



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

MONDAY, MAY 2, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, MONDAY, MAY 2, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

4:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition entitled a Petition to Ban Hydraulic Fracturing in Nova Scotia. It is signed by 1,493 individuals and I, too, have affixed my signature.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition from constituents in my area. There's a long operative clause, so I'll read part of it:

“People who live on or must travel on, highway 202 between the intersection at the McCarthy Road and the amber light in Centre Rawdon and the Valley Road between West Gore and Rawdon Gold Mines, are fed up with the condition of these roads all year round.”

Mr. Speaker, there are approximately 300 signatures in this petition and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 924

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

Whereas this government wants Nova Scotian families in all parts of our province to be as safe as possible; and

Whereas May 1st to May 7th is Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada - a time set aside to highlight the increasing importance of being prepared for all emergencies; and

Whereas it is critical to their safety that Nova Scotians understand the risks we face, make a family emergency plan and assemble a household emergency kit;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House encourage Nova Scotians to make sure they are ready to take care of themselves and their loved ones for the first 72 hours of any emergency as we recognize May 1st to May 7th as Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 925

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 April 28th was the National Day of Mourning to remember the 23 Nova Scotians who died at work or from work-related causes; and

Whereas Rick Clarke, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, was in Halifax to recognize those who have died and to raise awareness of this very important issue; and

Whereas while driving to a Day of Mourning ceremony, Rick was in a car accident and suffered a broken ankle;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the important work Rick Clarke does on behalf of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour and all Nova Scotians, and wish him a very speedy and thorough recovery.

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. 926

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

Whereas hospice palliative workers, both paid and voluntary, in Nova Scotia provide unconditional, compassionate care and bring comfort and dignity to individuals approaching the ends of their lives; and

Whereas during the week of May 1st to May 7th, governments, health care workers, and volunteers, recognize National Hospice Palliative Care Week by raising awareness about hospice palliative care; and

Whereas this year's theme is Communities Share the Care, How Can I Help?, which reflects that we can make a difference in the lives of those living with a life-limiting illness, and those affected by it, when we work together;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize the week of May 1st to May 7th as Hospice Palliative Care Week and acknowledge the dedication of health care professionals, staff, and volunteers in the field.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 927

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

Whereas I was pleased to take part in the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Canadian Space Agency and the Department of Education, the first in Canada, so that students can learn more about space exploration, technology, and careers; and

Whereas Mr. Brian Ellenberger, principal of Southdale-North Woodside School, has been a provincial leader with the Science Lead Team for Grades Primary to 6 for more than seven years, and has been an inspiration for hands-on, minds-on science involving critical thinking, literacy, and mathematics; and

Whereas students and staff of Southdale-North Woodside School graciously hosted astronaut Dr. Robert Thirsk at the signing event and had the opportunity to ask questions;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly thank Southdale-North Woodside School Principal Ellenberger for all his great work engaging students and teachers in science, technology, and the exciting field of space exploration.

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. 928

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

Whereas May 2nd is Federal Election Day; and

Whereas candidates and volunteer organizers of all political stripes have been working hard over the last six weeks in communities across the country; and

Whereas tonight Nova Scotians and Canadians will come together and watch democracy unfold in all provinces from east to west;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the many candidates, staffers, and community volunteers who have worked during the election campaign, and encourage all Nova Scotians to get out and exercise their right to vote.

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. 929

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

Whereas an estimated 36 per cent of Nova Scotians gave care to someone because of a long-term condition, mental illness or temporary difficult time; and

Whereas those women and men give freely of their time, energy, and income to provide the love someone needs; and

Whereas May is Family Caregiver Month, a time to recognize the dedication, energy and love family caregivers provide;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in celebrating the month of May as Family Caregiver Month in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 51 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 371 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Public Highways Act. (Hon. William Estabrooks)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 930

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

Whereas the NDP Government has slashed public education funding in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the future of Nova Scotia's economy depends on providing the best education possible for our young people; and

Whereas this short-sighted and ill-advised decision by the Dexter Government has put the future of Nova Scotia in jeopardy;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to reconsider their deep cuts to public education in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 931

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

Whereas the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary has been a constant source of support for the department's firefighters for more than 40 years; and

Whereas in times of fire or emergency, the Ladies' Auxiliary has been called upon to provide food, drinks and a warm word of encouragement, as well as to volunteer at fundraisers and department functions; and

Whereas over the years the dedicated members of the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary have raised more than \$175,000 for the department;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislative Assembly commend the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary for their dedication and tireless commitment to the fire department and 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 Minister of Energy.

RESOLUTION NO. 932

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

Whereas Jenny Armin-Pereda of Pictou took part in a young writers workshop sponsored by the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library and their Writers in Residence program; and

Whereas Ms. Armin-Pereda was part of a group of four young writers from Pictou County who participated in a writing workshop under the guidance of Writer in Residence Gary Blackwood, to write an original one-act play called *While It Lasts*; and

Whereas the play *While It Lasts* was entered and performed at Theatre Antigonish's One-Act Play Festival in March and won the award for Best New Play at the festival;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Jenny Armin-Pereda for being part of a group of young writers who wrote an award-winning play at the Theater Antigonish Festival and wish her success in future writing projects and furthermore, to thank the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library for its Writer in Residence program.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 933

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has the highest rate per capita of sexual assault in our country and nine out of 10 sexual assaults go unreported; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has the lowest rate of laying charges in sexual assault cases; and

Whereas the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre of Halifax teaches skills for intervention, aid for the abused and encouragement to break the silence on sexual assault;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House acknowledge May as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and recognize the need for action on this important issue.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 934

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

Whereas citizen participation in the political process through the act of voting is the cornerstone of our democracy that ensures an accountable and responsible government; and

Whereas voting is the easiest and most important form of civil duty that gives citizens a stake in the future of their community and their country; and

Whereas to be “. . . free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country” is what former Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker called the heritage of freedom;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize how fortunate Canadians are to enjoy the right to vote freely and urge all Nova Scotians to exercise their democratic right today, during Canada’s 41st election.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 935

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

Whereas on June 3rd, the annual Pictou County Relay for Life will be held at the Scott Weeks Parkdale Park in New Glasgow; and

Whereas the event will host approximately 70 teams who will be walking all night to raise funds to fight cancer, remember loved ones and support those who are fighting; and

Whereas last year's Pictou County Relay raised over \$250,000 with 72 teams participating;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the residents of Pictou County for their amazing commitment to the Relay for Life and thank the participants for their fundraising success for such a worthy cause.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 936

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

Whereas multiple sclerosis is a devastating, unpredictable disease which affects balance, hearing, memory, mobility and vision with the effects of the disease being physical, emotional and financial; and

Whereas May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in Canada; and

Whereas because women are three times more likely to be diagnosed with MS than men, Mother's Day weekend serves as the focal point for the MS Carnation Fundraising Campaign;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge May as MS Awareness Month and extend our appreciation to the volunteers who will raise funds for the MS Carnation Campaign this coming weekend.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 937

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

Whereas Cape Breton's Northside has a rich and interesting sports history that will be welcomed into a new home at the Northside Civic Centre in October this year; and

Whereas plans for a Northside Sports Hall of Fame began in April 2009 and a committee, including Bob Gordon and Cyril Aker, has been working ever since to honour the area's many sporting greats; and

Whereas April 16th is this year's deadline for applications to the Northside Sports Hall of Fame;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the dynamic efforts of the Board of Directors of the Northside Sports Hall of Fame Association and wish them every success with plans for the 2011 induction ceremonies.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 938

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

Whereas Warren Wagner of Brooklyn, Queens County has contributed to the business community of Queens County for 28 years; and

Whereas through the activities and growth of his business, Memory Lane, in Liverpool, Queens County, Warren Wagner has been a leader in providing imaging and digital technology to the area; and

Whereas Warren Wagner, after 28 years in business, has retired;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Warren Wagner on his retirement and thank him for his contribution to the business community of Queens County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 939

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

Whereas Chalice is a Canadian Catholic sponsorship and development organization working to alleviate the effects of poverty in the developing world; and

Whereas Chalice was founded 15 years ago in Nova Scotia and works to alleviate poverty in 15 countries including Haiti and Ukraine and countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa; and

Whereas Chalice was named the No. 1 International Aid and Development Charity in Canada in 2010 for being a good steward of the donations it employs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate founder Fr. Pat Cosgrove and Lower Sackville-based Chalice on their weeklong celebration of the Chalice family on May 1-8, 2011 and thank them for their service to the international community and to enriching the lives of their recipients, donors and volunteers.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 940

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

Whereas the Coal Miners Cafe hosted a John Prine Tribute to benefit the local food bank in January 2011; and

Whereas Anne and George Stoupakis of Inverness returned from Boston to open the Coal Miners Cafe with its warm interior design celebrating the history and significance of coal mining in Inverness; and

Whereas the John Prine Tribute welcomed local musicians to play the classic music of one of North America's finest songwriters before a standing room only gathering;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the cultural and economic contributions of Anne and George Stoupakis in their dedication to entertaining the people of Inverness and those who visit this special place.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 941

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

Whereas Mr. Bill Alexander has been a long-time resident of Stanley Section, Lunenburg County, and an important member of his community; and

Whereas Mr. Alexander has volunteered his time to the local seniors' club in the New Germany area, the Lions club, the local medical centre, the Canada Day committee and many other volunteer projects big and small; and

Whereas on February 18th at the Masonic Lodge in New Germany, Mr. Bill Alexander was recognized for his volunteer work by being named the Maritimer of the Week by CTV Atlantic;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Mr. Bill Alexander for being named Maritimer of the Week, acknowledge his significant contribution to his community through his volunteer work and wish him health, success and happiness in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 942

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

Whereas Sheila Evans of Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, has a life membership in the Royal Canadian Legion where she has been very active for the past 37 years and became interested in veterans at a very young age; and

Whereas Sheila has recently received the Royal Canadian Legion Meritorious Service Award which is the highest award that can be granted to Life, Ordinary, Associate or Affiliate Voting Members and very few members within the Royal Canadian Legion receive this award in their lifetime; and

Whereas Sheila is a respected member of the Centennial Legion Branch No. 160 and is deserving of this honour for all the volunteer work and her many accomplishments over the years;

Therefore be it resolved that the Members of the House of Assembly recognize the invaluable contributions and services rendered in her dedication to our veterans and join with me in congratulating her on this very prestigious award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 943

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

Whereas two Park View Education Centre students, 15-year-olds Cole Skinner and Rebecca Weagle, were selected as alternates for their respective Canada Games hockey teams; and

Whereas Cole Skinner of Spectacle Lake is a technically sound goalie who plays with the South Shore Mustangs and earned himself the role of alternate goalie in the Canada Winter Games; and

Whereas Rebecca Weagle of Masons Beach has contributed as a first-year player with the Midget AAA team Metro Boston Pizza, as well as mentoring other young goalies in her community, and was also chosen as an alternate goalie during the Canada Winter Games;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the achievement in sport of these two young goalies, Cole Skinner and Rebecca Weagle, and congratulate them for their participation in the Canada Winter Games.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 944

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

Whereas justice is a significant issue in Nova Scotia, a concern made greater with the seven murders in the province already this year; and

Whereas since March, there have been 16 shootings in Halifax Regional Municipality alone; and

Whereas the NDP Government cut crime prevention programs by 55 per cent in this year's budget;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly condemn the NDP Government's cut to crime prevention programs and demand a renewed focus on the prevention of crime in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 945

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire brigades are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters not only contribute hard work, skills and time, they often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank all their members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ken MacLean of the North River and District Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for receiving a 30-year service award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 946

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

Whereas for 16 years the Halifax Comedy Festival has been a successful and highly anticipated cultural event in Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas performances were staged across Halifax during the Halifax Comedy Festival from April 13-16, 2011; and

Whereas Paul LeBlanc was the volunteer chair for the Atlantic Comedy Festival Society;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the work of Paul LeBlanc and all members of the Atlantic Comedy Festival Society in promoting the arts and cultural community of Nova Scotia, and congratulate everyone involved with the society on another successful and hilarious season of comedy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 947

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

Whereas this evening, award-winning country music artist George Canyon will host the George Canyon and Friends Diabetes Heroes Tour at Fountain Hall; and

Whereas this extraordinary event will be filled with great entertainment and inspirational stories of individuals who have triumphed while living with diabetes; and

Whereas Jordan DePape, Lindsey Carswell and Mike Fisher, all of whom have type 1 diabetes, will share their insights and prove to everyone that being diabetic doesn't mean you can't still pursue your dreams and live life to the fullest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House extend their appreciation to George Canyon for his unwavering commitment to advocate for persons with type 1 diabetes and wish the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation all the best for a successful event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 948

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

Whereas the Eastern Shore District High School Glee Club performed at the first annual Limelight Dance Competition; and

Whereas the 16 students of the Eastern Shore District High School Glee Club worked long hours and early mornings with the professional teaching staff of the school, perfecting their singing and their dance choreography; and

Whereas the Eastern Shore District High School Glee Club, under the direction of both Ms. Allison Penwell, director of music, and Ms. Heather Allen, director of dance, achieved a gold standard and top mark in the Novice Song and Dance Category, and were awarded the Broadway Bound Spirit Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the director of music, Ms. Allison Penwell, and the director of dance, Ms. Heather Allen, and all of the hard-working and talented students of the Eastern Shore District High School Glee Club on their significant achievements in this competition, and wish them luck in all of their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

There has been a request to revert to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci M. le Président. Au nom de mon collègue, l'honorable député de Clare, je désire présenter une pétition qui dit :

« Attendu que la moyenne des frais de scolarité et les frais afférents pour les études de premier cycle en Nouvelle-Écosse ont presque doublé depuis 1990 ;

Attendu que les frais de scolarité de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui s'élèvent à près de 5 500 \$, sont parmi les plus élevés au Canada ;

Attendu que les étudiantes et étudiants étrangers paient au moins le double pour la même éducation, et que les étudiantes et étudiants inscrits aux domaines d'études professionnelles font face à des frais de scolarité annuels de près de 14 000 \$;

Attendu que les étudiantes et étudiants de premier cycle en Nouvelle-Écosse traînent une dette étudiante moyenne de 30 000 \$, soit le niveau le plus élevé au pays ;

Attendu que les frais de scolarité réduisent les possibilités d'éducation de nombreuses familles dont le revenu est faible ou moyen tout en intensifiant les obstacles pour les étudiantes et étudiants autochtones, des régions rurales, racialisés et autrement marginalisés ;

Attendu que la Nouvelle-Écosse fait face à une diminution des inscriptions et qu'elle compte parmi les deux seules provinces à pénaliser les étudiantes et étudiants hors province en imposant des frais de scolarité plus élevés ;

Attendu que 82 p. cent des nouveaux emplois requièrent des études post-secondaires ;

Attendu que les 11 universités de la Nouvelle-Écosse sont une industrie d'un milliard de dollars, fournissant 30,000 emplois directs et indirects ; et

Attendu que le gouvernement provincial dépense 2,000 \$ de moins par étudiante ou étudiant pour la moyenne nationale ;

Nous, soussignées et soussignés faisons pétition pour que l'Assemblée législative de la Nouvelle-Écosse :

- réduise immédiatement les frais de scolarité et les frais afférents pour tous les étudiants et étudiantes ;
- fournisse 50 % de tous les prêts d'études provinciaux en tant que bourse ; et
- augmente le financement par étudiante ou étudiant à la moyenne nationale. »

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Can I just have the operative clause read, please?

