



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 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. Before I start the daily routine today I would like to read something on behalf of Mr. Luc Trembley who was a Commissionaire here at the House of Assembly, who passed away on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Luc was posted here at Province House on April 23, 2006, and went on sick leave on May 10<sup>th</sup> of this past year. Luc passed away and his funeral is today, so I would ask honourable members to stand and give a moment of silence in memory of Luc and condolences to his family at this time. Thank you.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: We will begin the daily routine. Yesterday after Question Period the honourable member for Kings West rose on a point of privilege, to the effect that in responding to a question, the Premier had said something with respect to the member having not read a letter from government, when the member had actually said that the government did not respond in a significant way.



**SPEAKER'S RULING:** Member says he was misquoted. (Pt. of privilege by Mr. L. Glavine [Hansard p. 1205, 04/26/11]) Not a breach of privilege, but a disagreement between members over facts.

Having now reviewed the authorities respecting privilege, I am confident that the member's point does not reveal a breach of privilege but is a disagreement between honourable members over facts. Thank you.

Also, I must say that the topic for late debate has been chosen and submitted by the member for Lunenburg. It reads:

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the work being done in the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to advance arts, culture, multiculturalism, and community development in Nova Scotia.

#### **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 Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an introduction if that's possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. LANDRY: I am pleased today to rise to introduce a group of people who worked for years to develop a correctional display that was recently unveiled at the Black Cultural Centre. The display was created to recognize African Nova Scotians who worked in the field of corrections and to encourage others to pursue this important profession.

Without further ado, I would like to introduce - and I'm not sure all the individuals that I'm going to say are here, but I will say the names that are in front of me: Correctional Officer Jason Wilson; Probation Officer Scott Borden; Probation Officer Kyle Patterson; Retired Correctional Officer Lamont Miller; Reverend Alfreda Smith and Roland Simmonds - I don't see them there; and last, but not least, Elle Sargeant and Diana MacKinnon. We would like to give them a nice hand. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 820**

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

Whereas earlier this month the Black Cultural Centre and the Department of Justice unveiled a display recognizing the contributions African Nova Scotians have made to the field of corrections; and

Whereas this important display was created to recognize and promote the value of an equitable and diverse workforce; and

Whereas this display sends a positive message to our youth, and especially our African Nova Scotian youth, that public service in the field of corrections is a worthwhile and fulfilling career path;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank the Black Cultural Centre for partnering with Correctional Services to see the display, recognizing the contributions African Nova Scotians have made to the field of corrections become a reality, and recognize the positive impact it will have in helping recruit more African Nova Scotians to this important profession.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, before I do a resolution on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, I was wondering if I may make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. JENNEX: It's my pleasure today to stand here to welcome the Grade 9 class of Bicentennial Junior High. Bicentennial Junior High is in the Dartmouth South-Portland Valley MLA's constituency. I know that, I was watching them earlier, they've been having a tour of this wonderful, historic building and I also know that this class has been very much involved in learning about how our Legislature works because they've done a model Legislature in their classroom.

Mr. Speaker, accompanying this class today are Kirsten Mitchell, Emily MacDougall and Nancy Bowes. I just would like to say that it's wonderful to have you here today, and I am one of the students who also went through Bicentennial Junior High. So it's an added pleasure for me to do this on behalf of your MLA - welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 821**

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Community College plays an important role in providing people with the right skills for good jobs; and

Whereas following the retirement of Dr. Joan McArthur-Blair as president, the college conducted a thorough cross-country search for her replacement; and

Whereas Don Bureaux, a highly qualified candidate with over 20 years' experience with adult learners and teaching, has been appointed by the NSCC Board of Governors as the new president of the college;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Don Bureaux on his new position, and wish him and the college continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 822**

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

Whereas the IWK Health Centre's Youth Advisory Council, a group of youth aged 13 to 19 who are, or were, patients at the IWK, along with their families and friends, help staff see the hospital through the eyes of the patient and their family; and

Whereas the Youth Advisory Council developed the IWK Cup, a first-of-its-kind how-to video and handbook, designed to teach health care professionals, youth, and families about engaging youth in health care; and

Whereas this innovative guide provides a practical, applicable and humorous approach to working with youth patients and improving the quality, safety, and experience of care;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the IWK Health Centre's Youth Advisory Council for their dedication to help improve youth patient care.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

**RESOLUTION NO. 823**

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

Whereas the Italian-Canadian community of Nova Scotia, many thousands strong, will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the reunification of Italy during Italian Heritage Month this coming June; and

Whereas Italian-Canadians celebrate and share their language, culture, food, and wine with other Nova Scotians through courses at the School of Italian Language and Culture and through meals, music, and celebrations at the Italian Canadian Cultural Association of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Italians came here to build a better future for themselves and stayed to build a better Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that as the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the reunification of Italy is celebrated, members of the House of Assembly thank the Italian-Canadian community of Nova Scotia for their contributions to our province and to our country.

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. 824**

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

Whereas the West African nation of Sierra Leone will celebrate 50 years of independence on April 27<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has historic ties to Sierra Leone dating back to 1792 when more than 1,000 Black Loyalists set sail from Halifax to establish the community of Freetown, which still stands as Sierra Leone's capital and largest city; and

Whereas Nova Scotia's Sierra Leonean community will join with their compatriots in celebrating this historical occasion in the coming weeks;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the people of Sierra Leone on their golden jubilee, and wish them peace and prosperity in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 41 - Entitled an Act to Strengthen Municipal Restrictions on Dangerous and Unightly Premises. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

**Bill No. 42 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, and Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government 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 Minister of Justice.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 825**

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

Whereas the New Glasgow Community Studio Residency Program has started a unique grassroots partnership designed to help the newly graduated artists; and

Whereas the program will provide studio space at the New Glasgow Library, and artists of the program will work with students and the general public on projects, host workshops and lectures; and

Whereas the partnership will work towards fostering a creative economy, while at the same time helping these emerging artists exhibit their work, gain some financial ground and experience in the business world, all while helping creatively in our county residents;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate New Glasgow on its unique partnership with the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and wish them success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 826**

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

Whereas HMCS Esquimalt acquired the tragic distinction of being the last Canadian warship sunk in World War II when it was torpedoed in the approaches to Halifax Harbour 66 years ago, on April 16, 1945, with the loss of the lives of 44 of its 71 crewmen; and

Whereas the commanding officer of HMCS Esquimalt on that fateful day was Lieutenant Commander Robert C. MacMillan, Distinguished Service Cross and Bar, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Division Charlottetown, whose son and grandson are, respectively, award-winning composer and guitarist Scott MacMillan and filmmaker Ian MacMillan; and

Whereas Scott and Ian MacMillan have collaborated on a documentary entitled *Within Sight of Shore*, which tells the tragic story of HMCS Esquimalt through film and

music, and which was released and screened at the East Coast Music Awards in Charlottetown, P.E.I., on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and on April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly wish to express the ongoing gratitude and sorrow felt by all Nova Scotians for those lost in the sinking of HMCS Esquimalt, and express their appreciation and congratulations to Scott and Ian MacMillan for their successful collaboration on the documentary film *Within Sight of Shore*.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Energy.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 827**

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

Whereas Dave Gunning of Scotsburn, a Pictou County musician and songwriter, was nominated for several awards at the East Coast Music Awards in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in April 2011; and

Whereas Mr. Gunning, who has eight CDs to his credit, won an award at the East Coast Music Awards for Roots Traditional Solo Recording of the Year for his most recent CD which is called *Dave Gunning . . . a tribute to John Allan Cameron*; and

Whereas Mr. Gunning, in addition to his solo recording award, also won the award for Producer of the Year at the East Coast Music Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly congratulate Dave Gunning of Pictou County on Roots Traditional Solo Recording of the Year and Producer of the Year Awards at the East Coast Music Awards and thank him for his music.



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.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I ask that I be permitted an introduction before I begin my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of all members to the gallery opposite where we have a number of distinguished visitors from Cumberland County, starting with the Chief of the Oxford Volunteer Fire Department, Chief Tory Rushton, who is with us today. With Tory are two very special people, Helen Emmerson and Dean Emmerson. I'd like them to rise and I will ask members to acknowledge them and I'll explain why in just a moment. (Applause)

Helen and Dean are very special people. I'm going to focus on Dean for a moment. They don't make them like Dean anymore. Dean and Helen have been married for 45 years; that is noteworthy on its own. Dean worked at the same store in Oxford for 47 years. Today, by way of resolution I want to acknowledge his 50 continuous years of volunteer service to the Oxford Fire Department. (Applause)

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 828**

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

Whereas volunteer firefighters are local heroes who risk their own safety to protect the lives and property of their friends, neighbours and communities; and

Whereas Dean Emmerson is one of those everyday heroes who has volunteered with the Oxford Fire Department for an incredible 50 years; and

Whereas brave and selfless volunteers like Mr. Emmerson are the backbone of Nova Scotia's tight-knit communities and give their time and talents without expectation of reward or recognition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Dean Emmerson for his half century of service to his community and salute his dedication and bravery.

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. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister of Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 829**

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

Whereas the Wolfville Curling Club was organized in the Fall of 1935 and the winter of 1935-36 marked the inaugural year of curling for the Wolfville Curling Club; and

Whereas the Wolfville Curling Club offers curling programs to seniors, women and "Little Rocks" and hosts a variety of tournaments such as Curl for Cancer and the 2011 Atlantic University Curling Championships; and

Whereas the Wolfville Curling Club celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by hosting the 2011 Senior Men's Nova Scotia Curling Championship from February 22 - 27, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Wolfville Curling Club on reaching this milestone in their curling club's history and also congratulate the Wolfville Curling Club on hosting very successful curling events at the curling club in Wolfville.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 830**

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

Whereas on May 1, 2011, Chester Volunteer Fire Department will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of service to the community of Chester; and

Whereas Mr. Murray Mills was the first Chief of the Department, there were 27 charter members, and in the first year they built their hall and purchased their first fire engine only to have it all destroyed by fire in 1959, but from the ashes they rebuilt and became a thriving and vibrant volunteer fire department; and

Whereas since May 1, 1936 there have been 280 members of this dedicated department and in several cases several generations of the same families protecting the community and serving in the department;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Duke Chafe, the current Fire Chief, and the members of his department who so selflessly give of their time and energy to keep our community safe and wish them another 75 years, and more, of service to the community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 831**

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

Whereas in December of last year, the Leadership Class at Prince Andrew High School took on a special fundraising project for Alice Housing; and

Whereas students held a series of fundraisers to help fill the coffers with coins, including a Kraft Dinner lunch, bake sales and athletics tournaments; and

Whereas the coins they collected were laid out on the floor of the auditorium to build a house made of pennies and the funds they raised helped buy Christmas baskets for Alice Housing;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly praise the efforts of the students of the Leadership Class at Prince Andrew High School.

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. 832**

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

Whereas the second annual Haliwards were held on April 2, 2011, in Halifax, to recognize individuals and groups for their extraordinary contributions to the community; and

Whereas Michael J. Burke has spent his adult life working to improve living conditions for the less fortunate, volunteering his time and efforts with the Word on the Street newspaper; Hope Cottage; Saint Patrick's Church; and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, both locally and internationally; and

Whereas Michael J. Burke was among those honoured at this year's Haliwards Ceremony on April 2<sup>nd</sup>;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Michael J. Burke on his Haliward for his commitment to helping the less fortunate and his dedication to social justice.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 833**

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

Whereas Jared Goad, a 17-year-old gymnast residing in Bible Hill, participated in the 2011 Canada Winter Games as part of Team Nova Scotia's gymnastic squad; and

Whereas Jared Goad has only been training in gymnastics for two years after competing for several years in both trampoline and tumbling; and

Whereas Jared Goad scored a personal best with his floor routine and won Nova Scotia's first gold medal of the 2011 Canada Winter Games with that same routine;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Jared Goad for both his outstanding performance at the 2011 Canada Winter Games and also for winning Nova Scotia's first gold medal of the Games.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 834**

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

Whereas in 1866 a cholera epidemic, originating aboard the ship, SS England, arrived in Halifax as it sailed to New York, took the lives of over 200 passengers who were all buried on McNabs Island and which was the event which led to the Lawlors Island's Quarantine Hospital; and

Whereas the Sisters of Charity cared for many of the passengers, as well as all of the orphans on the island, after the Health Officer of Halifax, Dr. John Slayter, succumbed to cholera himself; and

Whereas during the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Friends of McNabs Island celebration in the summer of 2010, the Associates of the Sisters of Charity Halifax Chapter dedicated a bench and plaque on the island in recognition of "Sisters aid to cholera victims and orphans from the boat named SS England on McNabs Island";

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend the current chapter of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax for their celebration of an historic yet sad event on McNabs Island by dedicating a bench and plaque recognizing the care of orphans and victims of cholera in 1866.

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. 835**

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

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

Whereas the Reynolds' Rebels broomball team have enjoyed a successful 2011 broomball season; and

Whereas Reynolds' Rebels played in the provincial broomball tournament, held recently in Windsor, where the men's team took second place, the women's team won their provincial championship and the mixed team also won their provincial championship;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the members of the Reynolds' Rebels on their success at their 2011 provincial championships.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 836**

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

Whereas East River Valley Community Development Association is one of four Nova Scotia communities to receive the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award; and

Whereas the association met the criteria needed to be considered for the nomination, including an ability to build on unique strengths within the community and a high degree of citizen participation in community projects; and

Whereas on April 16, 2011, the East River Valley hosted the Pictou County Rural Development Conference with hundreds of people participating in a trade show and workshops;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the East River Valley Community Development Association for being recognized by the Lieutenant Governor with the Community Spirit Award and recognize the tenacity and commitment which is fostering a stronger sense of community throughout Pictou County's East River Valley.

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. 837**

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

Whereas Arash Marzi, a Grade 12 student from Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School, recently won a grand prize at the regional science fair for his project, "Designing an Intelligent Classifier for Diagnostic Reasoning"; and

Whereas Marzi's award-winning project was the design and development of pattern classification software that employs his self-described strengths of being able to use novel techniques and complex algorithms; and



Whereas this was Arash Marzi's fifth consecutive regional grand prize award and garners him a trip to the Canada-Wide Science Fair held in Toronto in May;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House join me in congratulating Arash Marzi on his fifth consecutive regional science fair grand prize and wish him best of luck at the Canada-Wide Science Fair and in all his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 838**

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

Whereas the Parkview Education Centre in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, has had a very active student council for a number of years with several capable presidents at the helm including Chelsea Stewart, Meg Sawlor, Samantha Romkey and Naomi Hughes; and

Whereas these student council presidents initiated and fostered a plan to create a student parking lot, rallying the support of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members of several levels of government; and

Whereas as a result of their efforts, a new 84-space parking lot was officially opened in December marking the culmination of their efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Ms. Chelsea Stewart, Ms. Meg Sawlor, Ms. Samantha Romkey and Ms. Naomi Hughes, and all others who worked so hard to make this student parking lot at Parkview Education Centre in Bridgewater become a reality.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 839**

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

Whereas Cumberland North supports the endeavours and growth of all of our athletes; and

Whereas Melanie Paugh is the Canadian black-belt taekwon-do champion in the hyper-weight division; and

Whereas Melanie Paugh recently travelled to Wellington, New Zealand, to represent Nova Scotia at the 2011 International Taekwon-Do Federation World Championships;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Melanie Paugh on her athletic achievements and on doing an excellent job representing Nova Scotia at the 2011 International Taekwon-do Federation World Championships.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 840**

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Labour Council plays a leading role in promoting safety in the workplace; and

Whereas injuries and deaths continue to be a painful reality of Nova Scotia workplaces; and

Whereas the Labour Council will unveil a new memorial on April 28, 2011, the National Day of Mourning, commemorating those who have been killed or injured on the job;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Annapolis Valley Labour Council on having established a memorial in Kentville for killed and injured workers, and join with the council in looking toward a day when there will be no workplace deaths at all.

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. 841**

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 Town of Mahone Bay has embraced its aging population with the development of the Mahone Bay and Area Seniors Project in 2008, and has increased its support for the creation of the Age-Friendly Mahone Bay Project; and

Whereas a partnership between the Town of Mahone Bay, the Mahone Bay Centre, and Dalhousie University will target initiatives that will allow older adults to contribute to, and remain in their communities, and to embrace the age-friendly approach to promote healthy, active aging; and

Whereas project coordinator Robyn Stadnyk will use a grassroots approach to collect and analyze information, and then report findings back to the steering committee so that the community will identify priorities that can be introduced to municipal and town planning;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Age-Friendly Mahone Bay Project and its partners for focusing on the needs of seniors to maintain a healthy and active contribution to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 842**

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

Whereas on March 30<sup>th</sup> the Strait Regional School Board held a Science Fair at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre; and

Whereas Hannah Gillis, a Grade 10 student at Guysborough Academy, developed an E-Map computer program which allows the public to upload their home floor plans so the information is accessible by emergency personnel; and

Whereas Hannah Gillis' E-Map computer program resulted in a first-place finish at this year's regional science fair, thus earning her an opportunity to compete in the National Science Fair in Toronto from May 14<sup>th</sup> to May 21<sup>st</sup>;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hannah Gillis on her innovative project which allowed her to win first prize in this year's Strait Regional School Board's Science Fair, and wish her continued success at the National Science Fair in Toronto.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 843**

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

Whereas Kylee Hick, a student at Tantallon Elementary School, competed in a contest for Grades 4 to 6 category sponsored by the Department of Fisheries for a position in the 2011 Anglers' Handbook; and

Whereas more than 100 children took part in this contest, in the different grade categories, whereby they entered drawings, sketches and paintings of Nova Scotia's provincial fish, the native speckled or brook trout; and

Whereas Kylee Hick received a fishing rod, tackle box, and trophy for having the winning artwork in her grade category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Kylee Hick for winning the Grades 4 to 6 category in the Department of Fisheries-sponsored contest for a position in the 2011 Anglers' Handbook and hope that this inspires her to continue in many art projects.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. JENNEX: I would like to draw attention to the east gallery today, and many of you know my daughter Brienne Williams, she's been here on many occasions, but sitting with her today is my son, Cameron Williams, who arrived this morning from St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, where he is a teacher, and they're on their Easter Spring break in Newfoundland and Labrador right now. I would like everyone to give him the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our visitors to the gallery - enjoy your time with your mother.

