



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse**

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### Third Session

**THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2011**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2011**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Third Session**

**12:00 Noon**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Gordon Gosse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

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

The topic for late debate has been chosen and submitted:

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

This was submitted by the honourable member for Colchester North.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**



MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, would you please revert to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a motion to revert to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

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

The motion is carried.

### **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause: Upgrading old paved roads. This is on behalf of the residents from St. Joseph du Moine, Grand Étang, Chéticamp and surrounding areas.

There are 432 signatures on this petition and I shall affix mine, in accordance with the Rules of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the honourable member for Inverness that there is no request from the House on this petition, so the petition is out of order and cannot be tabled. I would ask you to provide that proper information on the petition and we'll allow it to be tabled. Thank you.

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1103**

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 in December, the province removed the total production cap for the Film Industry Tax Credit, allowing producers to claim between 50 and 65 per cent of eligible Nova Scotia labour, making Nova Scotia the place to do film business; and

Whereas the residency requirement was also removed to allow companies to claim full tax credit for employees who are residents of Nova Scotia, for tax purposes, during the production period; and

Whereas as a direct result of these changes, production activity surged in the province and more good jobs are being created;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend the members of the film industry who are making Nova Scotia an even more important centre for this creative industry, adding to the number of good jobs in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1104**

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

Whereas today, May 5<sup>th</sup>, marks the International Day of the Midwife, which is recognized in 70 countries around the world since 1992; and

Whereas midwives have been providing care to birthing women in every corner of the globe for at least a century; and

Whereas this is an opportunity to pay tribute to the dedicated and compassionate work of midwives and all those who are recipients of their care;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize International Day of the Midwife and acknowledge their role in providing quality health care to Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1105**

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Agricultural College has an international reputation for educating students who make positive impacts on some of the world's biggest challenges including food, water and the environment; and

Whereas tomorrow, Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate the Agricultural College and the achievements of its students, as 236 people are graduating at the 106<sup>th</sup> convocation ceremony; and

Whereas 87 per cent of Agricultural College graduates are living in and contributing to the success of Atlantic Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Nova Scotia Agricultural College's class of 2011 for its accomplishments and hard work, and wish all the graduates the best of luck with all future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1106**

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

Whereas Mr. Alfred Dale Ells is being honoured tomorrow, May 6<sup>th</sup>, by the Nova Scotia Agricultural College with an honorary doctorate in recognition of his dedication to advancing the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Agricultural College honours extraordinary contributions to society and exceptional intellectual and community achievement, and celebrates both the university and its graduates; and

Whereas Mr. Ells spent 28 years of his working career at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College as a professor, dean, and later founder and director of the school's Centre for International Development;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Alfred Dale Ells on receiving an honorary doctorate from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and recognize his valuable input into the educational programs during his years at the college.

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. 56 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 28 of the Acts of 1996. The Real Estate Trading Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

**Bill No. 57 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 358 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Private Ways Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

**Bill No. 58 - Entitled an Act to Require Clinical Trials Respecting Multiple Sclerosis Liberation Therapy. (Mr. Alfie MacLeod)**

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

### NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

### RESOLUTION NO. 1107

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

Whereas on May 3, 2011, the residents of Yarmouth, and indeed all Nova Scotians, lost a dedicated servant of the people with the passing of Richard Hubbard; and

Whereas Richie retired from the Royal Canadian Air Force after 24 years as a physical educational and recreation instructor and became the first recreation director for the Town of Yarmouth; and

Whereas in June 1993, he was elected to serve as the Yarmouth member in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly where he completed a term of five years, and Richie never forgot about the people and the importance of serving in their best interest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature extend their sympathies to Richie Hubbard's family - his wife Barbara, daughters Jane, Dawn, Jill and Susan, and sons Richard Jr., Paul and Steven - and honour his memory by ensuring that our actions respect the best interest of the public at large.

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.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 1108**

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

Whereas MS patients who seek the right to have venoplasty to restore proper blood drainage from the brain are rallying in cities across Canada today, including a group of Nova Scotians here in Halifax; and

Whereas between 150 and 200 Nova Scotians from Nova Scotia have undergone liberation therapy outside of Canada and report having an improved quality of life because of the treatment; and

Whereas Nova Scotian multiple sclerosis patients say that they are being told by their physicians that they cannot be referred to follow-up treatment here in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the Minister of Health and Wellness to reassure multiple sclerosis patients who have undergone liberation therapy that follow-up therapy will be provided to them right here at home.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1109**

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

Whereas Forest Ridge Academy teacher Jennifer Smith has been recognized for her exceptional contribution to innovative teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with a 2011 Education Week award; and

Whereas Jennifer Smith, who teaches elementary students from Grade 3 through Grade 6 in Barrington, Nova Scotia, incorporates various technologies in the classroom, on a regular basis, to motivate and inspire her students to achieve their goals; and

Whereas Jennifer Smith has worked with her students on projects such as the production of an anti-bullying video, as well as a video recognizing volunteers at the school, teaching them important life lessons, along with instilling in them the fundamental knowledge to move forward and succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Forest Ridge Academy teacher Jennifer Smith who has been recognized for her exceptional contribution to innovative teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with a 2011 Education Week 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 Cape Breton South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1110**

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

Whereas Nova Scotia Power is planning to seek its seventh increase in 10 years; and

Whereas Nova Scotians can simply not afford another rate increase; and

Whereas the NDP Government has done little to alleviate the heavy burden ratepayers are now faced with;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to oppose any planned rate increase by Nova Scotia Power in the near future.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

### RESOLUTION NO. 1111

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

Whereas Claude Choules, the last known combat veteran of World War I and the last person to serve in both World Wars, has passed away at the age of 110; and

Whereas Mr. Choules began his military service at the age of 14 and would go on to serve in Britain's Royal Navy in World War I and in the Royal Australian Navy in World War II; and

Whereas Mr. Choules lived a long and remarkable life with wife Ethel, of 80 years, and their two daughters, whom he called his loving family, and also found success as the world's oldest first-time published author when he was 99 years old and wrote his autobiography entitled *The Last of the Last*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the life and service of Claude Choules and pay their respects to this historic serviceman.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

### RESOLUTION NO. 1112

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

Whereas Judy Nicholson has been a member of the Truro Rotary Club since 2007 and sits on the board of directors; and



Whereas Judy Nicholson has been involved in the Rotary Club's fundraising efforts through the annual auction and yearbook, as well as being in charge of community service; and

Whereas Judy Nicholson is the recipient of the Rotarian of the Year award for 2010-11;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Judy Nicholson for receiving the Rotarian of the Year award and for her dedication to the Truro Rotary Club and our Truro community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1113**

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

Whereas Harley Hazelwood of Kingston has faithfully dedicated his time and effort to the Upper Room Food Bank in Kingston for the past 20 years; and

Whereas Harley continues to be the driving force behind numerous fundraisers and community events in the Kingston/Greenwood area and is always available to help out as many families in need as is humanly possible; and

Whereas the Upper Room Food Bank in Kingston assists hundreds of families every year as they struggle to feed their families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Harley Hazelwood for 20 years of dedicated service to the Upper Room Food Bank in Kingston.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1114**

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 North Highlands Nordic Ski Club was founded in 1977 by a small group of enthusiastic cross-country skiers who shared a love of winter and the splendid scenery in the Northeast Highlands area of Victoria County; and

Whereas from humble beginnings of skiing on ungroomed trails to a high-calibre facility and trail system, the club has hosted many national and regional ski races such as the 1987 Canada Winter Games and the 1989 Canadian Junior Nationals; and

Whereas North Highlands Nordic Ski Club and its members were proud to be represented at the recent Canada Winter Games by skier Kilya MacNeil from Bay St. Lawrence, provincial ski coach Daniel Murray, provincial manager John Hudec and wax technician Chris Algar as part of the Nova Scotia team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend the members of the North Highlands Ski Club for their efforts over the past 34 years and congratulate them on their participation as part of the Canada Winter Games Team Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1115**

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

Whereas Cumberland North takes pride in promoting both visually aesthetic and environmentally friendly communities; and

Whereas Amherst has been chosen to receive a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and Tree Canada which will be used to plant trees on a number of downtown Amherst streets; and

Whereas Amherst is the only applicant from the Maritimes to receive such funding;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Town of Amherst on being chosen to receive funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and Tree Canada which will be used to plant trees in downtown Amherst.

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. 1116**

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

Whereas the Fort Sackville Foundation is the historic resource centre for the community of Bedford; and

Whereas the foundation maintains and promotes Scott Manor House and the site of Fort Sackville by collecting and preserving photos, artifacts and stories, researching and producing accounts of local people, buildings and organizations and events, and advocating for heritage preservation; and

Whereas the foundation will hold another of its popular Heritage Nights on Saturday, May 7, 2011, this time explaining the background of the Mill Cove area and will operate its popular tea room again this summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Fort Sackville Foundation, its board and volunteers for their concerted efforts to preserve the history of Bedford, and wish them success with their upcoming events.

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. 1117**

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

Whereas Chief Morley Googoo of Waycobah First Nation has been elected as the next Assembly of First Nations regional chief of Nova Scotia-Newfoundland and Labrador; and

Whereas Chief Googoo, who served nine terms as chief of Waycobah First Nation, won the election for AFN's regional chief last week with the support of 11 First Nation chiefs; and

Whereas the Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada and gives First Nation government leaders the ability to directly formulate and administer its policies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chief Morley Googoo and wish him continued success in his new role as regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1118**

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

Whereas Jennifer Longley of Kentville has worked tirelessly in her community to assist persons coping with bereavement, founding the support group Friends in Bereavement, which has grown to include groups in Kentville, Berwick, Middleton and Bridgetown, and made valuable contributions to VON Palliative Care and Caregivers Nova Scotia, non-profit organizations dedicated to recognizing and offering practical support to families and friends who give care; and

Whereas Ms. Longley, whose personal faith is reflected in everything she does and whose ministry has made a lasting impact on the community she serves, holds a Masters of Divinity degree from Acadia University; and

Whereas Ms. Longley is the recipient of Her Honour Mayann Francis, the Lieutenant Governor's Faith in Action Award, which recognizes exceptional community outreach and reflects the Lieutenant Governor's deep commitment to community development;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Jennifer Longley on being the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Faith in Action Award, thank her for her many contributions to the citizens of our province and wish Ms. Longley well in all of her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1119**

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 Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children will celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> year of existence later this year and have launched the Akoma Family Centre in February 2011; and

Whereas the Akoma Family Centre is a new vision and direction for the Home, which will enable emergency receiving and allow sibling groups to stay together in foster care; and

Whereas the Akoma Family Centre is a short-term care facility that will provide a safe and nurturing place for siblings when they come into the province's care, as well as provide a wide range of culturally specific services to children in care;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the splendid outreach service provided by the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children to vulnerable families in the African-Nova Scotian community and join me in wishing them every success as they continue to show love, patience and compassion to our children.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1120**

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

Whereas champion rower Mike Forgeron, formerly of Main-à-Dieu, will be inducted into the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame on May 28, 2011, at Centre 200; and

Whereas Mike Forgeron was an Olympic gold medal winner who has represented Canada well, bringing home Olympic gold from the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, as one of the eight-man skulls crew; and

Whereas Mr. Forgeron also won gold at the 1994 Commonwealth Games as a member of the four-man skulls and silver and bronze medals at the 1992 Pan Am Games;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and offer our best wishes to Mike Forgeron upon being inducted into the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame and thank him for representing our province and our country so well.

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. 1121**

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

Whereas Supportive Housing for Young Mothers is a unique housing initiative designed to provide new mothers and their babies with family-based programming in a safe and encouraging environment; and

Whereas Supportive Housing for Young Mothers will host their second annual Mom's Day Cabaret and Silent Auction on May 7, 2011, at the Nova Scotia Community College Waterfront Campus in Dartmouth; and

Whereas the Cabaret and Auction will make for a joyous and moving event of entertainment with all proceeds to benefit new mothers and their babies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing the organizers and beneficiaries well for a successful event on May 7<sup>th</sup>, and recognize the important work of Supportive Housing for Young Mothers in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1122**

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

Whereas Baddeck Academy students excelled in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Cape Breton Regional Science Fair held in late March; and

Whereas Grade 7 student Drew Stonehouse from Baddeck Academy was awarded a prize of \$100 for his exemplary work related to physical science, sponsored by the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, with his project comparing white hockey stick tape to black hockey stick tape in a project entitled He Tapes, He Scores; and

Whereas Grade 12 student Kendra MacCuspig was awarded a silver medal and a \$150 award from Cape Breton University, as well as a \$1,000 scholarship from Mount Allison University, for her project entitled Liberation Determination;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the achievements of students Drew Stonehouse and Kendra MacCuspic, and students Caleb MacCormack, Bailey Chapman, and Taylor Pierrard for their outstanding work as well in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Cape Breton Science Fair.

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. 1123**

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

Whereas for the second straight year, the Palladium Restaurant in Cole Harbour participated in the Halifax Christmas Feed to help support Feed Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Palladium Restaurant joins forces with several other local establishments to raise funds and awareness for Feed Nova Scotia by donating 50 cents of every dollar of sales to Feed Nova Scotia; and

Whereas crowds of people turned out in huge numbers to enjoy a delicious meal at the Palladium and help make a big difference at Feed Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly applaud the generous endeavours of the Palladium Restaurant of Cole Harbour in supporting Feed Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1124**

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

Whereas on April 19<sup>th</sup>, the CBRM announced the winners of the special volunteer awards, which include the Gary MacDonald Memorial Award for Outstanding Community Project, the Anne Holland Memorial Award for Outstanding Community Volunteer, and the Youth Volunteer Award; and

Whereas Marjorie Petite of Glace Bay is the 2011 recipient of the Anne Holland Memorial Award, in recognition of her over 40 years as a volunteer with the Glace Bay Town House; and

Whereas Marjorie's volunteer services include teaching nursery school to the children of Glace Bay for four decades, raising much-needed funds for Town House, serving on the Board of Governors for the Citizens' Service League and the Glace Bay Central Credit Union, in addition to dedicating time to help the St. Mary's Anglican Church, and was also awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for volunteerism;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in congratulating Marjorie Petite on receiving her much-deserved community volunteer award, and we appreciate her 40 years of faithful service to Glace Bay - we all recognize the role volunteers play in shaping our communities and strengthening the fabric of our society.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que Gisèle LeBlanc, un résident de Grand Étang, a été reconnu pour son dévouement et son engagement envers la communauté acadienne et francophone en étant reçu dans l'Ordre de la Pléiade; et

Attendu que l'artiste habie est connue pour les masques de fête, crée en honneur de la tradition française de la Mi-carême et pour être la fondatrice du Centre de la Mi-carême à Grand Étang; et

Attendu que l'Ordre de la Pléiade est une distinction internationale décernée par l'Association parlementaire de la francophonie visant à reconnaître les personnes qui se sont distinguées en servant les idéaux de la communauté francophone;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de cette Chambre de l'Assemblée félicitent Gisèle LeBlanc pour être reçu dans l'Ordre de la Pléiade et se joindre à elle de maintenir en vie les compétences et les capacités de la communauté francophone.

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

Whereas Gisèle LeBlanc, a resident of Grand Étang, was recognized for her dedication and commitment to the Acadian and francophone community by being received into the Ordre de la Pléiade; and

Whereas the skilled artist is known for the celebratory masks she creates in honour of the French tradition of Mi-Carême and for being the founder of the Mi-Carême Centre in Grand Étang; and

Whereas the Ordre de la Pléiade is an international honour bestowed by The Parliamentary Association of the Francophonie to recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves as serving the ideals of the francophone;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gisèle LeBlanc for being received into the Ordre de la Pléiade, and join her in keeping alive the skills and abilities of the francophone community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1126**

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

Whereas the exchange of information and reliable communications is essential in fire emergency and rescue operations; and

Whereas the Petite Riviere Volunteer Fire Department has completed approximately \$50,000 in communications upgrades, including the installation of a 24-metre-high radio tower off Italy Cross Road, with funding provided by the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program administered by Nova Scotia's Emergency Management Office; and

Whereas these upgrades now provide complete radio coverage to the Petite Riviere Volunteer Fire Department's district, and beyond, to facilitate response to emergency situations as well as mutual-aid situations in other zones;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize the Petite Riviere Volunteer Fire Department for their efforts in ensuring the safety of its district through an effective and reliable communications system.

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 Digby-Annapolis.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1127**

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Heather Murray of Belleisle, Annapolis County, a mixed doubles player with the Mount Allison's Badminton Mounties who represented Nova Scotia at the Canada Games this year, has been awarded Female Athlete of the Month during the CCAA national championships; and

Whereas this is the second year in a row Murray has been awarded this prestigious honour; and

Whereas Murray's skill in the sport is clearly recognized as she is currently team MVP, two-time league MVP, and two-time All-Canadian MVP;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Heather and wish her continued success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1128**

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

Whereas the Awakening Souls Choir is a youth choir at Tracadie United Baptist Church in Monastery; and

Whereas the Awakening Souls Choir, under the musical direction of Jamie Sparks, released its debut CD, *God Is Love*, in December 2010; and

Whereas the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs recently celebrated Awakening Souls Choir as part of its recognition program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Awakening Souls Choir on their CD release and wish them the best for their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1129**

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

Whereas in July 2005, the Premier said, while in Opposition, "I'm sure Nova Scotia Power remembers the shock and dismay that many people had around the last rate increase."; and

Whereas the NDP Government's laissez-faire attitude towards Nova Scotia Power rate increases puts more burden on the backs of ratepayers and takes more money out of the pockets of Nova Scotians; and

Whereas Nova Scotians can simply not afford another rate increase;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to oppose any planned rate increase by Nova Scotia Power and recommend that government freeze the NDP electricity tax now placed on energy bills.

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 Cumberland North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1130**

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

Whereas Cumberland North takes pride in all of its athletes and the sense of team spirit present in our communities; and

Whereas the Atom A Bombers hockey team made it to the final round of the playoffs during the Ross Anderson Pharmacy Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association hockey tournament, held during the weekend of March 20<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas the Atom A Bombers hockey team captured second place in this hockey tournament;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Atom A Bombers hockey team on placing second at the Ross Anderson Pharmacy CCMHA hockey tournament, and also commend this team and the communities of Cumberland North on embodying the true sense of team spirit.

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. 1131**

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

Whereas since 1989 the professional counsellors at Kids Help Phone have provided necessary and immediate help and hope to young Canadians seeking guidance about issues such as depression, anxiety, hopelessness, uncertainty, and suicide; and

Whereas the Walk for Kids Help Phone event took place May 1, 2011, in over 40 communities across Canada to raise money for the much-needed support system and raise awareness about youth mental health; and

Whereas hundreds of supporters took part in a local walk held at Shubie Park in Dartmouth, including Margaret Densmore who participated in honour of Emily McNamara;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the important work of Kids Help Phone, and congratulate the volunteers and participants for their contributions to the success of Walk for Kids Help Phone 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1132**

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

Whereas the dedicated students of Madeline Symonds Middle School in Hammonds Plains, along with staff and community support, launched a very successful production of *Beauty and the Beast* on May 5-6, 2011; and



Whereas the enthusiastic students involved with the production showcased their talents of singing, acting, set design, choreography and much more; and

Whereas the musical production, which enhanced creativity and school spirit of the students and staff of Madeline Symonds Middle School, was enjoyed by the community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Madeline Symonds Middle School on the success of the production of *Beauty and the Beast*, and wish them the best of luck in all of their future projects.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1133**

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

Whereas the NDP Government is making life unaffordable for Nova Scotians; and

Whereas Nova Scotians are now facing their seventh rate hike in 10 years; and

Whereas in 2008 the current Premier of Nova Scotia said, “[Power] increases will make life less affordable for every family in the province.”;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to intervene in the rate hearing and instruct its officials to oppose any planned increase by Nova Scotia Power.

