesses and if not, why not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what we set out in legislation, of course, we intend to follow through on. It's one of the reasons we put it in legislation in the first place, much as we have done with the other things we intend to achieve on the renewable electricity side. One of the things that we intend to do is to move this province to 40 per cent renewable by the year 2020. One of the important reasons for that to happen is it does away with the instability in the fossil fuel market to the extent that you have renewable. This will ultimately be good for the people of Nova Scotia. It will mean more stable long-term electricity rates, something that I'm sure the Opposition can agree with.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess that's a no and it's too bad, because in May 2008 the then member for Cole Harbour had some very strong opinions about rising power rates. In fact, he said, "Now with power bills going up . . ." possibly as much as 20 per cent, ". . . they are rightfully worried about freezing in the dark next winter," said that member. "These increases will make life less affordable for every family in the province. And these increases will affect jobs, as Nova Scotia industries struggle to remain competitive."

That member didn't hide behind the Utility and Review Board then, Mr. Speaker, so my question to the Premier is, now that he is in a position to do something about it, why not intervene on behalf of Nova Scotia households and small businesses?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I just said, although we are on this side of the floor instead of on that side of the floor now, virtually from the day we came through the door, we wanted to make sure that we made life more affordable for people in this province. That is why we made sure that the tax came off of home energy, it is why we took the HST off of children's clothing, children's shoes and a list of other things as well. It is why we brought in the Affordable Living Tax Credit, it is why we brought in the Poverty Reduction Credit.

Mr. Speaker, we will do everything we can in this province to make life more affordable for all Nova Scotians, but particularly for those who can least afford it. I know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party appreciates my efforts, even if he doesn't agree with them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM.: PROF. FEES - ACCOUNTING TABLE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier. In response to issues raised by members of the public, the Official Opposition submitted questions in advance to the Minister of Justice regarding the payment of professional Bar Association fees by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia on behalf of the member for Cole Harbour. That would have taken a short time in estimates and given an opportunity for the government to clear the air on this issue, while addressing the issue once and for all. I am sure the Premier can appreciate that that would benefit him and allow Nova Scotians to move forward from this issue.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier table in this House, before the end of Question Period today, an accounting of all professional fees, such as Bar Association fees, paid on his behalf, since he was first elected in 1999?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is a question that has been raised here many times. I can tell him that I have already done so.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is incorrect. In fact, the Premier only tabled information back to 2006 and has repeatedly avoided the question of the period between 1999 and 2006.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have an absolute right to know exactly how much, if anything, was paid out on behalf of taxpayers and oddly, the Premier has only given us information for the short period of time. In response to the Official Opposition advising the minister that we had questions, the government's response was to cancel debate on all Justice issues, at a time when people are literally shooting at one another in the streets. We wanted to give the Premier a chance to clear the air but this action to treat the legislative process as a nuisance has only increased suspicions.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier advise this House whether any fees, Canadian or Nova Scotian or any other professional fees were paid on his behalf by the Province of Nova Scotia before 2006?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, when I said that I tabled all the fees, I meant that - all of them. There was nothing paid before that time, of course. I find the question by the

member to be extraordinarily regrettable, and to use something like tragedies that are happening in the streets to try to make a political point like this, I have to say I am extraordinarily disappointed.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the only thing shameful is the fact that if the government had nothing to hide, they cancelled the discussion on those very issues. So it is actually this government that has refused, in violation of Legislature convention for over 20 years - more than 20 years but at least 20 years - is refusing to allow debate on those issues. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is, if indeed there were no fees paid between 1999 and 2006, why is his government refusing to allow debate on Justice estimates and the very important issues which are on our streets at the moment?

THE PREMIER: It's not unusual. As I've said before, this is a member who would rather be wrong than be quiet. Nothing that he said in his preamble is true, nothing was cancelled. In fact, there was a request from the Progressive Conservative Party that we go ahead with the Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal estimates because they weren't able to get into the main Chamber. If it was important to the member opposite, why didn't they bring it into the main Chamber when they could have called it at their own leisure?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**PREM.: VALLEY DRUG ADDICTION PROBLEM
- ADDRESS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. For the past week and a half this NDP Government has been under siege. They neglected to address the seriousness of the prescription drug addiction problem in the Valley and have not yet, to date, put any proactive solutions to address the situation.

Today, to no one's surprise, Mr. Speaker, we learned that community safety is being compromised. If it isn't tragic enough that individuals have been unable to seek out timely access to treatment, pharmacists must now fear for their own safety. So my question to the Premier is, why does government continue to address this issue in a silo instead of holistically?

THE PREMIER: As the member opposite knows, last week I tabled for him a copy of a letter from the Minister of Health and Wellness to the chief of police in Kentville - that was within a couple of weeks of his writing the Minister of Health and Wellness. It set out the program that we were going to follow for the purposes of assisting with what is a very serious issue before the people in the Valley. Mr. Speaker, we are working by bringing the

resources of the Department of Health and Wellness, the district health authority and, of course, any other resources that we can and are able to bring to bear on this important issue.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this government was warned a year and half ago that a solution involved an interdepartmental response. Instead, one government department addressed it by looking to see if there were patterns around those who have passed away - instead of addressing the needs of today.

The individuals needing treatment and not able to access it are turning to extraordinary means to address their addiction, and the potential for innocent people to be hurt in the process remains high. My question to the Premier is, when will the Premier invite the Minister of Justice to develop solutions which will ensure that public safety needs are being met?

THE PREMIER: Of course, the Minister of Justice is always involved in that process. Society is changing, that's true, and they're always trying to evolve new ways to be able to meet the challenges we find. One of the things I do find ironic is that if the member opposite is reading the same accounts I'm reading, what it said was that the supply of the drugs in the Valley was going down and that was the reason why you were seeing the kind of events that you were seeing, which of course means that Justice and Health and Wellness, the initiatives they're undertaking are actually working.

MR. GLAVINE: You know last week this Premier shot across the floor that I should be ashamed of myself for not reading his government's letter, at the community meeting, about setting up a committee, by the way. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm here to say that I can look myself in the mirror, unlike this Premier and this government who should be ashamed for not adequately addressing the situation a year and a half ago - a situation that is moving out of control. My question to the Premier is, when will this government admit that their less-than-adequate response a year and a half ago has failed the people of the Annapolis Valley?

THE PREMIER: In fact the response was a year and a half ago; it was within a couple weeks of the matter actually being raised. It set out the program that we were going to proceed - and I would just point out that it was not the fact that the member opposite wouldn't read a letter at a public meeting, it was that he denied it existed.

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

**PREM. - CONVENTION CTR.: SUPPORT
- CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: On October 13th of last year the Premier and his government finally announced their support for the building of a convention centre in

Halifax. Now, last week, the second deadline by the developer has passed for a variety of reasons; in fairness, including the federal election. My question to the Premier is, will he, today, reaffirm his own and his government's support, eventually, for the construction of the convention centre for Halifax?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this whole issue could have been resolved, of course, if the federal government had acted in advance of the federal election campaign, but they didn't. We will still wait to hear a response from the federal government. Our position hasn't changed.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his government took two whole years, they took their sweet time to decide whether they supported the project or not and then gave the federal government a month and a-half to get back to them before the election was called. When the Leader of the federal Liberal Party, Mr. Ignatieff, expressed a lack of support for the Lower Churchill project or for the shipbuilding strategies, the Premier was very quick to write a letter to him expressing his disappointment that he wasn't supporting Nova Scotia's interests. Now we have an NDP Member of Parliament right here in Halifax, Ms. Leslie, who has been strangely silent on the convention centre project.

My question to the Premier is, will he write to his federal counterpart, the MP for Halifax, before May 2nd, to instruct her that this project is in the best interests of Nova Scotia, just like he did with the Liberal Leader?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite is an avid follower of election polls, but that's not a good enough reason to have to ask questions in the House of Assembly.

I don't have to write Megan Leslie, I see her often. We've discussed this on many occasions. It is, of course, a matter for her to address with her constituents; she's done that on many occasions. She's talked about some of the things that she'd like to see in terms of architectural improvements and those kinds of things, which I think is perfectly all right for federal members to ask. Ultimately, this is the priority of the provincial government, we've stated it many times. Unfortunately the federal government has not complied.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it is the Premier's job to stand up for projects that are important to Nova Scotia. It is the Premier and his government that say they are committed to this project. He mentions polls. I don't know if anyone follows polls more than he, but I happen to have one here - a recent CRA poll that shows that 58 per cent of the residents of Halifax Regional Municipality either completely or mostly support the convention centre project.

Now, I note that the federal NDP Leader, Mr. Layton, who some say is a popular guy, recently told the media here (Applause) I'll just wait - he needs to know where our Premier stands. Mr. Layton said, when he was last here: Our view is that local communities need to provide what their priorities are and the federal government should be there to

support those decisions, so we think there should be a kind of program on the part of the federal government that helps cities accomplish these goals, that they want accomplished.

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. BAILLIE: In light of the CRA poll, that 58 per cent of Haligonians have said this is their project, will the Premier write to Mr. Layton before the federal election next week and ensure that he knows that this is an important priority for his government and for all Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for quoting at length those very wise words by Mr. Layton. (Applause) What I can say is that this is exactly what this government has been doing, which is standing up for our communities, whether it's in Halifax, or for that matter in any part of Nova Scotia, when it comes to federal funding. He mistakenly said that we sat on it for two years - I know he wants us to be government for a very long time, but we have not been government for two years yet. He can be assured that we will continue in all matters of federal funding for provincial initiatives that we will stand up on behalf of our communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

PREM. - SCH. BDS.: FUNDING - DETAILS

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In April of last year, the Premier said he could confirm that: The funding that is in place for school boards in this province is going to continue to increase.

By now, all Nova Scotians know this simply isn't true; the cuts by the NDP have meant valuable programs are being lost. My question to the Premier is, why did you mislead Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: My Speaker, I did not. The per student funding for education in this province continues to rise.

MR. GLAVINE: In a news article in The ChronicleHerald on April 27, 2005, the member for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour said: If there is any kind of vision for education, we haven't seen it and won't see it, apparently. He said this at a time when money was going into education programs that are being cut today under his leadership.

After nearly two years in office, it has become quite apparent that this government has no vision for education. They have cut funding from Reading Recovery, Math Mentors, Literacy Mentors, Youth Pathways and Transitions, and teaching assistants

without telling Nova Scotians how they plan to ensure that our children have the support they need. Will the Premier acknowledge that the cuts his government are making will affect the most vulnerable students in our education system?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, every time the Opposition stands up they put in a preamble that is entirely wrong. We haven't cut anything - nothing. The administration of the school board funds are left to the school boards, not to us. The per-student funding for students in this province continues to rise.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, when asked about his plan for education, in the Fall the Premier said his plan was to balance the books. We see him choosing paving over Reading Recovery, land over educational assistants and personal tax cuts for his Cabinet Ministers over Math Mentors. Will the Premier explain why buying paving equipment is more important to his government than ensuring our struggling students receive the support they need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to point out that just today, just this morning, we announced a new program for literacy to ensure that young people are getting the kind of support that they need. Another wise decision to support children earlier on and through Grade 1 into Grade 3. This is the reason why we are able to make some of the changes that we are able to make is because we've taken expensive programs, thrown them out and brought in new programming that meets the needs of our students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC.: LITERACY SUPPORT - PROGS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Premier for the introduction to my question. Our education system currently provides a menu of literacy supports for young readers: Reading Recovery, Grade 1; Early Literacy, P-3; Literacy Mentors, P-6; Literacy Teams, P-6; EAs, P-6; Resource, P-6; IEPs, P-6; program planning teams, P-6; and an observational survey of early literacy achievement in Grade 1.