The honourable Minister of Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 844**

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

Whereas the Hantsport and District Lions Club was organized in the Fall of 1983 and was officially chartered in March 1984, and recently celebrated their 27<sup>th</sup> Charter Night on April 9<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas the Hantsport Lions Club assists their community in many ways, such as making donations to the Hantsport Recreation Department and the Hantsport Food Bank, as well as helping with the RCMP Bike Rodeo, and the Lockhartville Strawberry Supper; and

Whereas the Hantsport Lions Club philosophy is to bring together in fellowship and common understanding the ideas and energies of community-minded individuals who wish to help those in need, and to provide services which will help make our community a better place to live, work, play, or go to school;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Hantsport Lions Club for their community service and for reaching their 27<sup>th</sup> Charter Night, an important milestone in the club's history.

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 Energy.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 845**

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

Whereas Sarah MacCallum, a Grade 11 student at Pictou Academy, has won first place overall at the Chignecto East Regional Science Fair; and

Whereas Sarah MacCallum's science project was part of a joint pilot project with the Northumberland Fisheries Association, in which she studied the effects of feeding a nutritional supplement to increase muscle mass in lobster larvae; and

Whereas Sarah MacCallum's science fair project on lobster larvae has won her a trip to the National Science Fair in Toronto, along with 39 other science fair winners from Nova Scotia, to compete at a national event against science fair winners from across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sarah MacCallum on her first place win at the Chignecto East Regional Science Fair and wish her success at not only the National Science Fair, but with all her future science endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 846**

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

Whereas the second annual Haliwards were held on April 2, 2011, in Halifax, to recognize individuals and groups for their extraordinary contributions to the community; and

Whereas Fusion Halifax envisions to capture the voice, spirit and engagement of 20- to 40-year-olds in shaping the future of Halifax by bringing together people in all sectors of the community to inspire active citizenship, create dynamic networks, develop new friendships and generate great ideas in everything from business to arts and culture, to sustainable communities; and

Whereas Fusion Halifax was among those honoured at this year's Haliwards ceremony;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Fusion Halifax on its Haliward and for its commitment to encouraging community and civic engagement among 20- to 40-year-olds in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.



**RESOLUTION NO. 847**

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

Whereas Luke MacLean, a Grade 11 student at the Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro, recognizes the necessity and importance of learning French; and

Whereas Luke MacLean is from a French family background, has lived in France for several years and has been involved in many French activities including Volunteers in French, Jeux de l'Acadie, as well as competing in French public speaking contests; and

Whereas Luke MacLean was selected from more than 125 applicants as one of only two representatives from Nova Scotia to attend the National Ambassador Youth Forum, which took place in Quebec City from February 25<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Luke MacLean for being chosen as an ambassador to represent Truro and Nova Scotia at the National Ambassador Youth Forum in Quebec City, February 25 to March 1, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

**RESOLUTION NO. 848**

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas 40 medals were brought home from the Provincial Winter Games by 11 athletes, won for their athletic accomplishments in their sport;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the athletic accomplishments of Special Olympic athletes from the South Shore 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 Pictou East.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 849**

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

Whereas 3-D Auto is an import/export company owned by Dennis and Gary Vint, that was incorporated in 1984; and

Whereas the company located in Westville, Pictou County began as a small family business and has grown into one that is incorporated, working hand in hand with American and Canadian auto parts companies; and

Whereas the company employs 30 people in varying divisions of auto parts and recycling striving to bring quality and affordable products to customers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the owners, Dennis and Gary Vint and staff of 3-D Auto on their 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 Antigonish.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 850**

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

Whereas Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional Royals hosted the Nova Scotia Schools Athletic Federation (NSSAF) division 1 boys hockey championship over the March 25<sup>th</sup> weekend; and

Whereas Bobby Hamer scored the winning goal in overtime to earn the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional Royals the NSSAF division 1 boys hockey championship for the first time since 2005; and

Whereas the Royals championship team finished their championship season with a 51-9 record and all but four of the Royals players are Grade 12 students who will be graduating this year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional boys hockey team players and coaches on their successful season and wish the graduating players the best of the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 851**

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

Whereas the constituents of Cumberland North recognize the importance of reaching out and helping our friends and neighbours in need, whether in our own communities or abroad; and

Whereas Pugwash District High School students, Mariah Johnson, James Russell and Jenna Cottrill, ran a fundraiser to plant trees in Haiti; and

Whereas \$700 was raised during this fundraiser allowing 1,400 trees to be purchased and planted in Haiti;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Mariah Johnson, James Russell and Jenna Cottrill on organizing this successful fundraising event and on putting forth their time and dedication to help those in Haiti.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 852**

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

Whereas Recreation Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education recognize the critical contributions volunteers make to the province in an annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony, this year being on April 4<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas Wayne Dykens has a strong commitment to making his community a better place to live by volunteering in many not-for-profit organizations as a member of the

Lions Club, with his church, on behalf of local school programs and with the Canning and Area Food Bank; and

Whereas Mr. Dykens has been recognized by the Municipality of Kings County and by the Province of Nova Scotia for his many contributions to improving life in his community;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly thank Wayne Dykens for his significant and long service to his community and congratulate him on being named a Representative Volunteer at the 37<sup>th</sup> Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony in Halifax on April 4, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 853**

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

Whereas Key Clubs are student-led organizations which provide members with service opportunities, build character and develop leaders and make up a core segment of Kiwanis International; and

Whereas Parkview Education Centre has 30 members involved in the first Kiwanis Key Club in the Bridgewater area, with various backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, all combining to contribute their skills to benefit their community; and

Whereas the co-presidents and students Seth Kay and Julia Powers, in addition to setting monthly goals, have focused on one major fundraiser for the year, called Dig Deep for India, with an objective to raise \$1,500 to dig a well in India, providing 25 families with clean drinking water;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend the members of Parkview Education Centre's Kiwanis Key Club and co-presidents Seth Kay and Julia Powers, for contributing their skills and efforts to improving communities at home and abroad.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 854**

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

Whereas from March 11 - 13, 2011, the Canso Curling Club hosted the Hartley Bonspiel, one of four annual bonspiels; and

Whereas the Canso Curling Club hosts three additional bonspiels, the MacDonald, the MacKenzie and the Industrial, as their major fundraisers and also hosts a Little Rocks program for youth in the community, thanks in part to a Highland Region for Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation grant; and

Whereas the Canso Curling Club continues to promote winter sport as well as physical and social activity for all ages in Canso and the surrounding area;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Canso Curling Club for providing an opportunity for the people of Canso and area to keep physically active through their involvement in the truly enjoyable sport of curling.

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 on an introduction.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the west gallery where we have members of the Mennonite Community, in particular Apple Blossom School in the Annapolis Valley. The adults are Henry Wohlgemuth, Kim and Sue Thiessen and Mervin Toews. I don't have all the students' names but let's give them a warm welcome to Province House. (Applause)

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

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 3:03 p.m. and we will run until 4:33 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM. - NSP: RATE HEARING - OFFICIALS OPPOSE**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government has made life more expensive for Nova Scotians - you look at the increase in the HST, user fees going up, and now Nova Scotians are being faced with the seventh power rate increase in a decade. They don't see much hope coming from government, so my question to the Premier is, government always has representatives at the rate hearing, will the Premier direct his officials not just to show up but to oppose any increase by Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as you know and as the members opposite know, since this government has come to power we've taken the HST off energy, we've brought in the Affordable Living Tax Credit, the Disability Tax Credit. We've taken the HST off children's clothing, off a range of other products.

The point of our government is to make life more affordable for people in Nova Scotia. Of course we're going to have representatives at that hearing and, Mr. Speaker, we'll make sure that we will be asking the questions that protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, as part of that rate hearing Nova Scotia Power is asking to increase its annual rate of return from 9.36 per cent to 9.6 per cent. That's following a year that Nova Scotia Power had profits of \$121.3 million.

My question again to the Premier, will he make sure that Nova Scotia ratepayers are not being asked to increase and pad the profits of Nova Scotia Power shareholders?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course the representatives of the government who are there, who attend the hearing, will be there for the purposes of making sure that the rate base on which the rate is determined is fair to the consumers of Nova Scotia. It is why this government is so committed to making sure that we are no longer hostage to fossil fuel markets internationally; it is why we are moving to more renewable; why we are making sure that the investment in capital is made now so that we can have stable pricing over the long term.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, we agree to the fact that Nova Scotians need to get off fossil fuels; we agree that renewable energy needs to become a more important part of the mix in this province. What we don't agree with, though, is that Nova Scotians should be footing the entire bill. We have a company in this province, Nova Scotia Power, which had profits last year of \$121.3 million and they are now going back to the rate base for another increase. What people are looking for from their government is someone who will stand up and defend the interests of the people of this province and not the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power.

Yesterday in this House we asked the Premier to ask the URB to do a performance audit of Nova Scotia Power. He said that the URB already does an audit. They do a financial audit of the finances given to the URB by the power company. What we have asked them, and what we want the Premier to direct the URB to do, is to do a performance audit of the entire company to make sure that they have done all the trimming of the fat inside of Nova Scotia Power. My question to the Premier is, why are you opposed to asking Nova Scotia Power to look at their own internal before they start looking at the pockets of Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not opposed to that at all. In fact, I want to make sure that ratepayers in Nova Scotia are treated as fairly as possible. I would point out that it was the members opposite who opposed this government taking the HST off energy. If they had their way, they would be paying an even higher rate today.

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

#### **PREM. - NSP: CAPITAL SPENDING - POWER RATES**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can't help but point out that I think the Premier's answers might need a performance audit before the day is out. I know the



Premier is a fan of the Utility and Review Board. Recently Nova Scotia Power applied to the URB for \$367 million in capital spending. Nova Scotians want to know what impact that new capital spending will have on power rates. When asked for that rate impact analysis, representatives of Nova Scotia Power said that they won't provide it because it would be misleading, inaccurate and inappropriate to tell Nova Scotians what impact on their power rates that new spending should have. My question to the Premier is this, does the Premier agree with Nova Scotia Power that telling Nova Scotians the impact on their power rates of that much new spending is inappropriate?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we have an issue with power rates in this province that is being mirrored, not just across the country, but across the world. As the cost of fossil fuels continues to rise, the cost of electricity generation continues to go up. The best way that we can do that is to do two things, actually. One is to make sure that we have a proper conservation program in place so that people are not using more than they need. Secondly, is to ensure that we are no longer a hostage to the international fossil fuel market. That's what this government is committed to - stable, longer term power rates.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting answer, but the fact of the matter is \$148 million of that \$367 million is directly related to actions of the NDP Government. It has nothing to do with worldwide conditions, it's all homemade, allowing them to buy their own wind turbines; the biomass project, which that government approved; \$100 million for street lights, which that government is imposing on Nova Scotia Power; the Mercury Abatement Program; these all cost money and a result of decisions made by the NDP Government, not by world markets. My question to the Premier is this, did the government analyze the rate impact of its own decisions? If not, why not and if so, will they table it for this House to see?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there have been many confusing questions asked by the member opposite but this one I think really takes the cake. Is he suggesting that there should not be a mercury abatement program? Is he suggesting there should not be conservation efforts by the province? Is he suggesting that we should not be pursuing renewable electricity? All of those things require an investment. I think that is the appropriate course for the province and it is one we intend to continue to pursue.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy that Question Period has just been reversed and the Premier is now asking questions of those of us over here, but they're obvious questions - the answer is, of course not. It would be nice for once, when the government is pointing out the benefits of something, that they actually tell people the truth about how much it's going to cost. That is the question that I asked of the Premier.

I'll follow up with this. Over the next five years Nova Scotia Power proposes to spend \$2.6 billion in new capital spending, all of which will show up in our power rates. My question to the Premier is, will he instruct his officials to intervene at those hearings

and make sure we know the true cost and the true impact on our power rates, not just the fluffy talk? That is my question to the Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in every case where Nova Scotia Power is at those rate hearings, we will ensure the appropriate questions to justify the rate request are asked. You have to remember that there is no easy way to get off the coal-fired generating and onto renewable. It takes capital investment to do it. What it means is over the long term you get more stable power rates which create a better condition for not only residential payers but also for businesses.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

### **JUSTICE: VIOLENCE - ADDRESS**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, my Nova Scotia doesn't include daily shootings. My Nova Scotia doesn't include daily stabbings. My Nova Scotia doesn't include violent robberies. Yet this is what life has become in Nova Scotia under this NDP Government. (Interruptions)

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

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in this month alone there have been at least 11 high-profile violent attacks in Nova Scotia. These include shootings, stabbings, robberies and assaults. In response, the government and this Premier have seen fit to ensure that the Department of Justice's budget is not scrutinized by the Official Opposition to ensure that our tax dollars are spent wisely on crime prevention in Nova Scotia. My question is, where is the Minister of Justice's plan to address the violence which seems to be sweeping across the Province of Nova Scotia?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, it's alarming that the Opposition would get in here and create fear and anxiety in society and have such a lack of confidence in our police. This minister and this government have a firm commitment and belief that the police know their job, they know how to do their job and they're working diligently.

As I answered in a similar-type question last week, I talked about the cyclical pattern of crime and sometime the escalation of crime. It takes police some time to do their investigations, they have to be methodical, they have to be sound and gather their evidence. I for one believe in them. I have confidence in the job they're doing and I stand behind them.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, what this government doesn't get and what the minister doesn't get - in his response it was very clear, what he spoke about is the response of police after a crime has taken place. What we're talking about is, how do we prevent

crime from taking place? How do we prevent people from being murdered? How do we prevent stabbings from taking place? How do we prevent violent robberies from taking place? That is the question that we are asking here today.

The numbers speak for themselves. When Nova Scotians are waking up each morning and seeing this type of violence taking place in Nova Scotia, that is not the province that we want to see. Once again, I ask the minister, have you devised any sort of anti-crime strategy to make Nova Scotia's streets safer?

MR. SPEAKER: Before you answer that, I'll just remind honourable members that all the questions come through the Chair, as the third party. Again, the word "you" keeps surfacing; that is unparliamentary, so I would remind all members from here on forward to take that out of your questions.

MR. LANDRY: I'm really pleased that question was asked. Finally, we're getting some good questions. I'm committed to, and have spent a lifetime, in the area of crime prevention and policing. I don't come before this House without some knowledge and experience, and as a minister and as a government, we're committed 100 per cent to crime prevention. We've invested heavily and there are a number of projects.

If my colleague across the way there wishes to see some of the grants that we're investing in, the Lighthouses Program for example; we have a huge forum coming up this month on crime prevention, which I'll be speaking at, where we're bringing educators, we're bringing health professionals, we're bringing a broad base of the community together to discuss these issues. Crime is an essence in society and how society approaches that issue is important and we're committed to working with the community to find sound solutions and looking at root causes of some of these crime patterns and addressing that at the foundation and I'm committed to that 100 per cent.

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister would have had lots of time to explain to Nova Scotians exactly what he's doing, had this government allowed his estimates to be called in the Red Room for debate as was first planned. So if the Minister of Justice is frustrated, he may want to go talk to his Government House Leader as to why he didn't have the opportunity to tell us, and tell all Nova Scotians, exactly what his department is doing.

Mr. Speaker, on April 9<sup>th</sup> a man was injured after shots were fired from a van. The next day a woman was found shot to death. A few days later more shots were fired in Dartmouth and then later on the Waverley Road. Just this weekend a young man in Preston died as a result of a shooting in broad daylight.

Mr. Speaker, the Boots on the Street program was created to fund more police officers in communities throughout Nova Scotia. Police chiefs have told us this is working and they hope for more officers. So my question is, will the Minister of Justice advise the

House, and all Nova Scotians, whether there will be any funding reductions to the Boots on the Street program?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, the loss of any life through violence in a community or in a society is a sad thing in and of itself. We take each one of those situations seriously and on the issue of the officers in the officer program, we have maintained, we were able as a government to have maintained those numbers for at least one more year. We have to examine, looking at the financial situation of this province, and as a government and managers of the taxpayers' money, we have to make sound practical decisions and look at the big picture. Unfortunately, sometimes, some people in this House don't get the big picture.

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

**JUSTICE: MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT PROG.  
- A.G. RECOMMENDATIONS**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, this morning the Maintenance Enforcement Program was before the Public Accounts Committee. It has been four years since the Auditor General examined the Maintenance Enforcement Program. At that time he issued a scathing report on the then state of the program. Mr. Lapointe made 19 recommendations in his report, one of which the government will not be implementing, leaving 18. Three years ago, he re-examined the program and discovered not one had been implemented. Can the Minister of Justice please tell us whether the Auditor General has indicated to him whether any of these recommendations have been completed to the AG's satisfaction?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: I'm very pleased to stand before you here today in regards to the Auditor General. I think prior to last year he had some huge questions on the performance of the government in moving the agenda forward and dealing with Maintenance Enforcement. I think in one of his answers this morning he commented that we have about 11 of the 18 recommendations completed and that he's very pleased with the outcome of what this government has done, particularly in the past year.

I will say, though, can we do more? Yes. Should we do more? Yes, and we're working very diligently to look at this issue, to examine the questions. I had the opportunity to listen to my colleague across the way there speak this morning and I see some very strong points of reference there to note and to act upon, and I look forward to working to move the issues dealing with Maintenance Enforcement performance forward.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, in fact what the Auditor General said to us this morning is that he has not seen anything to indicate that any of the recommendations have been implemented. He has heard things but he has not been presented with any evidence at all and he has not examined it at all, so that was why my question.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2007, the then Justice Critic - now a minister in this government - was outraged that six months after the report was first issued no progress had been made on the recommendations. Fast forward to almost four years later, the Auditor General indicated today to my colleague the member for Halifax Clayton Park, that he heard there has been some progress on these items, but no report has been issued to him and he has not examined the progress. We heard varying numbers in terms of how many recommendations have actually been completed.

Could the minister please instruct his staff to provide the AG with the report on the status of the recommendations, so the AG can judge whether the required improvements to the MEP have, in fact, been made?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what meeting my colleague was at this morning, but I did have the pleasure to watch most of it on Channel 95 this morning. I guess maybe I have a different interpretation of what occurred there this morning than the account there. I did learn, though, that prior to my arrival in this office and this government coming into place, this province was in the bottom one-third and today we are in the top third. Our goal is to be number one in the performance and we will work diligently to get to that end. (Applause)

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, in fact the employees of the Maintenance Enforcement Program were very clear that they had not had the AG sign off on the ones that they thought they had completed; they were very clear on that. Last year the program was \$84.7 million in arrears; this year it is \$83.2 million. At the rate this government is going, it will take us 55 years to get those arrears collected.