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 Digby-Annapolis.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1134**

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

Whereas the week of April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 16<sup>th</sup> signifies Education Week, with this year's theme being Innovative Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; and

Whereas this theme provided teachers the opportunity to use 21<sup>st</sup> Century methods in their teachings, providing the students the tools needed to be successful in their studies beyond graduation; and

Whereas Greg Turner, a teacher at the Digby Regional High School, used these methods in his teachings, earning him recognition and honour during Education Week;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House congratulate Mr. Greg Turner for his excellent teaching methods and wish him continued success as an educator 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 Glace Bay.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1135**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Yarmouth, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Walter 'Richie' Hubbard lived a life of service to his church, community, province and country, serving 24 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, as the first recreational director of the Town of Yarmouth, and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Yarmouth from 1993 to 1998; and

Whereas Richie's contributions to Yarmouth and area were significant and many, gaining him the respect and admiration of his community; and

Whereas Richie embodied a life of integrity, compassion, and faith in all that he did, and demonstrated the highest level of character, especially in raising his children and providing his wife, Barbara, and family with all his love and support and acting as a source of strength and guidance for so many in our community, including me;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly remember Richie Hubbard fondly, as a former member, recognize his many contributions to Yarmouth and area and the province, thank him for his meaningful service, and wish his family continued happiness as they move forward, carrying on his memory and legacy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1136**

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

Whereas the Fresh Air Society's Free Play program in Antigonish enables young people ages 10 to 16 the ability to participate in outdoor activities free of structure; and

Whereas on a year-round basis the Tidnish Crossroads and Area Community Association encourages the importance of being active, to people of all ages, through a variety of activities and sports; and

Whereas on April 14, 2011, Doctors Nova Scotia nominated the Tidnish Crossroads and Area Community Association as one of three finalists for its Golden Apple Award, an award which will offer \$5,000 for an organization's efforts in improving the health and well-being of Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly extend their appreciation to Doctors Nova Scotia for their efforts in creating healthier communities, congratulate the Tidnish Crossroads and Area Community Association on being nominated, and wish them best of luck when the winner is announced on June 4, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1137**

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

Whereas Canada's Best Managed Companies Program have once again recognized Acadian Seaplants as one of the best managed companies for nine consecutive years; and

Whereas Acadia Seaplants achieved Platinum Club Member status by holding on to their Best Managed designation for more than six consecutive years; and

Whereas each year since 1993, hundreds of entrepreneurial companies have competed for this title in a strict and independent process that evaluates their management skills and practices;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Acadian Seaplants on this outstanding recognition and wish them many years of continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1138**

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

Whereas five years ago, Lill “Missy” Searl founded WIN NOW, a charitable organization that puts together Mother’s Day gift baskets of personal care items for women living in shelters or on the street; and

Whereas through WIN NOW, which stands for Women In Need Need Other Women, Missy collected nearly \$6,000 worth of goods in 2010 for women in need; and

Whereas Missy was honoured by Dress for Success for her generous work with the Women of Spirit Award on April 10, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Missy Searl for her concern for others and dedication to helping women in need and wish her well in her goal to achieve charitable status in 2012.

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. 1139**

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

Whereas sheep were the first domesticated livestock in Canada and the early settlers of Nova Scotia recognized the opportunity to raise rams and ewes in this province; and

Whereas the sheep industry is well established in Nova Scotia with approximately 14,700 ewes and rams; and

Whereas there are relatively few large flocks with only a few producers having over 400 ewes and 10 producers having 200 ewes to 300 ewes and the average flock size is estimated to be between 45 and 50 ewes;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of sheep farming in Nova Scotia and particularly ewe farming, pledge our support to the sheep industry, offer our thanks to farmers for each ram and ewe raised and urge government to assist our sheep farmers for many rams and ewes produced here each year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 12:59 p.m. and end at 1:59 p.m.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **NSP - RATE HIKE: PREM. - STANCE**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. For more than a week the Official Opposition has been trying to gather some concise answer from the Premier, his Minister of Energy or anybody in the NDP Government about whether they will oppose any planned rate hike from Nova Scotia Power and not just show up to listen. Will the Premier state publicly today that he thinks the proposed rate hikes are wrong and will hurt Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker I think that any increase in costs for Nova Scotians of course hurts Nova Scotians. It makes it more difficult to make ends meet. That is exactly why we will be showing up at that hearing to make sure we examine the rate case thoroughly to try and protect ratepayers. It's also why we took the HST off home energy.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it seems we might be getting somewhere. The Official Opposition has been clear, we want the NDP Government to instruct its officials at the hearing to oppose the rate hike until a value audit is done on Nova Scotia Power's operations. It's quite simple.

Mr. Speaker, why does the Premier oppose ordering a value and performance audit on Nova Scotia Power's operations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't oppose it at all but I recognize that it is the job of the Utility and Review Board to order such a performance audit if they believe it is merited. Of course what we want in this province are the fairest possible rates for the people of the province. That's why we have undertaken the most comprehensive renewable electricity plan in the province's history. It's why we want to get off of the international fossil fuel market, why we want to ensure that there are stable, long-term rates and why we're taking action to make that happen.

MR. YOUNGER: Well to quote the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that's not true. The fact of the matter is that the URB can only order audits which are allowed under regulations of the laws of the province at the moment, and the only audits that can be done are on fuel costs, the actual presentation of the audits and on the executive salaries. They cannot do audits or order performance or value audits on any other aspect of Nova Scotia Power's operations without this government changing its regulations or the laws and that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, you know it's interesting to hear the Premier put so much faith in the Utility and Review Board these days because back in March 2006, the man who is now Premier said: It is clear today that neither the Utility and Review Board nor Nova Scotia Power have the will to seriously address the impact on today's families.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Premier is in government, why does the Premier believe that the URB will suddenly address the impacts on Nova Scotia families?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I have already pointed out to the member opposite, our intention is to ensure that we examine very carefully the rate case that is being made, in order to ensure that the fairness aspects with respect to ratepayers is fully complied with. This is a responsibility of Nova Scotia Power, it's also a responsibility of the Utility and Review Board.

For our part, there are a number of things that we can have done in order to try and make sure that we put in place a stable rate regime for the province. We took the HST off the home energy charges, as I just mentioned. We put together the most comprehensive renewable electricity plan in the province's history and we have been asking and trying to prevail upon the federal government to follow our lead and to take the HST or their portion of the GST, I guess, off home electricity. Of course that would be an immediate benefit to ratepayers.

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

**PREM.: LIBERATION THERAPY  
- CLINICAL TRIALS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In December of last year, the Premier of Saskatchewan pledged the support of his government to the conducting and funding of clinical trials and to liberation therapy for the sufferers of MS. Shortly thereafter the Premier of Manitoba joined in with his colleague from Saskatchewan in agreeing to jointly share in the conducting of those trials. Now, very recently, we've learned that the Premier of the Yukon is committing his government to sharing in the conducting of those clinical trials.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has one of the highest incidences of MS in the country. My question to the Premier is, will he now finally show the same leadership as his Premier colleagues across the country and join in getting those clinical trials done and finding some answers for those MS sufferers who are looking to liberation therapy with hope for the future?



THE PREMIER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course this is a very important issue for many people in this province and, in fact, for many people across the country. I think the member opposite really misunderstands the position of those governments and, of course, the position of this government. The position of this government is that if there are clinical trials, we are prepared to participate. We've said that over and over again.

Currently this is with the federal government which is doing a comprehensive review of the scientific literature in order to determine whether that ought to move on to the next stage, which I believe would be clinical trials. That is the way in which the best medical practice is put in place and I think it's important that we are very careful, that we are ensuring that the people who are very earnestly asking for this kind of assistance get the very best medical practice that we can have.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you the only thing that we don't understand is why this government won't step up for those people who suffer from MS like his government colleagues, like his Premier colleagues have across the country. We now have two provinces and a territory working together to get those clinical trials going, they see the benefits. In our province, we have one of the highest incidence of MS in the whole country. My question to the Premier is, what is holding him back? What does he know that they don't know about the importance of going ahead with these trials?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I know, of course, is that there are no clinical trials currently underway. There has not even been a request for proposals for clinical trials in any of those provinces. What I do know is that the federal government is carrying out a comprehensive review of the medical literature and scientific evidence with respect to this procedure. I certainly would want to believe that what we have here is in the best interests of all Nova Scotians, in fact, of all Canadians, that what we want is appropriate medical and scientific examination of this procedure that comes to a conclusion either in favour or against that treatment.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, since Saskatchewan is going forward, Manitoba is going forward, the Yukon is going forward, but our Premier won't commit our government to going forward and participating in the building of a pan-Canadian solution, as they have invited him to do repeatedly, my question to the Premier is, what can he point to, what hope can he provide to those Nova Scotians who suffer from MS that his government will do something to alleviate their suffering? What can he point to if he won't do this?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, we've never been asked to participate by those other provinces, that's the first thing. Secondly, what we have said is that we will participate - if there are national trials - in the process that is set out by Health Canada, with respect to the approval of these kinds of procedures. That is the responsible thing to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**PREM. - NSP: RATE INCREASE - EFFECTS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Nova Scotia Power's profit is up by 11 per cent and yet they are seeking an increase in their rate of return for shareholders. One of Emera's other companies, Bangor Hydro, has brought rates down by 25 per cent. In New Brunswick and P.E.I., government intervention is freezing or decreasing rates. Even before the current rate request, further rate hikes had already been approved for the next two years in Nova Scotia. Does the Premier agree that increases in Nova Scotia Power bills will result in a harder time for Nova Scotia businesses to compete?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course, anything that affects the rate bases of businesses can affect their ability to compete, although I do notice that for most jurisdictions the cost of electricity is going up. The reality is, for the most part, some of the provinces are in a little bit better position, for example, Quebec has very vast hydro resources that are not subject to the same kind of volatility that we see here, but in those jurisdictions that are also dependent on fossil fuels you will see generally the same kind of increases in cost.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Premier went after school boards with a hatchet demanding they cut administration costs and now teachers. When we look at this, increased electricity prices may stall economic growth, it will increase the price of everything from food to diapers and other goods in stores, to nursing homes, hospital budgets and school costs. Will the Premier now agree to order an audit of the operational costs of Nova Scotia Power before the rate hearing?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reason why we have the Utility and Review Board is to address exactly those kinds of questions. It's to look at whether or not the rate increases that are asked for reflect the costs that go into the generation of electricity in the province. It is fundamentally the case that the cost associated with operations is very much tied to the cost of fuel, and in our case, it's particularly tied to things like the cost of coal. As all consumers have been watching, as they see the cost of various fuels continuing to increase, they know that reflects right through the chain. He is quite right, it reflects itself in things such as the cost of food, it reflects itself in the cost of transportation and, unfortunately, it reflects itself in the cost of energy, like electricity. This is not a phenomenon that's simply happening in Nova Scotia. It is, in fact, across North America and you see the discussion of it in the papers almost daily.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the point is that he can do something about it. The Premier is right that power rates are going up, but the fact of the matter is he doesn't seem to understand the role of the Utility and Review Board. Nova Scotia Power is very specifically applying for a fuel hearing. They're not applying for any type of hearing, which will allow the Utility and Review Board to look at operational costs. It's that simple

- they're not applying for a general rate hike, which means the Utility and Review Board is prohibited from looking at those costs.

The CFIB recently released a study of Nova Scotia businesses, which I'll table, which shows that energy costs are the number one concern of businesses in this province. I say to the Premier, stand up for Nova Scotians on power rates like he said he would do in Opposition. Will the Premier join us and join our call for a value audit on Nova Scotia Power's operations and say once and for all that this rate hike is unfair?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course I want to make sure that the people of Nova Scotia have the fairest possible rates. We've undertaken a number of initiatives that I have explained, really at length, to the members opposite in order to put us on a path where we can achieve a number of aims. One is stable long-term electricity rates. There's also the fact that we're trying to deal with the significant greenhouse gas emissions that we have here in the province. We're trying to deal with questions associated with conservation so that people in this province will pay less for electricity because they will conserve more.

I realize that it's difficult because this is a complex matter. I realize this is sometimes difficult to explain to people, but the solution to this is not going to be any single thing. We took the HST off of home energy, that was a good thing, but that alone is not going to control rates. We need a broad-based, comprehensive plan, like the one we have laid out, in order to try and ensure that we have stable, long-term rates.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

### **JUSTICE - CRIME PREVENTION: CUTS - INFO PROVIDE**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General has chosen a very poor time to withhold information from Nova Scotians on the issue of crime prevention. We know that the NDP Government has cut \$5.3 million from the Department of Justice budget, including \$475,000 to discretionary crime prevention and restorative justice budget. On April 28 I asked the Minister of Justice to provide me with the details of which initiatives would no longer be funded as a result of the \$475,000 cut. Since that time I have sent three personal emails to the minister asking for that information. As I stand here today, that has not been provided. My question to the minister is, why will the minister not provide us with the information we have requested about cuts to crime prevention in our province?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, once again he is not accurate. As I told him last night in the email less than a little over 12 or 14 hours ago or whatever time that goes back - last evening anyway - I sent him back an email saying that as the information comes that we would get that. It's my understanding from my staff that they are hoping - I thought it would have been in his hands already, but hopefully it's over here this afternoon sometime and before he leaves the House there's a letter that will get to him.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting when the Opposition puts demands like that. We have staff, they have jobs to do and that priority isn't necessarily number one. It is a priority, we are answering it and we are addressing it. I told him we'd get back to him so, hopefully, this afternoon he'll have a letter in hand that satisfies his interest.

MR. SAMSON: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I believe the delay in getting this information has more to do about politics than it has to do about staff in the Department of Justice and I find it actually shameful that the minister would suggest that his staff has been unable to put together this information since April 28<sup>th</sup>. I think all Nova Scotians know that that's simply not the case.

Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. This government has chosen to eliminate the Assistant Probation Officer Program, \$200,000; elimination of bail supervision, \$170,000; reduction of ankle bracelets, \$152,000; a 20 per cent cut to the Halifax Youth Detention Center, \$150,000.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the Minister of Justice has \$475,000 that he could have reinvested in crime prevention initiatives in this province and yet when we ask for information about what programs won't be renewed, he refuses to provide us the information in a timely fashion.

My question again to the minister is, what more is it going to take for the minister to take the issue of violence and the need for anti-crime initiatives in this province seriously?

MR. LANDRY: Dealing with the issue on the violence part, I would like to just table a letter that I have sent to Mayor Kelly to address some issues here. To address the specific questions that he's asking, he's saying that he's making the connection with the violence in the community and changes in our budget from a matter of a few weeks ago to now. He holds out the illusion that it's all Nova Scotians that are speaking about it.

I want to assure the member and assure all Nova Scotians that this Justice Department is committed to crime prevention; for this minister, it's his focus. I spent over 35 years in a law enforcement world and crime prevention was an integral part of my duties from day to day and for me, as an individual, my own purpose in life. I continue that in this job and I want to assure Nova Scotians that the core funding, the stable funding for crime prevention is there. We are looking to do things differently by realigning resources. If we keep doing the same thing over and over without looking at new and more innovated ways to do them we won't progress - no change no future.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I should say to the minister and to his government that if they don't start taking crime issues seriously in this province there will be no change, no future for this government as well.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has acknowledged that, while previously it appeared that I was the only one in the province who was equating cuts to anti-crime preventions with crime taking place in our streets, it now appears that even His Worship Mayor Peter Kelly and HRM Council are also drawing the same link. So now it's not just myself, the minister has even more people that he says are wrong in making that assumption.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are looking for leadership on this issue. They are looking for the minister and for the Premier to at least acknowledge that what is taking place in our city and in our province is not normal and it needs to be dealt with in a timely fashion. So I ask the minister again, when will the minister finally take the issue of violent crime seriously and work on a new anti crime strategy for the people of Nova Scotia?

MR. LANDRY: I want to be very clear that I take it seriously. I am committed to fighting crime - as I stated a moment ago I spent a lifetime, unlike some people that are raising questions on this issue. On the issue dealing with leadership I want to point out to this House that I met with the mayor last year and the Chiefs of Police on this issue. We moved a number of things forward. I have confidence in the process and the progress that the police are making. I have a meeting arranged as early as next week with the mayor and with the Chiefs of Police and with the RCMP; so a timely matter of addressing this issue, this is a concern, I am committed, we have a plan and we are working in that direction.

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

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: LIBERATION THERAPY - FOLLOW-UP CARE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. As the minister may know, Mr. Speaker, roughly between 100 and 200 Nova Scotians have travelled abroad to seek out liberation therapy, to provide some relief to a family member who has suffered from this terrible disease. In fact, in many cases they have depleted their family's lifelong savings to make that trip to seek out some relief.

Mr. Speaker, they come home and many report that they have seen an improvement in their quality of life as a result of what they have done. Some of those families, in fact, are outside this very building today and they are here to hear from their government.

My question to the minister is, will she guarantee to those people - since the government at this point is not prepared to participate in clinical trials - will she guarantee to those people today, those who do deplete their family savings, those who do go overseas to seek out the liberation therapy, that when they get home their government will be there for them, that they will ensure that they get proper follow-up treatment here in Nova Scotia, including procedures like Doppler ultrasound and referrals to appropriate vascular specialists?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. MS is a terrible disease and as Minister of Health and Wellness, there is nothing that concerns me more when we have diseases like MS and we don't have effective treatments to halt the progress of such a disease and we do as much as we possibly can to support the scientific community in the necessary research to help find effective treatments for these diseases.

That is exactly what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We have an excellent MS system of health care here in Nova Scotia, two clinics. They provide very good medical services and they will be there for people with MS, whether they leave this province for treatment or whether they chose not to do that. Thank you.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. Many Nova Scotians who have undergone liberation therapy abroad come home and see their family doctor and, in some cases, their family doctor tells them that they cannot refer them to a specialist for proper follow-up. The doctors claim that to do so would leave them open to discipline, including a review of their medical licence.

My question to the minister is, will she assure this House that no such direction is being provided to doctors in Nova Scotia, that there is no such threat to disciplinary action if they refer an MS sufferer who has gone through the liberation therapy to a specialist and will she work with the medical community to ensure that people do get the follow-up care they need when they come home to Nova Scotia?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of questions I heard there. First of all, let me assure all the members of this Chamber that as Minister of Health and Wellness, overseeing our department, we've certainly issued no directives to family physicians that they are not to refer MS patients to specialists and we would have no intention to do that. Individual physicians make decisions based on their own clinical judgments and if patients are feeling they are not getting the follow-up care they require, then they need to bring those concerns to me and the Department of Health and Wellness and we certainly would look into that; additionally, they can lay complaints with the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

However, I've met with the head of the MS Clinic, Dr. Bahn, and he is very clear that there are a number of patients who have left Nova Scotia for the Zamboni experimental treatment and the MS Clinic continues to see these patients and they do not turn people away.

However, it is also the case that patients, who want the Zamboni experimental treatments as part of the follow-up care in Nova Scotia, will not be provided with a treatment that has not yet been approved or established as a safe procedure, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, again thank you to the minister for that answer. In answering previous questions in this House about liberation therapy, the minister has said that liberation therapy is on the agenda of every conversation at every meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial health ministers' meetings that she attends.

Accordingly, I ask through you, Mr. Speaker, will the minister assure Nova Scotians living with multiple sclerosis that these discussions are more than just talk? Can she point to some concrete results of all those discussions?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, yes, I can point to results of those discussions. The result of the discussions that provincial health ministers and the federal Minister of Health have had, has resulted in seven studies that have been fast-tracked to help us establish the linkage between the CCSVI condition and MS, and those studies are underway. Preliminary results are starting to be generated from those studies and they certainly will help us in making a decision with respect to clinical trials and getting those underway.

I'm told by the scientific community that never in the history of any other disease has research been fast-tracked in this way in this country. So that is the concrete action that health ministers across the country, and our federal counterpart, have undertaken with respect to this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

### **EDUC.: LEVIN REPT. - CONTACT GROUPS**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. We have just heard Dr. Ben Levin deliver comments about his report, *Steps to Effective and Sustainable Public Education in Nova Scotia*. Dr. Levin is a well-known educator and author, his report contains important statements about teaching and learning.

It appears, however, to be more generic than specific to Nova Scotia, so my question to the minister is this, will the minister tell Nova Scotians which groups, organizations and stakeholders Dr. Ben Levin contacted in order to draft his report and when he met with those groups?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question but unfortunately, I don't have all of the information to answer that question today. I do know that when he was in Nova Scotia he met with various groups but I couldn't actually name them at this point. I will get that information, hopefully by the end of this session, the department will have that information and I will be able to provide the member opposite. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate that information. I'm sure all Nova Scotians are anxious to know how extensive that consultation might have been. In Dr.