MR. SAMSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm almost done.

M. le Président, cette pétition est signée par 190 étudiants et étudiantes de l'Université Sainte-Anne et j'ai signé la pétition moi-même.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is from the students of Université Sainte-Anne, who are calling upon the government to address the issue of post-secondary tuition fees in Nova Scotia with the petition clause being:

“We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia to:

- Immediately reduce tuition and ancillary fees for all students;
- Provide 50% of every provincial student loan as a grant; and
- Increase per-student funding to the national average.”

This petition is signed by 190 students of Université Sainte-Anne and I have affixed my signature. I am presenting the petition on behalf of my colleague, the honourable member for Clare.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

There has been a request to revert to the order of business, Presenting Reports of Committees.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 1 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 7 - Justice Administration Amendment (2011) Act.

Bill No. 13 - Pharmacy Act.

Bill No. 19 - Nova Scotia Business Incorporated Act.

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

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

There has been a request to revert to the order of business, Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

[Is it agreed?

It is agreed.]

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, during estimates I was asked for a number of things pertaining to the budget. What I'd like to table is the Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association partnership agreement funding and special projects. I would also like to table the partnership agreement, the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, as represented by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, and the Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association.

MR. SPEAKER: The information is tabled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to continue my remarks on this piece of legislation. I know we had a very spirited evening the last night I spoke and (Interruption) It should be spirited tonight, it's an election day today.

Let's start with something positive about some of the measures that are in this piece of legislation. These are items that are reasonable. There's a measure about tobacco, about using stamps to protect against contraband and it's a federal initiative that's trying to be accomplished. Mr. Speaker, that's something that is favourable and that would be a positive development.

We know that there is a lot of contraband in our province right now. We're trying to reduce the number of people who smoke and use tobacco because it has significant health effects, as we all know. I know there were measures taken a number of years ago by the Office of Health Promotion because tobacco reduction was one of the six priorities of that office. I know there had been success in reducing the amount of people smoking and getting contraband off our streets and highways, wherever it's being transported, is something we should be focused on.

If we can better control tobacco, hopefully we can better control whose hands it's getting into - I think for anybody, but certainly for youth if they're getting their start with illegal tobacco. We know how addictive tobacco is.

There was also a measure in there about bus inspectors, they're basically being moved from the URB to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. There're nothing of significance that we have seen there to object to that. There's nothing to do with the film tax credit that would be negative, we see it as a positive. They're changing the cap for amounts eligible for labour costs, making that cap higher and as I understand, that's to better assist the sector in the film business of digital animation because it's very labour intensive.

Those are some positive things, but (Interruptions) A very short list, yes. I had a chance to visit the shopping centre in Port Hawkesbury over the weekend. You get a feel for what's on people's minds. I popped into one of the stores and they told me the increase in the HST has been hurting their business. They've been quite quiet and they see people polarized, they seem to be going to either end of the mall to the big-box stores. The people working there felt that the increase in the HST was making people even more price sensitive. People were shopping for the best bargains they could get.

I told them I would carry that message to the Legislature. They're working hard, they're trying to ply their trade in a shopping mall. The consumer is hurting and the consumer is not coming into the store as much as they once did.

Another interesting thing I noticed, and I don't think this would be strange to anybody sitting here in the Legislature, but a lot of people - I'm not directing this to this government in particular but I think all governments are seen nowadays as perhaps not listening to people. Whether that's true or not, I guess at the end of the day that's up to the electorate. People don't feel government is listening to them.

One comment that caught my attention was a couple of people have said that it's all on television. They don't feel connected to their politicians and sometimes they give up. They may have approached a politician in the past about something, an issue might have come up in government, whatever level it wouldn't matter, but sometimes people lose faith. I think it's important for us all, no matter what Party we belong to, especially on a day like today when there's an election, to remember the importance of listening - not just leading up to the election but well after the election too.

One of the items that is in this piece of legislation is the increase in user fees. One of the things I spoke about the last time I stood here in the Legislature was the importance of us showing people the transparency behind user fees. I think all Parties in this Legislature have called for it at one time or another. I know there were a lot of people who feel the same way.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left in my remarks?

MR. SPEAKER: You have 18 minutes.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. This is one example in this piece of legislation that I think Nova Scotians spoke about, we've heard about it. Every Party in this Legislature agreed with them at one time or another that there should be transparency behind user fees. The importance of the transparency is mainly because people deserve to know what they're paying for and why it costs as much as it does.

I gave the comparison as government being different from the private sector in that when you buy something at a store, go out anywhere, walk out onto the street and buy something in a store, there's a competitive process that brings that product, or that service, to market and people know that they're getting something. They're hopefully getting the best value for their dollar. We should be striving for the same thing in government.

That's something that we see in this piece of legislation, giving the government the ability to increase user fees by 2 per cent this year, but there is no measure in there to ask or call upon government to be transparent and explain to Nova Scotians why there is an increase in the user fees. We can say inflation, sure, but that's only one component of the cost.

Another measure that is in this piece of legislation is the MOU and that's something else that I know a lot of Nova Scotians are going to be hearing about from their municipal counsellors. Those counsellors are going to explain to Nova Scotians how the government

changed the terms of the agreement that is now going to cause pressure to be put on municipalities. That pressure is going to come because the province is not going to be providing the same funds as it had promised for court services and for housing costs, to help municipalities with those issues. That's revenue that the municipalities were expecting, but they're not going to get. I don't know if there are any counsellors listening tonight, but I'm sure that they're going to be explaining to their constituents about this.

It gets back to the theme of listening and I guess if the government chooses to change its mind on something, that's a case where people don't feel like they're listened to or they feel that it doesn't matter. That gets back to the comments of a couple of people I spoke with on the weekend when they felt that - should I bother going to vote? I know we all read resolutions today encouraging people to vote because of the importance of democracy, but what do you say to somebody who has lost faith? I know I said to them, well, if there is something I can do, give me a shot at it anyway, I'll give it a try. People voted NDP in the last election and they were looking for change, but as it was established the last time I spoke, they didn't get change and I can tell from the people who come to visit me in the office in Inverness.

I might look around me after the next election and be surrounded with a lot more colleagues. I guess the answer on that will come in the next election and maybe the answer will come from the people who vote, who feel like they're being listened to. I was out on the weekend listening and that's why I'm bringing some of these points forward here today.

Another thing that people had said - I know everybody here will relate to this - is the price of gas and there's not a lot we can do to control the price of oil. It's traded out on the open markets and with all the strife in the Middle East, in North Africa, there's a fear that it could move into the real, oil-rich nations. That is what's driving the price of oil up and as the price of oil goes up, the price at the pump goes up for gasoline. For a lot of people I spoke with on the weekend who are working, for them, they may not be making the big salaries of, say, what a doctor might make or some other person might make in this province. For them, when the price of gasoline goes up, it affects them significantly and they start looking at their weekly budgets.

I spoke to one person who works in Port Hawkesbury and Port Hawkesbury is a real hub area. There are people who drive in 40-50 minutes away from Port Hawkesbury, a significant drive; they're doing that five days a week. That's 200 minutes in the car and I'm not going to do the math on how many kilometres that is right off the top of my head, but it's a significant amount of time spent in their vehicle and they're spending a lot of money on gas.

I raise this because it's all the more reason why it's important for government to be making sure that we're giving Nova Scotians more affordable government. When we look

at the increase in the user fees of 2 per cent, that's another added cost; we're not helping them there. When we change our agreement with municipalities to reduce their revenues and put pressures on them to increase their taxation, we're not making government more affordable for Nova Scotians. When the government raised the HST, Mr. Speaker, after they promised they wouldn't - again, we're not making government more affordable for Nova Scotians.

These are the reasons why we find it difficult when we look at this legislation to be happy about it. We would prefer if government was taking a page out of our books, we've introduced some legislation. For instance, the Balance Budget Bill that we felt was very sensible and would restore the requirement for government to table balance budgets and limit government spending, limit it to population plus the cost inflation in a given year.

Mr. Speaker, this would take the pressure off taxing the people more. So when those people are driving to work they may be paying more for gas, it's hard for us to control that, but maybe we can give them a savings somewhere else. Maybe we can save a little bit on the tax side when they go to buy their fuel at the gas pump. That is something that we've put forward, we'd love to see in this piece of legislation but it's not there.

We also said that when the provincial budget balanced, we'd reduce the HST to 13 per cent. That's another sensible measure, Mr. Speaker, another way to show Nova Scotians that we're listening. That we care when they say they are facing pressures on family budgets each week. That we're trying to do something, something that we can control to make life more affordable for them by giving them a more affordable government.

How do we do that? We'll look at the user fees again. If government doesn't even know how much it costs to deliver these services, or only knows in a very rough sense, then how can we expect to control those costs? If you opened up a small business in Nova Scotia tomorrow and you didn't understand what your costs were, how would you know how much to charge for your product or service? If you didn't control those costs, you might find that a competitor might be selling their product or service cheaper than you are and you'd be out of business.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation that we're being asked to support here, we have difficulty with it because the whole principle that we should be looking at right now is determining what costs there are in government, trying to control them and giving people a break on their taxes. That's really what creates the environment for a good economy. It takes resolve, it takes difficult decisions but you know sometimes - and I think we think that we can't make changes in government, we need to change in government.

We always need to change and it doesn't matter if you're in government or if you're in any organization, change is healthy. I would like to start seeing change towards balanced budgets. I would like to start seeing change towards more affordable government for Nova Scotians and change towards lower taxes.

Another piece of legislation that we were putting forward was the Value for Money Bill. We don't see anything in the legislation here about it but basically, the idea was to try to establish some goals for program performance and measure the results. If we can find ways to deliver a service more efficiently or better for Nova Scotia, we think that makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

Lastly, I'm not going to use all my time this evening but we did introduce another measure and in fairness, I think it needs to be pointed out because there would be some cost to government - that was a tax credit to farmers who make donations to food banks. Based on our numbers, the costs are not significant. We think it's an interesting piece of legislation that deserves a look and I know that our Liberal colleagues introduced a similar piece of legislation .

I took a look at the numbers, Mr. Speaker, and I wanted to make sure that they were meaningful because if there was no uptake by farmers then there wouldn't be much sense in putting it forward. We did speak with a lot of sectors in the agriculture industry and they felt the numbers that we were putting forward would be reasonable and there would be uptake. So we would encourage the members of this legislature to take a look at that piece of legislation. If they have any questions about it, if it's something that they would see passed - at the end of the day the goal of the legislation is to help people, it's to help feed people who are going to our food banks and it's about helping farmers.

We've seen it throughout history, Mr. Speaker. There are people starving in the world and we have farmers in countries where there is surplus agricultural product being destroyed. We even saw it during the Depression, when people were devastated by the economy, the effects of the Depression. I suppose some people were starving, yet farmers in their frustration - because the price for their products was so low, they were destroying them, to protest to the government, because they were suffering as well. They were working hard to produce goods and they weren't getting fairly compensated for them.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this food bank donation tax credit for farmers is, if there is some surplus corn or whatever it happens to be - I know I spoke with a couple of dairy farmers - we might find a way to be able to make that happen. If we can get more food product to the food banks in a cheap way that helps to offset the costs for farmers, they might be willing to do it. I even spoke to one person in the agricultural community and they said, you know what, we like the feel-good aspect of this legislation because we would feel good about donating some food to the food bank.

Mr. Speaker, I should give credit to where this idea came from, it did not come from me. It came from somebody in Port Hawkesbury, a man who is chair of the food bank there. His name is Larry Evans, he's a lawyer. He had taken notice of this. No doubt he's trying to find ways to improve the stock of food at the food bank in the Strait area. He said Allan, why don't you take a look at this? I said I thought it was a great idea.

We ran it through our caucus, we did research on it with the agricultural sector and we've tried to put forward something that we felt would not cost government a significant amount. We don't want to be handcuffing the government but we feel that it's going to help farmers and it's going to help less fortunate Nova Scotians who rely on food banks.

Mr. Speaker, as I close my remarks, I would ask all members to have a look at that piece of legislation and consider giving a vote in favour of it because I think if we do, at the end of the day it would be nice for us to agree on a few matters over the course of a sitting. There is one, I think, between the Liberals who have also proposed a similar measure, and I'm sure the compassion on the opposite side of the Legislature will hold true and hopefully, we can get that bill passed as well. With that, I will conclude my remarks.

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and give a few remarks around the FMA (2011), Bill No. 27. First of all, I want to acknowledge the speaker prior to me, the member for Inverness and his talk about the tax credit for farmers who donate food to the food bank. It is a great proposal, it is one that was brought to our caucus as well, I think the Federation of Agriculture brought it to our caucus. I'm sure the government caucus would have received that. I agree with him, that is a piece of legislation that I think all of us could agree on.

Quite frankly, if the government does not want to pass an Opposition bill, I would encourage a member from government to present that bill, it's one that we would support as a caucus. It is a good piece of legislation for Nova Scotians. It rewards the farmer for donating that produce and, of course, as the previous member spoke about it, it provides those Nova Scotians who require our assistance in their time of need, an opportunity to receive that healthy product from Nova Scotia. So if it's not our bill, I would encourage someone from the governing Party to present a bill, one that our caucus would support without hesitation.