A year ago the Community Services Committee gave the officials of the program a variety of suggestions for ways to help track down more delinquent payors or compel them to pay. Today we heard that MEP is, "still looking into most of these", but a year later there has only been progress on one of those, and that was a pilot program we were told would be implemented last year.

Mr. Speaker, over 9,000 cases are in arrears, Nova Scotian children and their moms are owed \$83.2 million. My question is, please tell us, four years later, where is the sense of urgency?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member. I can see the passion that she has on this issue and I, too, share the commitment that this is an important matter. It's a complex issue, it's a complex matter in total - how do you address the complexities of this. One way is to take the recommendations and start to work methodically through that, to look at, as a government, what resources we have and to look at our best practices across the country.

I have absolute confidence in the staff working in the Department of Justice in this area of responsibility, as in other areas. I am confident of their commitment to doing a good job. Yes, there were problems there. I'm not here to defend the status quo and I won't pretend that that's what I am here to do. What I'm here to do is to say that we are looking at ways to making improvements and we are committed to making improvements and reducing those numbers, but it is a broader issue than just saying it is the government - it's a community responsibility and we have to work collectively.

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

**PREM.: HIGH TAX/HIGH FEES POLICY - RECONSIDER**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. As you know, last week Statistics Canada reported that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of inflation in the country, at 3.9 per cent and rising. When I asked the Premier about that last week he said: "When you exempt home heating fuel, we were below Ontario and on par with the rest of the country." Well, most Nova Scotian households would wish it was that simple, that they could just exempt home heating fuel from their monthly bills.

I know he's very proud of removing the HST from that one bill, what he leaves out is that he added it to all of our other bills. So my question to the Premier is this, will he now, in light of this new hardship on Nova Scotia families, reconsider his high tax, high fees policy and give Nova Scotians a real break?

THE PREMIER: The reality is that for many, many families in this province they are better off from the tax perspective. Not only do they have the advantage of having the HST off home energy but also a range of other products. They also receive the Affordable Living Tax Credit. We have tried to ensure that those people, particularly those who are least advantaged, are in a position to be able to make ends meet. That is the commitment of this government.

I would point out to the member opposite that the reason why home heating oil forms a bigger part of the calculation on inflation is because something like 60 per cent of Nova Scotians heat with heating oil and that's not the case in the rest of the country.

MR. BAILLIE: I'd be tempted to ask the Premier to table a list of things that are exempt from HST, but in the interest of fairness, I'd have to ask him to table all of the things that now have an extra 2 per cent of HST. We'd need a backhoe to bring that list in to this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, because he conveniently forgets all the other things that have gone up in price because of his policies.

Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada reported that the cost of water, electricity and oil have gone up by 14 per cent in Nova Scotia, three times the national average. My question

to the Premier, through you, sir, to that strategy-loving bunch over there, what is the strategy for them on water, on home heating fuel and electricity, where is it?

THE PREMIER: I realize that the members opposite, especially when they were in government, they didn't bother with strategies, they didn't have a plan and they didn't understand the nature of planning. The reality is we have done many things to try and make life more affordable. I have just listed them, that's why we have the affordability tax credits, that's why we took the HST off energy.

What is confounding about his question is that it was his government and his caucus that actually opposed taking the HST off energy. In fact they took it off at one point in time and then they put it back on. Mr. Speaker, if it were not for us, energy costs in this province would be even higher than they are today.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what I know is that it was this bunch that balanced the budget at a 13 per cent HST that all Nova Scotians benefited from; that is a fact that I think we should keep in mind.

My question through you, sir, to the Premier, not only are we facing the highest inflation in the country and the highest taxes in the country, but Nova Scotia Power now tells us that our power rates are likely to go up by 9 per cent, on average, next year. Will the Premier at least state clearly that he and his government will intervene at that rate-increase hearing on behalf of Nova Scotians? Will he finally, after being asked this time and again, come through for the people of Nova Scotia, yes or no? Intervene.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've said over and over again that the government will be there to make sure that the ratepayers in this province are treated fairly. That's certainly our obligation and I hope that the member opposite will take the time to recognize that the prices of electricity are going up across the country, in fact, I saw a news story yesterday that had them going up in B.C. by 8 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **ENERGY: OIL & GAS IND. - EXPLORATION ATTRACT**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Today the Minister of Energy announced at the OTANS breakfast that the results of the independent Play-Fairway analysis are in and it suggests there are as much as 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and eight billion barrels of oil in our offshore.

This is definitely a much more positive announcement than the Premier gave at last year's OTANS conference and I think we can all agree that it's good news. Mr. Speaker, this morning the minister encouraged everyone in attendance to do their utmost to attract

major companies back to Nova Scotia to take advantage of these resources, and I agree. But in light of low natural gas prices this is a significant hurdle and many of the companies there said that this morning. So I think it's reasonable to wonder what plans the department has to attract exploration activities since that did not form part of this morning's speech. Will the minister advise the House what he and his department plan to do to encourage the oil and gas industry to return to Nova Scotia's offshore?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, it is good news for Nova Scotia that we have a Play-Fairway analysis of 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and eight billion barrels of oil, off our shores. That's going to create good jobs for our service industries and for Nova Scotians who work in the industry, royalties for our province and so on.

We have a plan, we're going to be following it. We're going to be aggressively marketing this information to the super majors, to the oil and gas industry in Calgary, Texas, Europe, around the world. We expect that before the year is out we'll have a call for proposals for companies to come and bid on blocks of land here.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have heard that the Minister of Energy sees himself as the chief salesperson for the province on this issue. At this morning's conference, attendees came to learn that neither the minister nor the Premier nor in fact any elected government official are planning to attend the Houston oil and gas show that starts on Monday. In fact, as of lunch time today, no elected government official from Nova Scotia was registered for that show. I was surprised, given that traditionally, Nova Scotia's Energy Minister or another government minister would attend. The fact is the minister announced some very good news this morning.

The minister went to Oklahoma to explore the issue of fracking, which we commended him on during estimates, but now Nova Scotia has good news to share with industry and it sounds like he'll be absent from the biggest stage in the world to promote our oil and gas industry. Is it true that the Minister of Energy does not plan to attend the Houston Offshore Technology Conference on Monday and if so, why?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we will be promoting our offshore play around the world through our competent staff in the Department of Energy. The Premier, myself, our deputy minister, others will be promoting this as we have the opportunity in various conferences or workshops. But we are our own best salespeople. Again, we'll have very competent people at the Houston show. I do plan to attend the World Petroleum Congress later this year to be held in Qatar.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the minister feels it's necessary to go to Qatar for a meeting of government officials on the issue but not to the biggest meeting in the world where the actual industries are that make plays in Nova Scotia on this issue. The fact is last year, I believe it was the Premier, perhaps it was the minister but I think it was



the Premier, took time out of the House to go to the Houston oil and gas show. Nobody here complained about that trip because we recognize the importance of ensuring that government is the chief cheerleader for our industry.

Mr. Speaker, if you want the big players to come to Nova Scotia then the minister needs to be there to demonstrate his personal confidence in this industry. He needs to tell the industry what the Cabinet and he as minister are willing to do to promote the development in the offshore. Will the minister agree to change his department's plans for the event and personally lead the delegation to the Houston Offshore Technology Conference?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as part of our outreach to reach the oil and gas industry around the world, we will be sitting down one on one with the super majors and with other active players in the industry. We have some very competent, knowledgeable staff in the Department of Energy who will be doing that. I'm quite convinced that before the year is out we'll have a call for bids and we'll have some successful applications. Soon I hope to see a rig in the harbour that will be heading out to spud a successful well.

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

### **CCH - ART NOVA SCOTIA: OPERATION - TIME FRAME**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. When the government announced the creation of Arts Nova Scotia, we were optimistic that maybe this government will be doing something meaningful for the arts community. As we saw at the East Coast Music Awards recently and as recognized in some of today's Notices of Motion, the culture of this region is second to none in Canada and we must promote it.

Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, would be to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. When will Arts Nova Scotia be up and running?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question because it allows me to give a few points on an important initiative that this government has taken part in over the last number of months. Arts and culture is an extremely important sector in Nova Scotia and we're working now to ensure that we meet the needs of the sector throughout Nova Scotia and Cape Breton and across the province. We're going to work over the next coming weeks to ensure that the organization is strong and we'll move forward on some of the initiatives in our arts and culture five-point plan that we just released about two months ago.

MR. BAIN: This area is of course more than just artists and craftspeople; it's also a \$1.4 billion industry in Nova Scotia, one of our main industries and a source of thousands

of jobs. Will the minister tell the House today, Mr. Speaker, through you, what would be the budget for Arts Nova Scotia?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as we progress to ensure that our independent body oversees the grants and the funding of the grants that we'll have under this initiative, the budget is at about \$2.3 million, but I can provide the member the exact figures on that. We're excited about ensuring that the artists across this province are supported by the government, but most importantly they're supported by their peers and I think that's the most appropriate way. That's why we took the step to ensure that we have an independent body overlooking the granting of these funds across the province.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that. The government now spends less on culture than it pays for bureaucratic undertakings like the Treasury Board and the Chief Information Officer at Communications Nova Scotia. The problem with the previous arts council, as the minister well knows, is that too much of the funding went to bureaucracy and not enough to the actual artists. Can the minister tell the House what percentage of the budget for Arts Nova Scotia will actually get to artists and what percentage will go to bureaucracy?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that's why we're very excited about this initiative, because what we want to do is ensure that as much of the money as possible goes to the artists. That's not what happened in the past. I know our government is committed to ensuring that we maximize the amount of money that goes to the hands of the artists here in Nova Scotia.

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

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: TOBACCO CONTROL STRATEGY - FUNDING**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, today my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Earlier today we finally, after years of waiting, had the release of the Tobacco Control Strategy. Like many initiatives introduced by government, they state ambitious goals, which we support, but what is most shocking today is the revelation that there is not one new red cent being invested by the government to fund this newly minted Tobacco Control Strategy. Despite this government's one-time windfall of \$12.4 million in the tobacco litigation case last year, and despite this government's anticipated collection of over \$213 million in tobacco taxes this year, we have not one new red cent devoted to the Tobacco Control Strategy. My question to the minister, through you, is why has this minister failed to secure new funding for a more robust Tobacco Control Strategy?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased today to be able to launch our next five-year tobacco strategy here in Nova Scotia, which will make us a leader in Canada. With respect to the allocation of funds to support this strategy, Nova Scotia is already a leader in terms of what we're doing and the funds we allocate. We are second only to Quebec in terms of the investment that we make per capita in a Tobacco Control Strategy.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, last week in estimates we heard that boast and again we hear it. It's really remarkable how we can go from a province that wasn't second and suddenly we are second and spending, but there's not one new cent that's gone towards this. It's a question of moving funds, as near as I can figure, from the Department of Justice, where we had tobacco contraband initiatives going on and inspectors, moving it now to the Department of Health. Not one new cent is being spent on tobacco control in this province and the minister admitted that, so smoke and mirrors is what I see.

My question to the minister is, will the minister now admit that she has indeed played a shell game when it comes to the funding of this newly-announced Tobacco Control Strategy?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as you and all members of this House know, we can do a lot with the current resources that we have. The former tobacco strategy, which was a resource strategy, had basically done as much as it could do and now we have a new strategy, which we'll be aiming at keeping young people from smoking. We'll be dealing with some of our more vulnerable populations and having more appropriate measures to help people, for example, with mental health disorders, who have very high rates of smoking.

We also are very much focused on dealing with the tobacco industry itself and looking at the various ways that we may use, to have the tobacco industry fund the various measures in this tobacco strategy over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to point out that I do chair the federal, provincial and territorial Health Ministers table and it certainly is my intention to work with my colleagues across Canada, pursuing in a very aggressive way, ways to reduce tobacco use which lead to one of the most preventable forms of illness and disease in our health care system. (Applause)

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the minister says she'd like the tobacco industry to pay more. Well, last year, the tobacco industry paid \$12.4 million to this province that went right into general revenue. The Premier, when he was then in Opposition, said clearly that all windfalls like that should be directed towards tobacco cessation and control. That is not what has happened here and I'm just really upset that no new money has gone into this program. The report, when you read it, is full of words like "enhance", "support", "improve", "direct", all kinds of great verbs and no money to make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, the programs that DHAs run are very effective and some of them run out midway through the year, so my question to the minister is, will she direct more money to the DHAs so that they can enhance their tobacco cessation plans?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, our DHAs are a very important component of implementing measures in our tobacco control strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to read a couple of quotes from people who were present today at the launch of the renewed tobacco strategy. The president of Smoke Free Nova Scotia said, "This strategy, with its twin emphasis on holding the tobacco industry to account and helping more Nova Scotians stop smoking, is an excellent plan to reduce this death toll." The executive director of the Canadian Cancer Society said, this strategy is "an important achievement that will lead to a reduction in tobacco consumption rates for Nova Scotians." It means fewer people will start smoking, more individuals will be supported to quit and fewer Nova Scotians will be diagnosed with cancer as a result.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good strategy, it has adequate resources for this year. We will continue to review the resources that are required in the years to come and we will get the results that are laid out in those targets.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

### **EDUC.: READING RECOVERY REPLACEMENT - DETAILS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, we've talked with Reading Recovery teachers across the province. They're experts in literacy because of the investment that government has made for more than a decade in the proven research-based Reading Recovery program. The teachers go through a year-long training session prior to becoming a Reading Recovery teacher and had access to a network of best practices from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, how will the new program address educating and keeping literacy teachers up to date on the best practices in literacy?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question. We will be making sure that our teachers will be retaining the skills and practices that they have received with Reading Recovery. That is the responsibility of the Department of Education and we will be doing on-site professional development. We will not be expecting our teachers to travel into the city centre. We will be going out to the school boards when they need professional development and also there will be organized professional development.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the research-based Reading Recovery program has been proven around the world to help close the gap for a classroom's most vulnerable readers. The program gives those students the tools and confidence that they need to excel amongst their peers.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, what review measures has the department put in place to monitor the new program throughout the course of the next school year and will there be a comprehensive review at the end of the next school year?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for that excellent question. That is part of this new program that we are rolling out. It's very important that we are assessing the success of any of our programs. The same measures that we put in place for Reading Recovery will be in place for this program. They will be using the observational survey but not all students will have to go through that process, only those who have been identified as struggling. Then we will record all of that data and there will be a report from each of the school boards at the end of each year. We will be tracking this, and by the end of Grade 3 we'll be able to make all those comparisons.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the minister has been saying that the new program will give boards flexibility to provide support to more students but, of course, at this point there's no proof that that new program will work.

Mr. Speaker, the end result that we all want is that all students are given the same chance to excel in reading and writing. So my question through you to the minister is, what will the minister do to ensure consistency across the province and what will she do if one or more of the areas of the province appear to be falling behind?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, this is a new program that we are putting forward. It has been developed in collaboration with every one of the school boards, and in every one of the school boards we're going to be ensuring that the guidelines that are set up in this framework are going to be followed. There's going to be accountability. So all of those things have been taken into consideration but I do want to add that Reading Recovery was not as successful, in terms of the data that we have received, as we would have liked to have seen it. So we want to make sure that we're providing a program that's not only going to reach more students, but it is equitable in that more students will be able to be reached.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

### **EDUC.: READING RECOVERY REPLACEMENT - CONTENTS**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. Today on CBC's Information Morning, a former teacher and a former principal were asked about this so-called replacement for Reading Recovery. David Patrick

said the Education Minister's framework lacks detail and is more like a university term paper; Laura Roblee said she's really concerned about what's going to happen in the classroom. So my question to the minister is, what is in this new framework that currently does not exist in our public schools?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I, too, listened to that report this morning and it's unfortunate that I haven't had the opportunity to speak with the two people who were on CBC today to have a dialogue on exactly what this framework entails. Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that what this is adding to our schools right now is that we will be having somebody working with the classroom teacher to support them with all the students that are encountering difficulty with literacy.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, we know that we currently have Reading Recovery teachers and we currently have resource teachers who are working with the classroom teachers. The Minister of Education has cut a very successful program, has allotted fewer dollars to the new framework and still says she will help more students - all without a plan. Since the minister has no plan, there is no program to replace Reading Recovery, my question to the minister is, will individual school boards who make the request be given permission to continue with Reading Recovery?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I just want to answer that by saying we do have a plan and I would like to table this as was provided yesterday at the press conference where the honourable member was. That is the plan and we're going to follow it and the school boards will be following it too. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, those of us who were there received that document. It's not a plan. (Applause) Boards have the human resources, they have the trained Reading Recovery teachers, they have the material resources, they have the reading success outcomes of which they are very proud. Boards are prepared to pay the licence fee for their own schools to continue Reading Recovery. My question to the minister is, will a request from a school board wishing to continue to help those young readers struggling with reading through Reading Recovery be given permission - question, yes or no?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the students in this province in the early grades are going to be receiving the support they need in a more equitable fashion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**PREM. - CHIEF MANDER'S LETTER:  
RESPONSE - TABLE**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, during previous Question Periods, the Premier has referenced a letter to Chief Mander. In all of his references he seems to be most impressed with the date at the top of the letter. However, I can tell you, members in the

community could care less about the date of the letter. They care more about the fact that this government did not make any substantive action for the past 15 months. Convening a group that met three times with no established mandate of action in my mind constitutes no action at all. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier table the recommendations in response to Chief Mander's letter as promised by the Minister of Health and Wellness 14 months ago?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all it was important to note that the member opposite was speaking to a large group, he said there was no substantive action. That's simply not true. The Minister of Health pointed out a series of actions that we're going to be undertaking. We are seeing in the Valley the result of things like prescription monitoring where the supply of prescription drugs that are on the market are actually going down. This is important.

Certainly the district health authority in the area understands this issue. They are working with the Department of Health, they are working with the minister in order to see to it that that very serious problem is being addressed.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier stated there are fewer pills on the streets of the Annapolis Valley and that typically happens when public awareness is heightened. However, he failed to address the question I posed yesterday around robberies involving pharmacies and the issue of public safety. It's ironic, over six weeks ago before public awareness around this issue ever started, before we ever resumed sitting in the Legislature, advocacy groups warned health officials of this problem around the issue of public safety.