I listened to the Literacy Support Framework announcement this morning; the minister made that announcement. It contained nothing new for students. In fact, it takes away from that menu of supports that we currently have for our young readers. Will the Minister of Education explain how more students will get better help with fewer resources?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we have provided a new program for reading that will be able to reach more of our struggling students where before we had a program that met the needs of very few children. This program opens it up. This is a program where we're going to make sure that the child doesn't have to fit a program. We have a program that's going to fit the child. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, this morning the minister made clear it was not a program, it was a framework, now this afternoon she is calling it a program. Regarding the literacy announcement, in response to a question from the media, the minister said she didn't know what would happen in any of our classes come September, she doesn't know how schools will make do with fewer support teachers, she doesn't know how many struggling readers will be helped. She has no evidence to back up today's announcement and she can't say students will have better results.

Why did the minister take a proven program out of the full menu of literacy supports and provide one today that has no detail, nothing concrete and yet it will be in place in September?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, I think I was at the same announcement this morning as the honourable member and I was very clear that this is a framework, a program - the word is not important - the use of more people in our schools now to meet the needs of our students. We are going to have a literacy specialist, a literacy teacher who will be working with the classroom teacher to provide the appropriate support for our struggling readers, starting in Primary.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Education. She claims that Reading Recovery doesn't work so she took the program away, so she's offering fewer supports for the classroom. The minister spoke about literacy teachers; in the Halifax Regional School Board, 39 literacy teachers are expected to provide literacy support in 97 schools. In response to today's announcement, Vic Fleury, the president of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, said: The challenge will be to do more with less.

Nova Scotia's school system will have fewer mentors, fewer teacher assistants, no Reading Recovery, as a result of this minister's program, or framework. Will the minister please explain that she can guarantee to parents that no student will fall through the cracks as a result of this newly-announced framework?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, this framework is to meet the needs of our struggling readers. It will be starting in Primary making sure that the students will be up and running in Grade 1, starting in September. This is a program, a framework that is going to capture our children who are struggling.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

EDUC.: READING/WRITING PROGS. - DETAILS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Education. Today's announcement for

Succeeding in Reading - or what I call Reading Recovery Light - is simply a show, \$5 million framework with no details how this funding will be allocated and how it will help struggling kids. My question to the minister is, when will Nova Scotia parents actually see details for a proper program that will help kids improve their reading and writing skills?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This framework was done with collaboration from reading specialists and from boards across the province. The framework is available, which I will provide later - I don't have a copy with me, it was provided at the press conference today. Parents can be very well assured that this framework and working with the school boards that we are going to meet the needs of our struggling readers earlier.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Reading Recovery Light fails to lay out how these literacy teaching positions will be implemented in classrooms and how they will be trained. What are the implementation costs associated with the \$5 million framework and what costs are associated with training a new level of professional?

MS. JENNEX: Nova Scotia has been blessed with over 600 teachers who have been trained for Reading Recovery, which means that they have been training with the best practices available for teaching of literacy in our classroom. So using the expertise that we have within our school system, we are going to be able to implement this with minimal cost and all of the professional development will be provided by the Department of Education. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her answer but I'm sure that the minister is intentionally being a little vague right now with the details. After all, it would be difficult for this government to be held accountable if no outcomes for Reading Recovery Light are identified. This \$5 million framework lacks substance to parents struggling with kids. When will this minister make public the deliverables of the Reading Recovery Light framework?

MS. JENNEX: This is a different approach. Where Reading Recovery was a program, a prescriptive program, this is the framework that provides the school boards the flexibility to meet the needs of their children. Every district is different, every school is different. This provides the school boards and schools with flexibility. I would like to add before I sit, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be making sure that this is a program that's accountable. We're going to be using the observational survey the same as we've been doing for the last 15 years with our Grade 1 students. We'll be able to track so that we'll be able to make those comparisons further on down the road.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

**EDUC. - C.B.-VICTORIA REG. SCH. BD.: CUTS
- EFFECT**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, last week the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board announced that more than 140 positions will be eliminated: 44 classroom teaching positions; 50 teaching assistant positions; 14 positions for lunch, bus, and grounds; 2.5 positions for school secretaries; nine cleaning positions; two janitors; a library technician; a clerical position; an adult education position; and a head bus driver.

I heard about these cuts all weekend, Mr. Speaker, at the BAYplex. People are afraid for the kids and they're afraid of the effect it's going to have on education in Cape Breton. So my question to the Minister of Education is, how does losing 50 teaching assistant positions not impact the classrooms?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for sharing your concerns with me. I understand that this is a very stressful time in our communities. Every year at this time there is this process where school boards are doing their reallocations and staffing for the next year. Unfortunately, I have to say that Cape Breton is an area where they are losing 700 in their enrolment next year. So there has to be a rebalancing and those decisions are at the board and I know they're doing them respectfully.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has been forced to absorb a \$5.1 million funding cut in addition to rising cost pressures. These layoffs show that the cuts to this board are extremely deep. Cape Breton also reduced classroom administration by five positions and there will be 6.5 fewer consultants. A human resources coordinator will be reduced over the next two years and another six staff in programs and student services will be eliminated. Will the Minister of Education acknowledge that despite administration cuts, the board has to cut from the classroom to balance their budget?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I just would like to make sure that people understand that sometimes losing a position doesn't mean that a person is lost. Right now, we're looking at declining enrolment and there are positions that are being cut, but with retirement and attrition there should be very minimal people lost within the system. So I just would like to say we need to put our considerable investment to the children who are in our system and we are funding for the children who are in our system.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, those people who have received layoff notices, I think the message is pretty clear to them.

Mr. Speaker, the board has been very clear that these layoffs are a direct result of the Department of Education funding cuts. So my question simply is, will the Minister of

Education explain to the students in Cape Breton how the loss of teachers and teaching assistants will not affect the quality of their education?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the teachers and educational assistants that will be hired in Cape Breton are going to meet the needs of the children who are sitting in the classrooms on whatever date we start in September. We are going to make sure that we have the appropriate number of teachers and educational assistants to meet the needs of our children in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**AGRIC.: AGRICULTURAL LAND REVIEW COMM.
- RECOMMENDATIONS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the Agricultural Land Review Committee spent a considerable amount of time consulting with Nova Scotians and concerned stakeholders, gathering information that will guide our agricultural policies for years to come. However, the review still sits on the shelf. My question for the Minister of Agriculture is, will you adopt the recommendations outlined in the Agricultural Land Review Committee's report?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind all honourable members that when you are recognized by the Chair that you must direct all comments and questions to the Chair. In that question was "you". Now I've sent out memoranda to caucuses earlier and I'd ask that from now on you refrain from "you" in the questions, please.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to my colleague opposite, the land review report and recommendations have gone to an interdepartmental committee, I think the member would be aware of that. It's our hope that a little later this Spring they'll come back with some recommendations. There is a fair bit of input, actually, from those other departments that deal with land issues, as well, and we're hoping that it will make a more comprehensive package for Nova Scotians to address some of the issues we saw for the need for the Land Review Committee in the first place. Thank you.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the discussion about land use in Nova Scotia has divided communities and caused considerable hardship for landowners and those concerned with local food production and consumption. As we know, the Federation of Agriculture is in support of the recommendations, they are the foremost stakeholder on this matter. My question to the minister is, has the minister had any further discussions or feedback with them since the report's release?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, well, certainly to inform them of the present process going forward and I think that, considering their constituency, they are as eager to see what comes from that interdepartmental committee as government is.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the recommendations from the committee are good, we know government has adopted some of the recommendations and we applaud them for that. However, what Nova Scotia farmers and producers need from government is a plan for agriculture. The department's Homegrown Success, 10-year plan isn't really a plan for farmers. In fact, it is an internal document for the department, not a strategy on how to ensure farmers are receiving the calculated, targeted funding and assistance they require. My question to the minister is, will we see a plan to address the concerns of farmers in our province and will we see this plan in the near future?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite, certainly Homegrown Success was a departmental guide and for where the people want to see agriculture go in the future. Presently my staff is working on a five-year program that I think will actually put the nuts and bolts to that document. As soon as it is possible, to make that available for all members and all Nova Scotians to see that, we'll do that as timely as we can.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**EDUC. - WINDSOR FORKS SCH.: PORTABLE CLASSROOMS
- CONFIRM**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. Together with the member for Cumberland South, I recently toured the Windsor Forks Elementary School. I was taken aback at just how crowded this school has become for students and even more concerned about the 29 students crammed into a small Grade 5 classroom. The school library has been forced outside and is now in a separate building near the playground area.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, will the minister tell the House whether portable classrooms will be provided to Windsor Forks and District Elementary School and, if yes, when that may happen?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, that is a question I would have to direct to the superintendent of the school board to get an answer for that because those are not issues that I am aware of but I will contact the superintendent and get back with an answer. Thank you.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'll table a letter today where I wrote the chairman of the Finance Committee, Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, last week on this very subject, to find out whether or not they have been made available.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the minister has obviously not discussed this issue yet and I would ask when that minister may get hold of Ms. Margo Tait, who is the superintendent of the school board, and find out when that discussion could be had, given that we are now well into the planning season for next Fall?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the member opposite for bringing this to my attention and as soon as I can I will be in touch with the superintendent to have a discussion on this issue. Thank you.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I've toured the school, met with the administration and written the school board about this issue, as the local MLA. My question to the minister is, will the minister acknowledge the growth that is happening at Windsor Forks Elementary School, support the school board in finding a solution and ensure that portable classrooms are made available for the coming year this Fall?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the member opposite that whatever the school board needs for us to work through this problem of overcrowding, which is a delight to actually hear that we have increased enrolment in an area, I would like to assure him that I will definitely work with the school board to find a solution to this difficulty.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**EDUC. - NUNN REPT.: PUBLIC SCH. PROGS.
- IMPACT**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. I'm sure the Minister of Education is familiar with the Nunn Report. It has been a guiding document used by several government departments to address problems of youth at risk. The Nunn Report contains 34 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the province shortly after its release. My question to the minister is, how does the minister see the recommendations in the Nunn Report impacting on programs in our public schools?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question. One of the things that we did recently is that we've been able to roll out SchoolsPlus to every school board across the province and that is a direct recommendation from the Nunn report.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister, I appreciate that answer. My follow-up is with respect to Youth Pathways and Transitions. This was a program, again,