Mr. Speaker, I've had a chance, as the previous speaker was up and the Finance Critic from our caucus got up to talk about the (FMA 2011), they talked about a number of issues in here, particularly the issue around what is not in it. They talked about bracket creep, which we all know was introduced in 2005-06, that it would come into effect in the 2011 budget, that income tax brackets would be indexed. The present Finance Minister, when he was in Opposition, was extremely critical of that, the practice of not indexing income tax brackets. He called it a way for the government to reach into the pockets of Nova Scotians - I think he said pockets, wallets and purses of Nova Scotians - without actually having a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with him on this side of the House. It is fundamentally a way for government to raise revenue and, at the same time, Nova Scotians are losing their buying power, they're losing their ability to keep up, keep pace with expenses in their own homes.

Mr. Speaker, it is all across the financial spectrum, regardless of what income you're making. As the Finance Minister has said, it's a way of digging into the pockets of Nova Scotians and, quite frankly, without them even knowing it. They don't begin to feel that until they recognize that their buying power is disappearing.

One of the other things that the present Premier and the Finance Minister talked an awful lot about when they were on this side of the House, was the increase in user fees. I know that it has been talked about in this House. There are 1,400 user fees that have gone up, some of which would automatically go up in legislation, others would have to have an Order in Council to go up. It was important, we felt, and I think members on the government side felt when they were on this side of the House, that those fees should be debated in the House, that we should be here making sure that the increases are legitimate.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, a cost of living increase keeping pace with inflation is okay providing it is in a sense covering what is the cost of delivering that service, and we should be able to debate that. Each minister should be able to get up and say the increases that have gone on in their departments in delivering that particular service and why it is important that the fee goes up to cover it, but in the absence of that information, Nova Scotians are left to rely on what the Minister of Finance said when he was in Opposition, and what the Premier said when he was in Opposition - this is another form of a tax. This is nothing more than a tax increase by the government.

I think we would be doing all of ourselves a service if we actually began a debate in the House or at the very least, when government presented those increases, they presented along with them a document that said this is why this fee is going up; here's the cost that's associated with it for us to deliver that service to the people of this province, and this is a complete cost recovery. That would allow Nova Scotians to look at it and, quite frankly, it would legitimize the process. It would make Nova Scotians feel that they were at least just paying for the cost of delivering that service as opposed to a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, the other piece, and I know it has been debated in here, is certainly the MOU with the municipalities and the downloading that has taken place. It has brought municipal leaders across our province here; they've expressed to their constituents that they fully expect property taxes to go up.

I know that the minister responsible for this has spoken in the House, following the memorandum of understanding and the clause that was in it that allowed government for extraordinary circumstances to back away from that clause. But the memorandum of understanding - I know as the minister has spoken and I've talked about this - it really is a question of fairness to municipalities. When you begin to negotiate between levels of government, you do negotiations and a memorandum of understanding is contracted, it's very similar to what we as a province do with the federal government.

We negotiate a health social transfer agreement that - as a matter of fact there will be a new one, I think the minister felt in 2014 we'll have to do it around a negotiation on the delivery of a health agreement. Well, if every time a government changed in Ottawa, or elsewhere, and had challenges that they just automatically threw the old one out, it would make it extremely difficult for the Province of Nova Scotia and other provinces to be able to deliver those services in a way that they budgeted for.

That's very similar to what's happening with the municipalities. They budgeted with the idea that we, as a province, would take over the funding of education, justice, as well as social housing, yet that reduction hadn't happened in their budget. They had began to make plans towards that and municipalities, as part of that MOU, had taken over - I think it's Property Valuation Services Corporation. Really, they had taken over the assessment of properties, which used to be done by the province and now we have offloaded that to municipalities as part of this agreement.

What we're actually changing is the part that applies to the province but not throwing out the piece that applies to municipalities. For example, Mr. Speaker, I know in HRM here that by legislation the municipalities have to have an auditor and that's a cost associated, and it's actually in the memorandum of understanding - that municipalities would deliver that. So if we're going to throw out part of this agreement, why couldn't we throw out the rest of it? Why wouldn't the municipalities just say, okay, here, you have back the assessment piece of this? We don't want to deal with it anymore; we don't want to deal with the costs of that.

I'm not encouraging municipalities to do that but what I'm trying to say is that when governments negotiate an agreement, regardless of what political stripe, it becomes the responsibility of future governments to live up to that and when that agreement runs out, then you renegotiate. We could all be critical of previous governments, and we could be critical of this government, for decisions that they've made going forward, but at the end of the day, if they get re-elected, they have to live with their decisions. If a new government comes in, they have to live with them.

It's no different than what's going to happen in our country tonight. If the previous government gets re-elected, we go on. If a new government comes in, there are agreements that have been negotiated that the new government will have to live with. As tough as it may be for them in some of the difficult times, they have to live with it because we as a province and other provinces and territories are budgeting and we're moving forward based on those agreements. That's where the underlying piece that I think goes along with this is why it is so important that when governments of any stripe create a negotiation - with whether it is municipalities or federal government - we need to respect that.

There's a certain level of respect that governments deliver regardless of what level it is you're dealing with. That's the fundamental problem that I have with this agreement. We have backed away from part of it, but not all of it and it's in my view that we shouldn't have backed away from any of it because, quite frankly, it is what municipal governments

are dealing with to set their budgets going forward. I hope that whoever forms the federal government tonight, that they don't walk away from agreements that have been negotiated between them and provincial governments by the previous government. I know how difficult it is to budget. I know how hard it will be for this government and governments in other provinces to budget if the federal government determines that they're going to walk away from a memorandum of understanding.

As we go forward, I hope that we go forward in that spirit. I know that during the last campaign there was a lot of talk about infrastructure dollars, were you going to keep the commitments of the previous government on infrastructure, all of which were important. It was money that was coming through from Ottawa; we were willing to keep it. I believe that memorandum of understanding was also part of that conversation and it is one that governments and provincial governments should have been able to keep and respect as we went forward.

The member for Dartmouth East is keeping me busy. I'm getting a little nervous of him behind me, but nothing to be nervous about. (Interruptions) I didn't mean that in any bad way to the member for Dartmouth East, he was actually being very supportive and I want to thank him for that. He's been a great addition to our caucus and, quite frankly, has a great understanding of how important a memorandum of understanding is for municipalities from the great work he has done as a municipal councillor prior to coming into this House. I do want thank him for that and wish him all the success in future elections, as many as he wishes to run in.

I've had an opportunity, because of the federal election, to campaign in a number of areas across our province. I was in Cape Breton, I spent some time in Eskasoni, campaigning with our candidate there and it was rather interesting. I know it was brought up in the House, there's a new young chief in Eskasoni who is doing great work trying to address some of the challenges that are faced in the community, particularly around drug issues that are in the community and education. They were the two things that came up as he was making a presentation. I was there for the long service awards of members of the RCMP that was actually on the reserve and it was a great celebration. It was great to be surrounded by a lot of red, which was good to see them there. (Interruption) red serge, of course.

It was interesting to talk to the young chief as he presented his presentation to the community. It came back to how do we deal with the issue of drugs in our community; some of it is prescription drugs. How do we deal with the issue of education, making sure that young people in our community are getting an opportunity to go forward?

I want to acknowledge and congratulate the RCMP on the program where they're bringing First Nations members into the force. The chief had expressed - and as he was standing up there he recognized a young member of his community who was probably

about two years old dressed in - they called it his Halloween costume because he was dressed in a policeman's uniform. It wasn't red serge, but it was their shirt with the badges on it and he said he wanted to be like his father who had become a member of the RCMP. I thought, that is the way forward. That is how we begin to recognize and begin to bring into communities - they see someone doing the job in front of them that they can do. For a generation before him, so many people told his father and his grandfather that profession was not for you, that you couldn't do that.

By that act, by the federal government, by the RCMP, by absorbing the Mi'kmaq police force in Cape Breton, they made that possible. When I looked at that young person who was there and I saw the opportunities that were in front of him, I thought, we don't truly appreciate the impact that gesture did for us as a province and as a country, decades out and generations out, by showing that young person that not only could his father become a member of the RCMP, but that profession is available to him. It doesn't just apply to policing, it can apply directly across all of our sectors.

As I was campaigning in other communities, on Friday I had a chance to go down in Bridgewater and I campaigned in the Town of Bridgewater, knocking on doors with our candidate down there. It was rather interesting the stuff that was coming back to me. It wasn't about political Parties. There was, of course, the normal stuff you get on the doorsteps of, I saw they did this or they did that. Often it was people talking to me about their concerns that matter to them.

One of the things that came up and surprised me almost on every doorstep was the issue of education. I ran into a grandmother who was looking after her two grandchildren and a foster child. The first thing she said to me was, shhh, they're sleeping so we have to be quiet. She is a retired pharmacist. So, like all of us in this House, I started to talk about Bill No. 17. That wasn't even on her mind in many ways, she's retired, but what was on her mind was education, the education of not only her grandchildren but of a future generation.

She was looking at and hearing in the local papers about the closures of schools and schools being under review and what impact that would have. She has also been following the debate about Reading Recovery. All of us in this House know, I'm sure, have been exposed to the fact that the South Shore board embraced that program like no other; perhaps Chignecto might be able to say they did the same. They actually embraced that program, understanding its strengths and its weaknesses and what they did was took the strengths of that program and used it as the foundation that it was going to build on a literacy program for the young people of the South Shore and then they built a structure of supports around it to help those children who may not fit exactly into that program.

Her concern to me was whatever you can do, fight for that program because it is the foundation to giving my grandchildren and other children a way forward and hope for the future. I found it interesting because, I know the member for Timberlea-Prospect, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, is here and when he sat on this side of the House - I hope he doesn't mind me telling a little story - he talked about this place,

we sometimes get caught up in what we do here. While it's extremely important, it is important and I've said this many times, there is a way to realign yourself with the priorities of the people of the province and that is by getting out of this place on occasion and knocking on doors. I know he has started, since being elected here, I think in 1998, that he has a ritual of knocking on doors at least once a week in - I was going to say Fridays - of knocking on doors to realign himself with his constituents. I think the fact that he gets sent back here with one of the largest majorities in the House election after election probably speaks to that. That's what I was experiencing, not just in my own riding, but as I go across the province.

When I was in Yarmouth, it's a different scenario. What they're talking about is, what are the economic opportunities that are going to be here because of the devastation of the link with the ferry service with New England gone? They are real concerns. You're a 45 or 50 year old entrepreneur who has been working hard, having a business that has relied heavily on tourism and all of sudden what you think is the mecca that's bringing the people to your business is gone. You start to see the business erode underneath you and you can't do anything to stop it. You try to remake yourself. Some of them are coming to try to promote their product to residents of HRM hoping they would go to Yarmouth for the weekend, but there's that fear of what happens. Then they start saying, well we don't know what the plan is for us going down the road. Where is the plan to bring a ferry service back, if not, where's the plan to replace that economic driver with another one, which will allow us to be here?

Then, in the same breath, you're talking to a young person in that community who has just automatically given up any hope of ever living there. Their hope is moving and they say do you know what? We've just listened to this, we see our parents, we see people around us who are trying to keep up and there doesn't seem to be any hope. As a matter of fact, year after year it seems to fall behind. So they are saying our only option is to leave.

That's not the right option, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the reasons why I firmly believed in reducing the small business tax much more aggressively than we are because I believe it is putting money in the hands of the men and women who have built our communities, quite frankly. They've suffered through recessions before, they've suffered through tough times but they always weather them and they stay and stick with the community wherever possible.

It's interesting when you get a chance to talk to a small-business person in our communities. I know all of us have had a chance to do that. You get them to start talking about their employees and they are talking about their neighbour more often than not. They'll tell you what a valuable person this person is to their operation. Then they'll quickly go back to the human side of all of this, which is, do you know what, not only is he a great employee, or she a great employee, but they've coached my child in hockey or soccer or, I see them, they're on the SAC, or they sit on the health foundation. You know

that person, you should see the work they've done with non-profit organizations in our community in their spare time and they begin to tell you the story of how our communities are alive and thriving.

They are the people who, at the end of the day, when they start looking at their bottom line and see challenges, the very last thing they're going to do, Mr. Speaker, is look across that table, lay that person off, unless they have no option. It isn't about increasing their profits, it isn't about anything else, it is about investing in that person who stuck with them.

Oftentimes they weather that storm and they're there to prepare themselves for the upswing that will happen. Every time there is a downturn in the economy, it is followed by an upswing. The ones who survive are the ones who have been able to remake themselves but, more importantly, who weathered it and set themselves up to take advantage of the opportunities that exist at the end of the day.

That's why I think as a province and as a provincial government, those are the people we need to be investing in. I've been extremely critical of the Industrial Expansion Fund. I've been critical of it for a couple of reasons but one, I don't think it's open and transparent enough. I think Nova Scotians should have a chance to see the investments they are making. Also, it has been a tool that has been the only tool that governments have used and it really doesn't reach out to the vast majority of the small businesses in this province that are driving the economy of every one of our constituencies. They are three- or four- or five-person operations who are really what is driving the community and what is driving our local economy. Also the people who surrounded them are the people who are driving the social fabric, if you will, of our own individual communities.

When they start to collapse, it's not just the economy that collapses, it's the social economy that collapses, too. People start to disappear, they see no hope. We all - those of us who have children - want them to be near. Whether it is somewhere in Nova Scotia, preferably nearby, so you can send your grandchildren back home, you don't have to keep them overnight. That's what I'm hearing, anyway.

I don't know if many of you know but the member for Colchester North became a grandmother again on Friday. The second girl in the Casey family. The first one was spoiled and I'm sure the next one will be just as spoiled as the first one. (Interruption) Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree with you 100 per cent, she is a leader.

When you look at what is happening, when I hear and get out and talk to people, it's not just an economic issue that we're fighting with, it is the individual economy or the social fabric of our communities that is disappearing. Until we turn around and reinvest in the individuals who have been - I'll go back to it again - who have stuck with us through the very difficult times, I think we're going to go through this cycle. In some cases it's going to be extremely difficult to bring our communities back.

I had an opportunity, as I was leaving Bridgewater to head home to my riding of Annapolis, to take the No. 10; I spoke to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and I told the minister in estimates about the No. 10. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is an economic corridor between the Valley and the South Shore and it is absolutely atrocious when you go across that road. There are signs up all over the place, they've been promised multiple times to have the road done. I've acknowledged to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal how encouraged I was, and I think the road builders were, about the five-year plan on paving. There is a section of that road that is part of that; I look forward to seeing that tender come out.

The worst section of that road is not part of that tender and what we'll be looking for - and I know from the conversation I had with the minister that they revamp that plan year after year, that the other pieces begin to become part of the paving plan going forward.