Flash forward to this past weekend and what do we experience in the Valley? A robbery at a pharmacy - this government was once again warned. What plan does the Minister of Justice intend to implement to ensure the safety of all Nova Scotians during this period of transition of previously enabled addicts who now have no option to obtain these highly addictive pills other than to rob a drug store or victimize a valid user?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, my understanding was that he was asking the Minister of Justice. Of course, as was pointed out, this issue came to the attention of the government as a result of the chief of police raising it in the letter, which has not been much talked about. Certainly the chief of police understands the issues around addictions and around the problems associated with that phenomenon in his community. I have faith in the chief of police and in their officers to ensure that they provide adequate protection to the people of their community.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, let's recap. We have a response dated 15 months ago with no clear public indication of any recommendations coming forward, we have had warnings to health officials of threats to public safety, and no obvious plan by the Minister of Justice to address it. The whole nub of the problem is access to treatment - fix that and

many of the issues will be mitigated and become more manageable. Addicts need treatment today. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, will the minister confirm that Dr. Gould's report will contain recommendations, both short-term and long-term recommendations, around access to treatment in the Valley?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as you know, I've asked the Medical Officer of Health for the Annapolis Valley to look into the facts of the situation. I anticipate that I will have his preliminary report by May 9<sup>th</sup> and I do believe that included in that will be his preliminary findings, at least with respect to treatment services in the Annapolis Valley.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**COM. SERV.: SHELTER ALLOWANCE  
- SHORTFALL**

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Last week during budget debates for her department, we heard once again, for the fifth year, that there will be no shelter component allowance increase. The average rent in my community for a one-bedroom in a somewhat decent living condition, in a somewhat safe part of Dartmouth North - you'll pay upwards of \$600 to \$650 a month. With the basic shelter allowance for a single person who may have health issues, addiction issues or who may be considered disabled, you'll receive \$535 for your shelter.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, where does she and her government think these folks will make up the additional cost for their shelter allowance?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for his question. We certainly know there are difficulties and challenges with respect to shelter rates in this province but we also understand that the solution is in a multiple plan of action. For the first time in the history of Nova Scotia, you have a government that understands that and that is why this government has invested in many different programs, from the Affordable Living Tax Credit to the Poverty Reduction Credit, to an increase of 22 per cent in the Child Tax Benefit, and also an increase, again, in the IA rates. I would probably use up the entire time of Question Period to list all the multiple action plans that we have implemented in this province.

MR. ZINCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, with rents slated to increase again this May and June for many in my community, the rising food costs and, of course, the power rates about to go up once again, the Poverty Reduction Credits, the Affordable Living Tax Credits just don't add up every three months when you have to pay your rent every month. I want to ask the minister, does she believe that income assistance recipients deserve to pay 60 per cent of their income towards their shelter allowance?



MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, if you look at this budget, the 2011-12 budget, we have seen in this province a major investment that has not been seen in decades and that's what we talked about with the multiple plan. For example, you can take an individual now, and if they were able to take what we have presented, it will equal, in one year, an increase, for an individual in this province, of \$700 more in their pocket, in a year. You can also take a single mom with two children and now what she will be receiving, because of this government, is over \$2,300. I think that's quite an investment. We know that we're working hard to make a difference and we're going forward, but there is not one person on that other side of this House who can stand here today and talk about any type of those kinds of multiple investments.

MR. ZINCK: The last round of federal funding of the \$128 million saw some great benefits to the existing housing stock, while also creating many new units across the province. Those funds will soon be depleted and with the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act still under review, rents continue to rise. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, will she commit to ensuring that the shelter component is seriously taken into consideration during the ESIA review, in light of market value rental units consistently increasing each year?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, what the member has to understand is that history has shown that when you increase the shelter rates, what happens is there's a negative effect because landlords increase the rates, so we're not going to go there. We understand that it's a multiple plan. The last increase in shelter rates, in 2005, was only \$50 and in 2006, \$20. There was no increase since then, but you put that together with the lack of investment in any other area from the previous government, the result is the poor situation that we found ourselves in when we came into government. We changed that. We have a multiple-plan approach and last year we invested \$70 million in our tax programs along with, just last week, another \$22 million that will be rolled out over the next three years. No one else on the other side can even get near those figures. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

**COM. SERV. - TRURO FOOD BANK: USAGE INCREASE  
- EXPLAIN**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we are seeing that life isn't getting better for many low-income Nova Scotians. CBC is reporting that 800 families in Truro are using a food bank each month, up from 500 only one year ago. We also know that over half of the users of food banks in Nova Scotia are on income assistance, which tells us that ends just aren't meeting for many people. Although the government has increased income assistance rates by \$26 per month for some families, this amount is quickly swallowed up by the HST, electricity and service fee increases. In fact, many of the clients in Truro stated that they simply can't afford the cost of groceries, gas and electricity - their basic needs. My question is, if the Minister of Community Services is confident that her government is

making life better for Nova Scotians, how will she explain the 60 per cent increase in usage at the Truro food bank?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we do understand that the price of food has risen and it is affecting everyone in the Province of Nova Scotia. That's why we have focused on the multiple-action plan that I just spoke about and those increased dollars that are rolling out to help families throughout this province.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on November 17<sup>th</sup> of last year, when asked about the increasing reliance on food banks in Nova Scotia, the Minister of Community Services stated that there are many difficult times and that food banks are doing a fabulous job to help us in the Province of Nova Scotia. There is no question many volunteers are ensuring food banks are doing very good work, but there is a problem when more and more Nova Scotians are being forced to rely on them. My question is, will the Minister of Community Services explain why she doesn't have a specific plan to support food banks even though she has acknowledged their importance in this House?

MR. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the important fact is that we have a plan that we have been rolling out and people have seen that action in terms of the increased number of dollars in many different areas. We've also increased the ability for individuals who are on IA to work and to keep more money. Those people with disabilities that has actually doubled in their monthly income ability to work and bring in more income.

We really respect what the food banks do and it's our hope with our multiple strategies that we can go forward and that someday we will have a society that we will not need to have food banks. But it will be this government that will make those strides forward because the other governments were spinning their tires for many many years.

MR. MACLELLAN: The coordinator of the Colchester Food Bank told CBC, "There are not that many jobs out. There are layoffs and a lot more layoffs coming . . ." Gasoline prices are up almost 19 per cent since last year, food costs have increased by 3.3 per cent. Yet we see no clear signs that the government's actions are addressing the root causes of increased food bank usage.

My question to the minister is, if the plan is working will the Minister of Community Services commit to ensuring food bank usage goes down in the province by next year?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder where we would be today if it wasn't for this government in terms of the food banks. We do need their support and we're working together and we appreciate what they do but as I've said we have made multiple differences in terms of where we have invested our money.

In fact just last week we increased the child tax benefit by 22 per cent. However, the member who just questioned me - when his Party was in government, they clawed back the tax benefit for children so I think they should look into the mirror (Interruptions)

AN HONOURBLE MEMBER: You always save the insults for last.

MR. MACLELLAN: You should have said that earlier so I could have responded.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, they passed status agreement not us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**ERD & TOURISM: STUDENT CAREER SKILLS DEV. PROG.  
- REDUCTION EXPLAIN**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, rural out-migration is having a devastating impact on communities throughout Nova Scotia. Many of our students leave to attend university or community college and do not return. One of the important tools in providing students with summer employment as well as allowing them to work with local non profit organizations has been the Student Career Skills Development Program. This program partners with not-for-profit organizations to create career related summer jobs for post-secondary students. The jobs will be distributed across the province based on population and unemployment for each county, that's what stated on the government website.

Mr. Speaker, Richmond County is being allocated nine student positions down from the 15 positions in 2009. My question is, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism explain what change in population or unemployment took place in Richmond County to warrant such as reduction?

HON. PERCY PARIS: With respect to that summer employment program, we base it on unemployment. So when a member asks a question about a particular area or region it's done on a comparative basis so we look at all the regions as a whole and the unemployment in those particular regions and they would get a rating based on.

What we've done this year with that particular program is that we have increased the amount of funding. However having said that, the demand for that program has increased enormously and if the member would like, I'd more than willing to have a look at Richmond County on an individual basis.

MR. SAMSON: There's actually been some interesting developments this year in where positions have been granted under the Student Career Skills Development Program. For example in Queens it went from one position in 2009 to nine positions this year. Shelburne went from eight positions in 2009 to 17 positions this year. Lunenburg went from 12 positions in 2009 to 30 this year and Antigonish doubled from six in 2009 to 12 this year. (Interruptions)

Now, Mr. Speaker, in case you didn't notice, these are all NDP Government-held ridings. My question is, will the Minister for Economic and Rural Development and Tourism explain what population or unemployment changes took place in Queens, Shelburne, Lunenburg and Antigonish to justify the significant increase in student positions under the Student Career Skills Development Program? (Applause)

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite, I've already said that the criteria for summer employment is based on employment rates in particular regions. That said, there's no politics involved here. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, that may have been the way of past governments, I can't speak to that, but certainly for this government, politics does not play a role. (Interruptions)

MR. SAMSON: Yes, I find that funny, too, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, I asked the minister to provide us with the statistics that he has relied upon and I would hope that he will provide the House with that to show the sudden increase in unemployment rates in Queens, Shelburne, Lunenburg and Antigonish that this program is based on. I'm sure that is something we would all want to know.

Mr. Speaker, having a cut in Richmond County from 15 to nine is truly a double whammy, because not only does it make it more difficult for university students to find employment, it makes it that much more of a challenge for the not-for-profit organizations that rely so heavily on these students, especially during the summer months. Two organizations, for example, that have been told no by this minister are Telile, a community cable station which is so important to social, cultural and economic development of our county, as well as the St. Peter's Lions Marina which runs the community station in St. Peter's, as well as the marina at the entrance to the Bras d'Or Lakes.

So my final supplementary to the minister is, is he prepared to review again the statistics on population and unemployment in Richmond County to hopefully increase the amount of student positions being awarded to our county this summer?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, through you for the information of all members of the House, this year we created 535 summer job placements. That's an increase. I think last year it was 400-something. (Interruptions) I will say this and this is for information for all members of the House. If they know of anyone who has applied for summer employment

and it has been denied, there is an appeal process and I would advise everybody to utilize that process. (Applause)

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

**PREM. - BUREAUCRACY: GROWTH PLAN  
- ABANDON**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, last week CBC News reported that about 800 people in Truro were using the food bank and that's up 500 people from a year ago. It was reported in November of 2010 the number of people using the food banks in Nova Scotia was up 33 per cent since 2008.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Will the government abandon its plan to grow the government bureaucracy by over 600 FTEs and instead develop a meaningful way to help Nova Scotians feed and care for themselves?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the reality is that the number of provincial employees is going down; that's being done through attrition. It's being done in a reasonable way but, you know, I'm sure, like everyone, I was distressed to see the comments that were attributed to the Prime Minister when he said that poverty is the responsibility of the provinces and not the jurisdiction of the federal government. I was very disturbed by that. (Applause)

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, food banks are struggling to meet the demand as more people continue to flood their doors. It's not just people who are unable to find work who are forced to use the food bank but it's also hardworking Nova Scotians who work every day and are having to make the difficult choices between having shelter with heat and electricity or having food on their tables. The rising costs of goods and services coupled with the highest taxes in the county, is crippling Nova Scotians who are working harder and taking home less. Fees are increased; electricity is going up.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is, will this government balance the budget now, so it can provide meaningful tax relief to Nova Scotians sooner?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's astounding, really. The reality is that this is a government that is focused on making sure that the people, especially those vulnerable people in our society, are protected. We brought in the Affordability Living Tax Credit; we brought in the Disability Tax Credit; we took the HST off of home energy; we took it off of children's clothing, shoes - all of these were designed to try and help those people who have the most difficulty trying to make ends meet.

This is a government that is sensitive to the fact that every time there is an increase in the consumer prices, it affects those at the lowest end of the income scale most profoundly, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are taking the actions that we are taking.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier needs a tour down reality lane. It is his government that increased taxes by 2 per cent in this province, and it is his government that raised over 1,400 user fees. All of these are being paid by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia - and he has nothing to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, with rising fuel costs affecting the cost of food and Nova Scotians' ability to get to grocery stores that are long distances (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACLEOD: It's very interesting how much the Minister of Finance has to say when it comes to somebody over here telling him the same kinds of things that he used to flap his lips about. (Applause) And I believe that is parliamentary. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, with rising fuel costs affecting the costs of food and Nova Scotians' ability to get to grocery stores that are long distances away, my question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture. What is this government doing to help people buy local produce that is grown closer to their own homes?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member opposite, if anyone, should be aware of Select Nova Scotia, which was a program shaped by the NDP in Opposition and brought in by the Progressive Conservatives when they were in government. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACDONELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent polling of Nova Scotians on their awareness of Select Nova Scotia, 33 per cent of respondents said they were well aware and are engaged in buying local. There is no government doing more to engage Nova Scotians and promote buying local in their area.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**ENVIRON. - DAVID SUZUKI FDN.: WATERWAYS PROTECTION  
- LETTER**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, recently the Premier received a letter from the David Suzuki Foundation, along with other concerned groups, urging this

government to take action to protect Nova Scotia's precious waterways. The foundation says that because government has not performed due diligence in dealing with the causes of serious nutrient pollution along the Wentworth-Carleton, Meteghan and Sissiboo river systems, that the government is putting our environment in jeopardy and acting contrary to the province's own water strategy.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. Is he aware of this letter and what action has he taken, as minister, to address these concerns?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, through you, I want to tell the member that I'm very aware of this particular issue and I just want to give a brief history lesson to the honourable member. This government has been in power for 22 months and this is a very complex issue, we're taking this very seriously and we appreciate the importance of this water, whether it's fresh water or salt water. We're going to do the right things for the people in Nova Scotia.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, according to John Werring of the David Suzuki Foundation, nutrient levels like those found in these water systems are, "... unheard of under normal circumstances . . . When we see those kinds of levels we take proactive measures to protect the environment and public health by building treatment facilities. Why that is not being done here is beyond comprehension."

My question to the minister is, why isn't this government treating these polluted water systems and working to reverse the damage that has been done to them by nutrient pollution?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, we have met a number of times with the stakeholders, with the communities and we are moving forward. The report that you're talking about, we support that as a most probable cause of the nutrient loading into that particular river system. I can assure you again, in 22 months, this particular government has done more than the previous ones have done in decades.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis that needs immediate attention. There have been three major studies conducted by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment on this issue. The province has a water quality strategy and yet we still see no tangible action from the NDP; we still wait. Our waterways are our most precious and valuable resource. Our very existence is contingent on access to clean water. However, as 2008 federal report on water quality indicates, we may be faced with increasing scarcity and diminishing quality of our fresh water.

This is an increasing concern for many of my constituents who use and live along our waterways. My question to the minister is, will this government act immediately to treat the Wentworth-Carleton, Meteghan and Sissiboo River systems and protect them from future contamination?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear of the timeframe, we've been in office, 22 months. We've dealt more with this very complex issue. We have introduced a new regulation to deal with this particular sector and we're moving forward with those regulations. I want to point out that this particular minister takes this very seriously, whether it's fresh water or salt water. We have put protection in to protect Georges Bank and we'll do the same thing for the Carleton watershed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis. (Applause)

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE: SWORDFISHING IND.  
- CERTIFICATION**

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, thank you to all the people in the House for that wonderful welcome. My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The swordfish industry in Nova Scotia is worth more than \$12 million each year and is an important economic driver for some coastal communities. Recently, we've learned that some organizations are opposed to the industry obtaining the certification saying that it is an eco-friendly business. My question to the minister is, what is government doing to make sure the sword-fishing industry of the province receives this certification?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I want to tell you we're doing a lot. We know that the certification is very important to this particular sector. Anybody who wants to be familiar with this particular industry, I suggest that you go out and get the movie *The Perfect Storm* because this is the industry that is represented in that movie. We have dealt with a number of sectors through Nova Scotia and we'll continue to work with it and I thank the member opposite for the question.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, yes, I'm quite acquainted with *The Perfect Storm*; I've been in the odd one myself. A draft report recently released, states that the industry is sustainable. The Nova Scotia Swordfishermen's Association is applying with the Marine Stewardship Council. It is important for the industry to obtain this certification if it's to remain competitive. My question is, what consultations have you had with the association and will your government help them in their applications?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, again to the member opposite, I want to table a document that actually outlines the amount of money. If I can see it here, it's \$57,420 that we helped out the longline and the harpoon fleet in this particular sector. There are a number of different particular industries that are identified here, I understand the length of time and I will table this and hopefully the member can review this. Thank you.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, the longline fishery has been a tradition and one that has created jobs and economic development for the fishers of this province for many years. Like most of the fisheries though it's in danger and this certification will help ensure



that the swordfish fishery is not lost. My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to supporting this application in writing and help the association obtain this certification?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I tabled the document that we have financially supported this particular sector and a number of other sectors across Nova Scotia. I just want to point out how important this particular certification is because we are in a global market and if we do not have this particular certification, there is a possibility that they'll see some stormy conditions. I can assure you that it's going to be smooth sailing for our fishing sector. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - NSCC STRAIT CAMPUS:  
LPN PROG. - FUNDING**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the Strait Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College has achieved great success with its new licensed practical nurse program. It has taken the two-year program and merged it into an 18-month course. Graduates of this program have helped fill a need in our health care system, especially due to a high number of recent retirements. Unfortunately the future of the licensed practical nursing program at the Strait campus is in doubt. My question is, will the Minister of Health and Wellness advise whether her department and her government will continue funding for this program at the Strait campus?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The previous government had a continuing care strategy to open new nursing home beds and replace a number of beds. That strategy required an increase in the number of LPNs available to work in that sector. As a result, the Department of Health and Wellness invested additional money to fast track LPN training around the province and the Strait campus of Nova Scotia Community College was one of those areas that had this program.