that was partly in response to recommendations from the Nunn report. Parents are telling us how valuable that program is and, more importantly, students are telling us how important that program is. It has helped many students remain in school. Now that the program has been cancelled by the Halifax Regional School Board due to funding cuts, my question to the minister is, how does the minister plan to respond to those very same students who are still at risk?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, this is a program that was put on by the Halifax Regional School Board. I've learned a little bit about it over the last week, recognizing that it was an intervention that was up to 12 weeks. At the time that it was put in place, there weren't as many support systems within our regular school system and the Halifax Regional School Board feels very strongly that their supports are within the community and better than they were when this was first initiated and also that we have other programs, like Options and Opportunities, that are available to students.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Options and Opportunities is a wonderful program, but it's not designed for students at risk. This government has not acted as though it is in favour of the recommendations. The reason it's not acting in favour is because it is taking programs away that allow these very kids to get their academic programming. My question to the minister is, will the minister provide funds to the Halifax Regional School Board so that they can reinstate the Youth Pathways and Transitions program?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, this government does recognize that there are children in our community who need supports and we do recognize the recommendations made from the Nunn inquiry. The decision that was made by the school board was a decision that they made with all of their best evidence and that question really needs to be directed to the school board, the issues around that particular program. There are other supports available now that weren't available at the time of the creation of that program. Thank you.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: SINGLE-USE MED. EQUIP.
- RE-STERILIZATION**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On Good Friday media reports highlighted Capital Health's new cost-saving initiative to reuse single-use medical equipment by contracting an American company to sterilize the medical equipment used in our operating rooms. While the Capital District Health Authority expects savings, they were unclear as to the amount of savings that will be accrued as a result of this initiative. My question to the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, is given that the minister has received the business plan from Capital Health, could she please confirm whether the re-sterilization of single-use medical equipment was a cost-saving strategy recommended by Capital Health?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, through you to the honourable member, this is an issue that we certainly have debated here, before, on the floor of this House. It is the practice in some very large health authorities across the country to re-manufacture certain medical devices. This is something that is possible to do with good quality control. The Capital District Health Authority is pursuing whether or not that is something they can do that will not only be more cost effective but also more environmentally friendly.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in fact, they're doing more than thinking about it because according to the news story, they've been doing it for a couple of weeks now. The people of Nova Scotia have mixed opinions about this issue. While no one finds fault with cutting costs in our health care system - actually they applaud that - many question whether one of the first lines of cost cutting at the province's largest DHA should come at what some may consider being a potential threat to public safety. With every decision, there is always risk and reward. The people of Nova Scotia deserve to know how much risk is associated with this plan. My question to the minister through you is, given the minister has the business plan, can she tell us how much the Capital District expects to save as a result of this initiative?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the district health authority plans have not been in the department for a full week yet. We will take the time that is required to analyze the information that has been brought forward in those plans. I remind honourable members that district health authorities are funded to the tune of \$1.6 billion annually so it's not an insignificant amount of work that is required to go through those business plans and analyze their implications.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that it's a huge plan and that there's an awful lot of money, but this issue has come to light. It's been in the press; it's been public and I would expect the minister has looked at that. Again, as she mentioned, it's an issue that's been raised here in the past, about a year and one-half ago, I believe.

There are concerns about reusing items that are manufactured and designed for single use. Who is going to be ultimately responsible, at the end of the day, for monitoring the sterilization process? How can the public be assured that equipment is properly sterilized? Will patients be notified when a single-use sterilized product is going to be reused during their procedures or will they be left to wonder? Accountability is what we're looking for on this issue. Also there's the question of future liability, if it happens to arise.

My question to the minister is, can the minister confirm that it is she, as minister, who is ultimately responsible for this decision should something adverse happen?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to establish whether this issue for the member is about the money that's being saved or is it about the risk to the patient? My focus as Minister of Health and Wellness will be with respect to the risk. That's why this government established a quality committee and that committee will

have a hand in helping us establish the proper standards and guidelines for these kinds of procedures when they are approached in the district health authorities. Thank you.

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

**SNSMR - CAP ASSESSMENT PROG.: REVIEW
- STATUS**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The department Web site indicates clearly that the government reviewed the Capped Assessment Program in 2010 and that the public was invited to provide their feedback on the CAP program to government last October and November, their deadline being November 30th. Through you to the minister, will he provide Nova Scotians today with a status report of the review and when his government will be saying something on this very important issue?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, to my colleague across the floor the government will be saying something on this particular issue, it won't be much today. The CAP review continues and actually there has been a lot of interest in the review and a fair bit of information has come in from stakeholders in this regard. I think I had made a commitment to the UNSM that we would have a response to them later in the Spring, we're still committed to that. We're pleased with the amount of information that has come to the department.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again my question will be to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Francis Gillis of Grand Mira South, a spokesperson for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Property Taxpayers' Association, admits the CAP is not perfect but he strongly believes the government must address the problem that led to the CAP in the first place before the CAP is removed.

Does the minister agree with Francis and can he assure him that your government will come up with constructive amendments that will recognize the concerns being expressed by the residents of Nova Scotia?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I believe I met with Mr. Gillis and his group, I had a very constructive meeting. I have to tell you they made it very clear what their issue was and certainly I think the government is not going to move in any direction that we feel has a negative impact on Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLEOD: Again to the minister, association co-chair Joe Gillis is calling upon the government to assess all properties fairly, uniformly and equitably. He does not understand why rural people have to pay a premium for having water frontage or living on

a river or a creek. Through you, Mr. Speaker I would like to know if the minister supports Mr. Gillis in his call for a reassessment of all properties.

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, it is a confusing message because on one hand I think the message to the minister is that people like the cap on the assessment but they somehow want assessment on all properties which tends to be a bit of a conflict. What I do want to say is that the government is definitely interested in fairness and a proper application of taxing and that's what our direction will be coming out of the review.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**PREM.: CIVIL SERV. POSITIONS -
UNDERESTIMATION**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. In the NDP Government's first year, they said that they had 10,935 positions in the civil service. It turns out they actually had 9,976 civil servants, that's almost a difference of 1,000 civil servants. My question to the Premier is this, can the Premier explain why the civil service was so drastically underestimated by 10 per cent?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I tried to explain this a couple of days ago to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. What happens is in the estimates each year you authorize a certain number of FTEs, and over the course of the year people leave employment, they either leave altogether or take some kind of a leave. There is time that accrues in filling those positions. Sometimes those positions stay open for a very long time, so what happens is those then become not estimates but actuals. Over every year, you will get a decline between estimates and actuals, if you approve the same number of FTEs, in the next year then you will see that go back up in the estimates the following year.

MR. COLWELL: Historically this province has numbers - the numbers have shown that government has been able to estimate the number of the civil servants within a few hundred people. My question again is to the Premier, why all of a sudden are we unable to track how many people are working for the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the differences have fluctuated from year to year as to the amount of estimates to actuals and then back to the estimates the next year. They do vary each year by a bit but there has always been a range.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier intentionally inflating the numbers of civil servants in the province, just as he has inflated every other number he has put out? My question again to the Premier - if the Premier cannot accurately count the number of people who work for him, how can we expect Nova Scotians to trust any of the estimates that this government publishes?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if they went back and had a look at the estimates and forecasts for each year over the last decade - and for that matter when that member was a Cabinet Minister - they would find that there would be a large fluctuation between the estimates and the forecast actuals. That is just the way it works.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**EDUC. - PATHWAYS AND TRANSITION PROG.: CUT
- MIN. RESPONSE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, again, to the Minister of Education. The Youth Pathways and Transitions Program of the Halifax Regional School Board has been helping high school students with individual needs to stay in school successfully for the past seven years. Last week, Information Morning highlighted the fact that 27 young Nova Scotians are now benefiting from this excellent program, which increases the individual attention given to students with such medical conditions as high anxiety levels. Now this excellent program is being scrapped because of this government's education cuts. Does the minister support this cut?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, what I do support are the decisions made by the school boards because they make them with all of the information they have at hand, so I support the decisions that our school boards are making. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, since my time is getting short, I'm going to go to the last one. We need more devotion from this government to meeting the needs of Nova Scotians rather than the needs of administrators, where there seems to be an added increase in administration costs by government. For the sake of these teenagers, will the minister not contact Irvine Carvery, chair of the Halifax Regional School Board, and see that this valuable Youth Pathways and Transitions Program could be saved?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I will definitely have a conversation with Mr. Carvery but I will only have the conversation to get more information and I will not make any commitments at this time to what I will be asking him.

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

The honourable member for Kings West on a point of order or a point of privilege?

MR. LEO GLAVINE: A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. During Question Period today when the Premier responded to my question, he said to the effect that while I did not read the letter that came from government, in fact my exact quote is that government did not respond in a significant way, as the tape which I reviewed this weekend.

I just wanted to let the Premier know that while I responded, as the people of the Valley know, it was not in a significant way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that under advisement and I will get back to the House as soon as possible.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it's really a pleasure for me today to speak as we go into the estimates debate. I wanted to speak today about some of the issues in Clayton Park, in the riding that I represent in Halifax. I particularly wanted to speak about the new Canada Games Centre, which I hope many of the members of the Legislature have had the opportunity to visit or to see, either during the Canada Games, or now that it's open as a public recreation facility.

First off, for those that don't know where it is, it's on Lacewood Drive in Clayton Park. It's really a huge facility: it has a large field house, walking track, a large eight-lane, 25-metre pool and some other aquatics, as well as a slide. The cost of that new centre is \$40.5 million. This is a centre that for 10 years the people in Clayton Park and beyond and the wider area there have been asking to replace the HRM facility, Northcliffe pool, that was opened in the 1970s. We were in need of a replacement because of the growth that's been so significant in our part of the city.

There are many good things to be said about this centre. Number one, the people of Clayton Park are really thrilled - 3,200 people have joined the centre so far. That's almost halfway to their goal - they're hoping to have 7,000 members - and the centre only opened for membership on March 5th. They are ahead of schedule in terms of the number of people who have come forward to join already. I'm happy to say that many of my neighbours and friends have taken out their memberships and are enjoying the facilities and bringing their families there. I know it's going to have a positive impact on the health and well-being and

the culture of our community. It's adding a dimension of wellness and activity that was missing in the past. It really is truly a community centre whereas in the past we had a neighbourhood pool and it didn't have other facilities.

Nothing opens without some controversy. I know that there have been some growing pains as they've adjusted to the demands of suddenly opening up and having the membership taking off in a very positive way. The management and the board of the centre are having to deal with a lot of that sort of growing pains and the initial adjusting of their programming to make sure that everything's working well and is going smoothly.

I did want to congratulate the board members who are community members, many from our immediate neighbourhood in Clayton Park and Fairview, some from a little farther away in HRM. The board is chaired by Ann Cosgrove who is a well-known community volunteer. She's a former school principal and educator, but she's also been very instrumental in the opening of Pier 21 when that was first begun. She worked very hard on our Bella Rose Theatre which is a non-profit, separate theatre society in Halifax West High School. She is now the board chair at our new Canada Games Centre.

I know she's doing a super job. One of the issues I have brought to Ann in the first month or so was the need for all of us to think about when we open a beautiful new centre like this - just by way of explanation, I'd like to let everyone know that the provincial government was a big player in the opening of this centre and \$12 million of provincial money went into this wonderful new recreation facility. It was matched by \$12 million from the federal government and there's more than \$16 million from the HRM to see the centre open. It's not just a little community centre for Clayton Park, it is serving the whole western region of Halifax and HRM.

Within a 10-minute drive you're in Timberlea-Prospect and Hammonds Plains and Bedford. We're drawing from a much larger area, it's a regional facility. But the difficulty that we're having, and this is what I brought to Ann Cosgrove's attention, was just that in the past where we had an HRM facility, although it was old and wasn't the best of facilities, it was serving a very important need with the seniors in our community. They were using it in large numbers, particularly the Aquafit and lane swimming. With the opening of the new centre the costs have gone up for those seniors.

One reason is that the older or the HRM facilities recognized seniors and give a discount at the age of 55. The new facility is looking at 60 as the age at which they give any kind of a discount for the swimmers and users of the facility. At the same time, the drop-in fee is quite substantial to go into the new Canada Games Centre. The reason for that, I fully understand, is to encourage people to take out an annual membership. That certainly gives the centre and the board more security and more understanding about what income they're going to receive. They are under the gun because the way we have set up this centre, which is very similar to other facilities, big facilities like Cole Harbour Place in the Premier's

riding, or Sackville Sports Stadium, those big centres are all run by boards. The HRM will not put municipal funds into them and so the boards have a very big responsibility and that is to ensure that they generate the income that's going to actually keep the centre open, keep the lights on and so on.

