



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I have been advised that there will be no late debate this evening.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: I am pleased today to table the Report of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia, House of Assembly, May 2011.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to speak about Water for Life: Nova Scotia's Water Resource Management Strategy. This beautiful province is blessed with more than 13,000 kilometres of coastline and many lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater supplies. We are very fortunate when it comes to water but it isn't a resource that we can take for granted. Like all Nova Scotians, this government cares about our water. We want to ensure it is safe, well protected and properly used. Water is not an unlimited resource but we know it needs careful attention and management, which is the focus of our water strategy.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia already has a strategy for managing drinking water. The Drinking Water Strategy has resulted in upgrades to water treatment facilities, strengthened standards for water well construction and even greater protection for municipal water supplies. In fact, a recent C.D. Howe Institute report by Dr. Steve Hrudehy, one of Canada's leading drinking water experts, credited Nova Scotia for progress regarding safe drinking water and the quality of my department's drinking water program.

Drinking water is just one way that water is essential to our daily lives. Mr. Speaker, our government understands that we need effective ways to manage our provincial water resources. The Environment Act designates my department, Nova Scotia Environment, as the leading government agency to manage Nova Scotia's water resources. Inspectors from our Environmental Monitoring and Compliance Division monitor, inspect, and enforce all approvals issued by Nova Scotia Environment related to water.

The department issues approvals to anyone wishing to alter a watercourse for example, by installing a culvert or bridge, or by withdrawing large amounts of water. We also issue approvals to facilities that provide public drinking water, such as municipal water supplies, and we administer approvals related to the protection of our water resources, such as those to industrial facilities and waste water treatment plants.

Mr. Speaker, during the last fiscal year inspectors from our department completed nearly 4,000 inspections related to the protection of our water resources - this accounted for 42 per cent of all inspections last year. Nova Scotia's Environment Department also has a dedicated Water and Wastewater Branch, with 19 staff and an annual operating budget of over \$2 million. Our water branch provides policy and technical support on a wide range of water management activities.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that water is essential to our health, our environment, and our economy. We are proud that with the launch of the Water for Life

last December, Nova Scotia met its 2010 Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act commitment to develop a Water Resource Management Strategy. The water strategy also supports the recent Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment Strategic Directions for Water, and the Council of the Federation Water Charter which all Premiers endorsed in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier represents Nova Scotia on the Council of the Federation which endorsed the Water Charter. Under this Premier's leadership, Nova Scotia became one of the co-leaders on a deputy ministers' working group established to move the Water Charter forward.

The Water for Life strategy will guide how we manage all our water resources in ways that will benefit all Nova Scotians. This strategy is a result of consultations with individuals, community and environmental groups, industry, Mi'kmaq, municipalities, and other government departments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone for contributing to the water strategy by participating in the consultation process. I would like to point out that Water for Life is an integrated approach. This 10-year plan provides a framework for today and into the future. In total, the strategy contains 29 actions, and these actions fall into three categories: those that help us to better understand the quality and quantity of our water; those that help us to protect the quality and quantity of our water; and those that help us engage others in caring for our water.

The 10-year water strategy also divides these actions by timeline - there are "Actions for Today" which will be carried out within the next three years, and "Actions for Tomorrow" which will be carried out within the next 10 years. Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to say that after only four months since the launch, some of the water strategy initiatives are already underway or even completed.

Mr. Speaker, we've provided grants and resources to universities like Dalhousie and Saint Mary's, to develop watershed and water monitoring projects that will benefit all Nova Scotians. We've launched a Nova Scotia Water Portal, a Web site that provides user-friendly, on-line water information and resources. We are also working with environmental groups like Clean Nova Scotia and the Ecology Action Centre who are monitoring and educating Nova Scotians about groundwater.