I believe the second cohort from that program will be graduating in January of the upcoming year. We will assess what our need is for additional LPNs as we see what happens in the sector.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the licensed practical nursing program at the Nova Scotia Community College, Strait campus, has already graduated 30 students, as the minister has indicated, with the next 30 due to graduate in January 2012. Currently, a number of students are enrolled in the Academic & Career Connections program with the hope of entering the LPN program in January 2012. Those students are hoping the minister will be able to give an indication very soon so they can make some career choices as they move forward.

The results show that most of the first graduates from this program have found employment in the Strait area, allowing them to stay home and work home. If this program is not offered at the Strait campus they'll be forced to leave to study in another area, reducing the likelihood that they will return home to work. My question again is, will the Minister of Health and Wellness advise what steps her government is taking to ensure the LPN program remains for another year at the Strait campus?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it is the case that we want to make sure that we have the right mix and the right numbers of health professionals in the right places to deliver care throughout Nova Scotia. We've had a very good nursing strategy. The LPN portion of that strategy will be reviewed and as we go forward with the next round of continuing care planning for our health care sector, we will work very closely with the community college system and my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, as we plan for the future of this program.

MR. SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly want to commend Principal Tom Gunn at the Strait Campus and the entire staff there for the work they have been able to do and how quickly, how on a very short notice, they were able to put this program together and certainly, the quality graduates who are coming out of it.

The challenge - and I appreciate the minister saying they want to review this but we all know that sometimes government reviewing things can take a significant amount of time - is that you have students who have chosen to go back to school and have entered the Academic & Career Connections program to upgrade their marks in specific programs and they are now going to be graduating shortly and having to make decisions as to where they are going to go in their career. Many of them want to go into the LPN program but right now they're left in doubt as to whether it will be available in January 2012.

My final question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, is she prepared today to commit to a specific date as to when she will advise the community college at the Strait Campus as to whether the LPN program will be renewed for January 2012?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to commend the principal and the staff at the community college in the Strait. It's a beautiful facility, they do a very excellent job in terms of the education that they provide to the students who go through this and other programs. We very much look forward to continuing to work with them and we will be assessing what the needs will be in the long-term care sector, with a view specifically to looking at the opening of new beds that are going to be happening in Port Hawkesbury, in Inverness and in other parts of the community, as we plan for our health human resources in the future.

The community college system will be a vital part of training health care staff, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask a question about C. difficile in Cape Breton hospitals. Maybe what I'll do is I'll save that up for tomorrow and get the minister to answer the question at that time. Thank you very much.

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

### **OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 10.

#### **Bill No. 10 - Electricity Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 10, the Electricity Act, amended, and just very briefly, it's more commonly referred to as the issue of renewable-to-retail sales. The bill, in essence, would allow renewable energy suppliers to sell directly to consumers in the province, which would be a partial opening of the market.

This is obviously a very timely issue at the moment as we watch power bills increasing. We've seen, not even including the current rate increase application, power bills have increased 36 per cent since 2002, over seven rate increases. That is in addition to the efficiency tax that was added by this government during that time and actually takes into account the HST decrease. It has still gone up 36 per cent, even with that HST change.

Madam Speaker, this issue goes back, in fact, to at least 2003, when the government had a report commissioned through the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee. That committee in their recommendations stated, ". . . any seller offering electricity from renewable resources . . . be able to sell directly to electricity customers."

Mr. Speaker, it's eight years later, almost nine years later, since that initial application, numerous ministers, and nothing has been done. So this is the time to look at

this. The government has spoken frequently about the need to move our energy mix from coal, what is effectively a dirty coal technology, imported coal, to more stable prices that can come from renewable energy but what we've seen is that there are a number of issues related to renewable energy suppliers. One of them is the access to the grid, a second one is access to capital.

What happens, and many renewable energy suppliers have indicated - and this is why this recommendation came out well before its time - that allowing a renewable energy supplier to sell directly to consumers provides the opportunity for a renewable energy supplier to raise capital on the markets because they know that they will have a revenue supply to pay for these things. It also allows these suppliers to compete directly with Nova Scotia Power for the provision of energy on the grid.

Now, Madam Speaker, this is a significant change in the way that energy is done and the reason why the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee recommended this to government a number of years ago was because they could see that fossil-fuel energy prices were going to increase dramatically over the years, and that's exactly what they've done. I'm sure that everybody in this House would agree that that trend on the fossil-fuel side will continue.

So the question that you have to look at is how do you get as many renewable energy suppliers into the marketplace at the best possible price and at the most efficient price? So the things that you need to do, or you need to look at, where is the most efficient place to locate those renewable energy suppliers? How are you best able to ensure financing for those renewable energy suppliers and what are the options available to ensure that that price is as competitive as possible and that you don't encourage non-efficient renewable energy? This is why the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee, as well as a number of other researchers over the years, have recommended this to government and have recommended it repeatedly to government that this opens the door and allows these suppliers to sell directly to a consumer.

So let me give you an example. We're aware that Atlantic Superstores, for example, have put up a number of wind turbines around the province on their properties. They're able to provide that energy only to their own stores. They are not allowed to transfer any excess energy beyond the property boundary that they have. If you take our industrial parks, if a group of businesses wanted to get together and put a small wind development or a solar development, or geothermal development, or any other renewable energy source on a parcel of land in an industrial park and sell that among themselves, they would be prohibited by law currently from doing that because the energy cannot be transferred beyond the property boundaries unless they are under a power purchase agreement or under the coming feed-in tariff program. Neither the power purchase agreement nor the feed-in tariff program addresses the issue which the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee was concerned about, and that was ensuring that

customers always know and that Nova Scotians always know that renewable energy is supplied at the most competitive price.

Now, you will have seen comments recently from Nova Scotia Power, at the Utility and Review Board hearing, suggesting that they have proven that they can provide this energy more cheaply than anybody else. They have suggested that the URB hearings prove that when, in fact, it doesn't because what has happened and if we take a look at the Digby Wind Farm, as an example, what happened in the Digby Wind Farm was it became very difficult for SkyPower, and subsequently Chebucto WindField, to gain financing. Scotian WindField was one of the companies that actually came to the Resources Committee not that long ago and reminded the committee members - and we could look up the Hansard to see this - that one of the things that could have ensured that they could have delivered that project was, in fact, the ability for renewable suppliers to sell directly to consumers because it would have allowed them to raise the financing necessary. The structure under the power purchase agreement did not allow them to raise the financing. So had this been in place, Nova Scotia Power would not necessarily have been the cheapest supplier of renewable energy and Nova Scotia Power would have been forced to compete for the delivery of renewables.

Now, one might argue, why not open this to all energy supplies? Well, I would hope that all members of the House would agree that any benefits or additional leg up that we might want to give to the energy industry should only be given to renewable energy suppliers. Not that anybody would likely build a coal plant today but you don't want somebody saying, oh I can sell directly to consumers, I'm going to go build a coal plant. You only want to do this on the renewable side.

There are and there will always be projects that Nova Scotia Power is better able to produce or deliver. There will always be projects that might be best delivered through a feed and tariff program, whether through some version of the governments one or some other one. But on the large scale projects, we look at Nuttby Wind Farm or even if we were to look at the NewPage biomass project, or if we were to look at the Digby Wind Farm or any of these larger projects. They can be competitively delivered to Nova Scotians for potentially lower rates at a competitive basis if this passes.

That's why, well before it's time, as I was saying, in 2003, before we were even dealing with the major spikes we are seeing today, the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee recommended this to government as something that it must move forward on. Here we are almost nine years later and no government has yet to move forward on it and that's a concern.

We've now heard that from the growing number of renewable energy suppliers, producers and industry in this province. One after another, they have been coming forward and saying, this is one of the tools that they need in their tool box. This is one of the tools that they need to deliver that.

When we look at what the options are to deliver more competitive rates, more stable rates, we need to look at a whole basket of goods. That basket of goods will obviously include the stabilisation that can come from renewable energy supply. It has to look at things like auditing Nova Scotia Power for value for performance, it has to look at things like examining the rate of return for Nova Scotia Power as we hear that they are looking for an increase in that rate of return. But another tool in that basket of goods has to be the ability to deliver renewable to retail sales. That is critical in this whole piece.

We would have been breaking ground in 2003 if it had been done then. We are not at this point. New Brunswick has already done this and has moved forward in this vein and the building that our caucus office is in, and ironically the building that the Department of Energy is in, the Bank of Montreal Tower, is powered by Bullfrog Power. They have to buy their energy from New Brunswick to offset because renewable to retail legislation does not exist in Nova Scotia.

There is a corporate customer, a landlord, who is trying to do good by replacing their energy with renewable energy and yet they have to go to New Brunswick to buy it because the legislation in Nova Scotia currently does not permit them to do that. This type of legislation would permit that and the many businesses around Nova Scotia that are moving to organizations such as Bullfrog Power. Who probably think they're buying power in Nova Scotia, would then have that ability to see that investment here in Nova Scotia, and see that money spent here in Nova Scotia on Nova Scotia opportunities, on Nova Scotia jobs and this would be an important tool in spurring the green economy in this province.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time of the House and I do hope that at some point we see this issue move forward.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy. (Applause)

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure today to rise in the House to speak on Bill No. 10 - An Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2004, the Electricity Act, Respecting Renewable Energy Producers. I want to thank the honourable member from Dartmouth East for bringing this forward and giving us an opportunity here to debate this particular bill in the House on the opening up of the electricity market.

If I understand the member correctly, the amendment would open the electricity market to competition and allow power producers to sell renewable electricity directly to customers and let the market determine the price that would be charged.

Madam Speaker, I can say there's nothing wrong with an open market, certainly providing that the conditions exist to support it. Those conditions would be lots of buyers, lots of sellers, and a method to bring them together - in this case, good transmission

systems across a wide area and non-variable sources of electricity to balance the intermittent nature of renewable sources of energy would be required.

In Nova Scotia we do not have those conditions. Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia is one of the smallest electricity markets in North America and I believe our transmission system could not support that kind of open market that the honourable member is proposing. We just don't have the population base here that is required. We also do not have a multiple source of renewable electricity over large expanses to ensure the reliability of the system and an unlimited amount of low-cost, clean energy supplies in the province.

Madam Speaker, intermittent renewables still have limits, and when the wind is blowing in one area of the province it is probably blowing right across the province, and the opposite of that is true as well. When it is not blowing it is calm, most likely, across Nova Scotia.

The third condition that must exist is good transmission connections, as I had just mentioned, and I use the analogy of a highway system. If you started out in Cape Breton on a four-lane highway and moved along perhaps into Pictou County and it narrowed down to two lanes and then went along further into the Valley and perhaps only one lane, then that system is not going to be able to bear the load. It works fine for the current system we have in the province, coming back to electricity, but I don't think it'll work for an open-market concept.

Now, under certain conditions it can work. In the New York-Pennsylvania area, which is one of the busiest transmission corridors in the world, the open-market system works just fine for them. But, Madam Speaker, here in Nova Scotia we've already tested an open market system - and perhaps the honourable members are not aware of that, but since 2007 we've opened up the wholesale electricity market in Nova Scotia to competition and to date no eligible renewable electricity has been supplied at a price comparable to Nova Scotia Power rates. Of course I'm talking about the six municipalities that produce their own power here in Nova Scotia.

I'm not here to criticize the member's idea and I'm not saying that it doesn't have some merit, and I guess you could say never say never. But Madam Speaker, looking at the big picture and under the current conditions that exist in Nova Scotia, I just don't think that an open market is the answer here for ratepayers in the province. You cannot build a house without first building a foundation. That's what this government is doing when it comes to electricity. We are taking actions and we are making decisions that support the conditions for an open market, so that one day down the road, and if the government of the day so desires, the conditions will exist then to support it.

Madam Speaker, what we are doing here in Nova Scotia is, we're working to ensure that our electricity rates remain stable, that we're lowering our greenhouse gas emissions, and we're lowering our mercury emissions. In actual fact, we are undertaking

an energy transformation in Nova Scotia that is leading the world in its ambition. We want to stop our reliance on imported coal, and the uncertain cost of that - and which generates our electricity at this time. I believe we have many good alternatives to expensive coal. We have a wealth of natural resources from our own water, from our air, from our land.

Just a few short years ago, Madam Speaker, we relied almost entirely on coal for our electricity production - it was well over 75 per cent. Today that has been reduced down to 65 per cent and dropping as we're using cleaner burning natural gas and a number of renewable. By 2020, 40 per cent of our electricity will come from sources like wind and hydro, tidal and biomass, and another 20 per cent could come from natural gas, especially if prices remain competitive. That makes our energy situation more secure and helps keep our electricity costs in check and it builds our local economies.

Last year our wind power capacity in the province more than doubled. We now have 160 wind turbines able to deliver power to the grid, and that number has been increasing month by month. At the same time, we are investing and reducing the amount of energy that we use. Our efforts are particularly focused on large users of electricity and also on low-income Nova Scotians who are least able to afford to pay for electricity. Between 2007 and 2011 demand has decreased by approximately 4 per cent across the province.

The third leg of the province's energy strategy is natural gas. It's cleaner, it's cheaper, it provides a firm back up to renewables and it is local. Making sure that we maximize the potential of our onshore and our offshore oil and gas industries is a very important priority of this government. We believe that the best road to energy security is a portfolio approach, combining wind, hydro, tidal, bio-mass, solar and natural gas.

Just this morning, as was mentioned in Question Period, I had the opportunity to speak to OTANS - the Offshore/Onshore Technologies Association of Nova Scotia - about the Play Fairway Analysis. That's a study that we plan to start sharing with the oil and gas industry around the world to attract new investment here in our province. Some of you may be aware that we spent \$15 million out of the Crown Share Settlement with Ottawa to develop a new industry-standard, geological picture of our offshore with the goal of reinvigorating our exploration efforts. That work was commissioned by the OETR - the Offshore Energy Technical Research Association - on behalf of our government.

The analysis phase of that project is finished and the results are very positive. The bottom line is that the study indicates there could be 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas lying off our shores and as many as eight billion barrels of oil. Oil is certainly a new player in our offshore but we're not taking that for granted; we're going to continue to do some technical assessment and to quantify these findings. Those are very large numbers and could provide a lot of jobs for Nova Scotians and a lot of royalties to the province.



We believe our potential there now is at least three times what was estimated previously and perhaps even higher. Clearly, oil and natural gas have a role to play but we still have a lot of work in marketing what we've found and to generate new activity within the industry. As I mentioned earlier, I'll be only too glad to be able to look out my window at the office of Energy and see a rig or two in the harbour getting ready to be towed out to the offshore and spud a new well and create new economic development here in the province.

I can tell you that we have a balanced approach to our energy needs here in the province. Our government is working towards improving our transmission system by partnering in the development of the Muskrat Falls phase of the Lower Churchill project and that project will strengthen our transmission system across Nova Scotia, create capacity for transmission into the United States. We're working collaboratively with our neighbours to enhance the regional system and create the connections necessary to develop and transmit renewable energy over the entire region, increasing the customer base and adding multiple sources of power to balance the intermittent nature of renewables.

In the short to medium term we are working at expanding our network at the local level, supporting the construction of community-based power projects that can tie in at the distribution level. We've established the first community-fit tariff program in the world and the COMFIT, a unique program for locally based electricity projects that will provide local economic development in the rural parts of our province.

I know my time is just about up and I just want to close - that we do have a very balanced approach to energy production in this province. We think we have what is working and it's a balance between renewables, non-renewables, conservation and energy efficiency. We will continue to provide that leadership as we move forward to provide stable pricing for Nova Scotians, residential and business. It's a carefully planned process and I think, in the end, we have a plan and we're going to stick to it.

I want to thank Madam Speaker and I thank the honourable member for bringing the bill forward and the few minutes to talk about it.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak to Bill No. 10. I would like to start by congratulating the member for Dartmouth East for bringing this bill forward, for introducing it into the Legislature. I know he has done a lot of work on this bill and in the area of electricity generation, renewable and otherwise, more generally. I do want to thank him and congratulate him for providing at least some practical suggestions on what can be done to get Nova Scotians off the current treadmill of ever-higher electricity rates, to aim

us in the direction of a day where we can generate more of our own supply from a larger number of sources and transmit it for use around our province.

After all, Madam Speaker, what we need at this time in Nova Scotia are some practical suggestions about how to get off that treadmill and on toward that better day. Lord knows we're not getting it from the NDP who are stuck on the current mode. The proof is in the pudding, as they say. As we see power rates going higher and higher, as we see competition squelched, as we see regulations that are brought forward where we hear all the benefits, but are brought forward without any regard to the cost, I think Nova Scotians are crying out for at least some practical suggestions.

I say this without regard to any ideology. In fact, I think Nova Scotians want practical, non-ideological solutions to the path that we are now on - ideas that support competition when it's practical, and that lead to more sustainable and lower priced and greener sources of power along the way. So I do want to thank the member for bringing forward some ideas in this area, which is a very important area to Nova Scotia households and Nova Scotia business.

Now, I did say that we don't want to be ideological about this and that would generally drive us all towards increased competition for the supply of energy but we want to be practical, Madam Speaker. I just want to draw to the attention of the House that opening up competition in the way that this bill proposes has not, in fact, in other jurisdictions resulted in lower priced power. I don't say that to be critical of the bill necessarily, only that we need to ensure that the bill aims to do what we all hope it will do, which is to provide us with that sustainable and lower priced power.

Municipalities in Nova Scotia, for example, Madam Speaker, municipal generators of electricity do have this very right, right now, to sell renewable, municipally-generated energy directly to consumers. The fact of the matter is, no one is doing this, or very few people are doing this, because at the end of the day the price of that power is higher, even higher than the price that Nova Scotians are paying from other sources today. In all other jurisdictions around North America that have opened up partial competition to allow for independent generation of renewable energy, as laudable a goal as that is, the result has been more competition but higher prices. Both because small independent players are not able to generate the economies of scale that result in lower pricing and because they go off the grid, those who remain on the grid are faced with higher tolling charges as well. Again, I raise this only as food for thought as we look for that better day when we can have sustainable green power at a lower price.

So I think it's fair to say that our view is Bill No. 10 is a practical suggestion, but it does need some work. It certainly encourages private production of renewable energy. That is a good thing. The NDP like to set goals for these things without any regard to who's going to pay for it. At the end of the day, if we have a bill that encourages private investors, big or small, to invest their own private capital to produce renewable energy, then surely

that is a good thing. If we can get to that day where they can do that at a price that is competitive with Nova Scotia Power in our case, all the better. That is the positive of the bill, that it will allow some of those things to happen. Unfortunately today, I don't think we should hold up a false hope that the bill will result in lower rates. That has not been the experience of every other jurisdiction in North America that has tried this route. It is not yet the experience here in Nova Scotia with municipal, renewable power generators.