So as a new centre opens, like our Canada Games Centre, they have to be very cautious and they are trying to balance the needs of attracting new members, setting up the swim programs and the other programming that's going to offer programs not only to members but also to people in the general community who might want to avail themselves of swimming classes, or dance classes, or any of the other many activities, yoga and so on, that are offered there. So they're trying to balance that against making sure there's enough revenue and where at the moment they're unable to take action is really to fill the void that was formerly available for people who are of limited means.

I know that some of the seniors in our community have contacted the Minister of Community Services, as Minister of Seniors as well, and have expressed some of their frustration and concerns. I wanted to thank the Minister of Community Services because I had contacted her office and had a chance to speak to her executive assistant who did look into the questions that are arising about whether or not there's some way we can support the seniors who are doing their very best to keep active and to find a sport that they can do. They love swimming and the water aerobics, because it's a way that if you have any problems with your knees, or hips, or ankles, you're able to do some sport and activity where your weight is supported. They said they're not interested in the track; they're not going to be running and walking. They're not interested in the exercise equipment. They really want to continue the program they're on, which is swimming and that's very important to them, Mr. Speaker.

So they're feeling a little bit pushed out because of the cost and I think it's important that we recognize that, again, when something like this comes into a community, which is so wonderful and is something that's accessible to most of us, the prices, I know, they aim to keep them in a fairly reasonable range. The membership fee for myself, for example, is exactly the same as it is to join GoodLife, which is a gym which a lot of people in my area have supported and it's a private company, of course. The new centre has picked exactly the same fee for us to join there and we get not only the full gym but we get access to the swimming, access to a walking track and a field house if we wanted to do, not that I would but basketball, volleyball. I might do badminton which is a sport that they have the facilities for and the nets for. In fact, during the Canada Games, the centre was used for badminton, for the rhythmic, or I guess artistic gymnastics they call it, and also for synchronized swimming. So those three events were hosted there. I can tell you that the crowds were wonderful, it was filled for all of the competitions and, again, people are so excited.

I know the Minister of Health and Wellness attended at the opening when the ribbon was cut, the Premier was there, the minister responsible for ACOA was there and the mayor, members of council, some of us from the Legislature; the member for

Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville attended because, as I said, this is not just about a Clayton Park facility, this is a facility that is going to serve so many - I mean easily 100,000 residents are within a 10-minute radius of that centre. So the impact it's going to have is really tremendous and without a doubt, this is a good news story for our area.

We are very blessed to have a good professional team in place there who are managing the facility and I have no doubt that it will cover its costs and all of the financial uncertainty will work itself out because the people of HRM are joining it in great numbers and that will support it. Their classes are being subscribed to. I know now almost every day after school the pool is full of swimming classes and as I was speaking to the general manager there - his name is Gary Furlong, and he's doing a great job - he said that they are not able to have general swims at the time when a lot of the members want to come in after school but the reason is very clear and that is that they have to have swim classes in place both for the community and for the generation of income, which it does, because it brings a lot of money into the centre to have extra classes.

So we understand that this first year is going to be a very important one, to just find out the dynamics of the centre. But my concern - and I did want to raise it here today - is that we are able to find a way to honour some of the programs that were in place through HRM and that is when we had the Northcliffe Centre open.

Some of the people who are disadvantaged - and Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate this because you've worked with youth and with perhaps people who couldn't afford the big fees to go into a new centre - just to give you an idea, for an adult to go in on a drop-in basis, it's \$10. The rationale for that is that if I drop in to swim, I have access to the pool and to the track and to everything else in the facility and therefore I could come for the whole day for \$10, but in truth, most people just want to come to swim or for a walk or for an hour at the gym with the equipment, so they're not actually going to be doing all the activities and staying all day and it's out of reach for some of our more disadvantaged neighbours and residents and I am concerned about that.

There is a facility in the Minister of Finance's riding - the Fairview Family Resource Centre - that used to give out passes for families to go to swim at the HRM facility and now those passes aren't honoured because it's owned by a different group. It's now managed by this board of directors and not managed by the Halifax Regional Municipality. The councillors themselves and the HRM - although they've put in \$16 million-plus are operating it at arm's length, they're not getting involved. Those people who previously could take their children and their families swimming are now finding themselves going to pools that are farther away like the Needham Centre in the North End or out to Spryfield and going to the wave pool. That has actually been reported just in the community newspaper. This Monday there was an article saying that they're seeing a real spike in the number of people attending there. That is really sort of the domino effect of a new facility opening.

I did want to say that I'm so excited about our new facility, but sad to see that just at the moment, we aren't able to accommodate everybody within its walls. I know from my discussion with both the general manager of the facility and with the board chair, Ann Cosgrove, that they're very well aware of it and that they're working on it. I'm hoping that between their goodwill and their discussions with HRM that funds will be made available to allow some of these special programs to be put in place. I don't want to see anybody left on the outside looking in when they go by such a large, impressive, exciting looking centre. I don't want to see children especially that are left outside.

I mean, it ties right into the Nunn Commission that we spoke about today where we know that if kids have activities and have a place to gather, they will be so much safer and healthier. I want to make sure that everybody can find a place at the Canada Games Centre and I'm going to encourage everybody who lives anywhere nearby to join the centre and help to give it that financial footing that is going to allow the board and others to then open the door a little wider and let everybody else in as well. This is a good news story for all of us and will promote health and wellness and I know will give kids a wonderful place to be in our community. With that, I thank you for your time today.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's a great privilege to stand here today and say a few words as we move into estimates. First I want to tell you what an honour it is to be a member of this House of Assembly and to represent the people of Cape Breton West. We are a House that is 250-plus years old. We were leaders in democracy here in the Province of Nova Scotia, second only to Westminster and I think some days when we come into this building and we look at our surroundings, we should all just take a moment and appreciate how much of an honour it is for us to be selected by individuals to represent them here. We should also remember that why we're here is to make sure that the needs and the wants of the people of our province are heard.

I also want to say how much I appreciate the work of the men and women who are in the armed services and the work that they do for us as a country. We should always remain vigilant of the people that are doing those things. I'm very proud to be a Nova Scotian and I'm very proud to be a Cape Bretoner. On the opening day of the House, I was very proud to see yourself in the Chair, the Lieutenant Governor being a Cape Bretoner and the Chief Justice being a Cape Bretoner as well, and all represented here in the House but, more importantly, all coming from the community of Whitney Pier. I'm sure that gave Whitney Pier a sense of pride and it was a sense of pride for all of us from Cape Breton Island.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many people who are responsible for getting all of us here as different members, and I certainly want to thank the people who have worked for me over the years and have become my friends and my extended family, but there are some other people who are very special, whom I really want to take this opportunity to thank, and that would be my family - my daughter Sandra, my daughter Jessica, my son Daniel, and

most importantly, I have two little grandsons and they are very, very special - and I have three new individuals in my family, Joe and Solomon and Amber. They have all become part of our family and they've all made living and working in this job that much more important and special.

MR. SPEAKER: Tell them about the Pier girl.

MR. MACLEOD: As you point out, Mr. Speaker, we have a Pier girl living in our family now and we are very proud of that. She is the mother of my two grandchildren, and I'm very proud of that as well.

The person who has been my greatest supporter through 34 years of marriage - and three more years besides that, of going together - is my wife Shirley, and I want to take this opportunity to thank her publicly for her support (Applause) My colleague for Hants West has said that she is a saint, and there is no question about that in my mind. She is very similar to all the spouses in this House, Mr. Speaker, because when get elected, they, too, are in the public eye and we need to thank them.

My wife, as you know, Mr. Speaker, has her own set of challenges, but with that she is still there and she is still very supportive, so it makes me proud to be able to say that I am the member for Cape Breton West.

In our area over the last little while, Mr. Speaker, there have been a few people who have passed on who have made a real contribution to our community. One of those people was a lady by the name of Dr. Marion MacKinnon. Marion was an educator, she was a caterer, she was a 4-H leader, she was a community activist, she was a strong supporter of the Liberal Party, and she was a friend. She passed away, but she made her mark on our communities. One of her sons was a member of this House, another son was the Warden of Cape Breton County. Marion was always there for the young people of our community and her work in 4-H will be something remembered for a long time; as a matter of fact, there is even a building named after her at the Cape Breton Exhibition grounds, so Marion has made a contribution. Just a small note - she was also the caterer at my wedding 34 years ago and she has been a friend ever since.

We also lost Chief Myles Burke. Myles was a visionary, a man who had a plan to help Cape Breton get back on its feet. He was fighting drugs, he was fighting the bad things in our community and he had a vision. Myles and I worked together at the Fortress of Louisbourg. We used to joke, it was the first time that Myles ever had a gun, it was when we were soldiers at the Fortress - and the first time I ever saw a tricorne was at the Fortress. Over the years we've intermixed in our lives and his sudden passing was something that had an impact on all our community. The tribute that was paid to Myles at his funeral and paid to his family was something unprecedented in our community. It was heart-wrenching to see the pain and the suffering on the faces of his wife Jane and his two daughters.

We've also had the loss of another icon in Cape Breton, Irving Schwartz, a guy who was involved in many aspects of the community and, right up to the very end, even when he was sick he was out there raising money for the I Care fund for cancer treatment at the regional hospital. He, too, left his mark on Cape Breton.

There were many others who have passed away and others who have contributed in many different ways in their own communities and it is all of those people who are the foundation and the fabric that make this province such a wonderful place to live.

We have some new people on scene. In Eskasoni we have a new chief, Chief Leroy Denny. Chief Denny is a young man, 34 years of age, who has taken on the challenges that come with his community. They have issues with many different things and he and his new council have been working hard to try and improve the quality of life.

They are doing different things to address the drug issues that are there, the crises that they have seen in the past, and they are looking at ideas and ways to move the community forward and find recreational purposes for the young people of the community. All these things are things that they need help with, from us as a province, and from the federal government. But there is another visionary who wants to make a difference in his community and who has a real concern about the young people and how they act. I know, Mr. Speaker, that young people have a real soft spot in your heart because of your activities in your former career with the Whitney Pier Youth Centre.

Then in Cape Breton West we are also fortunate to have some of the greatest tourism sites in all of Nova Scotia. We have the Fortress of Louisburg, the largest re-creation, in all of Canada, of a National Historic Site, a site that brings people from all over the world and from all parts of our country and it is a site that we need to promote more as a province - even though it's a federal site - we need to promote it more as a province so that the people of this province, and the people who are in the tourism industry, and in and around Louisburg would be able to benefit more from this beautiful piece of our history.

We have the Two Rivers Wildlife Park. The Two Rivers Wildlife Park is a park that has been near and dear to me for a long time. It is a place where many people come to celebrate, to enjoy, for their children to have an opportunity to mingle and see animals in their natural environment. It's a place where people can go and have a relaxing day at a very low cost, but it is a place that needs the support of the communities and of this provincial government. (Interruption) There is a Two Rivers Tunnel there who has been bang on in his predictions of the weather for the last 10 years and the odd day he might even snap at you. There was a picture in the paper not too long ago and people had trouble determining who was who, who was Two Rivers Tunnel and who was the furry guy beside him.