I am pleased to say that Water for Life secures Nova Scotia's role as a leader in water resource management in Atlantic Canada and across this country. We are proud of Nova Scotia's water strategy and it will help us to protect and manage our water today and for generations to come. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Given he said nothing new since his announcement in December and there has been no action taken by the government on the strategy since then, we'll not be responding at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his comments today and, of course, for the advance copy that we did get on it. We had the opportunity to question his deputy minister on this very water strategy. I thank him for bringing this to the attention of the House today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to you about crime prevention initiatives of which I'm very proud. There has been a lot of talk about crime prevention lately and questions about this government's commitment to these critical interventions.

The Lighthouses Program is a crime prevention strategy that government committed to in 2009. It gets to the heart of our communities by helping 20 community partners provide direct support to youth. This grant program helps community organizations across the province provide recreational, educational, cultural and life skills programs for Nova Scotia's youth. Just this past April, we announced our final five funding partners. The program has reached its capacity of 20 community partnerships, each receiving \$12,000 in funding. This is a \$240,000 annual commitment.

The Lighthouses Program is an important part of our approach to crime prevention. In the past we focused most of our efforts on enforcement - now we know this is not enough. I would argue that these efforts to prevent youths from ever becoming involved in criminal activity are just as important as enforcement laws that keep us safe. The reality is, the face of crime is changing - so must we. We must learn to adapt our methods, discover new ones and develop programs that will allow us to stay one step ahead. This means investing in programs that help our children make the right choices.

The Lighthouses Program focuses on reducing youth involvement in the criminal justice system, promoting pro-social behaviour and attitudes, fostering a high degree of inter-agency co-operation, and building knowledge of community risks and assets. The evidence to support this approach is very clear. The better we can connect with our youth in positive activities and relationships, the better equipped they will be able to withstand the negative pressures facing them on a daily basis.

As I mentioned, the Lighthouses Program was \$240,000 committed to support 20 partnerships across the province. These organizations provide a variety of programs to

youth so that they won't get involved, re-involved, or get involved in crime at all. These organizations are located in a wide range of communities and are offered in highly rural areas, urban neighbourhoods, and at First Nations communities.

One example I would like to come back to, Mr. Speaker, is the Youth on the Radar program that is sponsored by J.L. Ilesley High School here in Halifax. This program uses art and recreation workshops to help engage disadvantaged youth. The goal is to help them develop better fitness habits, artistic skills and technological competence. The Youth on the Radar program has created a short video called *Sprytown*, which was shown at the Atlantic Film Festival. They also painted a mural in our Provincial Court and were commissioned by the Supreme Court to create a mural for their main entrance, under the mentorship of a sculptor from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention the importance of community leadership, especially with respect to this program but also overall. Crime prevention is more effective at the community level. These organizations have the unique opportunity of knowing the issues that impact the youth in their communities and they are able to tailor the programs to their needs. As a result, they have the powerful impact of guiding and directing these youth. The program is successful because of the dedication and commitment of many people and organizations at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that we have seen very good early outcomes in our Lighthouses Program. As part of our evaluation process, in January we received reports from the first 15 funded partnerships. The reports, which track youth participation, showed great results. There are more than 1,300 youth visits per month, which means there were more than 10,000 engagements with youth over the course of a year. These numbers and results are a great example of how a small investment in a number of multi-faceted organizations can make a significant difference in the communities they serve.

We must also remember that these organizations have strong ties to other community groups. Our Lighthouses Program partners reported that more than 80 formal partnerships have been established to support their programs. At a time of fiscal restraint, working together in unity for a common cause produces results that we can all share and be proud of. I am confident that through this program, with the help of our community partners, we are making and will continue to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotia's youth. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. At a time when violent crime is up by 7 per cent in Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotians are calling for action, not excuses. This government's action was to reduce

Justice funding by \$5.3 million, including a reduction of \$475,000 from discretionary crime prevention and restorative justice. Those are the facts. This government had a choice and when it came to crime, it obviously takes a back seat under this NDP Government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, government is always faced with the question of whether to invest in justice or mercy. In justice, you invest in activities and institutions that punish people who commit crime and that's very important. But it is also important to invest in protecting those who might fall into a lifestyle of crime. I'm going to keep my remarks brief. I do know that in this program there is some focus, I believe it's called the Youth Leadership model. We learned at the Public Accounts Committee about it, that there's a component where youth at risk are watching out for other youth at risk to protect them from activities that lead to crime. We think that's a good thing.