So we need some work, but so too does the alternative that is being worked on today. Feed-in tariffs into the electricity grid, into the Nova Scotia Power transmission system, also need work because they are not doing what we hoped they would do, which is the same thing: to encourage small, independent, renewable, green power producers, whether they're hydro or wind or tidal or what have you, to invest their own resources in order to sell at a profitable rate as a feed-in into the existing grid. So that, too, needs some more work because Nova Scotians want practical, real solutions. That is not to say that we should do nothing. In fact, we need to step on the gas pedal to get this right. We need to work both on Bill No. 10, which is before us today, to ensure that it does what we all hope it will do, and we need to work on the feed-in tariff regime in the hopes that we can get that structure to a place where it does what we all hope it can do.

There are other things that we can do in the immediate time frame, including intervening in the URB, something that both Opposition Parties have called on the government repeatedly over the last two days to do, something that is its duty, I believe, as an elected representative government of the people, to speak up on their behalf when higher rate applications come before the Utility and Review Board, something that two days in we're still waiting for the government to say whether they will or not, something that we're stepping up to do anyway. If they won't, then we will because that's what we're elected to do, to make sure that the people's voice is heard. When power rates, something that is so important to our households and to our small businesses, are going up and up and up, that is something that every Party in this House can do today that the government still has not said they will do, which is shocking because normally governments do intervene.

In addition, we can ensure that we have smart regulation of our power producers and of the transmission system, that when we propose new targets, that when we come up with new ideas as beneficial as they may be about streetlights or other targets, that we make sure we explain to Nova Scotians not just the benefits - as great as they may be - but that we're also upfront with Nova Scotians about the cost in increased power rates, because today they're only getting half the story. The Minister of Energy says they want a balanced approach. I don't see how it's a balanced approach when you tell them only half the story.

The fact of the matter is that power rates are going up for a variety of reasons. The government likes to point the finger at world markets for coal and other things. That is again only half the story, that there are decisions that have been made by this government that have had a direct impact on rising power rates and when we ask for that information,

the government denies it. That is not a balanced approach when only half the story is given.

Finally, it is important that we attack this problem of rising energy costs on a regional basis. I think we can all imagine the day when Newfoundland and Labrador hydro, when New Brunswick nuclear, and when Nova Scotia tidal and wind power are all put together in the same basket of diversified energy generation sources, so we get to that day when we can turn energy pricing from a disadvantage for our province and for our whole region into a competitive advantage that houses, households and businesses can benefit from long-term fixed price, stable, competitively-priced green electricity, from all of those sources.

That is that better day that we want to get to, but between now and then Nova Scotians deserve more than lofty words from the government - they deserve practical suggestions, they deserve practical intervention, they deserve practical regulation, and practical steps that will get them from here to there. Bill No. 10, although not perfect, is at least an honourable suggestion to get us there.

I will conclude again by commending the member for Dartmouth East for doing his homework and bringing it forward. I only wish that the NDP would do the same. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise in my place and speak in support of Bill No. 10, the Electricity Act. You know any time I get up to speak about electricity, I guess I'm brought back to memory lane a little bit when, in 1973-74, it was my first year teaching (Interruptions)

I hear some catcalls from my colleagues in the back - that long ago - it has to be the former Minister of Education. Anyway, I'm brought back to the reality of 1973 and, of course, the first oil embargo in the Mideast and the impact on oil prices in Nova Scotia and the immediate rise in electrical rates in our province, a rush to look at how we could improve the efficiency of insulation in our homes because the price of heating went up very quickly, very dramatically.

Then we had a second round in the 1980s and now . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter is getting a little loud, it's difficult to hear. The honourable member for Kings West has the floor. Thank you.

MR. GLAVINE: It looks like we're going to have in a continuous fashion high oil prices, high costs of our electrical inputs, and because of that we need to look at all of the ideas, potential legislation that comes before our Legislature here, no matter from what

Party it is brought forth - it needs thoughtful deliberation as to how we can have a greater amount of renewable energy and to work towards some stabilization of our rates.

This bill, of course, is essentially about energy providers selling directly to consumers. I do have a lot of faith in entrepreneurial Nova Scotians who can bring good ideas to fruition to produce energy. Many small producers see, in fact, on their own landholdings small streams that could produce a small amount of hydro. Others are experimenting with solar, and I think if we could allow them to sell directly to customers, I would see, as our past has shown us, that there indeed is a great innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that can be awakened on the energy front. I think it's that singular thought behind this piece of legislation that gives it tremendous merits.

You know reality in Nova Scotia is that a monopoly is determining much of how we move forward with providing electricity for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Nova Scotia. We need to move quickly to the goals that have been set out - 40 per cent by 2020. There's tremendous work to be done to reach that target and I'm not so sure whether price stabilization will, in fact, be part of the mix that's coming at us.

I think increased competition will mean Nova Scotia Power rates would become more competitive. As I said, any time we have a monopoly, we have that challenge of trying to get them to rein in their costs, make long-term contracts for coal and oil that are beneficial to Nova Scotians. We know that the history of procurement has not been a strong one. There are a lot of areas when we ask for, and talk about the need to have, a review of Nova Scotia Power, to see if Nova Scotians are constantly being served in their best interest.

I think competition would increase the availability of renewable energy in a way that puts a lesser burden on Nova Scotia ratepayers. In fact I had some e-mails this week that really put it profoundly to me - two retired couples who said they are at the point of contemplating and talking about the most difficult decision that they will make in the next number of months, whether they can continue to live in Nova Scotia with the current costs that they have. As they look at the history of seven increases in power in a decade and likely increases for the next four successive years, it is something that on fixed income they have to seriously look at if they want to maintain - and in knowing these two couples - what is indeed a modest way of life.

Now Nova Scotia is seeking another large increase, again on the backs of consumers, and we have seen power rate increases dig deeper into the pockets of Nova Scotians. Families and businesses can no longer sustain this old-fashioned reliance on coal and oil.

It is interesting, Madam Speaker, the need to move to renewables, while again may not stabilize, is also in a good business interest for us. When we see some of the large retailers taking a look at how products are made, what are the inputs? Is it green energy or

is it dirty energy? We are now getting major retailers taking a look at how a product is being made, at what the energy consumption pattern is that goes into producing that product.

The recommendation on this particular concept of providers selling directly to customers came forward in 2003, following the Nova Scotia Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee recommendation. It was made up of government officials, officials from the utility, industry, energy and environment stakeholders. Eight years later and numerous ministers later nothing has been done.

I think one of my colleagues did mention a quote from the Nova Scotia Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee that any seller offering electricity from renewable resources be able to sell directly to electricity customers. I think this is a concept whose time has come in Nova Scotia and I think with, as I said earlier, the many ways in which Nova Scotians are thinking about energy and electricity for their own use and being able to provide, perhaps, a small community, a small rural area, a farm or a couple of farms, I think those kinds of enterprises need to be supported.

Also, it's interesting that the minister said that the current grid system and market application would not be able to sustain this, would not be able to bring this forward, but at the same time we know that COMFIT, and the goal of 40 per cent renewable, in fact requires a similar system.

It's interesting that on the one hand the minister doesn't see this renewable energy concept of providers going directly to consumers as being somewhat markedly different than COMFIT. It's interesting that the minister did bring that forward because from the best information we can get, in fact, there are very similar grid and market requirements.

So this legislation would open the door to renewable energy projects in the province which would generate jobs and much needed tax revenue. It would also, I think, start to clearly show Nova Scotians that there should be more than one power producer in our province and if we take a look at many jurisdictions, they've been able to hold the line on power rates and ones that don't have, for example, Quebec's and B.C.'s dominance of hydroelectricity, but have a number of production methods in their mix and they've been able to hold the line by good solid competition.

Allowing competition in the renewable energy market also provides much needed access to capital for renewable energy suppliers while ensuring Nova Scotians get the most cost-effective and energy-effective renewable energy. Making the energy market more competitive would increase the number of options available to Nova Scotians, create jobs and work as a privately-funded economic development tool in many communities. The NDP talks of new electricity and renewable energy plans. Their history so far in government shows only minimal effort to protect the environment and help Nova Scotians

with rate stabilization. We also need to push renewable targets out into the future and they've sidelined national commitments such as those on mercury reduction.

With that, Madam Speaker, perhaps we'll address this topic on another day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

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

### **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 523.

Res. No. 523, re SNSMR – Mun. Agreement: Breach – Premier Apologize – notice given Apr. 15/11 – (Hon. S. McNeil)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place and speak to Resolution No. 523 and, of course, the impact that this will have on all taxpayers in the province either directly or indirectly. I want to speak to some of the work, Madam Minister that goes into MOUs and in particular, of course, this one with the municipalities across the province.

If you look, Madam Speaker, at the Whereas in the resolution, I think there are some highlights that we need to pull out of those "Whereases" and the first one, of course, is that during the election campaign of 2009 there was a commitment by the NDP and by the current Premier to honour all commitments that had been made by the previous government and, you know, that was an honourable thing to do. I believe that that is something that Nova Scotians expected would happen and I would expect that the reason that commitment was made was because when you look at MOUs, in particular, they do require a fair bit of negotiation. They do require a number of meetings at the negotiating table and a lot of hard work on the part of the two parties. If it's an agreement between two parties, the work on behalf of those two parties that goes into those negotiations needs to be respected. After a lot of those meetings, the two parties come together with an agreement, with a Memorandum of Understanding, in this particular case. So it certainly was respectful of the current Premier to say that they would honour those commitments that had been made.

One of the MOUs that obviously is of particular importance to me was the MOU in Education with post-secondary universities but, again, it's the work that goes into coming together with an agreement and people walk away from that table expecting that both sides, not just the government side but both sides, respect the terms and conditions of that. So when the current Premier made that commitment, people in the municipalities were expecting that the work and effort that they had put into establishing an MOU would be respected and they were ready for all parties to honour that. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

That's why we are speaking to this resolution today. What happened, we know, is the second whereas in the resolution which says that on March 22, 2011, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations informed municipalities that they would not be honouring the commitments made in that MOU. That really destroys all of the hard work that had gone into that, all of the goodwill that had gone into that and all of the expectations - again, I'm speaking about both sides. It would be the same as if the municipalities decided they weren't going to honour their part of that. It is an agreement and the message on March 22<sup>nd</sup> was unfortunate and one that demonstrates perhaps a lack of faith and a lack of keeping to a prior commitment that had been made.

We know that the municipalities together expressed their concern about that. Their concern, I believe, is expressed on behalf of the taxpayers in their own municipalities. But they came together with a common voice and a common concern. They obviously were expecting that they would operate within the parameters of that MOU and were suddenly told that no, that was not going to happen.

The unknown, the uncertainty of what will happen as a result of the MOU not being honoured is something that has caused them concern. One of their concerns, we know, is what that will do to their ability to hold the taxes within their own communities, within their own municipalities, so that the property owners are not paying for the failure of the government to not respect and honour the MOU.

We know we have a little cascading of responsibility from the government to the municipalities and municipalities get their money from one source and that's you and me. The concern that the municipalities are expressing are on behalf of the property owners in their own municipalities.

If you look at a parallel, I would say, to the MOU with the municipalities was the MOU with universities. We have had over the last eight years MOUs with universities. Three-year agreements and a lot of people sat around the table for many, many hours and eventually they hammered out an agreement that the government would respect and that the universities would respect. During the life of the MOU - whether it's with education or with municipalities - the parties, in this case the universities, could pass on to their constituents, who happen to be university students, information that would allow them to do some budget planning themselves. Things were predictable. The funding was



sustainable for three years, it was predictable and so university students could take that information and they could plan their own budgets for how they were going to pay for their university.

The point here is that once you take that away, the uncertainty rears its head. With the universities, of course, there now is no MOU. Again, this is something that was put in place so that all parties could work together, come to an agreement and move forward. In the case with the municipalities, it is the taxpayers who are wondering what impact this will have on them. In the case of the universities it's the students and we all know that the students are now feeling and seeing and hearing what some of that impact will be because universities are coming out now and saying well, we're going to have to put our tuition up. Well that lands fairly on the backs of the students.

If municipalities have to increase their tax rate, that will land fairly on the backs of the taxpayers. So the point here, Madam Speaker, is that when you take away that predictability, that kind of a guarantee of what all of the players are going to contribute to this, when you take that away, you leave a lot of uncertainty. That's two MOUs that have - one is not being respected, the other is not even negotiating. The government has said, well we'll give funding to universities for a year.

Again, that gets you through the one year, but during that time you have many people who are not sure what to do. A lot of students are leaving and going somewhere else and once they start that university education in another province, chances of them coming back here, if there's another MOU signed - and I say if - it's highly unlikely.

Respecting and honouring the hard work that is done by the teams that sit down to hammer out an MOU is something that we would have hoped and expected the current government to honour. The uncertainty that is created when that doesn't happen is exactly what we're feeling right now. Whether it is, as I said, the taxpayers who are wondering what their own municipality is doing to do because the municipality is uncertain now about what responsibilities they are going to have and what funding is or isn't going to be flowing back and forth between the two levels of government, that uncertainty has been expressed, and on behalf of the taxpayers, the mayors and wardens and the councillors have made it very clear that they don't want to raise taxes, the same as universities don't want to raise tuition, but if there's no agreement that holds people to certain understandings and certain terms, then it's kind of free market and free market contributes to no ability to plan or predict.

Madam Speaker, I will take your signal, I will take my place, but I appreciate the time to express concerns that we have about the MOU with the municipalities not being respected. Thank you very much.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Well thank you, Madam Speaker. I have to say I'm really glad for an opportunity to speak to this resolution. I should apologize to my staff, if they are listening, they prepared a speech for me but I'm not going to use it. I want to say that it, probably, is quite appropriate that the Liberal member who just spoke was the one who spoke for the Liberal caucus because she was a Cabinet Minister in the Progressive Conservative caucus when they signed the MOU, so I think that's really interesting.

I'm going to table a copy of the MOU, Madam Speaker. The point I want members to notice, if they get a copy of this, is that it is signed by the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations in the Progressive Conservative Government and on the same page that the signatures are there from the president of the UNSM and the minister, it also has the clause that allows the province to come out of this agreement and it is actually on the very page they put their signatures.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'm going to read from this, it's an editorial from The Halifax ChronicleHerald dated April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I'll table this when I do that. Anyway, last week Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly was front and centre in a March of Mayors to protest the Dexter Government's suspension of a non-binding deal to phase-out the share of education, corrections and public housing costs borne by municipal taxpayers. The mayor said the province's failure to take over these costs would force them to raise taxes. They don't think provincial deficit reduction was a good reason for local taxes to go up. Their unhappiness about losing an expected windfall is understandable, but it would have been prudent not to put unquestioning faith in a commitment the previous government made in 2007 without a plan to pay for it, with most of the benefits deferred for three years or more and with an opt-out clause saying, ". . . the municipalities acknowledge that unforeseen costs or revenue losses may impair the Province's ability to achieve its commitments . . ." Which is precisely what has happened. As Abraham Lincoln once reminded one of his generals, the wise hen doesn't cluck until the egg is laid.

Meanwhile, the Halifax draft 2011-12 budget that went to council this week will mean higher property tax bills, but not because the province reneged on a wobbly promise. The city's tax rate for the mandatory provincial charges actually declined from 35.4 cents to 34 cents per hundred dollars a residential assessment because the province won't end the phase-out of these charges until next year, so I'll table that.

What I want to say to the members opposite - in particular the Liberal caucus who brought forward this resolution - they started out by saying how the Dexter Government had reneged on its commitments, that the Premier had said he would honour commitments of the previous government. Well I think the Premier has done that. I think this government has done that. It was commitments by the government, not commitments by MLAs as they paraded around the province saying we're committed to this or that. The members opposite - any of them who were former Cabinet Ministers - would know that a commitment by the government is a commitment that has passed scrutiny at Executive Council.

The member for Colchester North, as she spoke, she talked about planning and how the action of moving away from the MOU had now allowed municipalities to be in a place where they couldn't plan. Well, it would seem to me that if you sign an agreement with an "out" clause for the government, that puts you in a place where you can't really plan very well because you can't be sure the government isn't going to be able to back out of that agreement because of the financial situation of the province. Which is why the previous administration put that clause in and the members who signed it recognized that. To say that we didn't honour the MOU, I think we honoured the MOU. As a matter of fact, we honoured all of it. It's the members opposite who say, oh, you were supposed to honour most of the MOU, just don't honour that clause. (Interruption) Right, but not all of them.

I think the editorial in the paper said it pretty well and I want the members to think seriously about the position that the municipalities were in prior to the MOU. Prior to the MOU, the municipal units had to cover about \$17.4 million of corrections, about \$7 million to \$7.5 million in housing and then about 14 to 15 per cent of the Department of Education budget based on assessment and then a rate applied to that assessment in order to come up with that amount. What has happened, Madam Speaker, is that starting in 2010-11, the first start of the phase-out for corrections, about a \$3.5 million reduction and another \$3.5 million reduction in corrections this year, plus half of the housing reductions started so there was about a \$3.5 million reduction in the housing costs.

You know, the members opposite talked about doom and gloom and municipalities raising taxes, it didn't happen. As a matter of fact, they got a reduction in their costs to the MOU last year and this year and there was no reduction in taxes to their taxpayers. Why do they think that there would be an increase in taxes as they bear these costs forward? They've been carrying these costs and they didn't offer a reduction to their taxpayers when the municipalities got a reduction. I haven't seen the member stand up and recognize that, and to say they're broke (Interruptions)

The point I'm going to make is that the municipalities are not going to be as well off as they would have been had they come out through the MOU the way it was signed, but they are getting a reduction of \$3.5 million in corrections going forward - they only have to contribute \$14 million starting in 2012-13 and that is a \$3.5 million reduction from what they were paying when they entered the MOU.