It is one of those things - and I've talked to the minister about this in estimates - that instills confidence back in communities. For too long - and it goes through all political stripes and not just in this province - you would pave a certain section of a road and then you'd leave it for 10 years and you'd be paving all over the place. When in actual fact, I could tell you because a section of No. 10 was paved in 2002, just prior to my election, about 10 months before my election in 2003, they paved that section and they paved the section directly in front of my house, about an eight-kilometre strip, before I was elected in 2003.

Last year there was another four kilometres on this 30-kilometre stretch of highway that was paved. I've said to the minister, and I've said to the previous ministers, if we want to build confidence in the communities in the province and with the taxpayers that we know what we're doing, then we need to say here's our five-year plan for this particular road that we're going to be working on.

They understand, quite frankly, if you can only do four kilometres, but if you only do four kilometres this year and then ignore it for 10, well, then they just simply think you haven't understood a single thing they've said. If you do four this year, because that's what we say we can afford, we do that, and then next year we do the remainder that we can afford.

It does a couple of things; it instills the confidence in communities that governments know what they're doing. It instills some confidence in that we're paving in a way that we're hitting the trunks, bringing the main arteries to where commerce goes through. It also allows the men and women who work for the department in communities across this province to take some of the resources that they have, in terms of RIM funding and other monies that they would have that are very precious, and it allows them to use them in a more effective way, because if they know that road is going to be done next year there is no sense in putting in a lot of RIM money, or a lot of ditching, because that road

will be done in a capital project. I'm going to take that money and divert it to a road or a community that has no hope of being paved over the next number of years but with some investment would go a long way to keeping up that road, would cause some confidence within the community, and, quite frankly, would build some confidence in the departments - when I say the department I don't mean here, I mean out in the field - that we've listened and allowed them to manage their budget in a way which is encouraging.

Where the minister and I disagree is on the paving plans. It's a difference of view, and I respect the position that he has taken, I disagree with that in the sense that I believe that we, as a province, should not be in the paving business. I believe it is the private sector that needs to make that happen. I know that I live in a part of the province where one of the problems caused the department to go in this direction, tenders were high. There were few people who were bidding on those tenders.

I think that the direction that the government took last year, in terms of the five-year paving plan, in terms of putting out - and my hope was going to be that there would be a lot of tenders put out early and would eliminate some of that. What traditionally happens, Mr. Speaker, if you get a tender that comes out in January, February or March, you get a fair bit of activity because people are hungry. When you start having tenders come out in July and August, what's happening is, for the majority of people in this province, they start to put together their order book and they want to make commitments to meet their obligations. So when they then have to turn very quickly to respond to a tender, whether it's in southwestern Nova Scotia, or Inverness County, where they may not have work, they just don't do it. So what we have then, we leave it to where there are a couple of large outfits that can respond.

I think if we had done a better job of laying out what it is we're looking for in terms of work over the long haul, we could have dealt with that issue as opposed to investing in a paving plant. It is just a fundamental difference where I believe the private sector can compete, where the private sector is doing it, they do it cheaper than we can, Mr. Speaker, and it is simply just my view on that. I think it would have been wiser for us to have kept going down the road of making the changes that the minister had made and then make changes in the terms of our tendering process. And, do you know what, if they come in - and I've said this in my own community - if they come in with a quote that is too high, we say no to them. We're not going to accept that, we believe that's too high. We'll re-tender this. We'll put this back out.

After all, it is taxpayers' money and we want to make sure that we're getting the best value for that and that's why I believe if we get creative and continue to allow the private sector to compete, the taxpayer would be at a better advantage. I happen to also in my community, in my backyard, I had a company a few years ago open a quarry on property actually that my parents had owned, a property that my father had bought in 1967-68, my parents had bought. In the early 1970s, I guess my father decided it was more important to feed us 17 kids, or 13 kids that he was looking at, than it was to have 200 acres behind us.

So he sold that property and more recently someone bought it and they put a quarry in. It's a quarry that is operated and three young families are doing tremendous work. It's the next generation of Spicer Construction that has taken over that quarry. They're going to grow that business. They've built a house in behind me actually. It has been a positive thing but also as part of that they have now a paving company coming out of New Brunswick called Northern. It's coming into southwestern Nova Scotia, that have made agreements with them to deal with some of those issues that we had been referred to around being competitive. That has been in the works for quite some time. It is a way to meet, that piece has a way of evening itself out over the long haul without us, as a taxpayer, investing in paving equipment to go forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I went through, continued through that road and I arrived home, and when I went campaigning the next morning - it's always nice to get out, I always say I'm going to do it more regularly, like the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal does. I've never quite been able to get at that because I'm moving myself around the province. It was interesting to get out but the things that kept coming back to me, and it wasn't so much the debate about who owns the paving equipment and things, people were talking about paving and I made the reference about the Memorial Highway that I travelled on. A couple of my constituents are referring to it as "my" Memorial Highway and it's not because I'm in ill health, I think they're talking about my political health, not my personal health, it's the issue. But the other thing that kept coming up, and has come up, is the issue of electricity and the cost of electricity.

We know the challenges that are out there in terms of this. I have made a suggestion which I think is a positive one and there are a couple actually, one of freezing the DSM charges where they are presently so that we could try to control that particular cost which is in our domain. The other one is that we do a performance audit of Nova Scotia Power internally. That is not in any way to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that company is not running appropriately or anything. But, I think it is important that when you're a monopoly in a regulated utility that we get an opportunity to see what's happening internally, that we do a performance audit, we order the URB to do one.

Just like, I'm sure, every minister was ordered to do an internal audit of their own departments to find out if there's a way - maybe in the good years we could be doing this but times are tough right now and we're going to have to cut back. I think it's a reasonable question for Nova Scotians to ask. Has the power company done that? Has Nova Scotia Power looked internally to find those savings? Do they reflect the reality of what they're doing? Does it reflect the reality of the financial situation of our province?

I would encourage the Premier to take that initiative. It really comes back to us, in government, to ask the URB to order an internal performance audit of Nova Scotia Power. There are things happening beyond our control that are affecting the price of power, we all know that, just like there is with the price of gas. But there are some steps that we can take,

internally, to control some of those costs. One of them is doing and having an honest performance assessment of Nova Scotia Power to ensure that the performance bonuses are appropriate at this time, whether or not the bureaucracy inside that company is bloated. Is it lean and mean, or is it being used as an opportunity to come back to us as the rate base to have an increase for their power?

Probably the issue that comes up to me more than any other issue is the issue of the price of gas. I'm sure all members of this House get that. Regardless of where it is in my riding, they start talking about the price of gas and what can you do about it. When it comes right down to it, as you know, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, mentioned in this House by me and others, the price of oil is not set here, it's on a global market. As a province our price of gas is set off the New York Stock Exchange; central Canada, I think, is down in Chicago; and in Western Canada it's down on the West Coast to an exchange where they look at the price of oil and set it.

What is different here, and what provincial governments do have control over, is the tax issue, on how much tax we charge and how we charge that. I know when the Minister of Finance was in Opposition, they talked, and the Premier talked, about the tax-on-the-tax issue. In this province it's 3.8 cents a litre that's an additional charge by just adding the HST on top of, and charging it to, the 25.5 cents of federal and provincial tax that we charge. It adds an additional 3.8 cents a litre.

That's not huge in the minds of people, but what it is and what it does, it goes back to what I was speaking about earlier, about how we pave roads, about how we address issues. It sends a signal to people that you're listening, that you're hearing and that you're trying to respond with what you can. I think the citizens of this province understand we're not going to fix - and we can't fix - the global crisis that is going on in the Middle East that affects the price of oil. They understand all of that, but when they look at what we do charge on the tax side, they do see an opportunity for us to respond to that. It sends a positive signal to them that we've at least heard them.

It's like I mentioned earlier about the paving, if we commit to a road and do it, it looks like we have a plan and we're responding to where they want to go. That is, I think, what they're looking for. We, as elected members, sometimes get caught up in this building, but my constituents are more worried about how they're going to meet their bills than they are worried about whether or not we're going to pass Bill No. 17 or the budget or anything else; what does it really mean to me at the end of the day and how am I going to make ends meet and how am I going to make sure that all my electricity - what am I going to do, right? How do we help that? What can we lay out to them?

I think it is important that we recognize that while we know there are challenges, a few simple signals to the voter, to the constituents, to the people of the province would go a long way. They don't have to be massive, they don't have to be big changes, they don't have to be earth-shattering. If it just looks like we know what we're doing I think would go and be an encouraging thing.

One of the things that has come up - and you get into the federal political cycle, which is going on now of course in elections and we went through one in 2009. We are going through this, the ad cycle that we're seeing today as a country and the negative stuff that is coming out of some of those ads, it's quite worrisome. I think we should be worried about that as a province, about what direction our country is going, in terms of how they run election campaigns and what direction we, as a province, want to go. I think it speaks a tremendous amount as to why there is disillusionment from voters, why people are disengaged in the process. I can disagree with the government about its position to buy a paving plant and I can lay out my position on that and how I believe it affects the taxpayers. They can lay out their position on why they believe it's best for the taxpayers to have one and whichever one of us can convince enough people should make us government. It's not about whether or not I attended a certain place or I visited some other place or you didn't or where you weren't there; all of those kinds of things don't seem to add up.

One of the things that has become very disappointing for me is that I don't believe the voters are actually believing any of us anymore and that's a real problem. How do we change that? Other than each of us, day after day, going to our offices and responding to the constituents the best we can, on an individual basis responding and being honest. If I don't have the answer for you and I can't give you the answer and it's not going to happen, then you just say it's not going to happen, can't do it, this is not fitting into the parameters that we . . . I'm sorry, as opposed to thinking that we're going to just continue . . . As political Parties, making promises and commitments in campaigns.

What I find rather - and I noticed it, not so much provincially, but I have since debated it in this House - nationally, but nobody is actually believing anybody. It has come to-where am I comfortable in the sense of who is going to do the least damage, who is telling me the least - I don't want to use the word in the House, Mr. Speaker, because I'm afraid you might not let me use it - whose story is less believable. That's not where we should be as a political process.

When we look at the disengagement of young people, I'm really curious to see how that happens in this federal election. Has Rick Mercer been able to engage and mobilize young Canadians to get out and vote? I often get an opportunity - not as much as I'd like - to go into the high school classes of my own riding and I often tell them they have so much power that they don't realize it. Collectively, they could vote me out of office and that could probably happen to almost all of us if they all got together and decided they're going to vote and swing their votes in one way on top of the support that a member who runs against me has. They could actually change the vote and they would determine who is there. It makes it a healthy process.

I have been looking at, and particularly following the federal campaign, but looking at our own campaign, I don't think it's good enough to say, I didn't know, anymore. I think people are saying, well, we knew, how come you guys didn't know? Or, don't tell us you

can do that because there's no way you can do that. Try to be upfront and reasonable and make those kinds of commitments. I think - I could be completely wrong but - that's what voters are looking for and I think there's a willingness on the part of the citizens of this province, of this country, to tackle the tough issues in front of us and there are a number of them. It would give us an opportunity to lay out what is a forward-thinking debate on, I think, a couple of the largest challenges that are going to face us: how do we deal with the rising costs of health care and how do we do that in a way that is effective and fair to the citizens of this province, making sure that we all have access in a timely manner.

There is a sense in communities - they all know we're not going to have every service available in every community, they recognize that. So how do we best deliver that model? What does it look like and how do we distribute it equitably across the province? We can't have that conversation because we are sometimes caught up in the minutiae of this stuff.

The other one that I think is paramount, in terms of economic opportunities for this province, is to seriously have a look at our education system, to look at educational outcomes and the plan that we want for it for the next five to 10 years and one that would live beyond, quite frankly, one mandate of a particular government but it would go into a second mandate before they begin to go into - we know things are changing, I mean as families we are not replacing ourselves, there's less than two kids in families today so we know that the demographics are changing. My own riding presently is looking at the closure of two schools. It doesn't mean they want to completely yank them out of the community, what they want to do is find a way to reshape this building, to make it more useful, quite frankly, beyond just education.

I often say Bridgetown understands it is not going to have a Y but it should have a gymnasium that is open a lot more than 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and should be open to the community and could suffice more than just a gymnasium for students when they are in school. They are the primary users of that building and they should be the primary users of that gym but the community should then be the second. How do we do that in a way that's effective and how do we respond to that?

We're just opening a new library in Bridgetown. I believe and I've always been a believer that in communities like mine and ones that are having an out-migration of population, that those community facilities should be linked. I always believed the public library should be part of a public school. We shouldn't be investing in bricks and mortar, we should be investing in the infrastructure of that particular library, whether it is electronic equipment, whether it is making sure the full resources are available and during school hours students are the primary users of that. We expose them to top-notch electronics and stuff.

Also, at the same time, you have community members coming in. I've said in this House before, I've had a chance to go to Guysborough and I was in Chedabucto High School. It was during the leadership contest four years ago, it was the first time I had been

in it. I went in, it was approximately seven o'clock at night when I arrived to have a meeting in one of the rooms. I can tell you how surprised and impressed I was, not just with the building but with the mix of the population that were using it. There were grandparents who were into the library that was there, there were young people in the gymnasium bouncing basketballs around, there were community members at a meeting, all in this one facility.

I walked into the building at seven o'clock at night and it was alive. If I walked into a high school in probably any one of our other constituencies, it would almost be closed, unless there was a basketball game or something going on.

I think we sometimes try to reinvent the wheel all the time when I believe right inside of our province we have an example of a project that while it may not be perfect for every constituency, it certainly shows a way to deal with the out-migration challenges of some rural communities and it shows us that we can expose ourselves to quality programming, a quality institution, one that is being used over the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I think Nova Scotians are looking for - that's the kind of change they want, I think, and it's the kind of change that I think all of us at different times have talked about and have embraced. It is one that I think we need to do and take on.

We just finished the debate, passed the budget, we're now doing the Financial Measures (2011) Bill today, but inside of that I don't see that kind of change that I just spoke about and the change that I hear, that I'm feeling when I'm out talking to Nova Scotians. As a matter of fact, prior to a campaign, I'm sure members of the governing Party today would probably hear some of the voters saying, can't be any worse than the other guys. Now we're hearing we're no different than the other guys.

How do we best set an option to direction for our province? I think that in a nutshell is where the voter is. I had a chance, as I said earlier, to knock on doors in a number of constituencies, people weren't talking to me about political Parties, they were talking to me about the challenges they face on a daily basis. How can we best respond to those as elected members and recognizing, I think it's inherent to be a Nova Scotian, that you are fair-minded. The people who are out there are looking at us and they say, we know we can't expect the world to come to us, but we do expect it to feel like you understood what we're saying, your understanding at least of how it feels to sit in our seat and to sit at our table to deal with those very basic living issues of paying my power bill, dealing with gas. What about the economic opportunities in outlying areas?