One of the things I think is very important is that with this program - and I hope it becomes part of it and it's part of some of the projects that they fund - is that we target young people who may fall under the influence of those who are trying to take advantage of them. What I'm referring to are young people who might come from poor or marginalized backgrounds. There are people out there who prey on people like that. We have to watch out for those young people. I do hope that the government can track some decreases in the youth crime in some of the communities where this program is active and attempting to do that. We look forward to the results of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia can take pride in their unique and diverse history and culture. In communities across the province, museums are working hard to preserve that history and tell our stories.

This is a very exciting day for the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Today the museum is making history as it holds the North American premiere of the exhibit, *Hello Sailor! Gay Life on the Ocean Wave*. It has been a long journey for this exhibit to come to Halifax. The journey began with the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersex people over half a century ago.

Their stories lay hidden for much of the past 60 years until Dr. Jo Stanley and her colleague, Paul Baker, brought them to life in 2003 in the book, *Hello Sailor! The Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea*. Their book chronicles the experiences of gay crew members on cruise ships and naval vessels that sailed out of England, often stopping in Halifax.

The book led to the creation of the Hello Sailor! exhibit by the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool, England in 2006. It ensures the stories of gay, lesbian,

bisexual, transgendered and intersex mariners were brought together for the public to appreciate. Now, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic has brought Hello Sailor! to Nova Scotia and added local content to make it even more relevant to Nova Scotians.

I had the pleasure this morning of attending a preview of the exhibit at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and it truly is an impressive experience. The Hello Sailor! exhibit is enhanced by the contribution of Dr. Stanley who is guest curator for the North American debut. Nova Scotia is fortunate to have her experience and knowledge increase our understanding of our maritime heritage. This is what our museums do best. They bring forward unique parts of our history that have never been talked about or shown before. They help us to understand how our diverse culture and history make Nova Scotia such an incredible place to live, work, and raise a family.

The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage has a mandate to support strong and vibrant communities throughout the province. We do that in part by ensuring that our diverse culture and heritage is accurately and fairly presented in our museums. None of that would be possible without the hard work and dedication of museum staff throughout the province. They do a remarkable job of interpreting and presenting our history to a varied audience.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is one of the top attractions for visitors to our province. Thanks to the imagination, skill and knowledge of the staff at the museum, there is now another reason for people to come to the Halifax waterfront - to see the Hello Sailor! exhibit. I urge all members of the House and all Nova Scotians to take advantage of this unique opportunity that Hello Sailor! provides to learn more about our maritime heritage.

As Nova Scotians and their visitors set out to enjoy all that our province has to offer during the summer months, I encourage them to visit their museums and share in the culture of life-long learning that they support. We all benefit from the excellent work of our museum staff. Their attention to details of our heritage helps us make life better for families across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for sending us an advance copy of his statement today. As the minister stated, this is what our museums do best, bring forward parts of our past that most people and a lot of us don't know about. Our museums can teach us many things and this exhibit will surely teach some people a thing or two that a lot of us never knew about. With that, I'll take my seat. Thank you very much.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the minister for providing our caucus with his comments ahead of time. Nova Scotia was shaped by the sea. It has played a role in history and culture, and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic also has a rich history. We have no doubt that museum staff will ensure this exhibit is shown in a way that's respectful of the unique perspective presented and I want to thank the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in this Assembly to share information on several chapters of the Auditor General's Report that focus on the Department of Health and Wellness.