But, Mr. Speaker, all those things taken into account, it is one of those areas, again, that is sort of a hidden treasure in Cape Breton and it's located in Cape Breton West on the

beautiful Mira River, the river that was made so famous by Allister MacGillivray in his song, Out on the Mira. The original song was written for that site that the Two Rivers is on because when Two Rivers was first developed, it was developed for an International Girl Guide Camp and the song, Out on the Mira, was developed for the Girl Guide camp so it all comes together and now we have people going there and people go to the park to enjoy it, as I said earlier. There are even people who have gone there to get married so it is a part of the community that needs and deserves the support of this government.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Cape Breton West, we talk about roads. We have a lot of roads in Cape Breton West and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has been very helpful with the roads and there has been a lot of work done on the roads in Cape Breton West, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

I think about the highway going to Eskasoni, I think about the road leading to Donkin where the potential of the new mine is, I think of the road that finishes off part of the Fleur-de-lis Trail that goes between Marion Bridge and Gabarus. All of these roads are priorities that need to be looked at, roads around the river itself, which has a beautiful scenic view.

The minister, in his last visit to Cape Breton, was very kind in allowing me to take him on tour to see some of these roads first-hand and see the conditions and I want to take this opportunity to thank him publicly for doing that.

Another thing that is important in our communities is the fishing. We have the best lobsters in all of Nova Scotia located in Main-à-Dieu and Gabarus. Now the member for Yarmouth and the member for Shelburne are laughing. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you right now that I am willing to test anything they want to bring to this building and do a comparison because I think it would be only right but at this point I stand convinced that the best lobsters come from Cape Breton Island, from the coast in Area 23. I wait to be proved wrong by these two honourable members when they bring forward the samples.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because as important as the fishery is to our area, and it is to all of our province, it is an industry that has had its hard times. This week we had something unique happen in Cape Breton, we had the fishermen come forward and they looked at the crab quota and they said, the science says we have to reduce the crab quota to make sure that we make this industry sustainable. What did they do? They approached the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, under the leadership of Gordon MacDonald as the area rep of the crab fishermen there, and they've actually seen a reduction in that. What that has done has made sure that the industry will be sustainable for the years to come. We have to congratulate the fishermen in that area for having the foresight to be careful and to be stewards of their fishery.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about issues and troubles and things that need to be done, I think about Sydney River, one of the oldest areas of the CBRM, outside of the old city limits, an area that still has no water. They have to get their water from wells and it's an area where we need to see some action taken. It is a joint process, it is the municipality, the province and the federal government. We need to look at that, especially when we consider the new standards for drinking water that have been put in place by the Government of Nova Scotia.

One of the areas that is really exciting is the area of the potential of the Donkin coal mine. That mine has the potential of creating hundreds of jobs, local jobs. It has the potential of creating a source for power right across the province but not only that, right along the eastern seaboard, Mr. Speaker.

Then there is the challenge in the wind energy. Wind energy is another potential. We're hoping that when they put the new transmission line in from Lingan to other parts of Nova Scotia, that they make enough capacity so wind projects on Cape Breton Island, wherever they are located, will be able to move that new renewable energy to different areas.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say briefly, that MS is a situation here in the Province of Nova Scotia, we've seen over 10,000 names on petitions, looking for help for the people who suffer from that disease. I know the minister has looked at the issue and is going to bring it up with her colleagues who are the ministers across the province but it is an issue that time is not a friend of.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to say a few things about Cape Breton West and some of the people who have made it so great and I want to thank you for your time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member.

The motion is carried.

We will now take a short break as we will go into the Committee of the Whole House on Supply. We will pause now and let the minister and her staff get set up. Thank you.

[4:13 p.m. The House recessed.]

[4:17 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Supply with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

[5:57 p.m. CWH on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Gordon Gosse, resumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met, made progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. As mentioned earlier in the day, the motion for late debate was put forward by the honourable member for Kings West:

“Therefore be it resolved that the government announce specific initiatives that would permit for readily accessible treatment options for individuals suffering with prescription addictions.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PRESCRIPTION ADDICTIONS - TREATMENT OPTIONS

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that I'm rising to speak about tonight that, in fact, I very much hoped I wouldn't have to bring to the attention of this House over the past couple of weeks. It has had devastating consequences, the issue of prescription drugs and the fact that treatment has not in many cases been as timely as a number of people affected and their families have indicated both in a number of forums, the last of which, of course, was last Wednesday evening in Berwick which saw and people experienced the heart-wrenching impact of not being able to get the help, the assistance, the professional treatment in that timely manner.

When it happens, we know that there are a number of impacts as a result. There's no question that in many cases, perhaps in most cases, detox works; medical detoxification, anywhere from five to 10 days, does support most of the drug detoxing that is required by those who go into a facility here in the province. As opiates are able to be removed from a person in five, six, seven days, during that time sometimes those who are very serious

addicts, in fact, it can be their fifth, sixth or seventh time going to detox and, of course, Methadone is part of the treatment often prescribed.

However, once they're out and there isn't that timely connection with a treatment program - and I'm certainly aware of a number, I'm not sure how many there would be over the past number of years who, in fact, had expressed to staff at detox units that they wanted to make a very clear break from their past and now go into treatment. When that isn't available, we do get the relapse for some people, after they get back on the street and get back in the same environment and the same challenges that perhaps are part of, or even led to, their addiction.

One of the areas brought to my attention with those who use prescription drugs, opiate derivatives like OxyContin, Percocet and Dilaudid, when they get back out many try to get on street Methadone, which, in fact, is one of the problems that Mark Mander, Chief of Police, and others have described for a period of time, that there is an availability of street Methadone. In fact, some people were able to get it at a reasonable price, small amounts that were able to hold them from returning to the use of opiates and they were able to continue in the workplace. So we know those people, absolutely, were aware themselves, and others around them, of one of the treatment programs that could assist them.

However, we know that at the Mud Creek clinic there is a wait list and, therefore, the unavailability to get into that kind of a program. A facility has been opened up in Truro; we're hoping some from the Valley will now be able to get there. In fact, one that I've been dealing with, hopefully got there today and is able to get into a program, a short period of time in Truro, then he can come back to the Valley and he will be able to access a highly-regulated amount of Methadone.

The other situation that we're now aware of, as well, when people aren't able to access treatment, is that they find out people, for example, who are on a very legitimate course of prescription drugs because they've had hip surgery, a knee replacement or whatever medical procedure, reconstructive surgery, some of these people have been associated with robberies. I'm sure that is not a new development in the Valley, it is taking place in other areas as well.

We know that over the past six to eight weeks, this issue in the Annapolis Valley has been in the media - television, radio, the newspapers - and talk on the street. It has been front and centre. About six to eight weeks ago, when it was first brought to my attention in a little wave of concerns - and a lot of it was post-Harlan Dorey's funeral that this wave started to come my way. At that time I was told exactly what would happen, authorities were alerted that there would be pharmacies broken into once they started to put the squeeze on the prescription drug availability. That, we now know, is exactly what has taken place and the possibilities of others are very, very real.

When treatment programs are not available and somebody has declared that they want to be in a treatment program, that deeper sense of hopelessness emerges. We had those kinds of accounts both on the record of last Wednesday, and other family circumstances - because not all families come forward and it's unfortunate that they do feel a sense of shame, perhaps, a sense of discomfort around this whole issue and they don't come out publicly with it. But we know now that without timely treatment, in fact we've lost lives. It's not new to the Valley, it has happened in the province and it has happened in other areas as well.

The research is very clear that, in fact, when a person has indicated to professionals or to family that they want to be in a treatment program, getting into it is absolutely critical. We've had a couple of cases where people have gone to counselling even prior to going to detox, and both the counsellor and the detox unit have indicated fully - in fact, one from the Valley was released from Lunenburg just on Monday and everybody has the same conclusion, that this person is now ready for a treatment program. But according to the Director of Treatment Services, Carolyn Davison, there is no such program available today or this week in Nova Scotia, and we know there are precious few.

For the record I just want to indicate what our neighbour province has for treatments. They have detoxification centres in each of their eight regions with in-patient and outpatient services, and other services include Methadone Maintenance Programs, Youth and Family Services, and Outreach Specialized Programs with parents as well. Services available provincially are short-term residential service, two centres, Moncton and Campbellton, and the length of stay is generally four weeks for men, three for women, referrals required. Long-term residential programs for men only, terms are six months to one year. Long-term residential service for youth in Portage Cassidy Lake, referrals required, 64 beds, ages 14 to 21.

There is no question, the professionals in this province, the doctors, family practitioners are saying we have a lack of services available in Nova Scotia. The immediacy and the ability to respond is very, very limited to get people in a place and at times that is absolutely required for treatment.

With that, I take my place, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to get the opportunity to get in on this debate - something I'm a little bit familiar with. I spent 17 years as a paramedic and I can tell you, over the course of those years I had the unfortunate opportunity to run into this issue.

First, though, I would like to say that it's a real shame that we're even debating this topic and we have to bring it here and that it is an issue in this province, but it is, it's real. This has been around for years - this is not new. I know in Cape Breton a couple years back there was huge outcry there - Methadone and some other opiates were issues. It was a similar problem, people were dying, and there were overdoses.

Unfortunately it comes down to how you get hands on it, and that has been discussed. People, unfortunately when they're desperate they steal stuff. They can get hands on it - there's no problem getting it. That, too, is unfortunate, whether they are breaking into pharmacies, as has been discussed here, or stealing it from other individuals which I think happens over the course of them needing to acquire it - and they do need to acquire it, they're hooked on this stuff and they do whatever they can. They're like most addicts, they're no different, they're like alcoholics who need a drink, they go get their alcohol and it's just another fix, unfortunately.

What's worse is that here we are, and it's after the fact unfortunately that we're really getting into this debate. It has affected yet again another group of young individuals who have changed their families' lives forever, but we're missing a piece and I've said this before in this House and I'm always harping about the education piece. The question is, how did we get here to begin with? What are we doing? Yes, it's great, we do need treatment programs and I'll agree with that and I support that resolution. I want to make that clear for the record and the honourable member knows that and I've also explained to him and gave my regrets for last week. I would have liked to have been in Berwick but I was hosting my own meeting with regard to homelessness and shelter in similar related issues, strangely enough. It's a shame that we have to do it but it's real. Those are the realities of living today, I guess, in hard times.

Back to how did we get here to begin with? You have to question maybe everybody's circumstance is a little different. Is it a traumatic incident that gets you so far down that you need to find a way back up through drugs? Well, in some cases we know that to be real, that's the case. So you have to ask yourself, is it that we're not dealing with the trauma to begin with when the incident happens. Maybe we're not doing enough in the beginning when the issues begin or to cut off the issues before they start. It's great to have programs to treat - unfortunately, I think they're needed, but at the same time, how much time are we spending with young people, with our kids, trying to remind them that drugs are bad things, even prescription drugs. I remember being at school, the RCMP would come in and they'd hold up their big panel with every little color drug on it you can imagine and you'd go, wow, what's that? They would be telling you, these are bad things. Education on drugs is a key component to solving this problem I think.

Now there will still be issues. It's like alcohol; everybody knows what it does. It's great to have a social drink, in fact, you like a glass of wine or whatever it might be. Others just can't handle it, they get onto too much. It's different though. We see these incidents that are being brought forward in this House. Again, back to the Cape Breton issue a couple of years ago. People are hooked on these hard drugs. We should be learning from it. I don't

know that we are as a society, in all honesty. I don't know that we are learning much of anything some days when I see the numbers. Over the years - as I said, I worked for 17 years, a lot of that time on the street - unfortunately you run into every circumstance that there is. You wonder about crime rates, you wonder about a lot of things. You see these gun fights or whatever you want to call them. There are a lot of drug deals relative to whatever it is. They're not all just the marijuana and crack and cocaine and whatever else is out there. There are these other hardcore drugs, which are, in fact, prescription drugs and people need them because they get hooked on them.