Levin's report he speaks about engagement, motivation, collaboration, professional development, assessment, accountability and he makes a series of recommendations. One of those recommendations is that the work of the Department of Education and the school board must be redirected from administration and focus on student outcomes. That's a recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, teachers have always been focused on student outcomes, so my question to the minister is, what did Dr. Levin know about our evaluation and assessment policies and procedures about our students in Nova Scotia and about our student outcomes before he made that recommendation?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, those are questions that the member would have to speak with Dr. Levin about because I haven't had the opportunity to ask those very specific questions. He provided a report for us to use here and we are going to be providing an opportunity for everyone in Nova Scotia to read the report. It's on our Web site at 12:00 noon today and we also have the opportunity for everyone in Nova Scotia who is interested in education to provide their ideas and insights on education on the Web site. There is the opportunity starting today that we're looking forward to hearing from people in Nova Scotia. To the very specific question, I wouldn't be able to answer that, it is a question for Dr. Levin.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly have expected the minister would have been familiar with the report before it was released, however, it appears she is not. This question may be something that is of interest to all of us, Dr. Levin talked about closing schools. When asked by the media how many schools, he said: Significant - not five, not 100, maybe 40 or 50. My question to the minister is, what information did Dr. Ben Levin have about Nova Scotian schools, about their enrolment, about their location, before he made that recommendation?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, in this report are steps to effective and sustainable public education in Nova Scotia, this is providing an overview of what Nova Scotia can be looking at in terms of making sure that we're sustainable. He did not go into all of the reports around school closures or schools in the province, he made that very clear in the press conference today, that would be another report in and of itself. He did say that he couldn't actually name the number, he said double digits, but there are opportunities to look at that. These are suggestions that have been provided, recommendations, but he also did very clearly state - and he stood very strong on this - that we are going to have small schools in this province in isolated areas and he supports small schools in rural Nova Scotia.

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



**HEALTH & WELLNESS: MEDICAL EQUIPMENT  
- REPLACEMENT VALUE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday the minister confirmed that the estimates for the Department of Health and Wellness contain a zero dollar provision for medical equipment this year. I assumed that was a mistake because it defies common sense but, in fact, the minister says it is not a mistake. My question through you to the minister is, does the minister know the current replacement value of medical equipment in our province's hospitals and, if so, will she provide it to us now or table it before the end of Question Period today?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, we do have very well-equipped hospitals and we fully intend to keep them that way. It is the case that we asked our district health authorities to provide an inventory of the equipment that they are looking at needing to replace and that they attach some priority to the order in which they feel equipment should be replaced. This accompanies business plans and it is part of the business planning process that's going on in the Department of Health and Wellness at the moment. Those plans and the equipment asks have not been fully reviewed by me to this point and until I've had an opportunity to finalize the work that I need to do on those submissions, I will be holding that information until it is finalized.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to hear that the minister is reviewing the business plans of our health authorities - it is, after all, May of the current fiscal year. Nonetheless, it remains true that it is nonsensical that no provision be made for medical equipment purchase or replacement during the current year. Common sense tells us that some equipment will need to be replaced. Best practices in the business tell us that somewhere between 2 per cent and 5 per cent of the replacement value of the equipment should be set aside each year for this purpose, but for some reason the minister has chosen zero. My question to the minister is, how did she determine that zero dollars was the right amount to set aside for medical equipment during the coming year?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, we have very well-equipped hospitals and it's our intention to keep them well equipped. We've made substantial investments in our hospital infrastructure equipment. Just in the very brief time that I've been minister, last year we spent about \$20 million. We know that the district health authorities - the Capital District Health Authority, for example, has \$2 million earmarked in their operating budget. As I indicated yesterday, we also have a capital infrastructure and grants program that has \$72 million set aside and a portion of this is available for small equipment.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the minister believes our hospitals are so well equipped. The fact of the matter is, as an example, at the cancer centre here in Halifax there are five linear accelerators that provide services like radiation therapy. One is due to be decommissioned this year at a cost between \$2 million and \$4.7 million. There are CT scanners at the QEII, their life expectancy is about seven years; one

is six years old this year and the cost to replace it will be \$2 million. There are diagnostic imaging units at the Capital District Health Authority; three are out of service now and two can go any day. There are OR lights in our ORs in Halifax; the paint is flecking off the OR lights. You can imagine the risk that imposes. The cost of replacing those lights is \$2.4 million. There are cardiac cath labs which are well past their useful life; the cost of replacing one is \$1.7 million. Yet, the minister has set aside zero for that purpose.

My question to the minister is, when this equipment does break down, what does she advise our hospitals to do - take it out of use, use their operating grant which would result in a cut, or get out the Scotch tape?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it is very true that in a health care system the size of ours there are many equipment needs and there are also many capital project needs. We have a well-equipped hospital system. One of the first investments we made as a government was in new linear accelerators for the cancer treatment centre here. It was a very good occasion, launching the opening of this particular unit to help us with our radiation wait times which, incidentally, I'm very pleased to say we meet in this province. Again I would like to reiterate that no equipment that needs to be replaced or repaired will be unattended to.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**JUSTICE - PARENTING ASSESSMENTS: FIN. CAP  
- JUSTIFY**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, what is a parenting assessment? A Family Court judge may order a parenting assessment. The main purpose of an assessment is to help the judge decide how the needs of the child may best be met. The judge can specify what kind of assessment is to be done, including a parental capacity assessment on one or both parents, a psychological/psychiatric assessment on one or both parents, a psychological/psychiatric assessment of a child, the child's wishes and reasons for those wishes, and the parenting arrangements that best meet the child's needs. This is used by Family Court judges to save an awful lot of time in the court process and, at the end of the day, money for the Province of Nova Scotia. My question is, would the Minister of Justice provide the justification for placing a \$6,000 cap on parenting assessments in Nova Scotia?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, dealing with the cap is that you have to manage your resources accordingly and our evaluation and assessment of the situation determined that on a budgeting factor, it was an appropriate fee at this time. In special cases matters are looked at or examined in their own right. It's a matter that has been budgeted. That's the amount that is set there for now. If he's got data or information that supports that it should be changed - or different - we'd welcome the reception of that data and information.

MR. SAMSON: Well, that's ironic because I wish I had the data and information because I requested it from the Minister of Justice on April 28<sup>th</sup>, that he provide it for me. In fact, I have the Hansard here where he says that he will get that information for me and once again, I am still waiting to see what the justification for that cut is.

The government expects to save \$164,000 by placing this \$6,000 cap so why is this of interest to Nova Scotians? Well, it's of interest to Nova Scotians because - and I'm sure the Minister of Community Services, if she listens, will be interested in this - those who actually have parenting assessments paid for, are the poor of Nova Scotia. They're the low income. They're not the middle class. They're not the upper middle class. They are low-income Nova Scotians who are now being told that they will have a \$6,000 cap placed on their parenting assessment. Would the Minister of Justice be so kind as to table in this House what sort of evaluation was made to justify placing the \$6,000 cap on parenting assessments?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, we'll take it and review the matter and correspond accordingly.

MR. SAMSON: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I raised the issue of legal aid. This government chose to take a program that's accessed by low-income Nova Scotians and cut half a million dollars. Today we find out that another program, which is used by many low-income families in Nova Scotia, parenting assessments, is being cut by \$164,000. In fact, a cap is being placed on how much they can pay for assessments.

The question being asked by family law lawyers is, if you're putting a limit on these assessments, is it not just going to result in more court time at the end of the day, which is just going to mean more money and there will actually be no savings at the end of the day? These parental assessments, in many ways, deal with some of the more litigious issues faced under child custody cases. Once again, this appears to be another shot by this government at low-income families in this province. I would again ask the minister, how did the minister agree to place a cap on parenting assessments when today he tells us he doesn't have the data or the justification to justify making that decision?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, this government, I just want to point out, has done more to help the low-income person within the last two years than in the last decade when his government was in power. We have also made more progressive impacts. Dealing with the questions or issues that this member may have, we will examine the question, look at what information is available and respond to him in kind.

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

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**ERD & T: SIGNATURE RESORTS  
- SALE STATUS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The Keltic Lodge Resort, one of the province's Signature Resorts, is an important economic and employment driver in Victoria County.

In estimates last week the minister said, we called for an expression of interest as far as the Signature Resorts were concerned. Now, one of the things that I tried to derail is that it didn't mean that the Signature Resorts were for sale. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, community members in Ingonish are concerned about the future of Keltic Lodge, is the government considering sale of the Signature Resorts?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. What we've done is we've had a request for expression of interest and the direct question, are the Signature Resorts for sale? As of right now, today, this very minute, they are not up for sale.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, Keltic Lodge is federally owned but provincially operated, so my question through you to the minister is, this has the department approached the federal government to work together to determine ways to sustain this iconic resort?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, through you I will say this - I will assure the good member opposite that staff has always and will continue to work with the federal partnerships in exploring all options that are related to the lodge.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that. It is reported on February 24<sup>th</sup> in The Digby Courier - and I'll table that - that 2010 was the first year since New Castle took over the resorts' management, in 2002, that the resorts lost money. It was also reported that the resorts require as much as \$22 million in upgrades, maintenance, and groundwork in order to bring them up to modern standards.

Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, what is the government doing to address these deficiencies, which will boost tourism in Ingonish and help make sure that Keltic Lodge is profitable?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to inform the member opposite and all members of the House that, yes, there was a figure that was quoted as upwards of \$22 million, but that \$22 million that was being quoted and certainly being bandied around was really high-end, so there is a range there - we could invest anywhere from \$1 million to \$22 million.

What the Signature Resorts need, and I would include all of them, are in some cases cosmetic, such things as carpets, drapes, mattresses, and if anyone has been in the Signature Resorts recently and you turn on the television set, it's the big box TV, so those would be considered minor upgrades - but in the course of three Signature Resorts consider the quality and the quantity, it all begins to add up after a while.

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

**LBR. & ADV. EDUC. - NSCC: FUNDING GAP  
- GOV'T. ROLE**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, it's the same story, but a different day. Today we learned of tuition hikes, teacher cuts, and program eliminations and rationalizations at NSCC. For this minister it will be tough in this case to use the excuse of declining enrolment as a reason for budget reduction and teacher layoffs. For the NSCC, decisions were tough as they grappled with the funding shortfall of \$5.7 million, attributable to inflationary and wage pressures. My question is, could the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education please explain government's role in contributing to this funding gap?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Nova Scotia Community College system recognizes that it is funded, to a large extent, by public money and that they take some responsibility in helping the government and the taxpayers of this province live within their means.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, students have been asked to fund a budget shortfall through a tuition increase. This 3 per cent increase impacts the pocketbooks of those students currently attending, or planning to attend NSCC in the future. The NSCC press release dated yesterday in relation to the tuition hikes states, "If approved by the provincial government, it would be NSCC's first tuition increase since 2008." My question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, is the minister planning to approve this 3 per cent tuition hike at NSCC, yes or no?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly protecting reasonable tuition and access to community college programs is a priority of both the college and the government. There has been no decision made on tuition increases. Certainly, an application to increase them has been received by my department and staff is currently reviewing that request. It is my understanding that if it were approved, we'd be talking in the neighbourhood of about an \$81 increase per student. But as I said, it's still in process; a decision has not been made.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, while I am certain NSCC carried on their deliberations carefully, the issue is a post-secondary institution, due to budget shortfalls, had to deliberate on program delivery. They had to eliminate programs and they had to rationalize their offerings. This impacts the classroom, this impacts industry and this impacts the economy of the future. My final question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced

Education is, will the minister admit that budget cuts made by this NDP Government will have a negative effect on training the workforce of tomorrow?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, actually the government did not reduce their funding to the community college system. We are currently, with them, examining the relationship and the support that community college programming gives to up-skilling the workforce of Nova Scotia and making sure that we have adequately and well-trained workers in much needed positions, in the future. All we've asked the community college to do is absorb their inflationary and wage increases while this review is underway. They appreciate that they are part of the structure of government, being funded by the taxpayer and they've certainly looked at ways that they can increase their revenue and also look at cost-efficiencies.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

**ERD & T: NSCC BURGESS CAMPUS  
- TOURISM MGT. PROG.**

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Today we learned that the Tourism Management Program at the NSCC, Burgess Campus, has been cut. This program cut in Yarmouth speaks volumes, it impacts students, it impacts staff, but most importantly it has a direct negative impact on the tourism industry. My question to the minister is, will the minister admit that by gutting the tourism industry in southwestern Nova Scotia, he made this decision very easy for the Nova Scotia Community College?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that this government, for the last almost two years, has worked very diligently in making, and assisting people in southwestern Nova Scotia to make, it a tourism destination and not a drive-through or stopover. We will continue to work with all of the agencies, volunteers and the good people in Yarmouth and area to make that whole southwestern region a popular spot for tourism.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I guess if there are no tourism operators you don't need to provide training in an area of the province where there are no employment opportunities. However, this minister and this government keep talking about looking to the future. How is it even possible to look to the future when it comes to tourism in southwestern Nova Scotia when education programs are being cut which would ensure future workforce needs. My question is, how does the Tourism Management Program cut at the NSCC match with the government's plan to somehow resurrect the tourism industry in Nova Scotia?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I understand the question and that's why I'm going to punt that question down to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Nova Scotia Community College has a regular review of its programming needs and they consider such critical factors as enrolment trends over a number of years, labour market demands, and whether that program is available in other campuses within that region. These are part of the rationale and the review process that the Nova Scotia Community College system looked at. That program is being suspended for one year. I understand that it's available at the Shelburne Campus.

MR. THERIAULT: So the minister is saying that it's cut because there is no demand, I guess that's the answer. There is no demand because the tourism down there has been cut to the bone. The impact of the program cut is significant. The message this sends the tourist operators and the future success of the tourism industry in southwestern Nova Scotia speaks volumes. It tells operators that this NDP Government gutted an industry and there appears to be very little hope that they will revitalize it when you cut education programs that will sustain it.

My question to some minister over there is, does the minister believe that the Nova Scotia Community College's decision to cut the Tourism Management Program was the result of the lack of confidence that others have with this NDP Government when it comes to growing the tourism sector?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the passion that the member has for his riding and for his area, but decisions around program cuts are not made by the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Those cuts to a program are made by the Nova Scotia Community College.

I will also say that I would suspect that the reason that program cuts are made is primarily due to lack of participants. I do know this - and maybe I shouldn't speak to this, but I will also say that I think, and I will stand corrected on this - there are at least three other locations in Nova Scotia that offer that tourism program. The Nova Scotia Community College makes those decisions when it comes to individual programs, not the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I believe we only have about 30 seconds left and I've spent some time preparing this question and we all understand the importance of the value of the element of surprise in Question Period so I think I'm going to save this question to ensure that it has proper delivery and it has its intended effect. (Interruption) I know I'm being called to practice it, but if there are only 12 seconds left, why invest the time to do such a good job and do it half justice by coming out and not being able to get a good question for the government?

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

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

**PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 20.

**Bill No. 20 - Trustees of Liverpool United Baptist Church Act.**

**Bill No. 22 - Public Service Commission of Bridgewater Act.**

**Bill No. 38 - Yarmouth North Baptist Church Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of these bills. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motions are carried.

Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

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. 30.

**Bill No. 30 - Land Registration Act.**

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I now move that Bill No. 30 be read a second time. This bill introduces amendments to the Registry Act and the Land



Registration Act. These amendments will allow Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations some flexibility in how we choose to locate Land Registration and Registry of Deeds offices across the province. Right now the legislation requires us to have an office in each district or county across the province. As a result, we have 18 combined Land Registration and Registry of Deeds offices across the province.

This made sense before the Internet, when someone had to line up at a Registry of Deeds office to let us know every time a property changed hands but as you know, Mr. Speaker, the world is moving to on-line services and we are no exception. Over 70 per cent of all land records in Nova Scotia are accessible online. That means a real estate lawyer in Cape Breton can access land records in Yarmouth if they need to, without having to leave their desk. About 75 per cent of all our land registry filing is done online, too.

Mr. Speaker, it may make sense in the future for the department to be able to locate offices outside the county boundaries, where they are now required by law to be. Other provinces in Atlantic Canada have far fewer land registry offices than we do. New Brunswick has the most, with five; there is only one registry office in all of Newfoundland and Labrador and there are two on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out that this is an administrative change at this point. We do not have any plans to close or amalgamate any offices but in the future, it may help us to deliver services more efficiently or to improve customer service. We need the flexibility to do that.

There is also another technical amendment in this bill, Mr. Speaker, which will allow me to appoint deputy registrars of land titles to help our Registrar General perform his duties. Thank you and I look forward to the intervention of other members.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I can only see one downfall with this bill that the minister is talking about, otherwise I think it makes a lot of sense for the province; a couple of downfalls actually. One of the concerns, and the minister already talked about that, is that the closure of some of these rural land registry offices would indeed make it more difficult for someone to go to a land registry office, if they wish to do so, in a rural area.

Also the employment impact in a rural area where they have some very good government jobs that would disappear and maybe go to another community and as the minister is well aware there are fewer and fewer jobs in rural Nova Scotia which over time will probably cause a problem for some locations. Other locations it will probably make not much difference if it just moved from one location in metro to another location, it won't make any difference. So that is an issue.

As we go through this bill, I'm quite interested to see it go to the Law Amendments Committee to see what kind of information comes forward on it in that case so with those few words we look forward to seeing it in the Law Amendments Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we also share the concern the honourable member for Preston has raised and that is of potential job loss in rural parts of the province. I guess one of the points I make about that is oftentimes things seem to be centralized in more urban areas and sometimes, the service being delivered, there's no real need for it to be centralized in an urban area. I'd like to make the point for the government areas of this Legislature to keep that in mind, keep conscious of that going forward.

If there's ways we can distribute some of the employment in government throughout the rural areas of the province, I think that's a good thing because those are the areas of the province that you're going to get more bang for your buck anyway. We need to do what we can to try and keep an economy going throughout the entire province. Halifax has a strong economy as it is and it's easier for people to find work if they are displaced. I do respect though that in government, times change and I heard the comment that originally some of these Registry of Deed offices had to be within about a day's horse ride for practical reasons years ago. (Interruption) Depending on the horse as the honourable member has suggested. So there may be some variance there.

But times do change and I guess what's important is that the service is being maintained and perhaps people are being given even better access to the service and that's good that government shows that it can change. So we're pleased to support this and I know that there's all kind of opportunity for people if they are displaced in the future to find other opportunities in government.

I guess the point we'd like to highlight again is hopefully this government is keeping in mind to try to make sure that there are opportunities continuing to happen in rural Nova Scotia throughout government.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the members opposite. It will certainly be our intention through attrition, and whatever way, if it becomes the case that we close or combine offices, basically to say if we reduce the number of offices, that we would like to take that concern around our employees to heart. I do recognize the value of government jobs and as an employer in rural communities. Certainly as the Minister Agriculture I think about that and I was Minister of Natural Resources and was also aware. So until I become Minister of Transportation and

Infrastructure Renewal it's still a thought that government keeps in mind. I think also the thrust of this and the thrust of any actions, legislation you see come from the government side of the House, it's about the people and the service for the people. In a department that starts out - its name is Service Nova Scotia, delivering good service to the people of Nova Scotia at a very reasonable fee I think is what we'd like to do. I recognize the members opposite certainly got their licks in on fee increases, so if we're able to hold those fees down and deliver good service, that's what we'd like to do.

But we do keep in mind the potential for jobs and the people who could possibly lose jobs and we're in no rush to be amalgamating offices or shutting down offices, but we do need the tool to allow us to do that. As the member for Inverness indicated, the story within a horse ride of the offices, where you get in a horse ride in a day or buggy ride - and actually I heard that similar thing, whether that's actually a fact, I'm not sure, but it makes a good story.

With today's technology, we can provide good service, actually better service - I think members would probably be surprised to find out how little people actually walk through the doors of those offices.

So, with those comments, I close debate and move second reading of Bill No. 30.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 30. 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: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 33.

**Bill No. 33 - Court and Administrative Reform Act.**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Madam Speaker, as Minister of Natural Resources, I'm pleased to move Bill No. 33, an Amendment to the Court and Administrative Reform Act to be read now for a second time.

It's my pleasure today to talk about Bill No. 33, an Amendment to the Court and Administrative Reform Act. This legislation will allow the province to release ownership of some unacknowledged, ungranted Crown lands in a more timely and efficient manner. The amendment at Subsection 2(aa) of the Court and Administrative Reform Act will assign to the Minister of Natural Resources the authority to issue certificates under the

Land Titles Clarification Act. The authority is limited to parcels of less than 200 hectares and the minister already has been assigned this authority under the Crown Lands Act.