We're going to hold the education rate at the 2010-11 rate going forward in 2012-13. One of the comments that was made here is that "they were blindsided." I met with the president of the UNSM a week or two after I became minister and I didn't even get to say there are going to be changes. He said to me, we know there are going to be changes, what we'd like to have is a guarantee that we'll get the one-year notice. A one-year notice isn't in the MOU; it's in the Municipal Government Act. So there really was no reason that we had to comply with the one-year notice, but it was going to have an impact on them and that's why that clause was in the MGA.

I said I would try as much as possible to give the one-year notice and that's what we delivered. (Applause) We weren't asked for anything else or anything more. We were asked if we could give one-year notice, and I said I would try to do that. I didn't even make a commitment that I'd do it, I just said I made a commitment that I would try. And we were able to deliver on that.

I want to say to members opposite that the impacts on municipalities for this, they've been charging this in their tax rate for years, there's no reason for taxes to go up for their residents. Matter of fact, if anything (Interruptions) They're not going to have a tax increase. If anything, they're getting a reduction, so there should be a reduction in their taxes coming out at the end of the changes to the MOU.

The assertions made by certainly the Liberal Party, and I've heard on occasion from the Progressive Conservative Party, don't hold water. The municipal units will come out of the changes to the MOU better than when they went into the MOU, and that should be better for all of their taxpayers. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: I find it interesting that the minister quoted Abraham Lincoln this afternoon. I know that the great (Interruptions) He provided a quote of Abraham Lincoln, but it reminded me of Abraham Lincoln and the fact that he recognized that after the Civil War they had a divided country and they needed to rebuild that country. He knew that those who fought for the North and the South were all Americans who needed to come together to build their country.

Much the same way, we Nova Scotians are all together when we pay our taxes, whether we pay them at the municipal level or the provincial level. The question we would ask, if an agreement is changed, if I may be so kind enough to use the term "changed", that has the potential to change the taxes that Nova Scotians pay. We're all in this game together. I think that the municipalities have spoken loud and clear - they had, I believe, 63 mayors, wardens and councillors who were here just two weeks ago. They felt that the agreement being changed is going to have an impact on them - they speak for a lot of Nova Scotians.

One other point I'd like to make is that in 2009, the minister at the time for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations spoke about a town's task force to deal with long-term sustainability for towns. We're in April 2011 now and we, as far as I'm aware, don't have that task force in place. We do know that it was something the municipalities requested. Hopefully, that will begin to take shape.

Another point I want to touch on is deficits. We know this province is dealing with a deficit - they had a surprise surplus last year, but they say they're dealing with a deficit. I did some numbers on this. I looked at what the actual amount of dollars that is not going to

be going to Inverness over the next couple of years and I believe it worked out to, in 2013-14, it looked like it was going to be about 3 per cent of their \$12 million budget.

I thought, isn't that interesting, because that's not far off from where this government was with its deficit. I guess, Madam Speaker, in fairness, if we're trying to be consistent with how we look at things, whether we're a Nova Scotian looking at paying municipal tax or provincial tax, or federal tax for that matter, we're all in this together.

We would question changing an agreement like this, which is going to change, which is going to impact - municipalities say that it's going to impact their budgets. We know that municipalities can't run deficits, so they have two choices: if things have changed, as they've said they have, that means they either have to cut back or they have to raise taxes - could be property tax increases, for example.

We find it strange that a government that is dealing with deficit would put this onto municipalities, some of which are dealing with deficits. I tabled a document in here about two weeks ago and from recollection, I believe it was about 12 municipalities and five towns that were running deficit budgets that they have to correct within a year, because under the Municipal Government Act they're not allowed to run deficits; this a protective measure, to ensure that municipalities don't over spend.

Maybe we should have had this in place provincially years ago. We've actually advocated for legislation here in this very sitting to get back-to-balance budgets because we see over time what damage deficits can create. For instance, \$1 out of every \$8, approximately, that Nova Scotians hand over to this Chamber gets thrown out the window in interest payments. That's something we feel is urgent and we should be doing something about that by balancing the budget.

I'm going to move back to the discussion at hand today, just to point out once again the irony of this government putting pressure on municipal budgets, which could put them in deficit, when they claim they're trying to deal with a deficit. I think we also have to look at what's going to happen in 2014, because significant revenues, about 36 per cent of every dollar that comes into the provincial Treasury here comes from the federal government.

Madam Speaker, if the federal government, which has said they're going to balance their books in the coming years, after providing stimulus, which we've benefited from in this province in significant ways - we've had the three largest road-building budgets in the history of the province in the last three years and that's a credit to the previous Progressive Conservative Government and also to our good Minister Estabrooks - look, I've given credit to both sides.

Madam Speaker, that's a pure fact. The federal government has been good to the province and they've seen the damage that was done to the economy with the crash of the stock market in 2008. The federal government is changing its path now. They've provided

the stimulus, it's time now to back off, so we can't expect as much infrastructure spending, at least, we know we're not going to get as much in that regard. But as the federal government aims to balance its budget it may add pressures to this province. Federal transfers may decrease, that's something that we should be looking at now, something we should be preparing for now.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have four minutes remaining.

MR. MACMASTER: So I think if we're going to be consistent, I'm going to be watching this government should something change in 2014 - provided they're still here, maybe there will be an election before that. But I'm going to be watching government to see what they would say, and I don't know what the federal government would do, but if there is a change to transfers and it affects this province, I'm curious to see if they'll point to the federal government and put blame on them and say, well, why are you doing this to us? Well, we're going to remember and all the municipalities in this province are going to remember, well, you did it to us. So that is something that I'm going to be watching for.

I think it's important in government that we're consistent. The Premier had some comments on this and there was a comment: If there's any increase in municipal taxes, it is 100 per cent due to decisions that will be made by municipalities, it will not be due to anything that this government has done.

Madam Speaker, the municipalities have taken exception to that comment and, you know, we have to because it's simple. We know that under the agreement there was a plan for funds to flow to the municipalities and that has changed. So all things being equal, that means that if there's an increase in municipal taxes, it very well could be due to the change in the MOU.

Madam Speaker, I guess the other point I would like to touch on, because I know we don't have a lot of time this evening, but one final point and then I'm going to summarize. Yes, this government gave the municipalities a one-year notice but it was required by law to do that. I think we have a disagreement there but we know that the province has to provide the municipalities a one-year advanced notice so they can prepare their budgets. It was done basically within - they were given a call - I'm going to summarize.

So, Madam Speaker, I guess the question I would ask is what does this mean for this government? I think what we're going to see from this is that the government has lost credibility with municipalities. They've lost the trust of municipalities and they've lost credibility. If the federal government makes a similar decision with respect to this province in 2014 onward, this government has lost a crucial point of credibility to make the same

case with the federal government - they should continue to provide this province with the same amount of funds they have historically.

Finally, Madam Speaker, there is one taxpayer in this province and that one taxpayer, we feel, with these changes, stands a very good chance to end up paying more taxes, likely in this case from municipalities.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Madam Speaker, I listened in great interest to the minister talking about no tax increases. Well, miracles happen but that's not one that's going to happen. You talk about no increases this year, and the mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality correctly said there would be no increases this year, but if you look at the internal report, which I tabled here and the minister should have read by now, it indicated there's going to be an increase every year incrementally up to about \$19 million per year in the fourth year of this agreement.

I think it's very cleverly drafted, the cancellation of this MOU. What's happening is that the present government will be gone by the time this impacts because people are really upset about all the tax changes and increases the NDP has put in place, the 1,400 fees they've put in place, the GST increase, and all the other things and now downloading on the municipalities is even worse with the cancellation of this MOU. So by the time they're gone and the next election comes around, they're hoping that people will forget. Well, I guarantee you, I guarantee you, as long as I sit in this Legislature, every year, every year I'm in this Legislature, every session, I am going to remind Nova Scotians about this MOU. As they start paying the higher property taxes, it's going to click in and they're going to say, well, that was something the NDP cancelled and pushed up our taxes, our property taxes.

As we go through this whole process, as we go through this process - and I've been talking to many of the mayors of the areas now and evidently, when I talked to them, the minister hasn't been. He hasn't been. Now, they're indicating to me this is going to cause some very serious financial problems for them and anybody over there who thinks it isn't, you want to talk to your council, you want to talk to your mayors in your towns and your counties to see exactly what kind of impact this is going to have. This is a serious impact and needless to say, I'm going to remind the government of this on a continuous basis. This ranks right up there with the 2 per cent GST increase that everybody is paying and every time that the Premier gets up and says all the things he has taken the GST off, he forgets the thousands of things that they increased the 2 per cent on. Indeed, that hurts everybody.

You talk about increased property taxes. I continually see people in my riding coming in and saying I can't cope with my property taxes, I can't pay them. These are usually seniors, people on fixed income, or people who are just living above or below the poverty level and two members of the family working, the people that this government

always championed, they are hurting the actual people that the NDP has always said they champion, so there's a real dilemma there.

You wonder, now that they've got in government, all the promises they made that they wouldn't change anything, they'd follow through on the things the previous government put in place and indeed, they're not doing that. You see this as it goes forward, it's going to become more and more difficult for Nova Scotians. When you talk about the average Nova Scotian who has a couple of children and see how they try to survive in this economy and you look at the property taxes going up, the fees going up and the GST going up and all the other hidden costs that are going to be in place, it's going to have a serious long-term effect on the people in the community.

You see businesses struggling in the province, you see businesses closing. This property tax increase is not going to hurt the business community this year, it will hurt it next year, the year after, the year after, and the year after that. One more blow to make them less competitive just with companies as close as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island - that's only close - and today, if you don't market outside of Nova Scotia and outside of Canada, indeed, you can't survive anymore. They get uncompetitive when they go outside of Nova Scotia and outside when they export, outside of the country, they won't be in business, it's that simple. They will move out of Nova Scotia or they will close their doors, and we're seeing people who are closing their doors.

As people close their doors that means less employment opportunities, and that means that people either have to find another job that probably doesn't exist in Nova Scotia and they move out West. If we're lucky, they stay in Canada. They move out West and once they're there for three or four years, they don't come back, they simply don't come back, so we lose all that expertise and the people who have worked hard and tried to make this province as great as it is today.

This whole thing really smacks of a deal not being kept, it's that simple. It's really nice and smooth because the municipalities won't see too much of the impact of this this year. They'll start to see it next year, and three or four years out they're going to really see the impact. I talked to one mayor today and he's going to see the impact this year and it's a serious impact. I'm waiting to get the information from him, which he promised to send me. As more and more of this information that people are sending me, it's going to become interesting to see when it's all tabulated, exactly what it's going to cost Nova Scotia taxpayers.

The minister continually says there's one taxpayer in this province. No, there isn't, there are two taxpayers in this province - the people who pay GST and income tax, that's everybody in the province. Property tax owners are a lot fewer in number and they are being hit with higher and higher and higher taxes for the service they get, so there are actually two levels of taxpayers in this province, one of them being taxpayers with property and all the rest of the other taxpayers that don't have property.



When you charge things like corrections and housing and education onto the property tax owners that, indeed, really aren't responsibilities of the municipalities, you're getting them to pay twice - they pay on their income tax, they pay on their GST, and then they pay on their property taxes. I guarantee you there's nobody I can talk to that I've talked to in this municipality who is happy with the amount of property taxes they're paying today.

It's going to get worse, it's absolutely going to get worse. As you see, they also, the province, if they would have taken over the cost of the municipal auditor that was in that same agreement and the MOU or the assessment services one, that would have helped the municipalities cope with this increasing burden they are getting. As the burden grows and grows and as people start to realize that their taxes are creeping up and creeping up every year, assessments are going up so their rates go up, it's nice to see the municipalities actually committing to put that bill, that cost, that they have to pay to the province on the tax bill, so people will understand what they are paying the money for and where the money is going.

If you have sidewalks on your street and it's on your property tax bill, that's fair enough but if you're paying for corrections and housing and education, which are Province of Nova Scotia responsibilities, that there was an agreement to eliminate, then you're paying for a service that you're paying more than your fair share for. You should be paying for that on your income tax, on your GST, and all the other taxes and services that the province provides for and, indeed, charges taxes for.

As a property tax owner - and there are many in the province - you watch this thing and see what's going on and when they finally realize what this downloading has done and done to their property tax and see how their taxes have gone up - when they come to you in government, the MLAs and say, I cannot pay my property taxes, what can I do? I'm seeing them all the time. What are you going to tell them? Where are you going to get the money? We don't have money to pay their property taxes so their house goes up for sale; something they've worked on for their whole lives to have is gone. It does happen. If anyone hasn't gone through a property tax sale with one of your constituents, look out because it's coming and it will come. You see really good people who have worked hard all their lives to get a home, losing the home for property taxes and that's something that has to change so more arrangements and deals can be made with people to keep their homes and keep them in their homes.

We talk about affordable housing for people and to keep the housing in place. The most affordable housing we could have in this is somebody's own home. Most of the people have them paid off and they get in this dilemma and they're living at the lowest possible cost. If you take that away and those people have to move out of their life-long property - in some cases, more than one generation - and get to a point where they lose this property, what does it cost the government then? It costs them a whole lot more because you have to go into public housing or you've got to rent an apartment that they can't afford

so what will they do? If you live in the country some place, it's not so easy just to get another property. You can't move into an apartment because usually there are none or you have to move into some house that's probably not fit to live in, but the only place you can get and hopefully the landlord will maintain it a little bit so it's safe to live in.

You see this whole thing happening over and over again. People have got to understand, this will increase their property taxes. Not this year, but next year and the following year. I've tabled the information here from HRM - you want to have a look at it - an internal report by the staff there. There's more information coming in all the time from other municipalities showing how it's going to negatively impact them. You can laugh, you can joke about it, you can say whatever you want, but at the end of the day, when your constituents and my constituents are paying more property tax . . .

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

MR. COLWELL: When you're paying more property taxes, they're going to remember that the NDP Government downloaded on them and we're going to remind them of that on a continuous basis. As you go knocking door-to-door during the next election campaign, you'll be reminded by those people that you're the guys that put my property taxes up and I'm not going to forget it on election day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, this completes the Liberal Opposition business for today. I now turn it over to the Deputy Government House Leader for tomorrow's business.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 12:00 noon, with the House hours being from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. and the Orders of the Day being the daily routine and after Question Period we will, if time permits, call for Public Bills for Second Reading: Bill Nos. 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 38 and 40 - the daily routine having the estimates as well.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow, April 28<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

It is now the moment of interruption. The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Lunenburg:

“Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the work being done in the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to advance arts, culture, multiculturalism, and community development in Nova Scotia.”

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **CCH: WORK - RECOGNIZE**

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: I'm pleased to rise in my place today to speak on this very important topic. As ministerial assistant to the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, I'm very excited about the potential for this new department to bring a broader focus to protecting and celebrating Nova Scotia's diverse culture and heritage.

Communities are important to all of us. They touch our lives in so many ways and help us to achieve our hopes and aspirations. Communities help define who we are and how we interact with the world around us. They provide outlets for creativity and opportunities for learning that prepare us to be active, engaged citizens. Government understands that supporting healthy and vibrant communities is a priority for Nova Scotians; that is why we chose to create a Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage earlier this year when it realigned a number of departments.

As an artist and craftsman and member of the community of culture, I would like to say that I'm very pleased that a lot of my friends called me and expressed their great enthusiasm over the creation of this department. This reflects how this government is doing things differently; we're listening to what's important to Nova Scotians and doing the work that makes our communities strong.

After just a few months, the department has already begun to create positive impact on communities right across the province. It hit the ground speaking, from announcing a five-point plan for arts and culture, to supporting public libraries in every part of Nova Scotia, to funding museums that tell our stories, to programming that helps us to protect and promote our distinct cultural communities, the department is helping make life better for Nova Scotia families. Just a few weeks after the Premier announced the creation of this new department, government released a plan for strengthening our important arts and culture sector.

Almost 1,000 Nova Scotians came out last Fall to offer their ideas and insights on how we can support the creative excellence of our province. They made it clear that arts and culture are important to Nova Scotians and the government's effort to support the success of our creative economy makes a big difference in the ability of individual artists to pursue their vision.

Advancing artistic achievement is a key priority for the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Our new five-point plan is the blueprint for successfully growing our arts and culture sector. The plan will ensure the importance of the arts to Nova Scotians that recognized by the Status of the Artist legislation and it will reinforce the independence of funding decisions for individual artists by creating Arts Nova Scotia.

Arts Nova Scotia will take over the responsibility for peer panels that make decisions on artist funding and announce those decisions once they're made. The plan will provide opportunities for dialogue with the sectors and through a revamped department Web site, new ways for artists to market and promote their work to audiences through the Internet.

The five-point plan also ensures that voices from the sector continue to play a role in guiding government support for arts and culture through the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council. (Applause) The council, which is evolving from the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council, will continue to advise government on arts policy and will lead the development of a cultural strategy for Nova Scotia - a first for our province.

Government's efforts to support the sector will be enhanced by an interdepartmental committee to coordinate activities across government and to look at ways to leverage other sources of funding, to ensure support for artists and organizations that advocate for them. The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage is also supporting communities through programs and services that enhance the protection of our precious heritage resources. Nova Scotia's heritage resources make a valuable contribution to communities and support life-long learning. Through the Nova Scotia museum system and the efforts of local heritage groups and community museums, that heritage remains accessible to visitors and residents alike.

Madam Speaker, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic recently made history by using social media to commemorate the 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. The museum used Twitter to broadcast the emergency messages sent out by the Titanic on that fateful night almost a century ago, providing a new way for Nova Scotians to learn about a tragic part of our maritime history.

Madam Speaker, the world was paying attention. The 55 tweets that the museum generated, generated much interest and this innovative approach to interpreting an historic event is one way that Nova Scotia's museums are keeping our history alive and relevant.

This Spring, the Museum of Natural History in Halifax has broken attendance records with “A T. rex Named Sue”. More than 80,000 visitors have taken in this world-class exhibit and the museum is close to surpassing its total annual visitation target for this year because of this one exhibit alone.