I would say that we have to figure something out. We can stand here and we can talk about it all we want, but if we're not going to create any kind of action from it all and put something in place - I'd like to see us put something in place that's real, as well; as real as the problem. The only thing that I can think of is the education piece and we have to go there and we have to try and get our young people, our kids maybe in the school levels. It's not just a young person's problem. I realize that too, but it's a big part of it. We do have to go there, but it's an ongoing struggle. Things happen every day in our lives. Like I said, there are these traumas; a family member dies, a parent, life changes, there are a lot of things that happen.

We need to find a way to cut the problem off at the pass before it becomes a problem. It all costs money, I guess, unfortunately, as I've said before, everything costs money. There aren't enough this and there aren't enough that, there aren't enough specialists, there aren't enough doctors, there aren't enough clinics, there aren't enough psychologists. You name the specialty; there probably will never be enough, in all honesty.

The other question you really have to ask is, how far does it go? Where is the responsibility? Does it lie totally with government? Should government be held 100 per cent accountable for making sure such things don't happen? I think that's impossible from a realistic point of view, to say that it's all government's responsibility. Government needs to be there to support by way of programs, education and whatever the needs might be, but somewhere we as people have to stand up and say there is an issue. We have to admit that there's an issue and we have to be willing to jump in and do our part. As parents - that is what I'm getting at, I guess - our part is educating our children. This is what life is about. You know, when they're five and six, you don't have so many issues. When you get into the Grade 5 and 6 level, unfortunately, your kids come home and they'll tell you stories that you don't want to hear, they'll scare you to death, you know, and then when they get on to middle school, Grades 7, 8 and 9, they get introduced to some of this other stuff, you know, maybe it's this pill or that pill and they don't think much of it but it's about knowing that this is going to happen, that this is real, it does exist, it's going to happen to you, and knowing what not to do or, I should say, what to do by staying away from it and the outcomes, what are the outcomes?

This is what will happen to you, not can happen to you, but this is real. This is what will happen to you if you get involved in this. This destroys lives. This destroys families. We see these kids taking their own lives – what a sin - what a real shame that is. The stress that must be on families and parents. The circumstance that was talked about last week, seeing that in the media, that's just absolutely traumatic in and of itself, for people to come to terms with that in that community, not just those families, but people who are going to that meeting, I can just picture it now, being there in a full house, people who have never ever experienced such a loss or know that this is a real incident in life, and all of a sudden here are pictures of five or six, whatever it was, on these chairs of these young people who have taken their lives because of drugs and there not being an intervention or not enough assistance out there to help them.

Now, I agree that, you know, if there is an issue and a kid comes up and he says, or anybody for that matter, it doesn't just have to be a kid or a young person. If somebody has a problem and they admit it, you know, and they need help, there needs to be something in place. I will admit and agree that there absolutely needs to be some resource in place where you're not waiting two, three, four months, six months, whatever it might be. That doesn't necessarily mean going to a clinic every day in my mind. We have all these wonderful phone numbers, now we've got 811, 211 and 911, maybe there's somewhere that you call and you can talk to somebody, you know, who counsels you on the phone, I don't know, but we have to start reaching out and making it available and saying, you know, will it change the decision that some young person might make when it comes to the rest of their life. Maybe it will and maybe it won't, but we have to have something and that's a simple thing, yes, you know, it costs, everything costs, but what is that one life worth, what are those five or six young lives worth that we've lost? There is no price tag on that and we all know that. We're all smart enough to know better.

We all, I'm sure, would agree that this is an important topic and that it has to be resolved. How do you resolve it is the question? Well, there's education, there are support systems in place that must be there if someone's having a problem, to pick up the phone and say, look, I'm having this problem, I admit I am a drug addict and I need some resource, where can I go?

Mr. Speaker, my time is up, is it?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. PORTER: Thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank first of all the honourable member for Kings West for bringing this important issue to the Legislature this afternoon and I'm happy, partly because of the work that I've done in the past, to have the

opportunity to respond on behalf of Minister MacDonald and on the record of actions and services that our government has been providing.

I know that there's nothing, I think we all in this House know that there's nothing more important to Nova Scotia families than the health and safety of their loved ones and when a family member or friend is taken from us prematurely, it's heartbreaking and we want answers. I know, myself, along with Minister MacDonald and all my colleagues here today, that we're concerned about this complex and emotional issue but I do want to say that while it's an emotional issue, it is complex and it requires thoughtfulness and distancing ourselves from the anxiety that can confuse things, I want to reassure members that on this side of the House we've heard the concerns of families in the Valley and government is taking action to determine the facts so we better understand the issues and the solutions.

Last week Minister MacDonald asked Dr. Richard Gould, the Medical Officer of Health for the Annapolis Valley, to immediately assist the medical examiner and law enforcement as they continue.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member, when you're speaking about a member of the Legislature, it's either the Minister for or the member of, or the Minister of. In this case you said Minister MacDonald, it should be the Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. MORTON: My apologies.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, most certainly, but continue, sir.

MR. MORTON: Last week the Minister of Health and Wellness asked Dr. Richard Gould, Medical Officer of Health for the Annapolis Valley, to immediately assist the medical examiner and law enforcement as they continue their investigation into these deaths. By May 9th Dr. Gould will report back to the minister with his preliminary findings, so that she can take decisions on the next steps. This response has been part of a larger, ongoing effort by all levels of government to deal with illegal drug use.

In early 2010, as members of this House have heard before, the Kentville Chief of Police sought assistance from government in addressing prescription drug-related deaths in his community. On February 10, 2010, the Minister of Health and Wellness responded on behalf of ministers who are working to address the problems of illegal drug use and brought together a group that can offer more insight into the challenges of dealing with this complex issue.

Advice has been asked of a representative from the College of Pharmacists and from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, The Drug Monitoring Program and from the addictions community. Their recommendations are due in June.

The Department of Health and Wellness has also been working very closely with the prescription monitoring program as they collaborate with law enforcement and licensing bodies to monitor the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. Nova Scotia's prescription monitoring program is considered a leader in prescription drug monitoring and is known as one of the most thorough programs in the country.

I urge Nova Scotians to contact the program or to contact law enforcement if they have concerns about the availability of prescription drugs for illegal use. Certainly I hope that no one would avoid making either one of those contacts.

Senior staff in the Department of Health and Wellness is also leading an Opiate Dependency Committee. This group is working to promote and improve access to quality opiate treatment through a coordinated, integrated, evidence-based continuum of services for opiate-dependent individuals. This group has recently made a recommendation to the College of Physicians and Surgeons to adopt Ontario's clinical practice guidelines for methadone use. These guidelines will assist the college in recruiting and training specialized physicians needed to offer these services in the Valley and, of course, across the province. This is a positive step in the right direction to ensure that we have the resources available to offer treatment when necessary.

Drug addiction and drug abuse are problems no one person can solve. Let me remind members of this House that there are a variety of services currently available in the Valley with little or no wait, including detox. As of this morning, for example, the detox unit in Middleton had three patients, with two beds pending and one bed available. There is also a full range of services and professional staff available through an in-patient treatment program, as well as counselling for families, groups and individuals and programs for adolescents.

I do want to say that of those programs that are available, or detoxification has been mentioned, there are services available for families and individuals who are decentralized and offered throughout the Annapolis Valley, in communities that include Annapolis Royal, Middleton, Kentville, Berwick, Wolfville, just to name some of those locations. Adolescent workers are located at every junior and senior high school in Kings and Annapolis Counties.

The member for Hants West also mentioned in his remarks about how important families are in this regard and certainly one aspect of the work being done through Annapolis Valley Health is to provide prevention and health promotion services and to also help build a healthier community. So family members and interested citizens are always welcome to participate in that work and certainly in all of those decentralized services that I have mentioned, family members who might be concerned about their loved one's use of

drugs, of any kind of prescription or not, are welcome to get involved in treatment planning.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that involving families and services in that way is a highly effective way to work and certainly families would be well advised to take advantage of that.

There is also in the Annapolis Valley, as well as here in metro, some residential treatment programming. One of the programs that exists in the Annapolis Valley is a 21-day program called Making Changes. It is evidence-based and currently, as we speak, has vacancies for its next beginning time in June.

I understand that New Brunswick has a long-term residential treatment program for men. This is a model we will explore as part of the minister's working group and we'll make a decision regarding that that's best for the citizens of Nova Scotia. I do want to remind members of this House that there is no panacea. Our neighbours to the North do have a system of addiction treatment programs. I worked in that province for 19 years, I'm a social worker by training and I've worked closely with that service. I can tell you that while those programs exist in the way they do, the problem of addiction is complex and not everybody makes the kind of progress that their families, or they themselves, would hope.

We need not to be complacent about these things. We need evidence-based services. There are good services available in the Valley and I would like to just take this opportunity to thank the doctors, the nurses, the counsellors and the therapists who work hard every day to combat this complex problem. Government is working hard to determine if more services or different services are needed and the work of the minister's working group, the opening of the dependency committee and Dr. Gould will help inform those decisions.

Those living with drug addiction and their families know that this is a disease with no easy solution. It's a problem that requires support from many levels of government, health care professionals, law enforcement and family members working together. It's certainly a situation that requires the calm thinking of many people and of community members and the use of evidence.

I'd just like to close - Mr. Speaker, am I done?

MR. SPEAKER: No, you have one minute and 28 seconds.

MR. MORTON: Thank you. I'd just like to finally close by thanking those citizens in the Annapolis Valley community who have been drawing attention to what is, in fact, the devastating effects of drug abuse and to assure them that we're working at a provincial

level to better combat this complex set of problems that face not only those of us who live in the Annapolis Valley but every Nova Scotia community.

I know from long experience that addictions and the abuse of drugs choke the lives of individuals and families. Far too often families suffer these experiences in silence, either from shame as the member for Kings West noted, or from not knowing where to turn. I know this too from working closely for more than 30 years with families struggling with addiction. By breaking the silence and by working together we can reduce the harms related to the abuse of alcohol, other drugs and gambling.

In the meantime, it's my sincere hope that citizens will remember that DHAs, not only in the Annapolis Valley but everywhere in the province, have access to a whole range of services that they can get by making a phone call. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to thank all the honourable members tonight for an excellent debate on a very difficult topic.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and that the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Supply unto Her Majesty.

[6:28 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Supply with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

[8:56 p.m. CWH on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Gordon Gosse, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met, has made considerable progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 27.

Bill No. 27 - Financial Measures (2011) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 27, the Financial Measures (2011) Act, be now read a second time.

On April 5th I introduced the second budget in a four-year plan to get Nova Scotia's finances back to balance. That plan is on track and it is working. The stronger the province's finances, the stronger is our ability to deliver important services like health care, education, social services and roads. This year during my pre-budget tour the message I heard clearly was the plan is a good one, stick to it; so that is exactly what we will do and that is what we are doing in this Financial Measures (2011) Bill.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking a prudent, thoughtful and reasonable approach to get Nova Scotia back to balance. I am pleased to say that we are restoring some sense to the province's books. As we enter the new fiscal year, our government will continue to show sustained discipline on departmental spending but, at the same time, we will invest in areas that are critical to moving this province forward. As members will know, a Financial Measures Bill is introduced every year to implement any legislative changes made necessary by the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak in the Assembly today about amendments to 14 pieces of legislation, as outlined in this bill. The amendments in Bill No. 27 are alphabetical by Statute, but it makes a little more sense to group them by subject. The first group of amendments deal with user fees. Our government implemented an increase in most user fees of 2 per cent as of April 1st. These fee increases reflect the cumulative rate of inflation over the past two years, one positive and one negative, and are necessary to maintain the current level of services that Nova Scotians have come to depend on, without adding to the general tax base.