This change further streamlines processes under the Land Titles Clarification Act which was introduced and passed last Fall by this government. These changes are making it possible for the Department of Natural Resources to clear up title to some 28,000 parcels of land around our province consisting of more than 100,000 hectares for which no Crown grants can be located - these parcels are referred to as unacknowledged, ungranted lands.

In 2005, when the Land Registration Act was implemented, it became necessary for the province to clear up its claim to ownership of this land. Although the land was never granted by the Crown, most of it has been used and occupied by Nova Scotians for many years. With the changes passed last year to provide a more streamlined and less costly a way for government to release its ownership claim on unacknowledged and ungranted lands, prior complex and very time consuming and costly title review has now been greatly improved.

The amendment will complete this streamlining process by allowing the certificates of release to be issued in a quicker and more cost-effective manner. A focused effort is now underway within the department to make the recommendations on the Crown's ownership of these parcels by March 31, 2013. Owners and occupiers of unacknowledged, ungranted land in the province expect quick determination of any outstanding Crown interest in the land. And, where the Crown's interest has been relinquished or extinguished, they expect clear statements that the province will not assert its authority over that land.

Certificates of release under the Land Titles Clarification Act can be issued once it's determined that through historic and current use the province no longer has any ownership interest in these ungranted lands, which have never been surveyed or managed as Crown land. Implementation of a streamlined process for signing certificates of release for parcels less than 200 hectares in size will help to reduce the work involved in reconciling Crown interests in these unacknowledged, ungranted lands.

Madam Speaker, the amendment will result in the effective time management and cost benefit for the Department of Natural Resources which in turn will free up resources for other activities. It will not only provide efficiencies, but will reduce the paper burden and red tape within government.

Finally, with this amendment the province is continuing to deliver on its commitment to make life better for Nova Scotia families. In this case, by eliminating a cumbersome process, clearing up land title issues and reducing the cost of government programs. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place today to speak briefly on the amendment introduced April 19<sup>th</sup> that will allow the province to release ownership of some ungranted Crown lands and, of course, in a more timely manner is what the goal and objective is of this amendment.

The change will give the authority to the Natural Resources Minister to sign certificates of release for parcels of land less than 200 hectares. The department has identified about 28,000 parcels of land consisting of more than 100,000 hectares in total, that's about 250,000 acres, as acknowledged, ungranted lands. A focused effort is underway to make recommendations on the Crown's ownership of these parcels by March 31, 2013.

The certificates of release are issued once it is determined that through historic and current use, the province has lost interest in these ungranted lands which have never been surveyed or managed as Crown land. Most of this land is located in rural Nova Scotia and in many ways we can conclude that the bill is pretty basic, motherhood legislation. It will help streamline - as the minister has outlined - the process of releasing small parcels of land and it will also help to reduce red tape which, again, we definitely agree with.

However, perhaps small in some regard, there is the sidebar issue here that Nova Scotia already is a province with one of the smallest amounts of Crown land. Most land in Nova Scotia is privately owned and this will, in fact, put more land in the hands of private ownership. While it is understandable government may want to get rid of some Crown land and help streamline the process of some small parcels, government still needs to keep in mind the 12 per cent goal of protected land no matter how small and how incrementally we may move this process forward. We need to protect our lands for future and ensure that Nova Scotia meets the legislation laid out in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act.

We do support the bill and its fastidiousness, but encourage government to obtain more land and meet the 12 per cent goal. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, may I do an introduction before I get started?

MADAM SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Joining us in the west gallery are two good friend of mine from the Pubnico region. They are, of course, representing Le Musée des Acadiens des Pubnico, Bernice d'Entremont, as well as Pauline d'Entremont, just coming in to take in the activities of the House of Assembly. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: We welcome our guests here today.

The honourable member for Argyle.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to say that our Progressive Conservative caucus will support Bill No. 33. This bill is indeed another step along the road to modernizing government. We, in our caucus, as our Leader has repeatedly stated, want to ensure that we have both a government and a Legislature that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Indeed, we have a bill before this House on that general subject.

I note, Madam Speaker, there have been a few problems lately with regard to traditional ownership of some properties and while this is not an earth-shaking problem, it is one worthy of correction, so the government, we believe, is moving in the right direction in this area with this bill. It's just too bad that I can't say the government is moving in the right direction on bigger issues of concern for Nova Scotians today.

As I understand it, Madam Speaker, the recent problem to be corrected by this Legislature relates to traditional use and occupation of land. Sometimes there's a history of generations of use of land by individuals or families who thought they owned it, or thought they had bought it from someone who owned it, when, in fact, the Crown, over the last couple of centuries, had never officially given up ownership and the land has never been granted to anybody.

Bill No. 33, Madam Speaker, responds to this sort of problem by allowing Cabinet to make regulations, assigning a specific minister to the right to issue, under the Land Titles Clarification Act, a Certificate of Release of the Crown's interest in unregulated land in situations like those just referenced.

Madam Speaker, I would hope that minister give it his right, it would be the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, because it is the department that now deals with other land registry issues.

Another point we would like to make here has to do with regulations. Bill No. 33 only allows this type of problem to be resolved if the regulations establish policies and procedures for the issuance of that certificate. Regulations, Madam Speaker, the bane of everyone's existence, the red tape, more complications. In this regard we in our caucus can only plead with the government to keep the regulations to a minimum and keep them simple, so that folks can understand them. It is not the job of government to create billable hour opportunities for lawyers but rather to reduce red tape and enable ordinary citizens to understand the rules.

In conclusion, while we support Bill No. 33, because it does tackle an outstanding problem, we strongly urge that the accompanying regulations be as simple, short and understandable as is humanly possible, so folks affected by this sort of problem can understand how to deal with it. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I just thought I would stand to say a few words on this matter. In Inverness County we have a lot of old properties because whether it be the Acadian people, especially in the northern part of the county, or people who had come - I know some of my own ancestors who came in the early 1800s were granted tracts of land. This has been an issue.

I can't help but think of one particular case that we were working on years ago; I can't help but wonder if it was the impetus for this piece of legislation because I can think of a family, in particular, who had a piece of land but there was some question as to whether or not they owned it for a long, significant period of time, at which point there was some dispute over who really owned the land, that it belonged to the people it was originally granted to.

I just want to throw my support behind this bill because if it is helping the process so that when we have these kinds of issues come to government, if it helps us to resolve them in a more efficient manner, Madam Speaker, I think that's a great thing and I look forward to the impacts that this piece of legislation is going to have for the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the support and the interventions of the members opposite. In many ways this is a housekeeping bill but I think it's certainly the right direction that we're moving in, so it will make it easier for landowners who have properties that are in dispute or under the ungranted properties that are in our province.

With that I, again, thank the members and I want to close debate here on Bill No. 33. I move second reading of Bill No. 33.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 33. 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: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 35.

**Bill No. 35 - Body Armour Control Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 35, Body Armour Control Act, be now read a second time.

This legislation was developed to deter those involved in criminal activity and make it safer for police to do their job. Believe it or not, it is very common for police to come into contact with criminals wearing body armour or bulletproof, stab-proof vests that they're commonly known as. I am sure that you have heard the news reports about incidents where those involved in criminal activity were wearing body armour. Our police partners have noted that this practice is becoming more and more common, and they are concerned - and we are - about the safety of their officers and the public. We can only assume that people involved with criminal activity wearing body armour to protect themselves while pursuing criminal activities, this is not acceptable. With this legislation it will be illegal for criminals - and for anyone who does not have a permit - to have body armour. Without regulation, the safety of both the police and the public is at risk.

At this point in time, anyone who wishes to buy, sell, possess or use body armour may do so. My department and our police partners want to ensure that only individuals who would legitimately require the use of the body armour can possess it. It goes without saying that there are many people who have to wear body armour to do their jobs, and this legislation will not impact these individuals - anyone required to wear body armour for their employment will be exempt. I am talking about police officers, sheriffs, correctional officers, armed guards, security guards, private investigators and many, many others.

To reiterate, under the proposed Act it will be illegal to possess body armour without a legitimate purpose. Anyone who possesses or sells body armour will be required to have a permit or a licence. That means that to enforce the Act we will create offences and provide authority to seize body armour that is possessed or sold illegally.

Madam Speaker, it is important to point out that this legislation is not unique to Nova Scotia. There is a growing concern about the issue across Canada; in fact, going this route will bring us more in line with other provinces. British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba all have similar pieces of legislation. The British Columbia Act is the only one in force to date - it has been in effect for less than a year and is still quite new but, overall, results have been positive. I know that our policing partners are unanimously in favour of this legislation.

When we introduced this bill on April 12<sup>th</sup>, the RCMP and the Halifax Regional Police spoke in support of this legislation. I am confident that all other municipal police officers and agencies will support this Bill No. 35. We have also consulted with the body armour vendor in the province and they understand the reasons for this legislation. They



support the overall objectives of keeping body armour out of the hands of criminals and ensuring only those with legitimate purposes use body armour.

We are proposing a transition period before the legislation is proclaimed - this will give individuals and businesses that currently own or sell body armour time to attain the necessary permits and licences.

I hope that all members of this House can agree that adopting this legislation is the prudent and responsible thing to do to protect the safety of the police and the public in this province. It is one more tool that we can use to make our streets safer, and hopefully it will make those individuals and criminal activities think twice. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, as the Liberal Justice Critic, it's a pleasure to speak on Bill No. 35, an Act Respecting the Control of Body Armour.

I have numerous comments to make with respect to this bill and the fact that it deals with justice issues, certainly a number of items to raise on that as well. The intent that's been presented by the Minister of Justice to keep body armour out of the hands of criminals is certainly one that all members of the House would support and I'm sure Nova Scotians would support.

I guess one of the first questions is, how big of a problem is this? The challenge is that when you have a Minister of Justice who stands in his place and says that police routinely run into situations where criminals are wearing body armour, it would be very helpful for us, as legislators, if you could provide some information to back that up. Did it happen once? Did it happen twice? Did it happen a dozen times, a hundred times, a thousand times? To be asked to pass legislation to deal with a problem and we don't fully understand how prevalent a problem it is, makes it difficult for us as legislators.

Today hasn't been a really good day for the Minister of Justice in providing information to this House. Earlier I did receive a letter from him relating to questions about cuts to restorative justice and anti-crime initiatives in his department and rather than provide us with the details, once again he just provided budget numbers and refused to say the exact programs that were no longer going to be funded or whose funding had expired. I'm left to ask, why? Why would you not provide that? It's not just to provide it to me, it's Nova Scotians' money and they have a right to know where their money is going to be spent or where their money will not be spent. Why the Minister of Justice refuses to give that information is a mystery to me.

Are there some programs there that he's embarrassed to not be funding anymore? Is that why? Regardless, whether he's embarrassed or not, this is Nova Scotians' money. It shouldn't be up to the Minister of Justice to decide what information Nova Scotians receive and what information they don't receive. In case he was wondering whether I was satisfied

with his response today, let me make it very clear, no, not satisfied at all. I think it's disrespectful to me and to this Chamber that a Minister of Justice, when asked for specific information, would not provide it. I can't see why he continues to hide that information.

So today, to stand in his place and suggest that we support legislation to deal with a problem that he's unable or unwilling to give us actual information on, it's again unfortunate. This is an issue where, as I mentioned before, preventing criminals from having body armour is something Nova Scotians don't have a problem with, but I can tell you from some of the feedback I've received, through e-mails and letters, there's a segment of Nova Scotians that really see this as Big Brother telling them how they can protect themselves.

The other issue with that is, as the saying goes, the devil is in the details - well, in this case, the devil is in the regulations and we haven't seen them. Those who have e-mailed me and said: what criteria will be used to determine who can have a permit to purchase and maintain body armour? I can't answer that because it's in the regulations and guess what? They're not here. We haven't seen them. Maybe the Minister of Justice, in being respectful of members of the House of Assembly, might be able to show us the regulations so that those who have asked exactly who will be permitted, other than those already prescribed in the bill, if an average Nova Scotian feels that his safety is threatened and he wishes to purchase body armour, what exactly will the regulations say as to who will be approved and who will not be approved? Today I can't answer that.

I would submit that the Minister of Justice can't answer that, yet we're asked to support a bill and the minister masks it under safety for our police. Nobody would oppose initiatives to make the streets safer for our police and law enforcement officials. Again, this is a bill that tells Nova Scotians that it's the government, through a registrar, that will determine which Nova Scotians are permitted to protect themselves with body armour and which ones cannot.

The other argument that's been raised with me is that while the minister does talk about sellers of body armour in this province, he has indicated that they support this bill. It would really be nice to see a letter from them or some confirmation that that's true, other than just the minister saying they support it. We haven't seen that.

The question has been raised with me, what is to stop people from purchasing body armour over the Internet? More and more Nova Scotians are buying items from their home computer. They are not going out to a store, they're not going out to an army surplus. In Nova Scotia they're not going to public auctions held by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal either, where apparently not long ago you could actually buy body armour, compliments of the Government of Nova Scotia. I'll get back to that in a minute.

Most now are buying over the Internet, so what protections does the minister plan on putting in place to somehow control the purchase of body armour through the Internet, where it gets delivered to people's doorsteps? Has the minister talked to Canadian border officials, to tell them we'd like your support? Once this bill is passed - and I believe the minister indicated there is going to be a transition period - once the transition period has ended, will he be informing federal officials with the Canadian Border Services that any items of body armour destined for Nova Scotia purchased over the Internet or through other means, that they'll have to check with the registrar, to make sure that it is actually going to someone legitimate, that it's not going into the hands of criminals or into the hands of Nova Scotians who have not obtained the necessary permit to be able to have body armour?

We were curious as to who would be under the list of exemptions. When the minister brought in this bill, one would think the first thing he would have said is, is there anything that has been done by the government regarding the purchase or sale of body armour that may cause us some embarrassment, before I bring this bill in? Regardless of what may have been done by previous administrations, civil servants are the same, they survive elections. They continue to operate even if governments change. One would have thought that the first thing this government would have said is, we want to introduce legislation regulating body armour - is there anything that we have done, as a government, that may cause some concerns in the purchasing or sale of body armour? Instead, I would submit, that was not done.

So lo and behold, we have to go through the embarrassment of reading the papers and finding out that some time ago - not long ago - the Government of Nova Scotia, through a public auction, put on by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, put up a lot of seven bulletproof vests for public sale. We found that out and then it happens, Madam Speaker, that the person who bought the seven units of body armour from the government had them stolen. So right now they are in the hands of Nova Scotians who obviously - quite potentially, I should say - do not have a permit to have these bulletproof vests.

I would be curious, when the police have come across criminals, have they come across any of these vests previously owned by the Province of Nova Scotia? We know there are seven out there - has the government been keeping track of which ones they may have been able to repossess, or are those seven still out there? Are those seven considered to be illegal when the individual who first bought them, bought them from the Government of Nova Scotia?

Madam Speaker, at a time when Nova Scotians are looking for confidence in our justice system, with the rash of violent crime that has taken place, to see this kind of an embarrassing situation, that a government that wants to limit body armour forgot to ask, did we ever sell body armour as a province? We did, and that certainly doesn't send confidence to Nova Scotians.

We spent the last few weeks trying to get the Minister of Justice to acknowledge there is a problem with violent crime here in this province. To date the minister has refused to acknowledge there is that problem. Instead, he has made personal attacks against me and my colleagues for suggesting there has been an increase in violent crime and that something needs to be done and we need to work together to address that.

Today, when he tabled his letter to Mayor Peter Kelly, he acknowledged in the letter that there has been an escalation of violent crime in metro and that he offered to work with the city to address the problem. So which one is it? Do we have a problem of violent crime in the province, in the eyes of the Minister of Justice, or is this just something that the Opposition is making up and that Nova Scotians shouldn't be concerned about shootings, stabbings and murders. We don't really know what to believe from the Minister of Justice anymore.

Then we see the Minister of Finance saying he's going to balance the books by cutting \$5.3 million from the Justice budget. As I said in the press, many Nova Scotians are of the belief that the NDP as a Party have been soft on crime and that crime has never been a main priority for this Party. When you look at what's happened in the last few weeks, actions speak louder than words and it certainly seems to be the case that Justice is not a top priority for this government, it really isn't. The only one who still thinks it is is the Minister of Justice, yet once again he's unable to point to specific new initiatives to deal with rising crime in this province.

I say it again, I don't blame the Minister of Justice. Unfortunately he was ordered by the Minister of Finance to cut \$5.3 million from his department, yet he's the one who must answer for it. I know deep down when I'm asking the questions he wishes to just point over with his right hand and say it's his fault, the Minister of Finance, and so be it. I don't sit around the Cabinet table but we would have expected if a Party really did take crime seriously, they may have reinvested in education and not make \$5.3 in cuts.

Today we are being asked to support a bill to limit body armour in this province. The regulations haven't been presented to us and we really have no sense of how serious a problem this is, other than a few media stories that have made mention that those who were arrested or those who are victims of a crime were wearing body armour. I think it would be very useful to have some stats. I'm assuming the Halifax Regional Police would have access to that and I'm assuming, as a result, the Minister of Justice would have that information. I think I would be very useful if he could stand in this House and tell us exactly how prevalent is this and how quickly should we be passing this legislation if it is as big of a problem as has been suggested.

I'm not saying it's not problem but I'm left here just to take the Minister of Justice's word when he says it is a significant problem, yet he doesn't provide us with any figures and he doesn't provide us with any regulations. Tomorrow when I go back and look at my emails and the individuals who have e-mailed me asking for details - will I be able, as a law

abiding citizen who is concerned about his safety, will I be able to register and get a permit to purchase body armour? I can't answer that. Instead all I can say is it will be in the regulations and we haven't seen them, I'd almost suggest the Minister of Justice hasn't seen them and it will be done later.

When the NDP and the Minister of Finance sat on this side of the House, they would have lamented that very situation and they would have asked to see the regulations before passing such a bill. When you look inside here at the bill itself, when it talks about the registrar and the process for obtaining a permit it keeps making reference to, as prescribed by regulation, which we haven't seen as I've mentioned on a couple of occasions. That's what makes this bill a challenge.

Are there any other professions out there that are currently not included in this legislation that should be? What consultation took place by the Minister of Justice? Was there an opportunity for people to make comments on the issue of body armour and placing limits on it? I don't recall seeing anything. I don't recall seeing a feedback site on the Department of Justice Web site. I don't remember a discussion paper I don't even remember a press release asking for Nova Scotians' feedback.

Instead this is something that's being put forward by the Minister of Justice, I assume it's with the intention of looking like he's getting tough on crime after he's had \$5.3 million cut from his budget, almost half a million cut from anti-crime and restorative justice initiatives. This bill, hopefully, will try to convince Nova Scotians they are getting tough on crime. Certainly, I believe most Nova Scotians who have been following debate in this Chamber and following the media will not come to that conclusion and are still waiting for some answers from the Minister of Justice of exactly what cuts have been made.

Today for example, I raised the issue of cuts, not only to Legal Aid but on parenting assessments. When I listened to the Minister of Community Services, for example, talk about investments that they have made for the poor, it was ironic to watch her expressions today to learn that this cut is actually aimed directly at poor Nova Scotia families. Nova Scotia families of very limited income are now being told, because the province is picking up the tab for you, you can only pay \$6,000 to have an assessment done to determine what is in your child's best interest. I don't think that's the type of cut that is supported by the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. I don't think that's something that he would support, saying to Nova Scotia families, because you are of limited financial means, this government is going to limit who you can go and get an assessment done by, or how much you can pay, and that after \$6,000 you're cut off. What message does that send to the Nova Scotia families of limited income?

Cutting half a million dollars from Legal Aid, who does that hurt? Not the middle class, not the well-to-do families. It hurts the poor. It tells the poor that their chances of getting Legal Aid has just become that much more difficult. As well, the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley and others are the ones who are forced to go out and

justify a 2 per cent increase in every user fee in the province that the Minister of Finance has yet to justify in this House, but he says it's a cost of living increase.

Why not put a cost of living increase on who qualifies for Legal Aid? That wasn't done. It was important enough to do it on services that Nova Scotians have no choice but to pay for. It's not like when you renew your driver's licence you can say, no, I'm going to go to New Brunswick and get it done there, it's a better deal. You have no choice. You have to pay what the government tells you is the going rate. Yet when they had a chance to say, not only are we increasing fees, we're also going to increase program cap limits, especially those that affect the poor such as Legal Aid, such as parenting assessments, or maybe the Minister of Community Services could have told us that they have increased the caps on housing grants - none of those were touched by this government. So user fees could be increased, but the caps that are placed on programs to help the poor in Nova Scotia remain in place, no changes made there.