Yes, we recognize there's depopulation of rural Nova Scotia. How do we deal with making sure those schools are still vibrant and we utilize them? All reasonable questions and asks, I think, and ones that we'll attempt to try and respond to. I know in question period we'll be asking the government to respond to, particularly the electricity one and the

gas one. I'm sure we'll all come up with our solutions around how we deal with the out-migration challenges.

I had a chance, as I said, to go out in other communities and it was positive to sit down and talk to people because often, in this place, we lose sight of what really matters and we get caught up. The advice I was given seven years ago, while the work we do in this place is important, you need to realign your compass once in awhile and you do that by getting out and talking to the people outside of this particular building.

With those few words, I will take my place and I look forward to getting a chance to hearing the other members start talking about this. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to all members for the opportunity to speak tonight. I know members are anxious to hear from others across the country besides me, but this is important that we continue to do the work of the House of Assembly even on a night like this.

I think budgets and the Financial Measures (2011) Bill are a lot of numbers, a lot of clauses but they do tell a story. I think it's important that Nova Scotians hear the story of this particular budget and this particular bill as we go through debate on the Financial Measures (2011) Bill. So that in some way we can make sense of the numbers, we can create a bit of a narrative, in fairness, so that Nova Scotians will understand where we're headed as a province. Of course, in order to understand where you're headed, to tell the story properly, it's important that we begin with a quick recap of where we have been using facts. Using reality in order to describe how we got to the position we're in today and then use that to project where we're going in the future. This is what forecasts and budgets and FMAs are all about.

I can tell you from experience when the province got put on the right track at least in terms of the method of accounting it uses. That was in the year 2000, when the John Hamm Government, fulfilling an election promise, brought in the full range of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Prior to that year, although we had a set of accounts, it was not fully compliant with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The governments of the day prior to them picked some and not others. They cherry-picked which accounting policies they would use.

One need only remember the 1999 budget, the one that led to the defeat of the Liberal Government, which they alleged was balanced but it contained this entity called the Health Investment Fund, which was \$600 million borrowing, off-balance sheet borrowing. This is perhaps where Enron originally got the idea that this would be acceptable because by any common sense measure, when you have a budget but you don't count the borrowing and expending of \$600 million, clearly you're not following very good accounting principles. It was that very act that tipped the scales against that government and that

budget, and led to the defeat of the Liberal Government of the day and the election of a new government, including the promise to institute the entire range of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

I say this because you don't often see elections fought over the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. It's not something that grabs the hearts of voters but it was an issue in that election and it led to the adoption of the entire set of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for the public sector, I might add, to be more specific.

Subsequent to the adoption of those standards, of course, we ended up with an operating set of accounts and a separate capital set of accounts. I raise this, Mr. Speaker, not with the intention of giving a prolonged accounting lesson for all members, as much as they may wish me to do that tonight, but just to set the stage for why this is relevant to today's debate.

With a separate set of capital accounts, for the first time the Government of Nova Scotia was required to depreciate the capital stock of the province, which is a charge against our operating earnings. As our capital stock has grown over time, that amount, that depreciation, has also grown over time, and is a non-cash charge against the operating accounts of the province, which can be used for the replenishment of capital.

Where I am going with this is, it is the position of our Party that not only should the operating statements of the province be balanced under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, but that we should come to a full stop in the further accumulation of provincial debt, meaning that we'll generate a sufficient surplus to cover any capital spending that goes on, so the debt can come to a stop and actually start to be whittled down.

There are some on the government side who say this is too high a standard to reach for, that it's too much to expect the operating statements to generate a surplus of that size, but I point out that it's not much further a milestone beyond the balanced budget itself because . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members in the House of Assembly that wearing partisan badges on the floor of the Assembly is not permitted. I would remind all honourable members to remove them before they come into the Chamber.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

MR. BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all wondering, without naming names (Interruptions) I thought that orange ties and orange scarves were kind of in but I'm not pointing a finger at anyone. They may or may not be wearing them in a couple of hours' time but I will continue with my remarks.

It's not that much of a milestone beyond a balanced budget to be able to actually start to pay down the outright, total net direct debt of the province because there is this charge against our earnings that is meant to be used for the replenishment of capital. That's number one, and I'll return to that theme in a moment when I talk about the estimates for the current year.

The other thing that is relevant to today's debate, Mr. Speaker, is that I continue to take every opportunity to set the record straight about the state of the books when the current government took over. As recently as last week I heard the Premier say, on the radio, in an interview, that he has inherited a large deficit from the previous government but that is provably, demonstrably, auditably - no, as lacking in truth because the fact of the matter is that the government inherited a balanced budget. In fact, I've tabled in this House previously the audited set of Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 2009 which, ironically enough, were signed not only by the Auditor General whose job it is to audit them and sign his signature that they are prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, but they were also signed by the new Minister of Finance who came into office later in 2009. In his message he acknowledges that he had been in receipt of a set of Public Accounts that were in surplus. He says it in his own message from the minister at the start of those Public Accounts and he signed it.

So I say that because it's time that we set this great inconvenient truth, this great myth, to rest. It's one thing for the government to say that they had hired a consultant who said if the following 16 things happened they may end up with a giant deficit, which would be at least half correct but it's completely not correct to say that they actually inherited a real deficit because that is simply not the case as the Minister of Finance himself affixed his signature to, as did the Auditor General.

Beyond that, not only do I take every opportunity I can to point out that there had actually been eight balanced budgets in a row and eight balanced actual sets of Public Accounts, but they actually were in surplus beyond balance by law thanks to Premier Hamm and the Atlantic Accord that was signed in 2005 which resulted in a \$830 million payment from Ottawa to Nova Scotia and a decision by that Premier that every last cent of that \$830 million would be applied against our provincial debt, as it was done instantly, and the largest single downpayment against our debt in our entire provincial history.

Now, accounting rules required that that \$830 million be amortized into the books of the province over the following eight years, a period of time that we're still in, and so every year since, every government since, including this one, has been the beneficiary of that amortization into the books of \$830 million. In some years it has been more than \$100 million and I say this because in order to make Premier Hamm's commitment true that every cent would go to the debt, the government of the day made it the law that the province would actually run a surplus equivalent to that year's portion of the \$830 million and this is a commitment that was kept in 2005, in 2006, in 2007, in 2008, and so on.

That is why we know by law that not only did we have balanced budgets but we were running real surpluses. This exposes the other great inconvenient truth that the government likes to perpetrate which is that March madness caused any surplus at the end of the year to be spent before March 31st. That's clearly not the case because by law the government had to run surpluses and the Auditor General's Report which shows charts and graphs of the previous eight years show a string of surpluses as was required, as was done.

Now, it is a good move - in the interest of fairness I say this - it is a good move to make sure that the lid stays on in the month of March, that the lid stays on spending, that it is kept to a minimum, or snuffed out altogether, which even this bunch has not been able to accomplish but they have made some good moves in that direction. Having said that, it is based on a false premise that all the surpluses used to get spent. That is not the case and I can show you that. The Auditor General has shown all members that. I've tabled that very information in the House before and the fact of the matter is this House of Assembly made it the law that we must run surpluses during that time.

So I raise this, as I raised it on a number of occasions, to point out that it is not correct for anyone in the government - certainly the most senior official of the government, or his Minister of Finance - to say that they inherited a large deficit. They did not. Now, I happen to believe that many Nova Scotians, knowing this great inconvenient truth that was out there, still accepted it, because they wanted the government to do the hard work of generating new surpluses and paying down our debt because that is an important priority for our province. It's certainly an important priority for the next generation of Nova Scotians who are saddled with a very big debt at the moment, one of the highest per capita in the country.

We all went along with the hope that where the government was going was to prepare us for some hard deficit. But we've all been let down, Madam Speaker, because here we are three budgets and two years later and the deficit is no smaller today than it was two years ago. A lot has happened underneath those numbers, I admit, but considering that we were all hoping for balance this year or the previous year, we're still waiting to see it.

All of that myth-making through the instructions that were given to Deloitte, the decision of the government to ignore its own Department of Finance, to ignore our Auditor General, to ignore the signature of the Minister of Finance in that first set of Public Accounts and spend \$100, 000 to go to Deloitte and tell them, here are 16 things that if you plug them into your spreadsheet, we'd like you tell us what it will say, as if we didn't know.

All of that wasn't, in fact, to prepare Nova Scotians for some tough medicine and balance the budget. It led to the fastest increase in taxes in the country, following an election where people were told that wouldn't happen and we're going to live with that for some time I guess and that's too bad.

That's the great inconvenient truth and that's why the accounting, the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and that history that I just wanted to walk the House through for a few minutes, is relevant to today. Here we are now with the 2011-12 set of estimates and the Financial Measures (2011) Bill and we still have this great inconvenient truth hanging out there.

We still have this \$400 million deficit that needs to be dealt with. Our debt continues to go up by an astounding amount actually for just two short years in office. The reason that it's important to look at that history is in order that we are able to look forward from here. We found out the day before the most recent budget that, surprise, surprise, the government had a large surplus for last year and in fact that it was large enough to cover our capital and make a down payment against our debt. There was a great fanfare made of this, so great in fact that the Minister of Finance was cast aside because it was good news, I guess.

In the NDP political world you save the good stuff for the big boss so they quickly shoved aside the Minister of Finance, elbowed him out of the way. Mr. Chara of the Boston Bruins has nothing on Premier Dexter when it comes to elbowing people out of the way, so he could announce that good news the night before the Minister of Finance brought down his deficit budget, Mr. Bad News again.(Interruption)

But the reason I bring this up is - it's not actually funny, because as it turns out our surplus lasted one whole day and then we were right back in the soup again. Worse than that the government crowed about its debt down payment of \$39 million but if you do the math, that lasted us a grand total of 20 days. For 20 days our debt was lower than the year before and then it started to climb right back up again by the government's own estimates.

Here we are at the midpoint of the government's mandate and we're no further ahead. In fact, I would argue we're worse off because our book of accounts is as out of balance now as the first budget that the government brought in but we're all paying 2 per cent more in HST and a lot more in other fees and so on for the privilege.

That is why I say Nova Scotians were prepared to accept the hard medicine, they were prepared even to accept the HST increase if it went to balancing the books and providing a sustainable financial path forward. Well, they got the bad, they got the 2 per cent HST and the other changes but they didn't get the good, other than for that one shining day when we were in surplus, those short 20 days, which is now long past, where the debt was actually going down. That is too bad because Nova Scotians elected a government, I believe, for many purposes, but surely one of which, one purpose that they elected the new government for, is to do the hard work, ensuring that we're on a sound, sustainable, balanced financial path. Not a single voter on that fateful day in June 2009 thought we'd still be talking about deficits two years later, and yet here we are.

Clearly - talking about how a budget tells a story - the story of this one is that the government's plan, if there is one, is to hope that tax revenues recover enough, transfers

from Ottawa continue enough, that they'll lift themselves into balance over time, but that do-nothing plan is not free. That do-nothing plan actually costs a lot of money because as more and more, hundreds and hundreds and millions of dollars are added to our debt while we wait, that is the real cost. We can argue whether \$1.7 billion or \$1 billion, or whatever, has been added to the debt. I agree that because of the surprise surplus, it's no longer a forecast \$1.7 billion, but it is \$1 billion, and that's a billion dollars in two years. That is the cost of doing nothing but sitting back and waiting and hoping that a recovering economy, and promised continued transfers from Ottawa, will lift us into balance. That is an expensive way to get to balance for the long run.

I've called on the government, as the Progressive Conservative caucus has, to live up to their word from the election, to do the hard work early in their mandate to bring the books into balance, to not cherry-pick a couple of things here and there, whether it's a ferry or Reading Recovery or whatever to claim you're tough, which actually don't add up to very much money but have caused some real hardship, but to actually do the hard work across the whole range of programs and services and administration and FTEs and departments and Crown Corporations and the whole works to bring the budget into balance early and then to keep going after that. We should be now at the point where we keep going beyond balance, to get to that point where we can bring our debt to a halt, full stop, which is what we owe to the next generation of Nova Scotians.

As long as we are the highest or the second highest debt per person in the country, this has to be our priority. It is not just so that we can be good accountants, because that's not ultimately what we're elected to do, although that is a worthy thing to aim to be, I might add, but not only for that reason but because it's good policy, because it puts us on a sustainable footing, because it removes one of the great challenges to sustainable health care and sustainable education and other programs. Mounting debt and never-ending deficits are two of the things that are a big threat to our ability to sustain the health and education and the services that Nova Scotians want and yet we're still waiting for all that to happen.

From time to time when an Opposition member actually defends a program against a cut, the government likes to say, well, you can't be in favour of balancing the budget and against this cut, which is of course ridiculous. There are thousands of government programs. If government or this House - both sides of this House - had the information on the benefits of programs as well as their costs, then smart decisions could be made about what is worth keeping and what isn't. Personally, I'm not a fan of across-the-board cuts. That means if you have a bad program, it just becomes only 98 per cent is funded or 97 per cent is funded, it's still a waste. You have a good program that actually is generating a return, then it becomes harder to sustain. That's why across-the-board cuts are a bad idea, but cherry-picking cuts to look tough is also not a good idea.

This is why I know my colleague has introduced the Value for Money Act, which at its core is all about ensuring that we have real, meaningful targets for every program and a real, meaningful schedule of reporting for every program - public, transparent, open reporting, I might add - and value-for-money audits to assure us we're getting the right information. Then we can debate right here in this Chamber which programs are meeting their needs and which ones aren't, which ones we should keep and which ones we shouldn't. We'll really be doing our job then, as the House of Assembly, at making sure that we're making the best decisions possible for Nova Scotians.

After all, at the end of the day, much like running a business, even managing the government is about picking priorities. Some things are worth investing more in even in tough times, other things are worth cutting out even in surplus times but we never have those discussions in this Chamber. It's always about the expense side and not about the return side or about the value of the service that's provided.

In the absence of that information, real, honest, open, transparent, audited information, we can't make good decisions. One can only imagine how the Reading Recovery decision might have been different if the light of day had been shined both on its cost - which the government was very quick to point out its costs - and the benefits, financial and non-financial that that program provided.