Mr. Speaker, some fees are in Statute so those changes require legislation, which is why those changes are in this Financial Measures (2011) Bill. Bill No. 27 includes amendments of this type to the following Acts: Companies Act, Corporations Registration Act, Motor Vehicle Act, Payment into Court Act, Personal Property Security Act, Probate Act, Summary Proceedings Act, and Trust and Loan Companies Act. This increase applies to most fees for services, licensing and regulatory functions by departments.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say there will be no increase in fees related to ambulance services, electrical charges in senior and family public housing, and laundry fees in senior public housing. In addition, fees under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act will not go up.

Mr. Speaker, the second group of amendments concern provincial-municipal funding arrangements: amendments to the Corrections Act, Education Act, and Housing Act are associated with changes to the municipal memorandum of understanding funding arrangement. The previous government made expensive, long-term commitments to assume certain municipal expenditures. The funding agreement between the province and municipality signed in 2007 had the province assume the responsibility for costs associated with corrections services and housing that had previously been the responsibility of municipalities. It also limited increases in municipal contributions to education, to increases in the consumer price index.

To date, this MOU funding arrangement has resulted in approximately \$21.5 million in additional costs borne by the province. And it is estimated that the total cost to the province over the seven-year term of the MOU could be upwards of \$100 million. On March 22nd of this year, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations provided the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities with 12 months' notice that the province is not in a position to assume any more uploads from the municipalities.

As a result of this 12-month notice period, these changes will not impact municipalities in the upcoming fiscal year, 2011-12. Municipalities will continue to receive benefits from the MOU funding arrangement in 2011-12 as if no change had been made.

Nova Scotia is facing tough challenges as we work to live within our means but we are not going to download the problem to municipalities. Any statement to the contrary, whether from the Opposition or otherwise, is false. The province is not adding a nickel to municipal costs. Any statement to the contrary, whether from the Opposition or otherwise, is false.

What we're saying to the municipalities is that if they currently bear those costs, they'll have to bear them a little while longer. The province cannot be expected to take on tens of millions of dollars of additional costs in times of financial hardships. These costs are already built into the municipal tax base. Therefore, any statement that this amendment of the MOU funding arrangement will result in an increase in property taxes or layoffs or service cuts is false.

If those things happen, it will be solely and completely because of decisions made by municipal councils. Amending this agreement to maintain an ongoing contribution from municipalities for education, corrections and housing is both necessary and fair, and recognizes the financial circumstances in which we currently find ourselves.

The third group of amendments in the Financial Measures (2011) Bill concerns a variety of amendments to the Income Tax Act. Clause 7 of the bill maintains Nova Scotia's dividend tax credit rate of 8.85 per cent. This change is necessary as a result of the corporate general rate decreases implemented by the federal government and changes to the federal dividend gross-up rates. To put it very simply, if we did not make this change,

the dividend tax credit available to Nova Scotians would go down and our choice is to maintain it at the current level and ensure that Nova Scotians continue to get the same level of tax credits.

Clause 8 provides a low-income tax deduction for a widowed person if their spouse or common-law spouse died during the taxation year. This is a recommendation from the Canada Revenue Agency and it makes sense to us. Clauses 7 and 8 are simply the product of an ongoing dialogue with the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure the most appropriate alignment of tax laws and administration. There are similar technical amendments in every Financial Measures Act.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 9 of the bill further reduces the provincial tax impact on small businesses by changing the small business corporate income tax rate from 4.5 per cent to 4 per cent effective January 1, 2012. Last year the rate dropped from 5 per cent to 4.5 per cent. This represents a reduction of \$500,000 in the last fiscal year, increasing to \$5.9 million in the current fiscal year. With this further reduction of the small business tax rate, the total tax reduction for small businesses will total \$10.8 million in 2012-13. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in the same group of amendments, Clause 10 removes the total production cost cap on the film industry tax credit for film productions that commenced after November 30, 2010. This allows producers to claim between 50 per cent and 65 per cent of eligible Nova Scotia labour without any cap, thereby encouraging them to hire locally. Enhancing this tax credit reaffirms this government's commitment to the film industry in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the next group of amendments concerns the Motor Carrier Act. Part VII of the bill supports the transfer of the Motor Carrier Inspection Division from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to the Vehicle Compliance Division of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The Motor Carrier Division of the Utility and Review Board provides an important service by administering the licence and safety inspection program for public passenger vehicles, including buses. The transfer is a good fit because Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's division does similar inspections for commercial vehicles. It simply makes more sense for this function to be in an operational department rather than being housed within the regulatory tribunal. The transfer of this division will result in the transfer of 17 staff members with no change in their terms of employment.

Mr. Speaker, the next group of amendments in this year's Financial Measures Bill concern tobacco enforcement. Clause 21 to Clause 25 will implement a new high-tech tobacco stamp to replace the tear tape currently on packages. This is a Canada Revenue Agency recommendation and it's being rolled out across the country. The current tear tape is easily simulated and it is difficult for enforcement officers to validate its authenticity. The new stamps contain security pictures similar to those found on Canadian currency such

as the \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills. We're told this will allow enforcement agencies to more easily detect and seize counterfeit tobacco products.

Clause 26 and Clause 27 deal with an issue that was raised by the Department of Justice. It has to do with penalties for the owner of a vehicle involved in tobacco smuggling. We're told that the existing language could lead to situations that unfairly impact innocent third parties so we're changing a "shall" to a "may" to make sure the penalties fall on the people intended.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 27 includes a section on effective dates and I would remind the House that any section not specifically mentioned here comes into force on Royal Assent. With that, I move second reading of Bill No. 27, the Financial Measures (2011) Act, part of our government's plan to restore some sense to the province's finances and thereby making it possible to deliver important public services that Nova Scotians need within an envelope that Nova Scotians feel they can afford. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place tonight and make some comments around Bill No. 27, the Financial Measures (2011) Act. I think when we take a look at this bill, there are three key messages that I will comment on. The bill makes the province's downloading of responsibility official. The bill does not address bracket creep as it does not index tax brackets to keep pace with inflation and we know that in the past three months alone inflation is steamrolling, not just across our province but across the country, as gasoline prices, food prices in particular are now averaging about 18.2 per cent as determined by Statistics Canada.

Because this bill puts the NDP budget into operation, because the bill and the budget are unfair for Nova Scotians and because the bill and the budget mean that Nova Scotians are going to pay more every day, we do not support this bill.

This bill provides the legislative and regulatory authority for measures in the provincial budget and the bill contains amendments to 14 pieces of legislation. A few of them include lowering the Small Business Tax by half of a percentage point; this doesn't take effect until January 2012. We've been asking for a more aggressive approach to dealing with the Small Business Tax knowing that small business is one of the vehicles in the economy that reinvests that money in a whole number of ways, whether it's in an additional part-time or full-time employee, whether it's new equipment, whether it's improvement to the building, to their operations. So we would have liked to have seen a more aggressive approach.

The bill implements a new stamp on cigarette packages designed to detect counterfeit tobacco and this is a move recommended by the federal government and looks to be taking place right across the country. It transfers the Motor Carrier Inspection Division from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, to the Department of

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, which indeed is a positive approach to this. It also makes changes to the Corrections Act, Education Act and Housing Act which the NDP, despite protestations, will, in effect, download the province-wide responsibilities to the municipalities.

It does not make any changes to income tax. Tax brackets will not be indexed to inflation which means that the NDP Government will continue to take a larger and larger cut from Nova Scotians' earnings. As the minister talks about an increase in income tax revenue, let's make no mistake about it - it is more from the same group of taxpayers that we've had for the last several years. Our employment numbers have not dramatically changed whatsoever but yet we garner more tax revenue because of the tax brackets and no indexing to inflation.

Bracket creep is becoming understood by more and more Nova Scotians. It's sometimes a little bit on the difficult side to explain but as people see that their wages increase, whether it be 1 per cent, 2 per cent or whatever, is actually disappearing because of no indexing to tax brackets. Inflation is eating that increase away. This was a response to the Liberal and NDP demands for a more fair, responsible taxation agreement when the Progressive Conservatives came forward with their proposal to start, in 2011, to introduce a way of dealing with the impact of inflation on tax brackets.

Specifically the current Minister of Finance, while he was in Opposition, was very vocal on the subject. On April 28, 2005 he stated:

“ . . . let's make no mistake about it, this budget includes an increase in income tax, but it does it indirectly not directly . . . while inflation marches along, the tax brackets do not. Simply by virtue of inflation, more people move into a higher tax bracket. That is as much of a tax grab as if the Minister of Finance reached into your pocket or into your wallet or into your purse and took out the money. Let's make no mistake about it, this is a tax increase measure, the government's continuing refusal or inability to index tax brackets.

That's from Hansard, April 28, 2005. I think the quote, if I remember - since I was in the House at that time - is actually a little bit longer, a little bit more detailed, but that's the essential point that the now-Minister of Finance in Opposition actually said.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has compiled some data and, again, I'm sure the Minister of Finance is familiar with that background dealing with bracket creep. In 2000, a \$40,000 income earner paid \$3,530 in provincial income taxes. By 2010 the same earner, whose salary is now \$50,511, pays \$4,749 in provincial income tax. Thanks to bracket creep, the earner's provincial income taxes have increased \$1,219 even though his or her real income essentially stayed the same.

Because Nova Scotia is one of only three provinces that does not index income tax rates, a person actually is able to afford less in 2010 than they were in the year 2000. In fact, the Nova Scotian who was earning \$40,000 in 2000 is paying an extra \$600 this year over and above what they should have been paying had the income tax rates been indexed to reflect inflation. As we know, this is simply not fair and to quote the former Finance Critic again, that is as much of a tax grab as if the Minister of Finance reached into your pocket or into your wallet or into your purse and took out the money.

The Nova Scotia Government promised in the 2006-07 budget that starting in 2011 personal tax brackets will be indexed annually at prescribed rates starting at 2 per cent. This is yet another broken promise in a long line of broken promises that Nova Scotians have had to endure from this NDP Government since they grabbed power.

Municipal downloading - in 2007, the province signed a memorandum of understanding with UNSM and this was a two-way agreement, which the NDP has now seen fit to break, but they are only breaking their commitments. Additionally, they did not consult with the municipalities. I met with two of the municipalities in Nova Scotia and that was the salient message they provided, no consultation. We're talking about individual municipal units. They gave no more notice about this change than what the minimum requirement was, and even with this they only gave the UNSM a few hours notice that they would be breaking their part of the deal before the minister gave a news conference. This is not how you build trust, in fact, trust is lost.

Let us be clear, the NDP has lost the trust of municipalities and of Nova Scotians. We saw one of the very first times that municipal leaders across Nova Scotia marched on Province House to put their stamp of disapproval on what is taking place. This is yet another broken promise by the Dexter NDP. The Minister of Finance plans to legislate this broken promise with this bill. The Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Minister of Finance have been trying to present this in other ways, but Nova Scotians understand exactly what this is. The province is downloading, pure and simple, and we're going to see tax increases this year and again next year and probably the following year.