That's the message that is being sent by the Department of Justice and by this government. I sincerely believe that many members - especially the backbenchers - had no idea that this was being done. We always thought the reason why the government didn't want the Department of Justice estimates to be called when we asked for them to be called was because there was other information that they didn't want to be out there; certain information respecting the Premier who did not want that embarrassment. When we look at the budget and the \$5.3 million cuts, it now appears there was another reason they didn't want the estimates to be looked, because we had 50 minutes to examine the Department of Justice budget.

I will give credit where credit is due. The Minister of Justice could easily have used that 50 minutes to give an opening statement and not allowed one question to be asked. He could have done that. In fact, many of his colleagues chose to do that during their estimates, an old trick done by previous governments, but for those on the government side who thought this government would be different, not really, they're not different, the same tricks that were done by previous governments. The minister gives a big opening statement, one hour limit, and then gives big long answers, unless you request the minister to give you short answers, which I will say, when I asked the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and suggested to keep my questions short and you keep your answers short, worked very well.

Now, I'm not sure many of my colleagues could say the same thing about some of the answers they got from that minister. They may disagree, but I can say that.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Long questions.

MR. SAMSON: Well, true enough. The minister suggests there may have been long questions, which I try to suggest to my colleagues, it's been in the Opposition that long questions bring long answers and wide open questions bring wide open answers, but

to his credit, the Minister of Justice, I believe, may have only been five or seven minutes in his opening statement and then he shut his book and he said, alright, let's have some questions. I'll give him credit for that because in the approximately 35 minutes that I was able to ask him questions, I obtained more information than I would suggest some members have received from government ministers in 10 hours. I believe I had more information in those 35 minutes.

One of the biggest things I could have possibly asked for was one sheet that said exactly what cuts were being made to the Department of Justice, reductions approved by Treasury Board, fiscal 2011-12, that one sheet is the one that told me pretty much everything I needed to know. Unfortunately, I wish the minister today, in tabling Bill No. 35 and opening second reading on it, that he would be able to give us a one-page and tell us how many incidents have there been of police coming into contact with criminals who are wearing body armour. Where are the regulations that say, here is exactly how the Registrar is going to be able to determine whether Nova Scotians can receive a permit for having body armour or not?

None of that information is contained and yet we're being told, and the minister is very happy to say, this is about police safety. That makes it very difficult for anyone to argue against that and certainly I would never want to be seen, or anyone be seen, as opposing that. But this is a legitimate question that is being asked by law-abiding Nova Scotians who are saying, well hold on now, do I really need to go and get a permit to purchase body armour to protect myself when I am a law-abiding citizen, and what's the justification for that?

It's a legitimate question, and again, as I mentioned earlier, it brings up the questions of, is the government playing Big Brother in this case? It's one thing to have the need to register your guns - we clearly know guns can be very violent, can be used for illegal purposes and can put an end to a life. Body armour is a little bit different, it's actually meant to try to prevent you from losing your life and protecting you, so it's certainly different. I believe from what the minister indicated, there's only one other Canadian jurisdiction that currently has legislation limiting the use of body armour in Canada.

One of the other issues that came to light yesterday was when the minister introduced the manager and lawyer who would be part of the Civil Forfeiture Unit for the Province of Nova Scotia. Many of the government members would not have been here at the time, but in 2007 we passed legislation giving the government authority to set up a Civil Forfeiture Unit in the province. They were given legislative authority by this House.

Yesterday the Minister of Justice told us, well, we didn't move on it right away because we wanted to see if the courts would uphold the legislation that was similar to what was passed in other jurisdictions. Then we found out about the Chatterjee decision in 2009 in Ontario, which upheld the legislation. If I'm not mistaken, 2009 was two years ago, so

what has this government, that tells us they are tough on crime, been doing for two years to set up this unit?

Now possibly the minister could say well, we had to go outside and advertise to find a director and find a lawyer for this unit. It took a long time, we had to post the job, we had to do interviews, everything else. That's not the case. The manager who is going to manage it and the lawyer in question are Department of Justice employees, so there was no outside search. There was no competition. There were no lengthy interviews; it was done internally. It took two years to set this up. The question is why? If a government is serious about crime, why would it take two years to put this in place?

We realize that sometimes the wheels of government may move a little slowly but if a government says this is a priority, legislation was passed in 2007, you've had four years to prepare for this and yet after the courts uphold it, it takes you another two years to set up a two-person team. That doesn't send a message of a government that is tough on crime or that takes crime issues seriously, but we'll wait and see.

Certainly I was here when the legislation was passed in 2007; the Minister of Justice wasn't, but I was here. I was part of that debate and I voted for that legislation. We've waited four years for it to be put in place. How much longer will it take, because yesterday was only an announcement? There's still work to be done in communicating this new unit, the Civil Forfeiture Unit, to police forces around the province and finding out exactly how it is going to work. With a few of the questions I asked yesterday, there is still a bit of confusion as to how this will proceed.

Yesterday in the questions, the Minister of Justice suggested that the minute the police find goods that they believe were purchased through the profits of crime, this unit can kick into place immediately, which raises an interesting question. If the police are there and they lay charges, and a criminal proceeding is going to take place, does it make sense for the civil forfeiture proceeding to take place at the same time?

As a lawyer, I thought that would be bizarre that you would have a civil proceeding taking place while you're still waiting to see the outcome of a criminal trial. That was the answer the minister provided. In talking with some of the lawyers afterward, that didn't seem to be the case. The last thing you want to do is have a civil procedure that may somehow negatively impact the criminal proceedings taking place. Those are some of the details we're still waiting to see.

Will they have to wait for the results of the criminal trial, if there is going to be actual charges laid, to see whether the courts are going to order the forfeiture of these goods that were obtained through the proceeds of crime? Or is it after that the courts may have determined no charges are going to be prosecuted and therefore, at that point, this new civil forfeiture team could kick in? Those details still need to be worked out.



Nova Scotians today who are saying, if someone is caught tomorrow with illegal items that were through the proceeds of crime, is this unit going to be able to work on that immediately? That remains to be seen. The question yesterday was, is this going to have an impact immediately on crime in Nova Scotia? My answer was, I don't think so. Over time, we are all hopeful that it is going to discourage people from committing crimes or people profiting from criminal activities here in this province. For those who are going to bed in Dartmouth tonight who are wondering, will this put an end to the shootings and to the stabbings and to some of the murders that have taken place, the answer is no. For the Minister of Justice to suggest otherwise is, I believe, disingenuous.

This is, as he has mentioned, one tool, another tool to be used. Bill No. 35, as well, is possibly another tool that's going to be used. I was wondering if under the list of exemptions that they would have included the seven vests that were mistakenly sold by the Government of Nova Scotia. I haven't seen it in the bill, maybe it will show up in the regulations. That was embarrassing for Nova Scotians. I believe it was embarrassing for the Minister of Justice that he would send out a release about a bill to limit body armour, only to find out through the press that it was actually the Government of Nova Scotia that sold seven units of body armour to the streets of Nova Scotia.

They were sold to a vendor and my understanding is they were stolen from the vendor. We have no idea whose hands they are in now. Only time will tell - whether the minister will even advise us if the police are successful in arresting someone who has the body armour that was mistakenly sold by the Province of Nova Scotia, if he will say we have one, there's only six left to go; or we have two, there's only five left to go.

Only time will tell, but certainly that is of great concern to Nova Scotians that an issue so serious that the government somehow would have allowed these items to be sold. I would have hoped the Minister of Justice would have indicated, as a reassurance to Nova Scotians, that a review is being done to ensure what exact items can be sold at public auction by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Make sure we don't have this type of embarrassing situation again, that we are not actually putting back on the street items that could be determined at the end to cause concern and possible harm to law enforcement officers in the Province of Nova Scotia.

I believe I've raised a few issues with Bill No. 35, which were brought to my attention. I believe there is an opportunity here for the Minister of Justice to show us what the regulations are, answer some of the questions we have raised about how prevalent it is that police run into individuals who are wearing body armour, how often it happens in our province. Show us the regulations as to exactly what criteria will be put in place for who will be permitted to get authorization to buy and possess body armour in this province. Those are legitimate questions by law-abiding Nova Scotians. I believe they deserve answers. I believe the minister has the opportunity to provide us with those. To not do so is disingenuous and certainly raises questions about just how serious this government is about crime in this province.

Madam Speaker, I do hope that we are going to see some presentations at the Law Amendments Committee. For those who are following, I would presume this bill won't be called before sometime next week. I would hope that any interested Nova Scotians who have opinions can either communicate them directly to us or can, even better yet, come make a presentation to the Law Amendments Committee. They can contact the Clerk's Office for Legislative Counsel here in Nova Scotia and find out exactly when this bill is going to be called and how they can come make a presentation to express their concerns whether in favour, not in favour or, as I've done today, merely asking questions about the subject at hand.

With that, Madam Speaker, I do look forward to the interventions of some of my other colleagues and do hope, on closing, that the Minister of Justice will commit to providing us with some of the information that I have requested during my brief remarks on Bill No. 35. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, I want to take just a few minutes this afternoon to speak to Bill No. 35 on a couple of concerns. I'm not going to repeat all of what the honourable member for Richmond has done but there were a lot of good points raised in his discussion in his debate this afternoon. One of interest is certainly the data on who and how many, and so on and so forth.

One of the things I noticed though, he did touch on, interestingly enough, was consultation and other organizations or groups that may also fit into this other than the police departments. There is one of them under Clause 3(2), there's one that should be added there. These people put their lives on the line every day in this province and there have been many incidents over the years that I'm aware of personally and that is the group of paramedics that work in this province.

A very professional organization that is not represented in this section at all and should be and I'd be putting forward an amendment to that very piece of the bill, very worthy of being on that list. I can tell you there are many stories from over the years and I was involved for nearly 20 years. I know of an incident in Sackville, years ago, where a paramedic went to a door - it was Christmas day of all days - the door opened and the gentleman opened the door and put a gun on the medic's chest. Luckily the trigger jammed or he would have been killed right there.

Those are real stories of the streets of Nova Scotia and that is so unfortunate. It's hard to believe that we're even debating the issues of crime that we're seeing in the last number of months and over the last few years. It's not new, unfortunately we have these issues. It doesn't matter if it's guns, baseball bats, two-by-fours or whatever it might be. It's a reality of the life we're living in right now and we'd like to be able to count on the

justice system to clean up some of the issues - call it a mess, call it whatever you want - that are out there.

I think that police departments around the province are certainly working hard to do what they can but they need the tools in place to do it. If this is a tool, great, they have many tools and I know that they are working on a variety of things, probably lots of things that we're not even aware of but it's important that we continue to do that. It's important that we try to figure out ways to deter crime. Instead, here we are putting in bills that are going to be out there to protect our people like police officers and a number of others that were mentioned there and now, as I'm mentioning, paramedics. What a shame that we have to think about this very issue and our medics going into these situations and their lives being put at risk.

But as I said, it is the reality. I know there are protocols in place when calls are coming in for responses to certain types of incidents that involve crime. Questions are asked, and appropriately so, and protocols that should determine whether or not scenes are safe to go in. But it only takes one and there have been incidents where medics do decide that they are going in, they feel comfortable or misinformation has been given over the phone or whatever it might be. But a very, very important organization to be captured in this and they should fit into that subsection, they should be fit in there without any exception as far as I'm concerned and, as I said, I will be putting an amendment forward to support that.

I look forward to this getting to the Law Amendments Committee and I'm hopeful there will be a number of presenters that do come in and perhaps we'll have somebody from the EHS or the paramedics themselves that will come in and speak in an effort to make it better, Madam Speaker.

With that again, I just want to say in closing that there were a number of very good points raised by the member for Richmond and I could easily stand here and repeat through the course of the next half hour all of those but I won't do that. I know we'll get on with other business here today but I do want to re-emphasize the support for those very comments and add my own as well. With that, Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank my colleagues for their comments and I'll take anything that they've said under consideration and reflect on that in my free moments of thought. I appreciate that opportunity presented to me. With those few remarks, I move second reading of Bill No. 35.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 35. 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: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 36.

**Bill No. 36 - Energy Saving Roadway Lighting (2011) Act.**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Madam Speaker, I want to move Bill No. 36, the Energy Saving Roadway Lighting (2011) Act, amending the Energy-efficient Appliances Act, and I now move that it be read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to give government the ability to regulate the use of roadway lighting. Currently, it just regulates the purchase and sale of such lighting. This legislative change will enable regulations to be developed that will require the use of energy-efficient LED lights for all roadway lighting around the province and set an international standard for those lights. This will mean energy savings, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and less mercury in the environment. I'm proud to say that this legislation will make Nova Scotia the first jurisdiction in North America to mandate the usage of LED street lights from one end of the province to the other.

Nova Scotia is a leader in using green technology and making the change to LED road lights just makes sense. Earlier this year, the province announced it was converting 2,500 lights to LED lights on Nova Scotia highways. There are approximately 120,000 roadway lights in place throughout Nova Scotia and the majority are owned by Nova Scotia Power, with 10 per cent belonging to the municipalities.

We expect that converting to LED lights will result in an annual savings of more than 50 per cent, and when combined with significantly reduced maintenance costs, that translates into an estimated annual saving of approximately \$18 million. In addition, converting to LED streetlights will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 30,000 tons and also save half a kilogram of mercury each year.

The cost of converting to LED is estimated at approximately \$100 million, but the final price will be determined through a competitive bidding process. Nova Scotia Power will apply to the Utility and Review Board to invest that capital, making the case that the conversion benefits municipal government ratepayers and that the savings offset the cost in the long term.

Nova Scotia Power and the municipalities will have five years to complete the conversion. Municipalities will have the option to finance their conversion projects through the Municipal Finance Corporation or they can choose to convert their systems through Nova Scotia Power. Some municipalities have already begun the conversion to LED lighting. Last year, seven municipalities received funding through the ecoNova Scotia Fund to begin converting their streetlights to LED lighting. Already, they're seeing savings. Just as an example, in Amherst, Mayor Robert Small said they expect to save approximately \$85,000 this year alone in energy and maintenance costs. Over the 20-year lifespan of the LED lights, they expect savings in excess of \$2.3 million. Certainly that's good news for the taxpayers in that municipality and Amherst is just one example.

Converting to LED lights on Nova Scotia roadways also has another significant benefit. It has the potential to create more jobs in Nova Scotia and to grow our economy. A Nova Scotia supplier of LED roadway lighting, LED Roadway Lighting Ltd., in Amherst, designs and manufactures energy-efficient street lights that are anticipated to be virtually maintenance-free for 20 years. LED Roadway Lighting has gained a worldwide reputation for the quality of its products; they work with governments and utilities throughout North America and currently employ more than 100 people in the border town. They provide LED lighting products for Nova Scotia highways and they will have the opportunity certainly to bid on the work that will result from this legislation.

Madam Speaker, this could mean significant economic benefits to them and more jobs for Nova Scotians. To be clear, we will set an international standard that could also be met by other suppliers; however, we are certainly hopeful that this Nova Scotia company will be a strong contender for the work, given their successful international track record.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I am very proud of this legislation, it has the potential to impact the lives of Nova Scotians in many ways - by saving energy costs, by significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, by lowering the amount of mercury in our environment, and potentially by creating new jobs and growing the economy. (Applause)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Energy shouldn't feel bad about the delayed applause because on all sides of the House today there has been delayed applause for speakers.

Madam Speaker, I guess I support the idea of moving to LED roadway lighting for our street lights, but I have a number of comments with respect to the bill. I'd like to start by the fact that the Premier went up to Amherst and stood in a factory in front of a number of workers and told them that his government would be legislating the requirement for LED lights for street lights in the coming days - and the bill doesn't even mention LED

lights, in fact all it does is the bill allows Cabinet, effectively, to legislate or require the use of any efficient lighting and Cabinet gets to decide what that might be.

I know we don't have any guarantee that that will be LED only or that that might be any one of a number of other technologies that are currently out there. And that troubles me because many people, including many of the workers I have since talked to, were surprised to find out that the legislation did not include what the Premier had promised at his press conference and his press briefing up at that factory. That is troubling.

That's not to say that the government is not taking an important step here by requiring this to happen, but they're not doing what they said they were doing to the workers who were there to listen to the Premier speak, and I think we should all be concerned about that.

Clearly the government is intending to try to create a situation where LED Roadway Lighting is the preferred bidder on this - and that's not something I am necessarily opposed to, they are a Nova Scotia company, a very good Nova Scotia company and, in fact, I know quite a lot about the history of that company and have worked with them for the better part of seven years, on and off, in different capacities. They are a company which is arguably the world leader in roadway lighting, LED roadway lighting, in any case.

However, I wonder what trouble this gets us in when the minister stands up and talks about having an open and transparent procurement process and then talks about how wonderful one specific company is that might be bidding on this process. I would suggest that that could very well open the government to charges by other bidders when this eventually comes out, that this was set up to support one company. That would be a shame if, all of a sudden, a Nova Scotia company finds itself in the middle of a protracted legal battle over procurement rules because of statements by the government as this legislation has come forward.

I believe it is a company which has a superior product, certainly. It's easier for me to say it because I am on the Opposition side and I'm not in a position to write the tender or so forth. I think that they would easily compete both on price and product with any other company in the world.

Much like my colleague, the member for Richmond, had talked about in the previous bill where there are no regulations in front of us, there are, again, no regulations in front of us here and really the details are in the regulations. The government says they're going to legislate LED lighting for roadways. They say they're going to do that within five years, I believe, or required to be in place within five years was the timeline. Yet neither of those items is in this bill, neither one is in the two paragraphs of this bill.

In fact, what is in this bill is “. . . that lighting meets the prescribed efficiency standards with respect to that lighting.” Well, high-pressure sodium lights meet the efficiency standard for high-pressure sodium lights, mercury vapour lights meet the efficiency standard for mercury vapour lights. This bill doesn't say it will have to meet what that standard is, it doesn't preclude other types of lighting. If indeed it is the intent to require that LED be the only option, the bill doesn't actually do that.

The bill doesn't provide the details on how this will be financed. It's worth noting that the Premier was asked by the media about this here in the Legislature and then had to have the Deputy Minister of Energy correct the media after his scum, because the Premier had said that the Utility and Review Board may have to look at how customers are charged and how individual ratepayers are charged for the lights, when, in fact, neither of those is accurate.

First of all, individual ratepayers in Nova Scotia don't pay for roadway lighting, municipalities or the province do or, in some cases, Nova Scotia Power owns them and they lease them back to municipalities in the province. There are a number of combinations. So he had to be corrected on how it's paid for.

The second part he neglected to mention is Nova Scotia Power already actually has an application before the board that is being heard at the moment on their capital plan which includes changing out all their lights to LED lighting. That's already underway before this bill even comes forward. I recognize they don't own all the lights, to start with.

The third thing he said was in talking about how they pay for it; there's already a process in place in terms of how this is paid for. For the sake of argument, if you're paying \$27 to lease a light, including the power charge, you continue paying the \$27 and the energy savings cost is factored into the capital amortization of the light fixture itself. That's already in place and that's been approved by the board. It seems to be working fairly well.

The Deputy Minister of Energy had to go out and correct all those things afterwards. That's fine, it got corrected and it's not the end of the world, but it makes me concerned that the government may not even understand exactly what they're doing with the bill. I think it is a good move, but the question is, what happens with the street lights? A lot of street lights around the Legislature here have already been changed in addition to the roadway lights that have been changed to LED fixtures. We know that because they've actually come with some of their own challenges where they actually don't heat up because they don't waste power in the form of heat from the lights and so the snow doesn't always melt off them so you get street lights that are covered in snow.

I know there are a number of companies working on potential solutions to that and a solution will be found. It still saves energy and there's a rate now in place for LED traffic lights. This bill could have easily covered those.

Perhaps one of the most interesting things, I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is sitting in the back listening intently and the government just built a new interchange in the Sackville area. I took a drive by on the weekend to see what roadway lights they installed just a couple of weeks ago. Some of them I think have been in for - it's still under construction, not open. They're not LED. This is the government's own project, the government's own tender on a government highway project and they're about to legislate LED roadway lighting and they didn't put in LED lights on their own project. It makes no sense.