The Yarmouth ferry is another example, which is a subsidy of the government, some years more than others, compared to the benefit. How much in income tax, how much in sales tax, how much in tourism dollars - add it all up - have been lost because of the loss of that ferry? Economists have done this work because the Yarmouth Industrial Commission has done this work and found that three times the cost of the subsidy has been lost in income tax that's no longer there, because the jobs are gone. Sales tax is no longer there because the tourists are gone, in economic activity in multiples and spinoffs that are no longer there because the economy has slumped in the area since - not just in Yarmouth but all along the South Shore.

So if you're only looking at one half of the story, you are at much greater risk of making a bad decision. In fact, this is a great example because that's exactly what has happened. The government made a bad decision, ignoring the other half of the equation. That's why the Value for Money Act will be a great improvement to the way that decisions are made by government and the way decisions are made in this House. So I applaud the member for Inverness for bringing that forward.

That brings me to another point, Madam Speaker, which is that we should never look at a budget in isolation because it's only part of the picture, that the flip side of budgeting is ensuring that we do all we can to grow the economy, which ultimately will feed back into a balanced budget. How we go about doing that is very important. In fact, the Auditor General himself says that the budget is one of his five key measures of how a government is performing relative to the economy. In simple terms, if the economy is

growing but the government continues to run a deficit, then the government is doing a poor job relative to the economy. This is a measure that the Auditor General himself relies on.

The fact of the matter is, Nova Scotia's economy is recovering. The Premier and senior members of the government, in defending the budget, got up on a number of occasions to say, look how great it is that we're taking in more income tax revenue, more sales tax revenue, more corporate tax revenue because the economy is recovering and individuals and businesses are making more income and therefore, paying more in taxes, ignoring the fact that they've also just made the point that the one element of our society that is obviously not performing well in a growing economy is the government itself, because it continues to run a deficit.

Interestingly, the Auditor General looks at a number of factors to measure the performance of the government in our economy. I mentioned whether the government is in surplus or deficit relative to the strength of the economy, that's one, clearly they're doing poorly relative to where the economy is going. Another is our total provincial debt as a percentage of our economy that is up from the time this government took office. It goes up and down, obviously, year to year. We have an economy that's growing slowly but we have a debt that's growing rapidly and as a result the debt is a percentage of our economy, that debt-to-GDP ratio, continues to grow. It took a slight dip downward; I will acknowledge this, when we had the surprise surplus. That lasted, as we've already established, for exactly 20 days and then the debt-to-GDP ratio continued its march upward, under this budget.

I might add, Madam Speaker, it had been on a long, slow, positive decline for the last eight years, sometimes quite a rapid decline because we had a growing economy but we also were generating surpluses. So by definition, the debt, the GDP ratio, had to be going down during those last eight years. Now it's starting to go up again.

Another one that I think it's important for us to track is our reliance on Ottawa, that we get transfers from Ottawa, as all provinces do in some cases - the health transfer and the social transfer go to all provinces - and most of the provinces, including Nova Scotia, are in receipt of equalization payments. The government in Ottawa has renewed the equalization formula. Nova Scotia could have been in a hard position because of that but they acknowledged that was the case and basically red-circled Nova Scotia's equalization transfers to ensure that we wouldn't have any negative effects. That was, actually, an important gift to the new government because it has made their job easier but they didn't take advantage of it because we're still running a big deficit.

Now, the government in Ottawa and, I should add in the interest of fairness, the Liberal Party, have both promised to continue the Canada Health Transfer increases at 6 per cent when that agreement is up for renewal in a few years. This should be good news to all Nova Scotians, for sure, assuming one of those two parties is elected tonight. Some may

have a preference of one over the other but for the purposes of budgeting that's good news. Hopefully, the government won't blow it again when we get to that point where we're projecting 2014-15 and so on, because a 6 per cent growth in health transfers is going to be an important part of balancing the Health Department budget in the future.

But back to what we can do to encourage the economy to grow versus budgeting itself, because they should go together. If we focus only on the budget and we lose track of the economy, we really haven't accomplished much because - this is certainly an old saying in business, and I'm sure it is in other places - you can't shrink yourself to greatness. The fact of the matter is Nova Scotia has all kinds of potential to have a thriving, growing economy that ultimately causes personal incomes to rise and corporate incomes to rise in a sustainable way that will generate new tax revenues for the province and so on.

Some of the time that requires the government to intervene and encourage growth where they can; some of the time it means getting out of the way when the government becomes too great a burden on economic growth. This is why I say that it is absurd economics to raise the HST by 2 per cent, netting the government, depending on what you're counting, \$0.25 million a year plus or minus, and then in the same year announcing an economic growth plan that's going to cost \$200 million. That's not all new money. I know there's some that's going to be shuffled from some other yet unknown place but, still, if it's there to free up, it's there to free up.

Now, any economist worth his or her salt will tell you that you can't inject economic growth dollars into the economy - and let's use the \$200 million number just for the sake of argument - and then suck it out of the economy through higher HST at the same time. What have you accomplished in terms of the economy when you do that? When you put in with one hand and when you pull out with the other, you accomplish exactly nothing, Madam Speaker, economically speaking. In Cumberland County we say you can't suck and blow at the same time.

Now, they probably have that same expression in some other counties around Nova Scotia, but that's the kind of economic policy this government is pursuing. You increase the tax take, you pull that money out of the economy and then you brag about spending more money and new programs and new economic development funds and offices and programs at the same time. You've accomplished exactly nothing. It's sad, really. Because ultimately, accomplishing nothing on the economy will make balancing the budget even harder on that day, when it comes, if it comes, where they actually get serious about balancing the budget.

Immigration is another great example, while we're on the topic of economic growth. This is one of the greatest challenges our province faces, particularly in rural Nova Scotia, because you cannot have a growing economy and a shrinking population at the same time. A growing population and a growing economy have to go together. The fact of the matter is, Nova Scotia is one of those provinces which is facing outright population decline in the future. So we have to get this right.

So the government has a new immigration strategy. It's picked some numbers, I read the whole thing, cover to cover, I'm not sure how they came up with the target immigration numbers, they're higher than we're experiencing now, I acknowledge that. But this is no time to be just a little bit better than the year before. This is not the issue, to be satisfied, to be just a little higher, even doubly higher, than the year before or in the last couple of years.

This is the time to be big and bold and strong and firm and determined on immigration. That we should never accept that our population has to decline. We should never accept that Halifax, as our capital city, has to level off. We should never accept that rural Nova Scotia has to depopulate.

So, what is the number of immigrants that are needed to ensure that that doesn't happen? The immigration strategy doesn't have a word to say about it. Maybe 7,200 is the right number, maybe it got picked out of the air, who knows? I'll tell you this, I think it should be multiples higher than it is now. That whatever that number is that ensures our population actually grows is the target that we should have. That's the math that the government should be doing. Then whatever we need to do, smartly, to focus our resources and our efforts on going to those places in the world where we have our greatest chance of success in bringing new people to Nova Scotia. That's what we should be doing.

Then ensuring that we have the settlement abilities, in all parts of the province, to make sure we have growing immigration in all parts of Nova Scotia is also what we should be doing. But the immigration strategy, tied into the economy, tied into the budget - just so you know I am on track with the theme of the bill before us - is silent in some very key areas. For example, our universities are our greatest potential source of permanent landed immigrants. They're not even mentioned in the immigration strategy, other than one line, in one line. (Interruptions)

Well, we can argue about how big the section is, it's not big enough. (Interruptions) Whatever it is, it's not big enough. I say that because they're so important. Of course, the government has to approve the fees that universities charge and they're proposing to jack up the differential fee, the international student fee, to an ever, ever, higher number, directly contrary to smart immigration policy. What has the government had to say about it? Nothing. What did the immigration strategy released on Friday have to say about it? Nothing. There's our great chance to have the single greatest positive input on immigration and the strategy has nothing to say about it. I think that's a lost opportunity.

Or the fact that we live in Atlantic Canada and the other provinces that face this same challenge of population decline are our Atlantic Canadian sister provinces. The strategy is silent on working with them. Imagine if we combined our efforts with New Brunswick and P.E.I. and Newfoundland on immigrant attraction, rather than competing with each other. That would be a great step forward. The strategy is silent on that.

Where I'm going with this, Madam Speaker, is that a budget has to be done in concert with a greater strategy to grow the economy, and that a greater strategy to grow the economy includes immigration, and it includes some other things, but what it does not include is taxing that growth back out of the economy as this government has done with the HST increase. You cannot suck and blow at the same time when it comes to economy strategy. That is the problem that we have before us.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned a moment ago that the government is in receipt of some good news from the government in Ottawa, that being equalization payments have been red circled, that they can't go down they can only go up for Nova Scotia, making their jobs a lot easier in the future; that the Canada Health Transfer, a big amount that's transferred to all provinces including this one, is under agreement that expires in 2014, but that the government in Ottawa has promised to continue the rate of growth in those payments at 6 per cent a year, roughly the same as the growth in health care costs are projected to be, making their job a lot easier.

That is good news for the government here in Nova Scotia and I know they're happy to have it because they've been treated like true partners by the government in Ottawa. They've been treated respectfully by the government in Ottawa, by the higher order of government in Ottawa, the federal government treating the provinces with respect, honouring agreements with the provinces, promising to extend those agreements even though the government in Ottawa has its own financial challenges that they've picked their priorities, and health transfers is one and equalization is another. They have agreements with the provinces in those areas, and they are respecting those agreements, both until the end of their term and into the future.

One can only wish that the NDP Government in Nova Scotia treated their local governments with that same respect, with that same sense of duty, with that same sense of partnership, but they didn't. This Financial Measures (2011) Bill, this very bill, sets the stage for the termination of the signed agreement between the Government of Nova Scotia and our 55 municipalities, those municipalities that relied on it, those municipalities that budgeted for it, that relied on it to do long-term planning, because they are struggling as well. But the one thing they asked of their provincial government was that it honoured its commitments.

I only reluctantly point out that when they ran in the last election one of the things they said was that they would honour the commitments of the previous government. It's pretty hard to break two promises in one action, you know in curling we call that a double take out. By terminating that agreement, they actually broke two commitments at once, the one they made to the people of Nova Scotia to keep all commitments, and the commitment the government had made to our municipalities.

But it's not just about elections, there is important principle at stake that parties can come and go, in and out of government, but the signature of the government goes on even when the parties change.

Only this bunch could, actually, with a straight face, argue that their honouring the agreement by terminating the agreement. That may strictly, legally, if you get O. J. Simpson's lawyer on your side, be correct, but I don't know that very many others would think that terminating an agreement and honouring it is the same thing.

I raise this because they're so quick to accept that spirit of partnership from the federal government when it comes to health transfers and when it comes to equalization but not to pass on that same level of respect of the next level of government, our local governments. I think that they are meant to be partners in the governing of the province. Our municipalities are partners in governing this province; they have their own duties, their own responsibilities, their own way of financing local needs, and those are pretty important needs.

If you ask Nova Scotians what is important to them, I'm sure that water, sewage, policing, fire, local roads, sidewalks and all things that municipalities do would be pretty high up on the list; recreation would be pretty high up on the list. In fact, we're supposed to be examining this right now with the town's task force, an urgent need to ensure that our towns are sustainable financially in the long run - a problem made worse by the termination of the MOU. Yet, where is this town's task force? When is it coming? When is it going to meet? When is it going to actually produce some real work? The towns themselves are crying for it because there is a problem in municipal findings and it's time that we involve the towns themselves in determining their future. That is the point of the town's task force. While it might be great to set it up on paper, it has to actually meet. It has to actually produce work. It has to actually study the problem and report back. Two years later we're still waiting to see all of these things.

It is not enough to say we're going to have a committee. This would be the richest province in the world if creating committees was the route to prosperity. It's the output that will measure the success of the town's task force and other committees, and we're all waiting to see that. Yes, we'll be rich if strategies make money, too, because we have a lot of strategies in play. But I digress.

I guess I'll just conclude my point on the agreement with our municipalities by saying that I wish that the provincial government, the NDP, treated our local governments with the same respect that they are getting from the government in Ottawa. I'll leave it at that for that section.

I think where I'm going with this is that Nova Scotians look to the government and to the House of Assembly and they want us to be focused on the issues that are important to them. They want us to be working collaboratively on modern Nova Scotia problems: whether it's our high level of taxation; whether it's the cost of living, which is getting harder and harder every day; whether it is long-term, sustainable modern health care; whether it's the education of our kids and the outcomes that we all want from our education

system; whether it's a true plan to grow the economy; whether it's a true examination of the cost and benefits of the thousands of programs that governments deliver. These are the things that Nova Scotians want us to deal with.

Too many of them have become convinced that the structures of this House, that the direction of that government, that the way we spend our time is not focused enough on the issues that they want us dealing with. That's why, in addition to the Value for Money Act, which the member for Inverness brought forward, that other reforms to our system are needed. The Modernizing Government Act is just one, but at least it's a positive step forward to making sure that a modern, dynamic 21st Century Nova Scotia with modern problems and busy families and cost of living is matched by a modern, dynamic 21st Century Legislature that deals with those issues.

The Financial Measures (2011) Act is the same old, same old. It contains the same general approach of the last century. We add a little here, we take a little away there, but the time has come for big, bold change in the direction of the government and in the way this House conducts its business. I tell you, if we don't get there soon, the people will put us there in their own way because they are crying out for a modern, dynamic 21st Century government that focuses on their issues. When gas prices are going ever higher, when electricity prices are going ever higher, when food prices are going ever higher - that they have a government that understands that and uses its power to provide a little relief, not to pile it on by adding more to the fees and taxes of the province.

I'll tell you that it is not good enough to throw up our hands and say, well, that's just because of global economics, because gas is up and oil is up and coal is up around the world, there's nothing we can do about it. Our problems as a province are man-made and they have man-made solutions (Interruption) And woman-made - because people should not ever accept from their government that there's nothing they can do to help them with their own issues. We'll never accept that in this Party, I can tell you, because we believe no matter how much time we spend criticizing, that this province has a great future. This province has all it needs: it has the people, it has the resources, it has the schools and universities. It has all it needs to succeed in a modern, dynamic 21st Century economy; what it lacks is a government with a sense of direction, that knows how to get us there.

That is why we are voting no on the budget, that is why we are voting no on the Financial Measures (2011) Act, because the same old, same old, reaching deeper into people's pockets while they are suffering is wrong for Nova Scotia and it's wrong for the future. With those few kind remarks, Madam Speaker, I will wrap up and I will take my place and thank you for this opportunity tonight.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was probably quite right and I think the Minister of Education pointed out that in fairness, as much as I hate to admit this since there has been

an overabundance of males in political office over the years, probably the vast majority of the problems have started with males in political office. Now there are more women, now they will have a chance to just make all the same mistakes that all the decades and decades of men made as well.