Information from all corners of the province is coming in and it all points to higher costs for municipalities, cuts to programs, which municipalities have planned for and higher property taxes for all Nova Scotians. HRM had a staff package presented to council on March 29, 2010. Under the new policy HRM was looking at a shortfall of \$1.2 million in the first year, \$9.6 million in the second, \$14.4 million in the third and \$19.5 million in the fourth year. On Page 3 of that report, the provincial policy change will increase future mandatory area rates - yet another increase forced on Nova Scotians and yet another way that Nova Scotians will find it harder to get by.

One of the parts of the agreement was the introduction of the municipal Auditor General. HRM already has one, but the others across the province do not. When asked about the future of this part of the agreement by the press, Billy Joe MacLean said he was

unsure that this was still on the table, he'd have to check with the municipalities, but since the province has taken away funding in other areas, maybe they would consider funding an Auditor General. Yet the Finance Minister and the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations have made it clear - the NDP can back away from any promise they make but they fully expect the municipalities to pick up the slack.

When it comes to user fees, the NDP waited until late on Friday afternoon before the Legislature resumed to hike 1,400 fees - these are fees which Nova Scotians encounter on a daily basis. Not one minister on the government side of the House can tell you how much it costs to deliver these services. We tried on several occasions and we haven't been able to get information to that effect; we asked repeatedly and we have not had an answer to date. Fees are supposed to be on a cost-recovery basis, anything more is a tax on Nova Scotians, and this government has no idea how much these fees cost.

Only two years ago the Premier said to Nova Scotians: "They call them user fees, but they're taxes, that's what they are, and many of them, in fact, have been necessarily put in as taxation measures because although they continue to be called user fees, by law they're actually taxes." That's from Hansard, May 4, 2009.

Government has made it more expensive to access the government, yet they don't have the information needed in order to debate the issue properly - yet again another issue in which the NDP would rather dodge the tough questions. Another tax hike for Nova Scotians and another promise broken.

In summary, this is a government which does not trust Nova Scotians, and Nova Scotians have quickly lost trust in this government. Nova Scotia needs a fair and competitive system of taxation; this bill does not address that. In fact, this bill continues to allow the Minister of Finance to reach into the pockets of Nova Scotians and take out more and more money every year. The bill continues the NDP's track record of legislating broken promises - higher taxes, higher user fees.

Because this bill puts the NDP budget into operation, because the bill and the budget are unfair to Nova Scotians, because the bill and the budget mean that Nova Scotians are going to pay more every day, we do not support this bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment of debate on Bill No. 27. Would all those in favour please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I will hand over to the Acting Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, are you talking about the speech I just gave or are you talking about business tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm talking about business for tomorrow, please.

MR. GLAVINE: Well, I'll have to get on to our House Leader about not leaving me that information. Anyway, tomorrow, Opposition Day, we'll have Bill No. 10 and Resolution No. 523. The hours of the House tomorrow are 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

I move that the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise, to meet tomorrow from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 9:25 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 803**

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Environment)

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

Whereas Friday, April 22nd was Earth Day, a date celebrated for over 40 years; and

Whereas Earth Day is a time to remind ourselves that our Earth is a precious resource and we all have a duty to protect it; and

Whereas Earth Day is a good time to celebrate what we have achieved in protecting our environment, while recognizing that there is still much more to do;

Therefore be it resolved that Nova Scotians recognized Earth Day last Friday, April 22nd, and pledged to do our part to help protect the environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 804

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Steve Martin, owner and operator of Steve's Barber Shop, has been providing traditional barber services for residents of Cumberland County for more than three decades; and

Whereas Mr. Martin represents Nova Scotia's innovative and resilient entrepreneurs who make important contributions to our province's economy and will continue to play an essential role as Nova Scotia recovers from the recent economic downturn; and

Whereas Mr. Martin is a member of the Black Business Initiative, which is a province-wide business development program committed to fostering growth of businesses owned by members of Nova Scotia's Black community and places priority on educating Black business owners in the operation of their business – from marketing to budgeting and securing funding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Steve Martin in the Year of the Entrepreneur for his 24 years of business ownership and acknowledge the commitment of the Black Business Initiative in helping people from our Black communities to pursue their business visions.

RESOLUTION NO. 805

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas 2011 marks the 15th Anniversary for BMC Seafoods Limited located in Meteghan; and

Whereas throughout the years Cedric Robicheau and Lucien Paul Robichaud, along with their staff, have provided outstanding service to their customers; and

Whereas BMC Seafoods Limited has made a significant contribution to the economy of Clare;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cedric Robicheau and Lucien Paul Robichaud and their staff for the exemplary service they provide to their customers and wish them continued success in future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 806

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas fire department ladies' auxiliaries play such a fundamental role in the operation of volunteer fire departments across Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Rilla Barr of Danvers, recently retired president of the Southville Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, has been a volunteer for 32 years; and

Whereas the Southville Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary work diligently year round to raise funds and support operations of the Southville Volunteer Fire Department;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Rilla Barr for her hard work and outstanding commitment to the Southville Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary for the past 32 years.

RESOLUTION NO. 807

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas Sarah Robichaud of Weymouth competed at the 2011 Canada Winter Games representing Nova Scotia on the Women's Hockey Team;

Whereas Sarah Robichaud was one of Team Nova Scotia's 220 athletes competing in the Winter Games in Halifax; and

Whereas the competition to make the team was very strong with several rounds of cuts before the top 20 players were chosen;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sarah Robichaud and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 808

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas Nicole Theriault of Meteghan River competed in archery at the 2011 Canada Winter Games in Halifax; and

Whereas Nicole Theriault was one of Team Nova Scotia's 220 athletes competing in the Winter Games; and

Whereas Nicole Theriault placed 6th overall in the women's archery individual compound event and also placed 8th in the archery compound team mixed event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nicole Theriault and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 809

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Nelson Pellerin has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for the past 25 years; and

Whereas Nelson has volunteered at St. Ignatius Church, where he has been a member for 43 years, as an alter server Wednesday morning and funeral masses, and a tireless worker on the Maintenance Committee; and

Whereas Nelson has also volunteered for the MS Society of Canada's Carnation Campaign;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nelson for his commitment to the Knights of Columbus, St. Ignatius Church and the MS Society of Canada.

RESOLUTION NO. 810

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Debbie Townsend has been a dedicated member of her church and a valued volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society; and

Whereas Debbie has served as a Sunday School superintendent and teacher, a warden council member and the Bible Camp coordinator; and

Whereas Debbie has canvassed for the Canadian Cancer Society since 1989, served as the CCS Hammonds Plains Unit Service to Patients Committee Chair, and has been a patients' rights advocate;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Debbie Townsend for the commitment she has shown to her church and the Canadian Cancer Society, and wish her well in her future volunteer endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 811

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas David Jackson has used his love of nature and biking to benefit the community of Bedford; and

Whereas David, a member of the Sackville Rivers Association, regularly participates in Sackville River cleanups, maintains Sackville River community signs in Fish Hatchery Park and at Bedford Place Mall and painted the gazebo in Fish Hatchery Park; and

Whereas David carried out a survey on bike usage in Bedford for HRM, has petitioned HRM to make improvements in bike transportation and is organizing the 1st Annual Bike Rodeo for Range Park, scheduled to take place in June;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate David for using his personal interests in nature and bicycling to make improvements to our community that all of us can enjoy.

RESOLUTION NO. 812

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Carmel Carrigan has been a devoted volunteer and fundraiser for countless organizations in our community; and

Whereas Carmel has worked with the Fort Sackville Foundation since it opened the Scott Manor House to the public in 1990, including operating the summer tea room and organizing the first antique appraisal weekend at Scott Manor House; and

Whereas Carmel has been the coordinator of the Bedford Days Community Tea for 10 years, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society for 10 years, a volunteer at Hope Cottage and has assisted in fundraising efforts with the Victorian Order of Nurses, Beacon House and the Sisters of Charity;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Carmel Carrigan for her contributions to our community and wish her continued success with her volunteer and fundraising initiatives.

RESOLUTION NO. 813

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Brent Newsome has been an active leader with Scouts Canada in Bedford over the last four years; and

Whereas Brent has served as the Group Registrar, Cub Scout Leader, Bedford United Church Sponsor Representative and Group Committee member for the 1st Bedford Scouts; and

Whereas Brent's accomplishments with Scouts Canada include coordinating the first all-Section Camp for parents at Camp Lone Cloud in October 2010 with over 100 parents and youth in attendance;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brent for the devotion he has shown to Scouts Canada and wish him luck as he continues to lead in that organization.

RESOLUTION NO. 814

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Anna Pellerin has been an active member of the Seniors Outreach Ministry at St. Ignatius Church; and

Whereas Anna helps to prepare baskets for shut-ins and helps to organize the monthly senior luncheons at St. Ignatius Church; and

Whereas Anna uses her talent as a knitter, donating her hats and mitts for sale at the Canadian Cancer Society's Christmas gift-wrapping booths each year and knitting finger puppets for the IWK;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly thank Anna Pellerin for her dedication to St. Ignatius Church and the community of Bedford.

RESOLUTION NO. 815

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Adam Perritt has served on the Board of Directors for the Bedford-Sackville Meals on Wheels for the past three years; and

Whereas in that position, Adam has secured funding grants and brought together other members of the community to help with the annual fundraising raffle at Sunnyside Mall where Adam has personally excelled at individual ticket sales; and

Whereas Adam helps out at the Sackville Rivers Association's annual cleanup, volunteers with Junior Achievement, Big Brothers Big Sisters and in the Ride for the Cure for Juvenile Diabetes;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adam Perritt on the many volunteer and varied fundraising contributions he has made and wish him well in his future community endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 816

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Margaret Whitehouse has been a valuable volunteer with the Girl Guides of Canada, Bedford District, for the last 13 years; and

Whereas Margaret, who began as a Spark Guider and went on to serve as the Deputy District Commissioner, was recognized with the Bronze Merit Award in 2010; and

Whereas Margaret has also volunteered at Basinview School and canvassed for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Margaret Whitehouse for her dedication to the Girl Guides of Canada and her contributions to Basinview School, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society.

RESOLUTION NO. 817

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Florence Zinck has been a dedicated parishioner of St. Ignatius parish and a valuable volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society and MS Society; and

Whereas Florence has dedicated 34 years of service to St. Ignatius Church as a member of the choir and parish council, and as a participant in the liturgical celebrations of first communion and confirmation; and

Whereas Florence has canvassed, sold daffodils and wrapped Christmas presents in support of the Canadian Cancer Society and fundraised for the MS Society;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Florence Zinck for the commitment she has shown to St. Ignatius Church, the Canadian Cancer Society and the MS Society, and wish her well in future community endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 818

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Jacob Wilson has been an active volunteer and a participant in many extracurricular activities at school and in his community; and

Whereas Jacob is involved in the St. Ignatius Youth Group and Choir, a regular reader at Sunday mass, and a youth Confirmation teacher, and has also volunteered as a reporter with the Charles P. Allen High School newspaper and at Beacon House; and

Whereas Jacob is an annual participant in the passion play at St. Ignatius, a member of the CPA Glee Club and the Bedford Players and took part in the production of *Guys and Dolls* at Neptune last summer;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jacob Wilson on his volunteer and extracurricular activities, and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 819

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Steve Majury has been a volunteer with the Bedford Sackville Minor Football Association for the last five years and has been integral to that organization's success; and

Whereas under Steve's coaching, the Bedford Sackville Saints Football Team won the Nova Scotia Provincial Championship and the Maritime Championship; and

Whereas Steve, who also coaches lacrosse and baseball, was recognized as the 2010 Nova Scotia Minor Football Coach of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Steve Majury for his success as a coach and mentor to youth in Bedford, and wish him well in his future volunteer endeavours.