Instead, I assume they are high-pressure sodium lights but they could be any number of technologies, but they're certainly not an energy-efficient standard. One thing I will give them credit for is that they are cut-off, they appear to be cut-off lights and that would be the next issue I would like to speak about. If we are talking about going to energy-efficient roadway lights, why are we not also legislating the requirement that the new - because there are going to be new heads on all of these, you don't just go and change a bulb - why are we not legislating that all the lights are cut-off fixtures?

When they built Dartmouth Crossing over here, it is one of the things the residents fought for. They said listen, fine, you're doing this but make sure that all the fixtures are cut-off lights. There's an advantage in that and what that does, of course, is it prevents the light from shining upwards, where it is wasted anyway, so the light only shines where you need it.

There are two advantages: one it uses significantly less energy because you need less light and the second issue is that you start meeting the dark sky conventions that people are increasingly and, in my view rightly so, concerned about, where you don't have those glows over metropolis' and shopping areas and homes. You can actually have the lighting but you can keep the skies relatively dark, which is great for not only astronomers and other people but anybody who enjoys the outdoors and anybody who is concerned about light pollution issues. There are actually a number of major - there's work being done in the United Nations on that particular issue and why wouldn't we legislate that?

Now I will say that it did appear that that new interchange near Sackville does appear to be a cut-off style light but it is not LED, it is not energy-efficient, they aren't even turned on yet and here's the government legislating a requirement that everybody else go out and use LED roadway lighting and they don't even do it on their own project. It makes absolutely no sense.

The final issue I wanted to address with respect to this bill is having the information to municipalities. Now the Premier said the other day, he talked about how he was asked in Question Period by the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus about the issue of whether they were consulted. Now I'm not sure what direct consultation went on but I do know that when the Premier said that UNSM had requested this, that is true. I believe it is even on their own Web site that they had actually requested this some years ago, so that is



true. They've been the ones who actually pushed this and a number of municipalities, such as Amherst and HRM and some others, have already put in a lot of these lights and, in fact, right in front of the Legislature here there's a whole street of LED lights.

I am concerned that in advance of doing this, the government staff or somebody hasn't gone out and said, listen, you need to understand what the rollout period would be, how this would be financed, all those sorts of things. That doesn't appear to have happened, so as a result, you have some municipalities that haven't moved ahead with energy-efficient lighting already, don't understand and they're looking and they're very concerned about the costs.

Now, it's wrong for the minister and the Premier to say that this is going to lead to short-term savings because it won't, it shouldn't be more expensive. The savings should cover your capital costs but long-term, it provides clear environmental benefits. There's demand - I mean lighting is a huge cost in this province and a huge driver of demand, so there are benefits. From a municipality's point of view, or the province, it shouldn't cost more money. I think the smaller ones in particular that are concerned about this, information should have been provided to them. In speaking to some of them in the past few days, they still don't feel they've been provided any information on this, other than the URB will make a determination.

The URB doesn't have to make a determination on this because it has already been done and there's a very strong precedent. So I'm concerned that on something that can potentially be very good, what has happened is that there's a lot of misinformation out there, a lot of confusion about it. Of course we get back to the fact that the government has advertised it as a bill that does one thing when, in fact, that's not what the bill does at all.

This is the second bill this session from the Department of Energy that does that because the renewable energy one, where a press release went out saying that they were introducing legislation to increase the renewable energy targets to 40 per cent and 40 per cent wasn't even in the bill, and they had to change that and go back and say, well actually we're going to do that in regulations later, when it could actually already be done in regulations. This is the same thing happening again, from the Department of Energy, advertised as a bill that legislates LED lighting - Burnside News this week had an article today quoting the Premier talking about how they've introduced a bill that will guarantee LED lighting on roads, but the bill doesn't do that.

The bill doesn't even mention LED lighting, so if you're going to introduce a bill and say it does something, then make sure the bill does that, because at this point, we can pass this. Interestingly enough, we support what the Premier says the bill would do. We're concerned that the bill doesn't do what the Premier said it does. I challenge any member of this House to tell me where in this bill it says, LED or light-emitting diode or any such thing, it just basically says that Cabinet can determine what kind of lighting is on a road. Well, great, but what guarantee do we have that is the technology they're going to go with and should they, potentially, open it to other technologies as well?

I think that the intent of the government here is good. The government's stated objectives are good. I don't disagree with anything the Minister of Energy said in his statement and his remarks. I completely agree with all that. I guess the one thing I do disagree with is that the bill doesn't actually do that. I think in his statement he actually said that will come in regulations, but that wasn't how it was initially advertised and that's not what Nova Scotians think the bill is that we're debating right now.

Perhaps the government will bring forward amendments before we hit the end. If they want to make it LED, let's make it LED. I hope they will also address the issue of the type of fixtures, the cut-off fixtures, and I hope that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, before they turn the lights on in the new interchange, will go down and get the heads changed and make them LED because it actually drives me nuts that we're passing a bill here on this and the province is building an interchange and putting in new lights that aren't LED. It's just really weird.

We certainly support this moving forward. We certainly support the idea. We think it does make sense. I think the municipalities could have had more consultation, but I agree that they had asked for this. In fact, I think, Madam Speaker, you may still have been on council at that time when the municipalities were starting to ask for this stuff. It is important. It will save money. It's good for the environment and we all know lighting is a major driver of demand for electricity in the province. This, obviously, can have a significant change, but I really think some more information has got to get out to the municipalities and other groups that use this. I also really strongly feel that I would like to see the government move to a point where the bills do what they say they're going to do and not that they're just suggesting it will happen in regulations at some point in the future. We've seen so many times that regulations have actually changed the stated intent of a bill and so I think that becomes increasingly of concern. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure to stand and talk about Bill No. 36, energy-efficient appliances. I listened to my colleague from Dartmouth East and a lot of what he has to say is interesting, I'm sure. One of the things that it is important to know is this is a valuable move in trying to do this type of lighting. The fact that the municipalities are interested in making this happen is good. I guess one of the things that we would question, on this side of the House, is that maybe municipalities may see this as a financial hardship.

It might be an opportunity, as these lights wear out, that they be replaced on a basis as when the light wears out, you put a new light in place and that way it's a little more efficient. You're getting the full life out of the product that's there now instead of tearing down some things that are still perfectly good and putting them aside. It will probably give you more time to work up a viable plan for looking after the mercury, how you store the

mercury that comes out of these new lights that are being put in place and replacing mercury vapour lights and other lights that are in the system. The overall goal of making our street lighting system more energy efficient is one that I think everyone in this House would support.

Knowing that we have in this province a leader in the production of such lighting is something we should take great of pride in. Hopefully they will be able to take their knowledge of the industry and help share that around Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians will get some good job opportunities building these lights so that they work on the streets and the roadways of the Province of Nova Scotia. With those few comments, Madam Speaker, I'm going to take my seat and we'll be voting in favour of moving this forward.

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

The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the honourable members opposite for their kind words, comments, interventions and general support for the bill. With that I just want to close debate and move second reading of Bill No. 36.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 36. 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: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 40

**Bill No. 40 – Liquor Control Act**

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 40 be now read a second time. These amendments to the Liquor Control Act will make it easier for businesses in Nova Scotia to apply for a liquor licence.

Our stakeholders feel strongly that the process of applying for a liquor licence in particular is too complicated, too time consuming and too costly. These new amendments to the Liquor Control Act will streamline the application process making it easier and less expensive for both businesses and government. These amendments would transfer the responsibility of granting permanent liquor licences from the Utility and Review Board to

the Alcohol and Gaming Division of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The Alcohol and Gaming Division will be the first level of appeal for issues dealing with licensing and enforcement.

Many of the Utility and Review Board's decisions can be dealt with through informal hearings but the Liquor Control Act requires a public hearing for many initial licence applications whether or not anyone opposes the application, Madam Speaker. So right now if you apply for a permanent liquor licence the URB advertises a notice of hearing, travels to the community and conducts a hearing, even if no one attends or objects to a licence.

This new change will replace a need for expensive and time consuming public hearings with a system of public feedback where people can have their objections heard before a licence is granted. The Alcohol and Gaming Division will remain responsible for the inspection of licensed premises. These new changes will streamline the application process, remove duplication and modernize the overall system. It will save money for both businesses and for the government which is crucial at a time when we're getting back to balance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to any interventions by the members opposite.

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

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Just a few remarks regarding Bill No. 40. The amendments in this bill will save government an estimated \$225,000 a year according to the government press release, in any case, so it must be accurate. It would also save the industry money while not compromising the enforcement.

We generally support this bill, there are a few things we would like to see clarified in the bill when it moves along to Law Amendments Committee and perhaps the Committee of the Whole House. The change is definitely transferring responsibility for granting permanent liquor licences from the URB to the Alcohol and Gaming Division.

Mr. Speaker, there was nothing more frustrating in the past than having these hearings set up for liquor licences. People would come and talk to you about it and they had to go through this elaborate procedure when they would get to the URB, or whatever the regulatory body was at the time, and they'd have to hire people to go there and they'd have to get lawyers and they'd have to present evidence as to why they should get a licence. In some cases, even though there was nobody there to object to them getting a licence, they had to go through this long and somewhat expensive process.

I think getting rid of that process is a good thing. I believe that's a step in the right direction. We are moving along, in this particular decade, where some of the events or the business requirements in the past are not relevant anymore and literally don't work. The

easier we can make the regulatory process for people trying to set up a business in Nova Scotia, the better it will be for everybody.

However, I do have a concern about the fact that the government's not passing the \$225,000 along to people who are going to get licences or set up small business. It would be a help to them to reduce the licence fee so I hope the minister might give some consideration to where that windfall will ultimately end up.

Having said that, we generally favour this particular bill. It cuts back on red tape and I believe the government is moving in the right direction here. You don't need these elaborate hearings; we don't need these judgments that are being made on people, very expensive judgments in some cases, as to whether or not they should have a liquor licence. We've reached the stage in this province where I think we should be encouraging business, at every step of the way, in this province. We generally support this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see how a culture in a province changes over time. I know that, in this day and age, the consumption of alcohol, if it's done in a responsible way, is looked at as more reasonable behaviour. I know years ago it was often considered something to be hidden away. Sometimes I wonder if that actually helped our patterns of consumption in this province.

I think about other places I've visited. I've been to Japan and you can actually buy a beer out of a vending machine, in broad daylight, in Japan, and you can crack it open and drink it on the street. You can't do that here. It just shows how the culture in this province evolves, it has been evolving. It's interesting to note that if you look at other places in the world how sometimes they're freer about these kinds of things. If people are responsible, I don't see anything wrong with that.

I think there's only one state left in the U.S. that allows this now, but you can actually have a beverage while you're travelling in your car, as long as you're not driving, of course. It's just interesting. I make that comment that culture changes and I think what we're seeing with this legislation is we're trying to make it a little more user friendly for the people who need liquor licences to be able to get them. We commend the government for that. I hope our culture in this province continues to evolve, albeit in a responsible way. If people are being responsible, then I think they deserve the freedom that goes along with that responsibility. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the members opposite. To the member for Cape Breton South, I asked the very same question.

Actually, it still costs us so much more, that's the reason that fee isn't getting handed on to the licensees or applicants. I would like to say that whatever opportunity we are able to drop those fees, we would look for it. I thank the members for their support to this point and I move second reading of Bill No. 40.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 40. 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, would you please call Bill No. 41.

**Bill No. 41 - Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Amendment (2011) Act.**

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 41 be now read a second time. These amendments to the HRM Charter and the Municipal Government Act will help municipalities deal with dangerous and unsightly properties. Unsightly properties are a major concern for municipalities. They don't just make our communities look ugly, they can attract crime, they make people feel unsafe, affect how visitors see our hometowns and how we see ourselves. These properties can also be dangerous for children and anyone passing by.

Municipalities want to have every tool possible at their disposal to deal with these properties and this government is happy to help. People can sometimes stockpile collections of things, cars, recyclables, newspapers, that can make their properties unsightly, unhealthy or dangerous. The Municipal Government Act and the HRM Charter currently do not give municipalities the power to cite the full range of these properties as dangerous and unsightly. Mr. Speaker, these amendments will allow municipalities to do that. It will also ensure that the minimum fines handed out by municipalities can't be reduced by the courts for a property other than a person's home.

Mr. Speaker, it's not uncommon for municipalities to take the owners of dangerous and unsightly premises to court and when they do, it is for a serious matter. This has been a concern for some municipalities in the past and we want to ensure that the property owners understand that municipalities mean business, particularly when dealing with dangerous and unsightly premises.

These amendments will also ensure that the staff members responsible for enforcing unsightly premises provisions report back regularly to council on their progress. This will mean that municipal councils and the public will be well aware of the progress being made on unsightly premises orders in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, with that I look forward to any comments by members of the Opposition on Bill No. 41.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our Critic for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, I'm pleased to say a few words on Bill No. 41. As well, I can say that my own municipality of Richmond has been tackling this issue, as many other municipalities have, for quite a few years. I certainly do want to take this opportunity to publicly commend them for actions they have taken in the last six months or so, of actually taking action on a number of properties.

The challenge has always been for municipalities, did they have the legal authority to go in and force a clean-up of properties? It's something that I know they are very reluctant to do. I know in our case the Planning Commission, they always do their best to have the property owner take action to address the concerns that have been raised. But unfortunately, in some cases there really is no choice, it's either by a lack of will, a lack of financial resources or a lack of wanting to let go of what has been accumulated. Municipalities are forced to go in and make the necessary cleanup of these properties.

Mr. Speaker, throughout Nova Scotia I believe we are a province - and many visitors have told me, as I am sure they have told the minister - that Nova Scotians really take care of their properties. They take great pride in their homes, they take great pride in what their yard looks like and it is something that they spend a great deal of effort in maintaining. There's nothing more that ruins a community or ruins a street, when you have one individual who decides that they are going to start collecting old cars, start collecting building materials, start collecting a whole host of items which are unsightly, which in many cases are dangerous and certainly put a black mark on the entire community. Especially all those property owners who work so hard to maintain the look of their properties and the look of their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important as well that we find a way of recognizing - and I had the opportunity to meet with a few individuals that the municipality was pursuing. I believe an A&E special that you see on TV has brought light to an important issue that falls into these unsightly premises, and that is the issue of hoarding. The fact is that you have individuals who have the problem that has been commonly referred to as hoarding and they don't know how to refuse items, they continue to collect items - they are not quite sure what they are going to do with them, but they don't want to let it go.

I had an opportunity - and I remember one individual who came in my office and I was listening to him rhyme off the stuff he had accumulated and I immediately thought of that show, because I said if they brought their cameras they could almost do one of their episodes on this individual. At the end of the day, looking back at the 30-plus years that he had been accumulating stuff, he really didn't know why he was doing it. Looking back, he still wasn't sure why he had done it, but what he did know is that he didn't want to let any of it go.

When you're looking at the individual, you can tell that there's some attachment, with what we would call junk, for this individual. So I believe there needs to be recognition as well, and I'm not sure what can be done but it is a disorder and many people - in this case that individual started off collecting cars for parts as a side dollar. That's why he started doing it, for him it was supplementing his family's income, but it just kept growing and people started dropping off old hot water heaters, then they started dropping off old oil tanks, then all of a sudden a camper showed up on the property, then all of a sudden a Winnebago showed up on the property.

It was the place where people who didn't know how to dispose of their goods went - they just dropped them off at this individual's property. Over time he collected all these goods and now he is at the point that he doesn't know what to do with them anymore. Some items he is prepared to get rid of - nobody really wants them, that's the problem. Old tires, for example, who wants old tires? You can't burn them anymore - certainly that is not an option - and you can't bury them.

He has attempted to address some of those issues, and I won't go into all the other details but it just amazed me that people allow not only their properties but in some cases even their homes to become overwhelmed with these items that they've collected over the years. It just boggles the mind that whole rooms - and if you've seen the show *Hoarders*, the conditions people allow themselves to live in. In some of the situations that I've seen in my own county, that is the case. There are people who have just - most of them are of low income and they've just collected these items, hoping to sell them for scrap metal, or keep a few parts if people needed to fix their vehicle they would have some spare parts. It was done more for economic reasons.

In this day and age, for environmental concerns, for safety concerns, and for aesthetic concerns, it is not acceptable anymore. You can't just continue to collect junk around your property and expect that people are not going to complain.

I would hope that with these changes, the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will work with municipalities - especially some of the smaller ones - and try to figure out a template approach that they can all use, rather than leave it to each municipality to try to figure out what their new powers are. There has to be an easier way of doing it because small municipalities have enough of a burden with what they're trying to do with limited tax revenue. I would hope that rather than having each one of the trying to



figure out what this means, that the department will be there working with them and possibly putting out a template that each one of them can use moving forward when it comes to dealing with dangerous and unsightly premises.

I do hope the minister will take that into consideration because I know now - and I am sure the minister is probably aware - each municipality is probably following different rules and following different approaches to deal with dangerous and unsightly premises. That's unfortunate because they are small units and there's no reason why we can't have a province-wide approach. In many cases, as I indicated before and I'm sure the minister is aware, municipalities are concerned about their legal rights in enforcing, going in on someone's property, bringing in whether it be a bulldozer or an excavator, tearing down buildings and hauling stuff away. It's a significant action and unfortunately, in many cases, I think municipalities have been reluctant to do it for fear of legal repercussions for taking this action.

At the end of the day I'm sure the minister will agree that all municipalities should continue to encourage property owners to deal with these matters on their own, but if they're not going to do so, it's just no longer acceptable to allow a few to continue to have unsightly premises when we as a province continue to promote tourism, we continue to promote what a wonderful lifestyle we have here and what a great place it is to live. For 99.9 per cent of every community in Nova Scotia, that is the reality, but there is still a small percentage that continues to have dangerous, unsightly premises. We don't only have to deal with the ones we have now. I think the minister also needs to work on finding ways of preventing new ones from cropping up.

I'm not sure this bill will actually prevent any new ones. This seems to be dealing with those who already have unsightly premises, but we may want to also look at whether there is a way for us to put some sort of a bylaw, or some sort of an Act, that would give penalties to people who do start up, from here forward, unsightly or dangerous premises on their properties, so that we send a clear message that this is no longer acceptable, whether it's for economic reasons, whether it's for the disorder of hoarding, it's unacceptable in the Province of Nova Scotia.

I remember, for example on the topic, when Frank McKenna was first elected Premier of New Brunswick, I believe in the first year they started a program to get rid of derelict vehicles and, if I'm not mistaken, I believe it was either 25,000 vehicles, or even more, that they collected in one year. As you said, it was a tradition in New Brunswick, especially amongst farmers, that when the car didn't work anymore you just pushed it behind the barn and it stayed behind the barn, but after a while you suddenly had four, five, six or more cars behind the barn. This was happening around the province and just in one year it was amazing the amount of vehicles they were able to pick up from properties and recycle.

I know we've done the same thing here in our province and it's a great program and one that for many of these unsightly premises, cars are the problem - cars or trucks or

Winnebagos or campers, they tend to be on wheels, or at one point had wheels, I should say, because some of them no longer have them. We have to do whatever we can to continue to encourage Nova Scotians to recycle old vehicles, not leave them on their properties, not have them up on blocks, and not have flower pots growing out of them. It's something that's just not acceptable so hopefully this is one more tool that is going to allow municipalities to deal with the problem, but I still think that we need to find ways, as a province, of sending out the clear message that it is unacceptable for anyone, from here forward, to be having dangerous and unsightly goods on their premises here in Nova Scotia.

I look forward to hearing some of the discussion on this bill and certainly any changes being proposed at the Law Amendments Committee, but again, I certainly want to recognize Warden John Boudreau, CAO Warren Olsen and all the counsellors in Richmond for having taken the bold step of dealing with this. I'm sure, unfortunately, there will be many more properties that need to be addressed, but if this is going to assist them in their efforts, it's certainly something that has my full support and I'm sure would be fully supported by Richmond Municipal Council as well. I thank the minister for bringing this forward and appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on Bill No. 41. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I've always been fascinated by old things and I think of the shows *American Pickers* or *Canadian Pickers* and you see situations where people have stockpiled all kinds of things that would be useless to most people. It is very interesting to me that people do that and it's kind of a neat way, I suppose, to find things that are part of our past, but I think there comes a point, too, where we have to balance that with the need to keep properties in good condition. I know it causes a lot of people frustration. We think about our tourism industry, people seeing things like that. I know most people would not really be interested in seeing some of the things that the honourable member for Richmond has just spoken about.