I notice that she caught that comment, it was probably a bit of a Freudian slip but we can all equally make those same good decisions and less good decisions over the years, anyway.

A lot of things have been said about the Financial Measures (2011) Bill and I don't want to repeat too much of that but I will start by saying I noticed that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island had commented when the Leader of the Official Opposition was speaking, he yelled across the floor that it should be on Bill No. 27. But of course, from his days as a political science professor, I'm sure he would recall that the Financial Measures (2011) Bill being the bill that puts in place the structures necessary for the implementation of the budget and the government's plan for the coming year means that any government activity is actually encompassed and is on subject when it comes to speaking about the Financial Measures (2011) Bill because, without the Financial Measures (2011) Bill, there is actually no single government activity which can take place. So from that perspective, I'm sure he would recall that issue.

There are just a few issues I wanted to cover which weren't perhaps covered in any great depth. I wanted to talk about the issue of bracket creep, to begin with. Maybe I would begin with a quote that was stated on April 28, 2005, ". . . let's make no mistake about it, this budget . . ." - speaking, of course, to the one in 2005 - ". . . includes an increase in income tax . . . there is no inflation indexing of the tax brackets. So while inflation marches along, the tax brackets do not. Simply by virtue of inflation, more people move into a higher tax bracket. That is as much of a tax grab as if the Minister of Finance reached into your pocket or into your wallet or into your purse and took out the money. Let's make no mistake about it, this is a tax increase measure, the government's continuing refusal or inability to index tax brackets."

Of course that was said by the current - I'll table it afterwards - Minister of Finance when he was the Critic of the Finance Department at the time. It is interesting to now hear the Minister of Finance and the Premier stand up and say that this is a budget that includes no tax increases when, in Opposition - and, of course, I just quoted the current Minister of Finance when he was in Opposition, who stated very strongly that it was absolutely a budget that included the tax increase, unless it addressed the issue of bracket creep.

It seems that the Minister of Finance tried to have it one way in Opposition and is now trying to have it a different way in government. What he said was correct when he was in Opposition and it should be equally correct now. Frankly, it's an issue that if I'm not

mistaken, was put into law that that would begin being indexed in this year and, unfortunately, it has not.

So the effect of that is that in 2000, an income earner who was being paid \$40,000, paid about \$3,500 - give or take - in provincial tax. By 2010, that same earner who, if you look at inflation, would be now making \$50,000, now pays \$4,700. That means that there's actually a \$1,200 tax increase between 2000 and 2010 and then that, of course, is increased again this year by - if I'm not mistaken, the inflation rate was around 1.9 per cent.

Nova Scotia finds itself in the unenviable position as being one of only three provinces which does not index its income tax rates, so a person is actually able to afford less in 2011 than they could in 2000. That's made even worse by the addition of two points on the HST on a whole manner of items. So not only are you affected by the bracket creep, unlike other provinces, you're also affected by the addition of sales tax, an increased sales tax level on a number of goods. That's a problem.

Now, I can remember - and I'm sure many members of this House can remember - when you filled out your income tax form, you would fill out your federal income tax form and then effectively your provincial tax would be a percentage of your federal tax, and you might have a couple of special provincial tax measures. That's not the case anymore. As most people may note today, the most important event in Canada today is, of course, it's tax day, and there's that election thing going on, too, but today is the day that your income taxes are due and if you filled out the paper form (Interruption) All of a sudden everybody is in shock. They were paying so much attention to the election they forgot their taxes were due. (Interruption) Yes, tax freedom day but today, of course, is the day that your federal and provincial income taxes have to be filed.

There's an interesting thing about that, if you had filled out the paper form - obviously there aren't as many people filling out the paper form now - but if you had filled out the paper form, you would have seen that no longer is the provincial tax form a single page where you put in your federal tax and you work out a percentage, then, of course, there are a couple like the graduate tax credit or provincial political donations that you may have filled out. That's no longer the case. It's actually its own form now that you fill out, so you fill out three or four pages of provincial tax information, which is actually longer now than the federal one, the basic thing, other than all the different schedules, and then you have to take that number and put it back on your federal form. Well, that's a huge change.

Now, a lot of people would not have noticed that as they would be filling out, using on-line software, or they go to H&R Block or some other company to get it done, so you wouldn't notice that change. But if you look at that over time, that's an indication of how the provincial tax structure has changed dramatically from the federal one, and the delinking that occurred under the previous government was the start of that. Of course, it only got worse over the years. So that bracket creep becomes an issue because what you have is while your federal portion of your taxes conceivably keeps up as a portion of your income or your buying power, what happens on the other end is that you don't benefit from

that on the provincial side, which means Nova Scotia becomes one of only three jurisdictions in Canada where it has actually become more expensive, every single year, to live here and the buying power of individual Nova Scotians has been reduced every single year since 2000.

This is not something that the current Minister of Finance can disagree with because it's something that he said and complained about when he was in Opposition and, of course, that's why I quoted him on that at the start of my remarks. In fact, you know, from the piece of paper I tabled earlier, which was the quote from 2005 from the current Minister of Finance, and I'll just repeat that last line he said from what I tabled earlier, "That is as much of a tax grab as if the Minister of Finance reached into your pocket or into your wallet or into your purse and took out the money." So the fact is, the minister said it then and it was right, and he says it now and it is right - or he doesn't say it now but it continues to be correct.

In the 2006-07 budget, under the previous government, the budget in the Financial Measures Act associated with that, committed that starting in 2011 - that's this year - personal tax brackets would be indexed annually at prescribed rates beginning at 2 per cent. So that's the law and that was the law until this Bill No. 27 that we're debating right now passes. That remains the law in Nova Scotia, that indexing of tax brackets would start on April 1, 2011. When this bill passes, which of course we all know it will, under current law, as of April 1st, a little over a month ago, tax brackets were supposed to have begun to be indexed. When this bill passes, the government will reach in retroactively and de-index those tax brackets back to April 1st. Well that's not right.

Let's look at something else that's also going to go semi-retroactive and that's this issue of the memorandum of understanding with the municipalities. There's been a lot of talk about, is it just a MOU, was there a clause that allowed the province to get out of it? Of course. A lot of MOUs have this, but this also had the force of law. Because it was passed in the Financial Measures Act and the reason that this Financial Measures (2011) Bill includes a provision that repeals that, is because it was more than a memorandum of understanding.

The deal with the municipalities was not just a piece of paper, it was the law of Nova Scotia. Since 2007, it was the law and it has been the law. It's much more than just a piece of paper where two people agreed that this is what would happen in the future. That is proven by Bill No. 27 because Bill No. 27 moves forward and repeals that provision in the law. It's much more than just a memorandum of understanding, it's the law of Nova Scotia and it will remain the law until this bill receives Royal Assent at some point in the next month. (Interruptions)

The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island may just want to get up and have a debate, which is fine by me if you want to discuss this, but he said it's still in the agreement.

Unfortunately, if the member goes back and reads the Financial Measures (2007) Act, where this was put into law, or 2008, I'm not sure which year it was (Interruptions) Well, the memorandum of understanding had that portion, but the law that was passed did not have that provision.

So it is the law of the land and has no exit provision in that law. Many MOUs have such provisions and (Interruptions) Madam Speaker, the Financial Measures (2008) Act did not actually entrench the entire memorandum of understanding in law. It entrenched one commitment without a provision for a change in that. The fact of the matter is it's in many MOUs, it was actually also in the memorandum of understanding around the Atlantic Accord, but the now-Premier and the Finance Minister were very upset, as were we, when the current Prime Minister decided he should tear that up, using the same argument. (Interruptions)

The fact of the matter is . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It's getting a little difficult to hear. Keep your chatter down a little bit, I'd appreciate it. The honourable member for Dartmouth East has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. No doubt the members on this side of the House and this side of the House have a different interpretation of the memorandum of understanding - I should say, the members of this side of the House and the members of that side have a different understanding of it and all of the municipalities and councils in the province have a similar understanding to this side of the House. Having been there when it was negotiated, to me it's very clear what the intent was. The member only needs to go back and read the studies that were done at the time and the reasons why this was done. If the members on the opposite side can point to any reason why the research that was done to back that up has changed, that hasn't been presented by any of the ministers or members yet, to point out what has changed in that research that would make the fundamental unfairness of change.

That's really what the issue is about. It's about municipalities dealing with their financial house and dealing with the issues that they have under control and the province dealing with its issues. Instead what's happening here is, it will be a download to the municipalities, because let's not forget the fact that at the same time that the government is saying that it will no longer pick up the costs for its own responsibilities, it is still requiring the municipalities to pick up the cost for things that it accepted in return for the province doing that. They haven't given any relief to the municipalities on their obligations and the municipalities don't have the ability to back out of that. I think that's important.

The last issue that I wanted to speak about before this moves on to the Law Amendments Committee is the issue of user fees. Again, the member for Cole Harbour, when he was in Opposition, was very specific to call user fees, taxes. In fact, he said at the time that you can call them user fees but, in fact, they are taxes. We agreed with him then

and we certainly agree with that position now. In fact, the current Minister of Finance put out a press release shortly before the 2007 budget - I'm trying to remember my years here, but I believe it was 2007, it was either the 2007 or 2008 budget. The current Minister of Finance put out a press release complaining about the government increasing user fees just a week before a budget was expected to be tabled and then he did exactly the same thing this year. He thought it was wrong then, but he suddenly thinks it is right now that he's in government. That should be troubling to us all.

Those user fees went up; the government has still not tabled any information in this House indicating the costs of those fees. There is no doubt in my mind that the cost of certain government services has gone up, but what this government has said is that all government services have gone up by exactly the same amount. Well, I don't even see how that is possible. Certain services would go up more than others. Maybe some have gone down and yet the law requires that it be dropped all the way around, or dropped where the fees have gone down and increased, and that that information be provided. There has been no information tabled in this House that indicates the rationale for the increase of each user fee in each department. We've asked for that to be tabled. It has still not happened and when we've asked, the information that has actually been tabled is just a list of fees and how much they've gone up by, not the rationale for each individual increase.

Fees are meant to be maximum of cost recovery and I have no doubt that there are some that aren't cost recovery, I don't doubt that for a second, but the government hasn't shown that none of the fees exceed cost recovery and the current Minister of Finance, when he was in Opposition, demanded that information be tabled in this House when the previous government did it and now he's unwilling to do it himself. To me, that's a problem, and that's the pattern that we're seeing from this government on these issues, that they repeatedly refuse to provide the same information that they felt that government had to provide to the people of Nova Scotia when they were in Opposition. To me that's the issue, and so at the end of the day, that is what we're expecting and so we'll move forward to the Law Amendments Committee.

When we talk about things like the MOU, we'll listen to what the municipalities say at the Law Amendments Committee. I understand many of them are already signed up to appear at the Law Amendments Committee. I would be very interested to see what the government has to say in response to the information that they'll bring forward. I'd be very interested to see what the government has to say in response to those who are concerned about increased user fees.

The Minister of Finance has said in Question Period, on the issue of user fees, he suggested that we're advocating for those amounts to be put on the general tax rate. We haven't said that. What we've said is that the minister needs to follow through with what he advocated for in Opposition, which was that the justification for each increase has to be tabled in the House and debated in the House. He said it in Opposition and he should live

up to that standard now that he's in government. That's all we're asking for, for him to live up to the same standard and for the Premier and the Minister of Finance to live up to the same standard that they demanded of government when they were in Opposition. I think that's eminently reasonable and it is not asking for too much.

Madam Speaker, I'm sure there will be many more words said about this bill before it becomes law and, of course, it will become law. I think there's no doubt in anybody's mind that that will happen, the government has a majority and is able to do that, but I encourage the government to listen to what Nova Scotians are saying. They are concerned about these issues and they will become rapidly more concerned about some of these issues as they start to see the impact. As they start to recognize that the buying power of Nova Scotians is less than almost every other province, because we failed to deal with bracket creep. That property taxes in Nova Scotia will go up because the MOU will prevent municipalities from dealing with financial issues that they had planned over multiple issues and because they can't rely on an agreement that was signed by the provincial government.

At the end of the day, user fees for everything from getting a septic tank approval, to opening a gas station, to getting a business fee, to trying to start your own - I mean my goodness, Mr. Speaker, they have an economic development strategy trying to encourage new business and yet they made it more expensive to get the permit to start a business. That makes no sense.

There's no strategy, it's a carte blanche increase across the board, without the same - and in every one of these issues it comes down to one issue, the members on the government side demanded that certain information be tabled and proven in the House, before things happen. Now they're doing exactly the same things, without delivering on the same - without tabling in this House the same information that they demanded when they were in Opposition. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all members for their constructive contribution to the debate and with that, I would move second reading.

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

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, since we got this weighty bill passed, I think that will end the government's business for today. Same place, same channel tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, we will rise, to meet tomorrow from the hour of 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. After daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos., 17, 21, 23, 30, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 47. With time left over, we get out early again tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I move that the House do now rise to meet from the hour of 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion for adjournment has been made. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We will now rise, to sit between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 6:59 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 949**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas since 1983, the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank has been assisting low-income families across the Halifax area by providing food, furniture, skills development training and emergency assistance to those in need; and

Whereas the third annual Pull for Parker Street fundraising event took place on May 1, 2011 at Dartmouth Crossing, involving teams of seven, competing to see who can pull a fire truck the fastest on a designated 120 feet course; and

Whereas Pull for Parker Street was yet again a successful fundraising event for the Food and Furniture Bank thanks to the many organizers and teams who participated;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating all teams involved for the contribution to the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank and the betterment of our community at large.

RESOLUTION NO. 950

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

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

Whereas the Ecology Action Centre has acted as a voice for Nova Scotia's environment for 40 years; and

Whereas the Centre's earliest projects included recycling, composting and energy conservation and now extend to built environment, marine issues, coastal issues, wilderness, food, transportation and energy issues; and

Whereas the Ecology Action Centre works to build a healthier, more sustainable province by working closely with social and natural scientists and using science to communicate its message;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Ecology Action Centre and its volunteers and members for four decades of environmental advocacy in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 951

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

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 community members; and

Whereas Kenneth Boyd is one of those everyday heroes who has volunteered with the Boisdale Volunteer Fire Department for 25 years; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Kenneth Boyd for his many years of service to his community, and salute his dedication and bravery.