Madam Speaker, the Museum of Natural History will continue to enhance Nova Scotian’s understanding of the natural world as it introduces new, permanent exhibits for the first time in 20 years. Community-run museums across Nova Scotia make vital contributions to their communities by encouraging life-long learning and helping to attract visitors during the tourist season. The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage supports their work through Community Museum Assistance Programs. This year, 67 museums will benefit from \$980,000 being invested in the grant program. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, the new department is also supporting our public libraries. Even as government makes the hard decisions needed to live within its means, it is maintaining more than \$14 million in operating grants for regional library boards so they can continue fostering learning cultures in their communities. Because we know that public libraries depend on the Internet more and more in their programs and services, the Nova Scotia Provincial Library continues to cover the cost of Internet connections with a \$30,000 annual contribution.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia is made stronger by our diverse culture and heritage and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage is helping to ensure that diversity is protected and celebrated. The Offices of Acadian Affairs, African Nova Scotia Affairs and Gaelic Affairs continue to do their work to represent the concerns and issues that matter to these communities, giving them a voice that is shaping our province’s future. In 2011, as the world marks the International Year of People of African Descent, Nova Scotia will welcome international delegates to the African Diaspora Heritage Trail Conference in September. This is the first time it will be hosted in continental North America.

Just today, Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia launched Gaelic Awareness Month, a time to recognize the contribution still being made to our communities by the Gaelic language and culture.

Government has recognized that communities are important foundations for building a strong and vibrant Nova Scotia and by creating the Department of Community, Culture and Heritage, it is ensuring that we have the tools and resources needed to keep them healthy and vibrant. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis. (Applause) Order, please.

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Lunenburg for that wonderful 10 minutes about our heritage, culture and communities which is very important, but we shouldn't have called it a debate. Late debate is usually something you can stand here and argue about and debate. There's really nothing to debate about our heritage and culture. I mean we're all onside with it. I don't see anybody being offside with our heritage, culture and communities and I agree with everything that the member for Lunenburg has said.

The department is a great idea, you know, and it can't be judged yet anyway because it was only started here in January and it needs time to see how it will work separately from tourism, where it was, but there is something, maybe there is a little debate here because not long ago, a few weeks ago, I put a bill before this House when it comes to our culture. The bill was to help our music industry in this province to grow more. We've done it for our film industry and everybody agreed to that and I'm hoping that this bill I put before the House - I hope the member for Lunenburg will go to the minister and ask him if this bill can come before the House, because it will give this industry a 20 per cent tax break and it will grow the music industry of this province, just like it has grown the film industry, and that will keep the industry from leaving this province which a lot are.

I spoke with the association not long ago and there are people recording music in Ontario and even farther west. So that's a loss to this province. So if we can give the music industry of this province an incentive to stay here, which would be a small tax break, I think we can grow that industry even more. (Applause) It just makes good sense to me, it's common sense, and I think the minister realizes that that is a good bill which should be brought forward.

Madam Speaker, in February the Premier announced there would be legislation coming forward called the Status of the Artist legislation. There are some questions around this legislation that I hope the minister and government can address and those questions, I'll put the questions forth now. What will this legislation entail? Will it have real teeth to help artists in Nova Scotia? When will we see it and will it be in this session? So I'll just leave that. The minister is over there and he's speaking to the member for Lunenburg right now so that's good, I've got him talking.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is good.

MR. THERIAULT: I've got him talking and I hope that he can answer these questions maybe in the next few days while we're still in the Legislature.

Our culture, my family has been in this province for 15 generations and I believe the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture's family has been here quite a few generations too. It's great that we can talk about heritage and culture. It's a great thing and I think we need to work at that and improve it, which we are, and it seems to be talked about a lot, but

I'm just wondering where communities come into this? That's another question I had and it's about the growth of communities, I believe.

I'm not sure, Madam Speaker, just what that means but I just want to speak a little bit about the growth that isn't in my community and probably a lot of other communities around our coastal areas of this province. It will be interesting, I wish the minister was speaking on this tonight on this promotion, not debate I guess, but maybe I'm turning this into a debate, I'm not sure, but I'm just wondering where the growth is in our local communities because I stood up here in the House a few days ago and I read a resolution that wasn't a joke, everybody laughed at it, but in my community, right now, there are more For Sale signs on our lawns than there are provincial and federal ones, probably three to one, maybe more. I've just kept a count of it these last two weeks to see what is there.

When I'm watching 150-year-old homes that are sitting there that nobody is purchasing, the signs are even falling down that are in the yards. We've got 150-year-old homes that are part of our heritage and culture that are falling into the basements because there's no growth in our communities.

What is going on in our communities? We have grandparents, I know of two grandparents who just went out West because they knew if they didn't they would never see their children or their grandchildren - may never see them again, because they wouldn't be able to travel.

This stuff is going on. Now whether this new department will be what community means, the growth of communities in this department - I'm not sure what it means and those are questions that need to be asked of the minister. But how can our communities grow if we see them dying like they are?

We also have other things in our heritage like our lighthouses. I see a lot of our lighthouses in our communities that have been there since 10 and 12 generations ago, that have been around our coasts that are slowly falling into the ground. Where will this new Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage be on this issue?

Where will it be on the wharves in our communities? A lot of our wharves are falling down, that some at the federal government are saying that they're not going to be responsible for anymore - will this department be looking at this to save part of our heritage? Which they are, they are part of our heritage.

I think I could go on with a lot of questions about what this department is all about, but like I said it's young, this department is young and I just wanted to say some of this stuff tonight to get the minister thinking, because a lot of these questions are going to come forth. If we had time in this session I know I have some questions for the minister regarding this. I guess I'm just giving him a heads-up of what's coming here.

But anyway it is too early to judge this department, but I'm sure the new minister who is involved in this new department - and he's a great guy, he has treated me well, I've got nothing bad to say about the minister that's for sure, but I need to know, we need to know, Nova Scotia needs to know more about this department, what it's going to do, especially when it comes to our coastal communities, which I'm part of and have been in my family for fifteen generations.

With that, Madam Speaker, I won't take up any more time, but it will be judged, this department will be judged in the next year or two to see how far and what it's doing to our culture and heritage and our communities - I won't say coastal communities I'll just say communities because communities is named first in this department, yet not too much is being said about those communities.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you very much, and I'll take my place. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I was struck by the comments of the member for Digby-Annapolis about the older homes that they are having difficulty selling in his area, and we have those in Inverness County as well. It is a sign, you know we all know about how things have changed over the years in the province, the economy has changed, people have had to leave areas. I know this department plays a strong role in supporting those areas. Of course, it supports urban areas like in Halifax as well, but there is no question - and I also always enjoy listening to the member for Digby-Annapolis speak because I enjoy his accent.

MR. THERIAULT: It's French and Irish.

MR. MACMASTER: And he has commented that it's a mix of French and Irish. Madam Speaker, I think that in itself was an important exponent of some of the culture we find in Nova Scotia. Some people tell me I have a bit of an accent as well, and I suppose if I have been around home for a few days it starts to become a bit stronger - and I am thankful for that, I don't want to lose that accent.

This department, we commend the people who work in the department for the good work that they do and are happy to recognize them here tonight. I know, as I've mentioned, Inverness County, the initiatives of the department, as it's now called, Communities, Culture and Heritage are very important in Inverness County. We have a number of ethnic communities. We have our Aboriginal peoples, we have the Acadian peoples, the Gaelic-speaking peoples and we also have, of course, many others as well, but those are certainly the three largest groups that I think about. We also have people who might be, say, less connected to the ethnic cultures, but maybe more so to other types of art and culture and they're all important.



I did notice - and I don't know if some of the other members might find this interesting - in the resolution something called 'advance culture'. I just want to point this out for the interest of members and perhaps anybody in department, I find this concept interesting. I'll just go back to a project I worked on years ago, about culture in Inverness County and somebody had made the remark that we need to do more to develop the culture in Inverness County. It kind of amused me at first because I thought, we have such a strong cultural presence; a lot of people come to visit because of it. What I realized was sometimes people have different definitions of culture and for this person, that kind of culture wasn't really what culture was about and that's fair. I mean, we live in a free country, people are allowed to have their own opinions, but they felt that culture and art was less about what we would find in traditional ethnic cultures and we think of things like music and dance and language. It was more so about other - maybe we would call them - modern art forms, which can also be dance, it could be theatre, could be art, as in visual arts and whatnot and that's fine.

I found this interesting that it was in the resolution and I guess one of the things I want to point out as something that I would caution all Nova Scotians, in my humble opinion, is that ethnic culture should not be perceived as being backward because that would be the converse of advanced. I think some people, perhaps, maybe need a better understanding of ethnic cultures and what they mean to us. They are living cultures. I often see the word 'preserve', that we preserve cultures or we preserve things like languages, but languages, for example, are always developing and we should be maintaining them, not preserving them. I think this might seem like a small point, but it's something in our own cultural mindset in this province I think we need to be aware of and respectful of.

Perhaps I'll be selfish for a moment and I know Gaelic is very important to me because it is part of who I am and certainly part of a great deal of people of the area I represent. I'd like to commend the government past and present for the work that they're doing for the Gaelic language. That's something very important to me and others. I'm not going to spend too much time on this, but I know when I grew up, Gaelic died with my grandparents' generation because they felt such shame from going to school and being told that they were backwards. There are stories of children who were slapped because they spoke Gaelic, they were made fun of and it's really sad that one's own culture could become an embarrassment to oneself. This is why that generation never spoke it to my parents' generation and why my parents just have a few words here and there that I used to hear growing up.

There's a loss there and it stands to reason that if government institutions were part and parcel of the demise of things like the Gaelic language, it's important in this day and age that government is doing something to fix that. I commend the government for that. We had it in school up to Grade 2 and then it disappeared so I missed that boat. I did get on the boat when I went to university. I was able to take some courses in it and that was important. I can still share a few words in Gaelic in the Legislature. (Interruptions) I'm going to make a statement in here soon all in Gaelic so members stay tuned for that.

I should move off on that. I guess the point I wanted to make was I'm happy to see government doing things to reinforce things in our society to help people learn that because had I had a chance to know it more, from Grade 2 on, maybe I would have had a chance to speak to my grandparents in our language, and I'm sure this is the same for other cultures, whether it be the Aboriginal culture - I know the Acadian people are very passionate about it and I congratulate them and all the efforts they've made to maintain their culture.

I should touch on, as well, the Arts Council. I know that was mentioned. I know there were changes made to that by the previous government that were frowned on by some people in the arts community, but I also know people who came forward and said that the changes were good. I remember what we did see at the time was that there was certainly value in having peer review for people making application under the Arts Council. What we were seeing was the same people who were getting awarded a year earlier were reviewing the person who had awarded them the year previous. Of course we have a small province and we saw a lot of the grants seemed to be falling into the Halifax community. It made people think, well, it's who you know that is going to determine your success, so we tried to change that.

I know that was met with great hostility, at the time, but I know that's what we were trying to do and I thought there was value in that. I know that some people maintain there wasn't value in that and I know they've perhaps had the ear of this government, and that's fine, but if there's anything to be said in that, I'd like to put that on the record tonight. I think it's good for people in the arts community to have funding, and I'm speaking more so about visual arts, dance, theatre and that, those are important things that government should be supporting.

I also know this, there are all kinds of forms of entertainment and culture that people consume every day. If Shania Twain was playing at the Metro Centre tonight, it would probably be sold out, Madam Speaker. To that, I would say the people have spoken and I think it's important that government respects that people can make their own decisions about what kinds of art forms they want to support because if they're enjoying it, they are speaking with their wallets.

I do think there is a place for government, for arts, and I'm glad to see this government continues to support that. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have? About two minutes? I guess to close off I just want to highlight again, thank the department for what they're doing, and highlight the importance of arts and culture in our communities right around the province. It's important for our economies, people dependent on it for their livelihoods. In a lot of cases it's what draws people here and it's what makes us who we are. That's important because when people who don't live in Nova Scotia look at our province, whether it be to visit or to do business, this is how we're putting our foot forward. It's not only important to them, but it's important to ourselves, because for young people growing up in this province, it's important (Interruption) The honourable member is asking when are we going to hear the Gaelic and I would say a dh'aithghearr, soon. Madam

Speaker, I think it's important for ourselves, for our young people, that we have a good understanding of culture and history and heritage in our province so that, hopefully, we can find some way to keep those old homes alive in places like Digby and Annapolis and whether it be at least finding some way to come back here and to keep their presence in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank all members for participating in tonight's debate and I would agree, I'm not sure that it was a debate, but it was certainly good discussion that I believe Nova Scotians need to hear, so thank you all very much for that.

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

[The House rose at 6:29 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 855**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas on December 3, 2010 the West Nova Inclusive Employment Society organized a special evening to recognize the Clare Special Olympics athletes; and

Whereas these athletes are guided by the Special Olympics motto: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt"; and

Whereas all the support provided by volunteers, organizers, coaches and sponsors for Special Olympics is greatly appreciated;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the West Nova Inclusive Employment Society for having organized this special event of recognition for the Clare Special Olympics athletes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 856**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Lions Junior C Hockey Team hosted the Maritime Northern Canada Junior C Championship Tournament from April 6-10, 2011; and

Whereas the Clare team finished the tournament undefeated with wins over Charlottetown Abbies 12-0, Eastern Shore Jr. Mariners 9-1, Richibucto Bears 9-2, Kivalliq Canucks 8-3, and won 8-3 against the Kivalliq Canucks in the semifinal and won 5-1 against the Eastern Shore Jr. Mariners in the championship game; and

Whereas four of the Clare players picked up individual honours in addition to the team's win;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Clare Lions Junior C Hockey Team as well as Marc MacIntosh, Nick Comeau, Renel Deveau and Alex Dennis on their recognition and their coaches for winning the Maritime Northern Canada Junior C Hockey Championship Tournament.

**RESOLUTION NO. 857**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas volunteers are the backbone of every community in Nova Scotia, and the people of Clare are proud of the many dedicated individuals who give of themselves each day to make out municipality a better place to live; and

Whereas this year the Clare community has selected one of its outstanding citizens as Volunteer of the Year, and this individual has given much in the way of time and energy to various organizations; and

Whereas through this individual's genuine warmth and caring towards others she has become a valuable asset to the organizations that she has been involved in;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anne LeBlanc of Concession for being named Clare's Volunteer of the Year for her outstanding contribution to her community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 858**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas Simon Dugas, a Grade 12 student at École secondaire de Clare has been chosen as Nova Scotia's Youth Volunteer of the Year for 2011; and

Whereas Simon Dugas has given much in the way of time and energy to various organizations; and

Whereas Simon Dugas has previously received the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for academic excellence and engagement in the community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Simon Dugas of Clare for being chosen as Nova Scotia's Youth Volunteer of the Year for 2011 and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

**RESOLUTION NO. 859**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Ronnie LeBlanc has been a volunteer for 25 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Ronnie LeBlanc was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 25 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Ronnie LeBlanc for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 25 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 860**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Paul Pothier has been a volunteer for 20 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Paul Pothier was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 20 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Paul Pothier for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 20 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 861**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Gilbert Chandler has been a volunteer for 20 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Gilbert Chandler was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 20 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Gilbert Chandler for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 20 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 862**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Paul Comeau has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Paul Comeau was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Paul Comeau for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 863**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Bob Huber has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Bob Huber was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Bob Huber for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 864**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Yvon Thibodeau has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Yvon Thibodeau was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Yvon Thibodeau for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.



**RESOLUTION NO. 865**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Ralph Dugas has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Ralph Dugas was recognized on December 8, 2010, by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize Ralph Dugas for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 866**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Richard Romain has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Richard Romain was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Richard Romain for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 867**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Anne Theriault has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Anne Theriault was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for her 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Anne Theriault for her hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 868**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Jim Theriault has been a volunteer for 15 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Jim Theriault was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Jim Theriault for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 15 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 869**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Eric Comeau has been a volunteer for 20 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Eric Comeau was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 20 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Eric Comeau for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 20 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 870**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Richard Comeau has been a volunteer for 25 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Richard Comeau was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 25 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Richard Comeau for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 25 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 871**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Roger LeBlanc has been a volunteer for 25 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Roger LeBlanc was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 25 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Roger LeBlanc for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 25 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 872**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas the Clare Search and Rescue organization was founded in 1983 and is a volunteer organization dedicated to helping others; and

Whereas Roland Comeau has been a volunteer for 25 years with the Clare Search and Rescue organization; and

Whereas Roland Comeau was recognized on December 8, 2010 by the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia for his 25 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Roland Comeau for his hard work and commitment to the Clare Search and Rescue organization for the past 25 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 873**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Jennifer McIntosh received gold in the 400 and 800 metre, and silver in the 200 and 100 metre and has been selected to attend the National Special Olympic Games in February of 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Jennifer McIntosh on her gold and silver medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games and her selection to the National Special Olympic Games in 2012.

**RESOLUTION NO. 874**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Jillian Young received gold in the 200 metre, silver in the 400 metre and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Jillian Young on her gold medal performance at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 875**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas John Gibbs received silver in the 100 metre, bronze in the 800 and 5<sup>th</sup> in the 200 and 400 metre.

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize John Gibbs on his silver and bronze medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 876**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Kenny Joudrey received gold in the 100 and 400 metre and silver in the 200 metre.

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Kenny Joudrey on his gold and silver medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 877**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Lynn Rafuse received bronze in the 100 metre, 4<sup>th</sup> in the 200 metre and 5<sup>th</sup> in the 400 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Lynn Rafuse on her bronze medal performance at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 878**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Matthew Faye received gold in the 400 metre, silver in the 200, 800 and 1,500 metre and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100 metre.

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Matthew Faye on his gold and silver medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 879**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Melissa Knox received bronze in the 200 metre, bronze in the 100 metre and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Melissa Knox on her bronze medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 880**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Stevie Demone received 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400 metre, 5<sup>th</sup> in the 100 metre and 6<sup>th</sup> in the 200 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Stevie Demone on his performance at the Provincial Winter Games.



**RESOLUTION NO. 881**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Alexander Shankle received gold in the 800 metre, silver in the 400 and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 200 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Alexander Shankle on his gold and silver medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games.

**RESOLUTION NO. 882**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Hansi Voegle received silver in the 800 metre and 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100, 200 and 400 metre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Hansi Voegle on his silver medal performance at the Provincial Winter Games.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 883**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Special Olympic athletes and coaches from the South Shore travelled to participate in the Provincial Winter Games held in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of snowshoeing, supported by their coaches; and

Whereas Emily Latta received gold in the 100 and 200 metre, and silver in the 400 and 800 metre and has been selected to attend the National Special Olympic Games in February of 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and recognize Emily Latta on her gold and silver medal performances at the Provincial Winter Games and her selection to the National Special Olympic Games in 2012.