I think of one particular situation where there are about six to 10 cars in the yard at any one time, and apparently there's a way that property owners can sometimes get by some of the rules of unsightly property. If they have cars in their yard and they slap a "For Sale" sign on the car, sometimes they can avoid having to remove the car from their property. I don't know if that's true, but it actually just came from a good source. Sometimes you have cars that don't even have engines in them that somebody slapped a for sale sign on it to be able to keep that car on their property for whatever reason.

In one particular case I think there's even some provincial property involved because this person has about 60 feet of property, but they've got cars and junk over a property of about the size 300 feet. The property that borders this is provincial property so it's being encroached upon, so I raise that for the minister for his interest.

So we are supportive of this measure, because we see it as a way to give municipalities greater ability to address issues of unsightly property and we know that that will be appreciated, Mr. Speaker, by most Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased today to rise on this issue and to speak in support of the bill, because I think all of us here as MLAs, or many of us, especially in rural Nova Scotia, get calls on unsightly premises. In fact, just a few moments ago, I was checking my BlackBerry and what's at the top of my list today? Premises on the Rafuse Road in Kings County that were burned out - the basement has been flooded for some time and it poses a safety hazard. Again, the inability sometimes for the county to move quickly to deal with these premises is all too common.

So if this legislation is going to enable Kings County to be able to deal with the issue of unsightly premises and the gathering of tremendous amounts of materials that are picked up and placed on the premises and are unsightly and unsafe, on many occasions. So I know that the new warden of Kings County, Diana Brothers, is concerned about this issue. She has had a lot of calls in her first months in office, has received as a councillor, and it's an area where she really wants to make a difference to this part of Nova Scotia. So I am hopeful that it will move through the House fairly quickly, but as with all legislation we know that proclamation and putting it into force is equally important as well.

I have actually had one case in the past year of a family frustratingly working on getting a backyard collection of small equipment, as well as vehicles, and working on these sometimes late into the night. Then you're dealing, of course, with the noise bylaw that is enforced pretty strictly. But, again, it doesn't deal with the issue that people have around the collection of old cars, old vehicles, working on them late at night. This couple who are now retired, decided that after trying to get some action taken, actually decided to move. And it was one of those times when I felt as an MLA, and through the work of my office, that we had turned over a lot of stones but just weren't successful in getting these premises cleaned up.

So I hope this legislation really does have that kind of teeth and ability to be able to make a difference in our community, because sometimes it is difficult to present an absolutely convincing argument to the Department of Health and Wellness that actual health hazards are involved. Now, I have had a couple of occasions where premises that were serving food burned down, and in the heat of summer they decided that they had better clean up the location and get rid of any possible health hazards that may be associated with the unsightly premises.

I just wanted to offer those few comments and, again, encourage all of us here in the House to move this piece of legislation forward and see how quickly it can make a difference in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes today to speak to this bill as well. I think it's kind of important that we have all the tools that are necessary to help municipal councils. I sat on council for a couple of years prior to being elected to this House. I can tell you there were numerous issues that needed to be dealt with, and if this helps to clean up some of the messes that are out there, that would be great. It puts a little more power in the hands of mayors, councils and municipalities in general, and their administration.

At the same time, I want to say I hope there is a common-sense approach, I guess is one easy way of putting it, not every yard is an unsightly mess. Sometimes there can be some disarray around - I heard the member for Kings West talking about people working on their cars or their garages, or something, at night. I don't know how that really relates, but I guess maybe if there is a whole yard full of old tires or car parts or something. I would like to think that the tool is advantageous but at the same time, as I said, Mr. Speaker, a common-sense approach.

I know you can't write all of the common sense that you'd like to write into a bill or a law, or a policy for that matter, and I'm not sure how it will be enforced, if it's going to be through the typical bylaw officers or just how that will go. But at the same time it's important that we just don't start knocking on every door saying we're going to clean it up and send them a bill or adding it to their taxes, or however that may go. In general, as I said early on, this is a good approach to helping those struggling municipal units. As I said, I was part of one and it was very difficult, there were a lot of hoops to jump through and if this strengthens that, so be it and that's great.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank all the members for their interventions and certainly for the member for Richmond. There are kind of liaison staff from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations who have a particular area of the province and that's their jurisdiction to work with the municipal units. I'm sure they would be more than willing to help the municipalities through this. This was really to give more options to municipalities; whether they choose to write the bylaw or not, it will have to be up to them.

I take his comments that it would be nice if it wasn't kind of a patchwork around the province but that's a little bit difficult for the province to demand. They've asked for this

power and we expect that they'll use it probably in considering how their neighbouring municipality might be applying it. We have people who can help them through that.

I thank the members for their interventions and I close debate on Bill No. 41 and move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 41. 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, would you please call Bill No. 42.

**Bill No. 42 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and Municipal Government Act.**

**Bill No. 43 - Interior Designers Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of these bills. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motions are carried.

Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 47.

**Bill No. 47 - Summary Proceedings Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 47 for second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill No. 47, the Summary Proceedings Act. It's my understanding that this is another effort to try to make it easier for Nova Scotians to be able to pay fines that they're faced with in Nova Scotia.

Previously, one had to show up in court, one had to wait their turn to have the judge read out the different summary offences to plead guilty or not guilty. If you were pleading guilty, it could be dealt with right away; if you were pleading not guilty, then it was a matter of setting a court date. If I'm not mistaken, I believe that this is one other step in trying to streamline that process. Rather than having to show up the day in court, you could actually go to the justice centre and be able to enter either a guilty or not guilty plea and deal with it on that level.

The whole idea here is to free up court time, which was very cumbersome under the old way it was done. There's no question that this is a positive thing. We believe there was previous legislation passed on this so I'm not quite sure why we're doing it again, but it's my understanding this is just a tweaking of what was previously done. So be it. At the end of the day, if it's going to make this easier for Nova Scotians, easier for our court system, save money in our courts and reduce some of the red tape that we often like to talk about, then it's certainly something that can be supported. I do look forward to this bill moving on to the Committee on Law Amendments following the extensive debate on second reading.

If there are any amendments there to come forward, we certainly look forward to that. I may have some more comments to make when it comes to Committee of the Whole House on Bills and third reading, but at this point I'm pleased to see this bill continue on its legislative journey through the House of Assembly and move on to the Law Amendments Committee process following second reading. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the Government House Leader it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the speakers that intervened on behalf of this bill. I would move second reading of Bill No. 47.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 47. 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, would you please call Bill No. 51.

**Bill No. 51 - Public Highways Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure members present that I am going to refer to this piece of legislation as Bill No. 51, for obvious reasons - that in one breath, I'm not going to tack on the particular specifics of the bill.

I know this will be of some interest because of concerns that have been brought to our attention in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, but also each of us as provincial MLAs deal with this issue quite regularly when we work with our municipal councillors - I hope you have a co-operative working relationship, I know most of us do. This legislation is a result of some calls and some meetings that have taken place between municipal staff, particularly in the HRM at this stage, but also the UNSM and the office of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal as we are looking at the Public Highways Act.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that Bill No. 51, the Public Highways Act, be now read for a second time. I am pleased to rise to bring forward an amendment to this particular Act. Today's legislation will enable municipalities to create a bylaw regulating advertising on provincial highways in this area. This will preserve the natural beauty of our communities, making life better for Nova Scotians, but it will also probably make it, as we can say to ourselves, somewhat easier for us as politicians when it comes to dealing with this continuing plague on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the management of advertising signage alongside provincial highways has been a controversial subject. Local business owners use advertising signs as a means of drawing customers to their business and, of course, they play a key role in our communities. Business owners in the tourism sector also believe that signs unrelated to tourism are sometimes unnecessary, and some members of the public view such advertising signs as a distraction from the landscape and scenic beauty of the province.

This has become a concern for some communities, such as within the HRM, but the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has also expressed its support for the amendment, and we expect other municipalities to take advantage of the opportunity to address the signage issue in their municipalities across the province.

The HRM specifically has identified the proliferation of signs along the Prospect Road, the St. Margarets Bay Road, and Exhibition Park, all areas that are within the area of Timberlea-Prospect. For once, I guess the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is listening to an individual MLA - in this case, himself.

This is particularly troubling for areas around the St. Margaret's Bay area as the sign clutter is viewed as a distraction on these very highly advertised routes as, of course, we are headed towards Peggy's Cove in the St. Margaret's Bay area. It would be at this time appropriate if I could table some letters of support.

I have a letter that was in the Halifax ChronicleHerald on May 4, 2011, from Sue Smith, concerning the “Unsightly signs of spring.” Ms. Smith, I would like to thank her for her letter of support - and I’ll table these all at once.

I’ve also heard from Bob Dooley, from Ace Upholstery, on the Prospect Road, who points out: “Thanks again Bill for all of your assistance in dealing with this problem - a job well done.”

And finally I would like to table, if I may, a letter to myself as the minister, from the Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association, from Claire Doyle. In the concluding paragraph - and I will table this in just a moment - “On behalf of the Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association, we hope this bylaw will receive a favorable response by all members of the house and that this progressive by-law will be passed and implemented. Thank-you kindly.”

I thank those residents of Nova Scotia - the President of Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association, Ms. Doyle, and the two residents of Timberlea-Prospect - and I would like to table those at this time, if I may.

The roadway in question is under supervision, management and control in the Prospect area of the province. The HRM is seeking the authority to regulate advertising signs along the provincial, secondary, non-controlled access highways, which otherwise remain under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Municipalities are asking us to give them the authority to regulate advertising signs along provincial, secondary, non-controlled access highways that would normally come under the jurisdiction of my department.

Amendments to the Public Highways Act will include these important issues and I’d like to highlight them for you if I may. The amendments will include authorizing municipalities to regulate advertising signs on provincial, secondary highways in their communities by way of a municipal bylaw; reduce sign clutter along highways and intersections; they will restore the scenic beauty of such areas - and they’re actually listed in my notes here - as the Peggy’s Cove community, which this year will be celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the Head of St. Margarets Bay area, just to name a few. I know there are members opposite who were making comments about their own unique areas and the importance that we address this issue as soon as possible.

These amendments show we are listening to municipalities who want a greater control of the issues that affect them directly. We’re happy to work with these communities to help them make Nova Scotia a clutter-free province when it comes to this dog’s breakfast collection - that’s how I described it the other day when I was talking to CBC in Sydney - the dog’s breakfast collection of signs across our province. Some are very well done, as you well know, some are tastefully done for sure. We’re talking about a clutter of



signs at intersections that are posted on trees, posted in any area and they really are an unsightly collection.

The decision to initiate these changes lies solely with the municipal councils and as the minister I look forward to continuing to work with them. Those municipalities who chose to participate will be responsible for the administration and enforcement of the program. As minister, I will retain the ability to approve or amend a proposed municipal bylaw before it can be implemented. Based upon the good working relationship that as the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal I have with members of the UNSM, I can assure you I'm looking forward to working with them as we solve these problems.

Once these programs are underway, staff in my department will work with municipal counterparts to ensure things are running smoothly and to ensure the concerns of business owners, the public and the tourism industry are acknowledged. This co-operative tone is the key; I know members opposite and members of this side of the House have a good positive working relationship with their councillors and I would be remiss not to mention the contribution of my own councillor, Councillor Peter Lund, I believe his title is Hammonds Plains-St. Margarets. I'd also like to recognize the efforts of Councillor Reg Rankin who represents part of my constituency.

This is an important issue for Nova Scotians. They're expecting some leadership and between the provincial government and the municipalities, this piece of legislation will now allow this leadership to unfold. With those comments, I look forward to comments from members of the House and I'll be paying close attention to their advice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 51 is one that impacts pretty much every member of the House of Assembly. It's an issue which we have all seen for ourselves, especially in our travels, as part of our duties, when we go from one end of our riding to the next.

The minister has certainly made very valid points about the concerns that are being raised and my intention was to speak on this. In light of the correspondence I did receive from the Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association, and I'm pleased the minister has made mention of that, and I wanted to put on the record why it is that they are indicating their support. I think it's something the minister didn't specifically address in his remarks.

It is of great concern for the tourism industry in Nova Scotia that many businesses will put up signs and unfortunately those businesses may go under or no longer operate. The last thing that tends to be taken care of when a business goes under is someone actually going to remove the signs that showed that business existed. The Isle Madame Tourism and Trade Association made reference, in their correspondence to the minister, of a business in our community, which went under a number of years ago.

It was only this winter that the sign - right at the entrance to Isle Madame - finally fell over. The Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association attempted to have the sign removed because for tourists coming onto Isle Madame the belief was that business was still operating. It was operating as a bed and breakfast and it had been closed for over two years. When they looked into it, they contacted the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and they said, no, you have to check with the municipality, and the municipality was called and they said, no, we have no authority, you call the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and so on. It was clear that no one really had any authority to be able to go and tell the business owner that they had to remove the sign now that their business was no longer operating.

There is an economic concern here for us on a tourism matter. The last thing we want is for tourists coming to our province to see businesses advertised, to drive to the location of that business, only to see the sign say, closed. That's the last impression that any of our communities want to leave with visitors to our province and while people have been very frustrated at seeing these signs still showing open, there's really nothing they've been able to do to tear them down or to remove them.

This obviously is a great initiative, but it again goes to some of my comments I raised earlier with the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on unsightly premises. I do hope that the minister and his staff, along with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, will work with the municipal units on a template approach to this bylaw, rather than leave it up to every single municipal unit to try to draft up their own bylaw. Again, the question will always be, will it withstand a court challenge? Will it be held up in court?

It's certainly a great step to offer this authority to municipalities to put in place, but again, especially for some of the smaller units, I hope the government is not just going to pass this and say you're on your own, but will instead work and try to see what the bylaw, what the wording should be, what the template should be, and offer that up to the municipal units rather than each one of them having to go to their legal counsel and trying to draft it up on their own. Let us work together with them, use the expertise that exists within the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, within the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and work directly with the municipalities.

Secondly, let's try to get this in place as soon as possible; too many bills come before this House without a proclamation date. Unfortunately they tend to drag on even after they're passed - even unanimously passed in the House - some of them can go on for years before they get proclaimed. This is one that we need done now so that the municipal units can quickly turn around, adopt these bylaws and that people know what the rules of the game are.

One of the concerns that I want to raise is that the fear always comes, will there be a fee attached? Hopefully there are going to be rules put in by the municipal unit that it's not

going to put a cost on business owners to advertise. I'd recently written to the minister - I'm sure he'll recall - a local business wanted to do advertising along a controlled access highway between Port Hawkesbury and the St. Peter's exit. Unfortunately, they are not permitted to do so.

The only way to advertise on a controlled access highway is through the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. You can only get one of these smaller signs that are attached to the large transportation signs. That's fine for McDonalds, it is fine for Wendy's, it is fine for Irving, and it is fine for Esso. Very large companies have taken advantage of that. It has removed the large clutter of signs, but for the small operator, that is simply not an option. They cannot justify the expenditure required to advertise along the controlled access highways based on the rules that are there and the costs that are involved in doing so.

Again, right now I believe the rule - what I saw from the minister - I thought it was 500 feet, but I believe it might be 1,000 feet, on a controlled access highway from the centre line, which is quite a distance in the woods and would require a significant sized sign. What constituents continually bring up, especially when they travel from Cape Breton to Halifax is, how does Stewiacke get away with it? While there are rules on controlled access highways throughout the province, the Town of Stewiacke has these large signs right next to the highway.

The explanation I was given years ago is that because town limits go right up to the highway, the provincial rule doesn't apply. I'm surprised that other towns have not taken advantage of that in their areas. Stewiacke seems to be the one place that I've seen in Nova Scotia that really has allowed the signage to take place that's really not allowed anywhere else along the controlled access highway.

I'm sure the minister knows it's a source of frustration for business owners in the rest of Nova Scotia who are told they can't advertise within 500 feet or 1,000 feet, yet Stewiacke gets away with it for whatever rules that are in place there.

Again, I believe this is a good initiative, that's why the president of the Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association, Claire Doyle, wrote immediately to the minister expressing her support, copied me on those remarks, and I'm sure the Municipality of Richmond will be happy to see this as well. But again I'm sure the last thing that they want is to simply be told, here is authority, go and figure out your own bylaw and figure out your own rules.

I am hoping the minister will be able to provide some clarification on that, possibility at the end of second reading as to whether that is an issue that has already been discussed with his department, possibly with the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to make this as easy a process as possible for the municipal units to have a sense of what kind of regulations they can put in the bylaw regarding signage, regarding removal, regarding erecting, and regarding where they can be put, and where

they can't be put. All of that, hopefully, is going to come to them as a package rather than leaving them on their own to try to figure that out.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister would have seen those as constructive comments, but certainly this initiative is one - I know he's mentioned it's been a problem for his riding, I know it is a problem not only on Isle Madame but I've seen, still driving between Sydney and Richmond County, signs for businesses which have been closed for in excess of five years. We simply cannot continue to have that, we rely too heavily on the tourism industry, on visitors to our province, to send them on wild goose chases, basically, by allowing misleading signage to continue to be in our province. This hopefully will be an important step in allowing municipal units to take action on that and to make sure signage is done appropriately and it does provide accurate, up-to-date information about services and businesses in communities throughout the Province of Nova Scotia.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this bill moving on to the Law Amendments Committee and any presentations and recommendations that may come from that process as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: I have some reservations about this proposed legislation and I know we just talked and we had agreement in the House here about unsightly properties and giving municipalities the power to crack down on unsightly properties. But when we talk about signage, to me it's different, and I'll explain why, because I believe this legislation not only talks about cleaning up the clutter of signs, maybe old signs, posts that are still stuck in the ground from signs that once pointed people in the direction of at bed and breakfast, or a restaurant.

Mr. Speaker, I think back to an issue that was before this Legislature, smoking in public places. I know at the time there was some pressure on the government to allow municipalities to make a decision whether or not they wanted to allow smoking, and this would be in bars and in restaurants. I know it was quite contentious at the time, but I believe government made the right decision.

We talked a little bit earlier about how interesting the way a culture of a province changes over time, and we were talking about changes to the Liquor Control Act. Well, we've seen a massive change in public smoking in the province - not 10 years has passed since you can no longer smoke in a public place. You can go out to a bar or to a restaurant and you can come home and your clothing doesn't smell like smoke, Mr. Speaker, which is an obvious sign that previous to that there were a lot of people ingesting second-hand smoke fumes - if I can refer to them as fumes.

There has been a big change and people have gotten over it. I know at the time people who smoke, they've come to terms with it and they've found other ways, if they

chose to continue smoking, to do that. Bar owners and restaurant owners were very concerned at the time. People have moved on; Nova Scotians have moved on with that. We don't hear any complaints anymore.

I think that was one of things that government did in the last 10 years that I don't think cost a lot of money, that I think had a tremendous positive effect for the people of Nova Scotia. The reason I bring it up here is because at the time had the province chosen not to take a unified approach across the province we still, to this day, would have had some municipalities that would not have banned smoking in public places.

That inconsistency causes problems for businesses because if you own a restaurant or a bar and in your municipality you are not allowed to have people smoking in your restaurant or bar and somebody 20 minutes down the road who can, we've created inequality for people in business. I guess there are cases to argue for and against that. Some would say that if you can't smoke in a place, that might draw more customers but we know that at the time, restaurants and bars were concerned that the opposite would happen. If a bar could have people smoking in it, that they would be drawing customers away from a bar in a neighbouring community in another municipality, under different rules, that could not draw those same customers.

I think if I could draw some parallel to signage for our highways. If we look at Pictou - and I just thought of mine and the next one closest to me, Victoria County - if we have municipalities that have different - they have the responsibility now to make sign laws and we have a municipality, say, in Victoria County, that allows maybe less restrictive rules about signage, what you could have is a whole pile of signs at the border of Victoria County, leading into Inverness County. And if, say, Inverness County has a more restrictive policy that makes it harder to advertise, in the minds of the businesses, you could have a pile of signs at the border and then, all of a sudden, you come into Inverness County and it's different.

To me, Mr. Speaker, that could cause clutter as well. I can't help but think that if there are inconsistencies in this, it's not like - we talked about unsightly properties but when we're talking about signage, we have to look at the impact on the economics of it for the business community, for people who have businesses who choose to advertise on our roadways. I would like any business in Nova Scotia to have an equal chance at advertising, no matter what municipality they are located in.