RESOLUTION NO. 952

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

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 community members; and

Whereas Joe MacLean is one of those everyday heroes who has volunteered with the Boisdale Volunteer Fire Department for 25 years; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Joe MacLean for his many years of service to his community, and salute his dedication and bravery.

RESOLUTION NO. 953

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

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 community members; and

Whereas Jim Burke is one of those everyday heroes who has volunteered with the Boisdale Volunteer Fire Department for 25 years; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Jim Burke for his many years of service to his community, and salute his dedication and bravery.

RESOLUTION NO. 954

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas one sporting event at the 2011 Canada Winter Games was the Biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting; and

Whereas it was the first time since 1995 that Nova Scotia sent a Biathlon team to the Games; and

Whereas Francis and Michael Castein of Manganese Mines, Colchester North, represented Nova Scotia in this event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate these two young participants in this unique sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 955

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Ken Minty, who now lives in North River, Colchester North, began driving trucks in 1944 and has driven for other companies, run his own company, sold trucks and was involved with truck safety and insurance; and

Whereas Ken has been building model trucks from scratch since 1951 and continues to enjoy his hobby; and

Whereas Ken's patience is evident since extensive measuring and designing is required before he cuts out all the intricate parts (except the wheels and axles), glues the parts, sands, stains, and varnishes the wood;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ken Minty for using his love of trucks to develop such a creative hobby and for winning many first place ribbons at the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition.

RESOLUTION NO. 956

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Liz Toole of North River, Colchester North says she lived her life volunteering because of the influence of Oprah Winfrey; and

Whereas Liz was one of the 302 Oprah fans who was taken to Australia to participate in the Ultimate Australian Adventure; and

Whereas Liz visited areas of Sydney, Yarra Valley, Melbourne and Canberra, had a private tour of the Sydney Opera House, sailed across the Sydney Harbour, attended a party for the guests at the Melbourne National Museum, got to meet Oprah and saw a number of other celebrities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Liz Toole for being selected to participate in this marvellous adventure, for having the opportunity to meet so many new people and to develop so many new friendships, and for her countless hours of volunteering in her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 957

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas figure skating is one of the sporting events at the 2011 Canada Winter Games; and

Whereas Matthew Joseph Allen from Tatamagouche, Colchester North, was one of the competitors in the Singles Pre-Novice Male category; and

Whereas Matthew is 16, has been participating in this sport for five years and finished in 12th position;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matthew for his participation and artistic accomplishments in the Canada Games and wish him continued success in his chosen sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 958

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas in 2009 Rebecca Taylor, with her husband Don, moved to Londonderry, Colchester North, and set up a business which she runs out of her home; and

Whereas the business makes soap, body soaks, body and lip balms from natural ingredients mostly harvested by the family using handmade methods from 100 years ago; and

Whereas Rebecca's business goal of doubling her client base in 2011 was surpassed by the end of February when her client base tripled, with new buyers from across Canada and as far away as Florida;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Rebecca Taylor for showing the dedication, creativity and entrepreneurial skills of many small Nova Scotia business owners and for receiving the Best New Product Award at the Atlantic Craft Trade Show in Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 959

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Spencer Hutchinson, a resident of Tatamagouche, Colchester North, began collecting family information over 35 years ago to enter in a database; and

Whereas Spencer's database now contains information on more than 100 families, including the first 11 Montebeliard families who arrived in Tatamagouche in the late 1700s; and

Whereas Spencer is one of the volunteers who operates the North Shore Archives based at the Creamery Square;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Spencer Hutchinson for being presented with an award by the Colchester Historical Society and thank him for the extensive work he has done to preserve local Nova Scotian history.

RESOLUTION NO. 960

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the First Baptist Girls Choir, Truro, is well known for the beauty, excellence and professionalism of their vocal presentations; and

Whereas the choir recently sang in Ottawa at the Rotunda at the Parliament Buildings; and

Whereas Rhianon Crowe, of Crowes Mills, Colchester North, a choir member, has been very grateful for the experience;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend best wishes to Rhianon Crowe and the other members of the First Baptist Girls Choir as they sing and work to raise funds for a trip to New York City and area in June.

RESOLUTION NO. 961

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the First Baptist Girls Choir, Truro, is well known for the beauty, excellence and professionalism of their vocal presentations; and

Whereas the choir recently sang in Ottawa at the Rotunda at the Parliament Buildings; and

Whereas Katelyn MacKenzie, of Crowes Mills, Colchester North, a choir member, has been very grateful for the experience;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend best wishes to Katelyn MacKenzie and the other members of the First Baptist Girls Choir as they sing and work to raise funds for a trip to New York City and area in June.

RESOLUTION NO. 962

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

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

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lucas Austin, of Great Village, Colchester North, for the prestigious honour of being named to the President's List for the Fall and winter semesters of 2010.

RESOLUTION NO. 963

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

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

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ross Hayman, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, for the prestigious honour of being named to the President's List for the Fall and winter semesters of 2010.

RESOLUTION NO. 964

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 965

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire brigades are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters not only contribute hard work, skills and time, they often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank all their members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Wayne Crowe of the North River and District Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for receiving a 15-year service award.

RESOLUTION NO. 966

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire brigades are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters not only contribute hard work, skills and time, they often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank all their members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Muir Murdock of the North River and District Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for receiving a 30-year service award.

RESOLUTION NO. 967

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire brigades are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters not only contribute hard work, skills and time, they often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank all their members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Jason Burke and John MacKay of the North River and District Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for being named top firefighters of the year.

RESOLUTION NO. 968

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire brigades are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters not only contribute hard work, skills and time, they often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank all their members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Bill Handspiker of the North River and District Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for receiving an award for the most training hours.

RESOLUTION NO. 969

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters provide a valuable service to their community and to the province; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their communities have the best fire protection; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of a fire brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ted Lock for receiving the Most Reliable Firefighter Award from the Five Islands Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 970

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters provide a valuable service to their community and to the province; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their communities have the best fire protection; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of a fire brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Stephen Hingley for receiving the Firefighter of the Year Award from the Five Islands Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 971

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters provide a valuable service to their community and to the province; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their communities have the best fire protection; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of a fire brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chief Glennie Davis for receiving a 40-year service award from the Five Islands Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 972

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters provide a valuable service to their community and to the province; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their communities have the best fire protection; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of a fire brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Darrel Spence for receiving the Most Valuable Firefighter Award from the Five Islands Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 973

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters provide a valuable service to their community and to the province; and

Whereas these volunteers dedicate both time and effort to ensure the members of their communities have the best fire protection; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of a fire brigade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Aubrey Eagles for receiving a Most Improved Firefighter Award from the Five Islands Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 974

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trevor Livingston for receiving a five-year Long Term Service Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 975

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tim McLellan for receiving a 25-year Long Term Service Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 976

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sean Foley for receiving a 20-year Long Term Service Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 977

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rick Johnson for receiving a five-year Long Term Service Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 978

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Eric Devanny for receiving the John Petrash Most Improved Firefighter of the Year Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 979

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Derrick Richard for receiving the Keith Hamilton Fireman of the Year Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 980

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cory Barton for receiving a 10-year Long Term Service Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 981

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians, for many years, have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas fire department members, in recent years, have also taken on the role of first responders because the need for medical assistance has increased throughout the province; and

Whereas many additional responsibilities, such as fundraising, training, first aid, recruitment and public relations are also part of a firefighter's commitment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bill MacKinnon for receiving the Clifford and Pat MacDougall Fellowship Award and the Clem MacKinnon Sportsmanship Award from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade.

RESOLUTION NO. 982

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Patrick Rafters, a Grade 9 student at North Colchester High School, is well-known for his hard work, his excellent organizational skills and his determination to succeed; and

Whereas Patrick is involved in Scouts, is an avid reader, takes music lessons, plays both the drums and the guitar, and is a biking enthusiast; and

Whereas Patrick has a friendly, kind, generous personality, and serves as an excellent role model for his peers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this very deserving student for being chosen the January student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 983

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Murray Foot, a senior student at North Colchester High School is an Honour with Distinction student; and Whereas Murray is an exceptional athlete who plays basketball, soccer, hockey and baseball and has held the title of Athlete of the Year; and

Whereas academics, athletics and a pleasant personality combine to make Murray an excellent role model for his peers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this very deserving student for being chosen the January student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 984

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Maddison Langille, a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School is well known for her hard work, her excellent organizational skills and her determination to succeed; and

Whereas Maddison plays hockey for the Colchester Cyclones, enjoys being part of the Mustang's soccer team and represents North Colchester High School in track and field in both the javelin and the 100 metre division; and

Whereas Maddison is a conscientious, pleasant student who serves as an excellent role model for her peers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this very deserving student for being chosen the December student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 985

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Jordan Rafuse, a Grade 10 student at North Colchester High School, is known for her pleasant personality and positive outlook on life; and

Whereas Jordan, a member of the soccer team, shows determination and desire to succeed both on and off the field; and

Whereas Jordan is admired by her coach for her hard work, attitude and behavior;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jordan Rafuse for being chosen the September 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 986

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Jake Pickard-Tattrie, better known as Jake, is a student at North Colchester high School; and

Whereas Jake shows strong leadership ability whether on the soccer field, organizing the After School Program or working as a peer tutor; and

Whereas Jake is an exceptional hockey player, has a part- time job and volunteers to help with school events and fundraisers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this well-rounded student for being chosen the September 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 987

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Hunter Nicholson, a Grade 11 student at North Colchester High School, serves his peers as a role model of how to balance academics and athletics; and

Whereas Hunter throws javelin for track and field, plays badminton and takes boxing lessons; and

Whereas Hunter is an avid outdoorsman whose special interests include hunting, fishing, dirt biking and four wheeling;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this hardworking student for being chosen the November 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 988

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Emma Bush, a Grade 9 student at North Colchester High School, is self-motivated, hardworking, eager to learn, humble and academically gifted; and

Whereas Emma is a talented pianist who studies piano and writes her piano exams at Mount Allison University; and

Whereas Emma takes horseback riding lessons, is a dedicated member of her hockey team, student council and the 4-H club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this bright, inquisitive, gifted student for being chosen the October 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 989

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Danielle Baillie, a student at North Colchester High School, is well-known for her school spirit, her willingness to volunteer, and her excellent organizational skills; and

Whereas Danielle is an avid reader whose other interests include writing, dancing and spending time with friends; and

Whereas Danielle is doing a co-op placement as part of her course work this year, and is receiving very favorable reports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this very deserving student for being chosen the November 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 990

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Daniel Walsh, a student at North Colchester High School, is an excellent academic student with a pleasant personality that is enjoyed by teachers and students alike; and

Whereas Daniel, who is extremely musical, is an accomplished guitar player; and

Whereas Daniel is a member of the Tatamagouche Air Cadet Squadron and recently received his pilot's licence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this talented, deserving, well-rounded young man for being chosen the December student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 991

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Andrew MacLean, a Grade 11 student at North Colchester High School is known for his “flair” for fashion and for his school spirit; and

Whereas Andrew shows leadership qualities and attends the NSSSA leadership conferences to improve his skills; and

Whereas Andrew’s interests include hockey, technology, playing the guitar and spending time with his friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this worthy student for being chosen the October 2010 student of the month at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 992

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 people of Clare have lost a prominent citizen, Madame Edith Comeau-Tufts; and

Whereas Madame Comeau-Tufts played a key role in the organization and the operation of a youth camp, La Colonie de la jeunesse acadienne in Clare; and

Whereas she contributed to the promotion of the Acadian heritage internationally, for which she received numerous official recognitions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the contribution Madame Comeau-Tufts has made to enhance Acadian culture and offer the deepest sympathy to her large family.

À une date ultérieure, je demanderai l’adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que la communauté acadienne de la Baie Sainte-Marie a subi une énorme perte à la suite du décès de madame Edith Comeau-Tufts ; et

Attendu que madame Comeau-Tufts a joué un rôle clé dans l'organisation de la Colonie de la jeunesse acadienne et des Dames Patronnesses ; et

Attendu que madame Comeau-Tufts a contribué au rayonnement du patrimoine acadien au delà des frontières de cette province et a reçu plusieurs honneurs officiels;

Par conséquent il est résolu que tous les membres de cette assemblée reconnaissent la contribution remarquable de madame Comeau-Tufts et offrent leurs sincères condoléances aux membres de sa grande famille.

RESOLUTION NO. 993

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas Albert Rice of Hilltown, Edward Rice and Maxine Comeau of Hassetts, found a wallet in Digby's Walmart parking lot in March of this year; and

Whereas Albert, Edward and Maxine got a surprise when they opened the wallet to check for some identification and found it was full of cash; and

Whereas Albert, Edward and Maxine turned the lost wallet containing \$2,170 in cash to the RCMP detachment which was returned to the rightful owner later that day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank and recognize Albert, Edward and Maxine for their good and honest deed and wish them well.

RESOLUTION NO. 994

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 2011 Canadian National Karate Championships took place in St. Hyacinthe, Québec on March 18 to March 20; and

Whereas Tyler Deveau from Church Point competed for Nova Scotia in the 16-17 age group and the 68-kg weight division; and

Whereas Tyler's success is attributed to his hard work, determination and dedication to the sport;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tyler for winning his gold medal at the Canadian Karate Championships and wish him all the best at the upcoming Junior Pan-American Karate Championships in Brazil this summer.

RESOLUTION NO. 995

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 2011 Canadian National Karate Championships took place in St. Hyacinthe, Québec on March 18 to March 20; and

Whereas Trysten Deveau from Church Point won a silver medal at this national competition; and

Whereas Trysten's success is attributed to her hard work, determination and dedication to the sport;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trysten for winning her silver medal at the Canadian Karate Championships and wish her all the best at the upcoming Junior Pan-American Karate Championships in Brazil this summer.

RESOLUTION NO. 996

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 Nova Scotia Resource Recovery Fund Board sponsors the Nova Scotia Recycles contest; and

Whereas the purpose of the contest is to encourage participation in recycling and composting programs; and

Whereas Mme Azure Hanna's class in Digby was the contest winner of the Primary to Grade 1 colouring contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mme Azure Hanna's class on their achievements and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 997

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 January 20, 2011, Mr. Fidèle Theriault of Belliveau Cove celebrated his 100th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached this milestone and still be active and able to share with your loved ones the memories gathered over your lifetime is a wonderful reason to celebrate; and

Whereas Mr. Theriault served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II in Canada and overseas in England;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend their congratulations to Fidèle Theriault on reaching this remarkable milestone in his life and wish him continued good health and happiness.