While I don't disagree with the intent of the legislation, I do have concerns about who it applies to and the consistency of that. Maybe this is an issue best dealt with at the provincial level. Maybe instead of a bill to empower municipalities to do this, we should be looking at doing it from a provincial perspective and doing it within this very Chamber, to make those rules.

Mr. Speaker, with that I'm going to reserve further comment on it until we hear at the Law Amendments Committee if other people have concerns similar to this. Of course,

we have another opportunity to speak to it on third reading. With that, I will take my place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make a few comments on this, really following up on some of the comments from the member for Richmond. The member for Richmond had talked about the existing regulations. Let me start by saying that I think this is a good idea. I laughed when it was announced that this bill was going to be introduced because I knew exactly what road everybody was talking about and you only have to drive down it to understand.

I took a look at the regulations under the Public Highways Act and it is interesting that the regulations - it's not even 1,000 feet, it's 1,000 metres from any provincial highway, the centre line of any provincial highway, which means a kilometre on either side of the highway, you are not allowed to have signs. Somebody was going to print that for me in the library and it might make it in before I finish speaking and I'll certainly table that part of the regulations.

The interesting thing to me about that, and I'm not sure how one goes about stopping that on private property and so forth. The municipalities will now conceivably pass bylaws that in some cases may say you are allowed to have a sign in this right-of-way - I assume it's going to be allowed on the provincial right-of-way. Maybe there will be a fee, maybe there won't, every municipality may be different in that respect.

However, the regulations of the province, unless they are repealed or changed by Cabinet, would seem to prohibit the option of actually having signs there in the first place. The one thing that I am unclear on here, or one of the things I am unclear on, is whether the minister, through Cabinet, intends to repeal those two regulations that prohibit signage or are they going to amend them, or what's going to happen there? And, I think this is where we get into complications around regulations. The member for Richmond talked about this on the Justice bill, where he said that not seeing the regulations of a bill can make things complicated and here's an example of where there appear to be regulations in force for this Act already.

That actually surprised me, because, much like other members, I've gone through Stewiacke and seen the billboards and I think most of those are actually on private property, so, I'm interested to know how we deal with, you know, you have a billboard on a farm and the farmer - I assume what's happened there is the farmer has rented his land for that purpose. But the wording of the regulations - and if it doesn't arrive before the end of my time here, I'll table it later - the two regulations, I think if I recall by memory, it was Section 5A of the regulations, says that you may not put a sign that is intended to be viewed from the highway, on any lands within 1,000 metres of the centre line. And so, I'm doing this, of course, by memory, so I apologize if I don't get the wording exactly correct.

So, the question becomes, if you're not allowed to have that, how do those signs exist now? What will happen when this passes and the municipality introduces a bylaw, is, say, for the sake of argument, let's take Highway No. 333. So, HRM passes a bylaw, or they take their existing sign bylaw and they apply it to Highway No. 333, a good idea. And, I hope the minister won't get me wrong. I support where we're going on this, I'm just wondering about the logistics. And they say, listen, you can't have signs. Which is basically what the sign bylaw says now, you can't have signs along municipal roads. So you won't be able to have them along Highway No. 333. They have some exceptions for sandwich boards and for charities and some stuff like that. If you go along Highway No. 118, there's one up on the hill there welcoming you to Dartmouth, by the Rotary Club.

There are exceptions, but, for the sake of argument, so they ban that, or they say, we're going to allow them but you have to come and get a permit. So, somebody comes to get a permit and they get a permit under the municipal bylaw, but the regulations under the Public Highways Act still says that you may not actually have any kind of sign - and the first one talks about controlled access highways, which, obviously, is your 100-Series Highways. But then the second regulation after says, any other highways operated by the Province of Nova Scotia, and Highway No. 333 would be one of those. I'm just not sure, what I haven't heard is any intention by the government when they proclaim this Act, to repeal those provisions at the same time and, if they repeal those provisions, municipalities that don't have any existing bylaw, suddenly it becomes a free-for-all; or, if they don't have any intention of having a bylaw, it becomes a free-for-all.

So, the member for Richmond talked about Isle Madame and the sign that fell over and so forth. Well, unless Isle Madame, unless the municipal unit that governs that area creates a bylaw to govern this, I'm not clear exactly what would happen. Because either they will continue to be banned, permanently, under the regulations or if the regulations are repealed, it will be a free-for-all along the highway, which I think we can all remember when it used to be that way. So, Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, I think where the minister is going makes a lot of sense. I'm wondering what's going to happen to those particular regulations that are already the law of the land and where they will go and how the minister plans on dealing with those. Both in terms of, does he plan to repeal them and if he repeals them, is there any way for him to repeal those regulations only in cases where a municipality has a bylaw. Or, I guess the third option is, he brings in a whole new set of regulations that say, here's the rule if they don't have a bylaw, but if they do have a bylaw, here is the alternate rule.

So with that, Madam Speaker, whether the minister is able to answer that now, I don't know, or, if not, I'm sure as this process moves forward he'll be able to provide some input on that. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Madam Speaker, welcome to the Chair again. As usual, I would like to thank the members who participated in the debate for some insight. You've brought a couple of specific things to my attention and they will be dutifully brought forward to staff.

I must point out that previous administrations have made attempts to deal with this issue and the lack of the ability to be able to reach consensus has always been a concern. The municipalities have shown the initiative, this municipality has shown the initiative. A letter of support from UNSM says that they would like, as a municipality, to have more control over this important issue, locally. That's the intent of this enabling piece of legislation.

I thank members opposite for their comments and with that I move second reading of Bill No. 51.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 51. 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: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. After the daily routine the order of business will be Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 52, 53 and 55, and if time permits, Private Members' Public Bills, No. 54 and if we have some more time we will do Public Bills in Committee of the Whole House on Bill Nos. 1, 7, 13 and 19. I move the House do now rise.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Colchester North:



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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **EDUC.: CUTS - NDP GOV'T. RECONSIDER**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to this resolution. We now know from school boards across Nova Scotia that these cuts are going to have a substantial impact on classrooms and on schools right across Nova Scotia. In fact, we've heard some of the most impassioned pleas, stories and statements over the past three or four weeks since the budget came down, since individual school boards were notified of what their annual funding would be.

Many have gone through a very torturous time trying to make cuts that would have the least impact on our students, on our classroom and on school life in general. As late as last evening we heard those cries and pleas from 40 probationary teachers who will lose their jobs in the HRSB. These are 40 very bright and capable up and coming teachers who may not find their way back into the system. That's the sad reality. Many of them now hurt by this process will be seeking jobs elsewhere.

That's the kind of impact that happens when we go about cutting without first putting together a long-range plan, a five-year plan or a 10-year plan. We know what's happening in our system. We have not been under any illusion with the Hogg formula; the Hogg formula has been making that kind of adjustment to students, fewer students in our system.

I know that most school boards, while they sometimes didn't quite get through to the threshold of additional funding, did recognize that over a period of time the Hogg formula was making adaptations to declining enrolment.

I know, Madam Speaker, that to get the system to where it is today, to have a strong public education system, it has taken every bit of the investment and, in fact, we could use more. When I started teaching in Nova Scotia in the 1970s, just slightly over 70 per cent of our students graduated from high school, only just barely over 70 per cent. Now we are into, close to if not reaching, 90 per cent of our students completing school. It has taken considerable investment in order to deal with the entire range of the individual differences, the individual challenges of our students. In fact, that's one of the hallmarks of our system that we can pride ourselves on the fact that we have moved the system to respond to many of the individual needs of students in our schools.

If we take a look at this past September here in HRSB, they had 50 students, 50 Primary students, just starting out school, who were fully, medically documented as having autism - 50. That is an amazing number, just to even think about, and knowing the kind of educational program that these children will require is a lot about one-on-one. It's a lot about having an individual EA. If we are going to raise the potential that these children have to be able to function, to work and to be happy and adjusted citizens, the educational system must respond to those kinds of individual needs.

As we know, each year as we go along, more and more of our students are being identified with a range of challenges with some form of disability. It is all about the composition of the classroom now that is in front of the teacher and the kind of support, the kind of backup that is required in the system is much more demanding than a generation ago. These cuts now will hit at EAs. We heard on the Cape Breton system that 50 TAs or EAs, depending on their identification in different parts of the province, but 50 will be taken out of the system.

We had already, in trying to restrain the Education budget, we had started to bundle students, meaning that one EA was looking after two or three high-needs students. We heard lots of occasions and times when these students were, in fact, not being looked after to the extent that they needed. This is what is happening to our education system.

We have reached a point where to be placed on an international, objective testing, at 13<sup>th</sup> in the world, at a reading level for Grade 9 students, is an outstanding accomplishment that has taken a program like Reading Recovery, has taken teachers committed in their classrooms to a defined reading period for their students, libraries and library technicians working to find appropriate materials for these children. All of that, with the professionalism of a well-trained Reading Recovery teacher, we know they have made an extraordinary difference.

I went into one school not long ago, on Flag Day, in February, and I asked a teacher about the program, what she thought about it, and she said, I have been teaching and using Reading Recovery, I've just gotten trained just two years ago, and here's the story of three students I have had this year and what this program has done for them, but this will not be my assignment next year. A tear rolled down her cheek, knowing the transformational work that a strong Reading Recovery program has done and we would have an even higher - the minister likes to quote 43 per cent success. That's a fallacy. That is a wrong statistic to use on Reading Recovery. Forty-three per cent never quite made it to the 16<sup>th</sup> level of the program and some started out and couldn't read a simple sentence, couldn't do word identification. It includes children who will not have the capability to read at any significant level.

One of the boards in our province that has made a tremendous commitment to this program has had an 80 per cent success rate of children doing Reading Recovery and

having it implemented in a 100 per cent way that the program requires - no program, if done in a sporadic manner or not to a full commitment.

It is with great disappointment that the system loses Reading Recovery as part of the cuts. I'm hoping that between now and the next budget, education and a commitment from the NDP Government will once again come very high on the priorities of what we should be doing to enable and strengthen public education in our province. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Madam Speaker, I'm glad to be able to stand here tonight to discuss some of the issues that were brought forward by my honourable colleague. I think there's a lot of miscommunication being put out there by the Opposition in regard to some of the issues. It gives me an opportunity to speak this evening about the important work that our government is doing to ensure that we maintain and protect the vital services like education for our young people.

I often engage with our youth in this province and I always talk about - and people always say, well you know, our youth are our future. Well, our youth are also our today and we need to ensure that we put the foundations in place for them to grow in this province.

I want to begin by discussing an interesting story. A lot of us in this Chamber have spouses or family members who might be teachers in this province. My wife is a substitute teacher, but one of the things that she talks about when we come home at the end of the day, and discuss our day, is some of the misinformation that teachers are getting out there. She hears it in the lunch room.

I want to stand here today to discuss that people need to understand that education is a priority of this government. Not once have we said that education is not a priority. In this budget over the last number of weeks and months that we've had this discussion, we have said right from the very beginning that the budget that has been built, the money that has been given to the school boards is with the child first. We have a public education system that every single one of us are proud of and we need to be focused on improving the achievements and the success of our children, which underpins many of our other key commitments such as growing our economy and creating jobs.

Now, Madam Speaker, delivering on those commitments is number one and at the same time the government - we have to understand that we all play a role in getting our province back to balance. The school boards not only have to play a role, the municipalities need to play a role, the health authorities need to play a role and the universities need to play a role.

Madam Speaker, that's one of the things that we heard a year and half ago when the Minister of Finance was out on the road talking to Nova Scotians. They said everyone needs to play a role in this. Not only does government need to spend its money smarter but so do the institutions to which government gives its money. Not only do we need to spend our money more wisely, but we have to know that just throwing money at it isn't going to fix it.

I want to get into specifics here. The department spends \$1.06 billion on public education, P to 12, in this province, and it's a considerable investment, Madam Speaker. The investments that we make today will, with no question, build a future for our young people. But again, you just can't throw money at it to fix it. We need to sustain a strong public school system, no question, for the long term, and we need to be smarter with our resources. We have to do a better job at matching our limited resources with the needs for the number of students.

Today, Madam Speaker, Ben Levin, an expert in education - and I think we've all heard that from various professionals across this province, that he is an expert in the field - provided government with his recommendations to help us improve the effectiveness of our already very good education system. I think he summed it up very well when he stated that this is really all about making sure that we shift resources from less productive practices to more productive activities.

Like the rest of the world, Madam Speaker, we are living in a time of limited fiscal resources, which is a significant challenge in itself. We also see challenges in our demographics, we all know this, and we have a system which was designed for much bigger school populations. Enrolments have dropped every single year in our system since 1971, yet previous governments have continued to just throw money at it.

Today we have about 128,000 students, almost 30,000 less than a decade ago, and as our projections note, we will continue to see that over the next decade, which means that if we take the starting point from today, almost 7,000 fewer students in the next three years in our system. By 2020 that's 15,000 less. Over the last 10 years investments in education have increased by 43 per cent - 43 per cent, that's \$320 million. Administration has grown along with those investments by about 30 per cent, even though enrolment has dropped. It doesn't make sense, Madam Speaker.

Expanding the size of bureaucracy set against the ongoing and steady collapse in enrolment is not sustainable. The department and boards recognize that we have to do a better job of aligning the system with the number of students and to do so in a way that will at least limit unwanted impacts on student learning.

No question, Madam Speaker, these are challenging times, so the decisions the boards are making must be realistic and position our students and the province for success. Ben Levin discussed the five key areas: reducing failure in the system, improving daily

teaching practices, better use of our facilities, expanding learning outside formal school offerings and building public support. All of these will help us build a system and prepare our students for the future. As the minister stated today, we will consult with our partners and public as we work to develop an implementation plan.

Madam Speaker, that gives not only parents, students and teachers, but everyone in the province an opportunity to get their voice heard, by going to the Web site at the Department of Education to fill out the form needed to have their voice heard and, of course, obviously get in touch with their local MLA. This will start a path toward a school system that is more effective in meeting the needs of a declining school population.

The future is closing in on us quickly, Madam Speaker, and we need to ensure that the funding goes where it is needed the most and that is to our students. We've said that the budget, no question, was built around the child first, which I think is the number one issue.

Madam Speaker, I also want to say that there is no question, as well, that the per-pupil funding for children in this province has gone up and that is an important thing to remember. We have to ensure that every sector in this province plays a role in ensuring that our province goes back to balance because as young as I am, and an expectant father in August, I think that I have to help. I have to be part of the role to ensure that our province is on a good footing to ensure that we can move forward together. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand for a few moments in this debate and talk to the resolution before us:

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

Deep cuts, Madam Speaker, that's what is happening in this province. I know the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville talked about education being a priority and I welcome the member's commitment to making education a priority. I can tell you, I'm sure as a husband to a teacher and an expectant father, that he will understand what that really means when his child goes to school. When you understand when his child will have to access maybe some services, like my children have had to access over their school time. He will understand that what has been proposed by this government, what is going to be happening to the school boards is nothing short of a deep cut. They're not going to be able to provide the services that parents expect of their school system.

The member talked about the whole Back to Balance road show, talked about the Minister of Finance, hearing from those communities of what they are saying, that we need to get back to balance. Well, the whole thing was built on a bit of a fallacy, on the issue that if six things happen that we will have a deficit of x - I can't remember the exact number but

that was if the six things happen. The six things hadn't happened, nor were those six things projected to be happening. So to say that we're going to be in this big mess is a creation of the Minister of Finance. Even to the point, at the end of this fiscal year, as the year-end document came, lo and behold, we were \$460 million to the good.

There's a creation of something horrible happening, when it's really not the case. I think what was happening, when the Minister of Finance was going around, is he was really exercising a Jedi mind trick - he was leading the questions, he was leading the thoughts, and he was leading the facts. I saw a number of members of the government who happened to be at the meeting and, gosh, what was coming out of those tables that they were working with were exactly, exactly, what the Minister of Finance had been saying all along and they were leading the questions. They weren't the real thoughts of Nova Scotians who were at those meetings, but they were led down that garden path, to fall into the thoughts and machinations of the Minister of Finance.

So here we are saying we have got to cut, everybody needs to participate in what's going on, yet how are we to believe what is actually going to be happening, or what's contained in the estimate documents, the budget documents today, when we stand here and we find that we were \$460 million to the good? I mean, gosh, what's this year going to be? After booking - what is it? - a \$200 million or \$300 million deficit, what's it going to be? Are we going to be \$200 million to the good which, Madam Speaker, ends up being a \$500 million mistake. If a company was running things like that, they would have another thing coming.

Madam Speaker, they talk about the 43 per cent increase in P to 12 spending over time. What that really adds up to is about a 2 per cent increase, per year, over 20 years, which is cost of living - as far as I know the cost of fuel, the cost of electricity, the cost of food, have all gone up by a very similar amount. So what that really says is that we've kept pace with the economy in which our province resides in, in the investment that we've been having in education. So you can take that number and just throw it out, because it really doesn't mean what the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville was talking about. This was the pure increase that anybody would have to experience in order to maintain a system in the province.

The other thing that I listened to in his debate was the needs of the number of students, or the funding needs to match the number of students that we have in the system. But what that really is blindly looking at is not the needs of the students who are in that system. In what I'm seeing of the education system today, the needs are far different than maybe what they were 20 years ago. If we're just looking at a base number, then we're doing a disservice to those students who need a little extra, or who learn differently. So we need to be able to build a budget around those realities rather than the thought of cutting 10 or 12 per cent out of a budget.

Madam Speaker, we came from a time in October where school boards were looking at scenarios, albeit them being scenarios of 23 per cent, a cut to the education system of 23 per cent that, after finally seeing an education system that was giving us the outcomes that parents and family would expect of that system - and that was finally relatively good marks compared to other students across Canada, in math, in reading, in science, in all those things, so that our kids can compete on a world market. When they move out of our education system, and make their decision of what they're going to do, whether they're going to go to community college, go to university, or go into the workforce, we want to make sure that they're ready to do that.

Finally, the education system was starting to give us the outcomes that we required. I can tell you 10 years ago when our Party took over government, the outcomes were horrible, they were embarrassing, so the question was how to fix it but to invest some money in some new programming and to be able to make sure that students had what they needed to succeed in life. If that Party wants to say that was the wrong thing to do, I'm going to have to differ with that. I think it was the right thing to do. We'll maybe debate that one at another time.

I think having kids ready to be on a world stage was important. It was one that we as government, as parents, representing individuals in our communities like our parents and grandparents and uncles and aunts - we felt that had to happen. They felt their children were not succeeding in the way they needed to be.

Today we had the presentation from Dr. Levin. I'm trying to digest what that report says. There are a number of troubling things in it, one being the fact that they're going to study a little further, they're going to have some more discussions. Really, this was just a document to consult so there is really no huge recommendation here that gives anybody any direction. Yes, it talks about TAs, the teacher assistant or educational assistant, and the possibility of reducing that.

I don't know if you had a chance to spend any time in a classroom lately or in a classroom with a number of challenging individuals in it and the TAs are extremely important to not just the student that they're assigned to, but to the whole class, to make sure that there is no disruption or the minimal disruptions to that classroom, to make sure that they can continue to learn. We're really worried about that.

The second piece we're really worried about and we can talk about it another time is the school closure issue. When the consultant was talking about how many - I know CBC, Jean Laroche, asked that question - and it was in the tens. When you said, 40, 50? He said maybe. Where are those 40, 50 schools going to be closed? That concerns us, those are cuts to education.

With that, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak to this issue again this evening. Merci beaucoup.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time allotted for the late debate has expired. I thank all members for participating in the debate.

The House will not adjourn until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 5:13 p.m.]



**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 1140**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

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

Whereas Morgan McNeil, a student at Avon View High School in Windsor, took first place in the Senior Poem division with her poem titled *Red is of a Poppy* and first place for her poster in the Senior Colour division at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 9 in Windsor; and

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

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 1141**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

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

Whereas Megan Lynn McCarthy, a student at Three Mile Plains District School, took second place in the poster contest Junior Colour division at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 9 in Windsor; and

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

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 1142**

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas Paddy's Brewpub and Rosie's Restaurant, located in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, recently celebrated 10 years of successful business; and

Whereas Paddy's offers to its customers a truly unique dining experience, and the friendly and courteous staff have created a wonderful atmosphere where they work to ensure customers' expectations are met with every visit; and

Whereas Paddy's Restaurant supports community endeavours such as The Deep Roots Music Festival, playground projects and hosts benefits for those in need;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Paddy's Brewpub and Rosie's Restaurant for its 10 years of excellent food, exceptional customer service and outstanding community involvement.