Nothing is more important to Nova Scotians than health care. We know that families value the health care services they receive and that the money we invest in health care must be spent wisely and carefully. When our government came into office, we became aware of the escalating cost of the replacement of the Colchester Regional Hospital in Truro. As Health Minister, it concerned me gravely that the cost of this project had grown so much. In 2005, the government of the day had approved \$104 million for the hospital - \$78 million from the taxpayers of Nova Scotia and \$26 million provided through the fundraising of the community, for that total cost of \$104 million. One year later it was clear that the initial estimate was wrong. In 2007, the government of the day approved an additional \$51 million, and then in 2008, it approved an additional \$3.9 million for an MRI unit.

When this government took office, \$155 million had been spent and we only had a shell of a hospital with no plumbing, no electrical, no air - the services you would expect in a hospital. In the first few months of becoming Health Minister, I was being asked for additional funds to complete the mechanical and electrical work that had been underestimated. In February 2010, this government approved an additional \$24.4 million for the completion of the hospital, bringing the total budget to \$184.6 million. Mr. Speaker, when a project runs so seriously over budget as this one did, something had to be done. For that reason I requested through Treasury Board that our Auditor General, Jacques Lapointe, undertake an audit on the Colchester Regional Hospital.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are welcoming his 14 recommendations. These recommendations are very helpful to the department not only because they give us some insight into what occurred with respect to the Colchester Regional Hospital, but they help us understand if we are to meet our infrastructure costs in our health care system, which are substantial. If you talk to people in the Capital District Health Authority, or at the IWK, or the Pictou County Health Authority - indeed across the province - you will know that there are many capital requests and many projects in front of us. There are many lessons learned in this report that can be applied to manage projects appropriately in the future. I want to share with the House some of the specific recommendations the Auditor

General is making that the Department of Health and Wellness accepts, agrees with and has already begun implementing.

Mr. Speaker, we're developing a process to review the preliminary budget and approve final projects. We're preparing a comprehensive assessment of the funding required to operate the new facility, which is designed as a replacement facility for a hospital which is very, very out of date. As a result, we have identified ways to manage costs. We will be using, for example, existing furniture and equipment from the current hospital in an attempt to be prudent and apply principals of good fiscal management. The department has also been advised that it should ensure managers in charge of capital projects review and challenge key estimates prepared by consultants.

I want to assure the House and the members that we now have a robust infrastructure management group within the department of six engineers. During the start of the Colchester project there was only one engineer and there is also a financial adviser dedicated to this project. The Auditor General recommended that Treasury Board assign responsibility to a central organization of government that has some expertise with respect to the management of such large projects. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that a memorandum of understanding between the Departments of Health and Wellness and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is in the final stages, so the organization and expertise that is required can oversee health infrastructure projects.

The Auditor General also asked that Health and Wellness sign a contract including clear responsibilities and reporting requirements with its project manager for the Colchester Regional Hospital replacement project. Mr. Speaker, I agree with this recommendation and can report that our legal department is currently drafting that contract.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn now to the chapter in the report on long-term care. The Department of Health and Wellness agrees with the Auditor General's seven recommendations pertaining to new and replacement long-term care facilities and is working hard to implement suggested changes. One of the key recommendations, which we accept, is the need to have greater transparency in making decisions regarding which nursing home projects are selected as having the greatest urgency with respect to new facilities or replacement facilities.

I'm pleased to note, however, that the Auditor General did find that the department used a detailed needs analysis to determine how many long-term care beds were needed, and where, and that the department had an extensive process to develop the requests for proposals and to evaluate the various responses or bids that came in on the various projects. However, I would say that the Auditor General also raised questions that there were so many untendered projects with respect to replacement beds and

recommended that we consider not approaching any further developments in this way. This is something we will have to consider very carefully.

We are pleased that we have built 12 new facilities and eight additions to existing facilities throughout Nova Scotia and replaced three facilities, creating 838 new long-term care beds and replacing 238 existing beds. Seniors and their families are helped by these services and this year we will open 169 more new beds, 593 replacement nursing home beds but still, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the need for greater transparency in the decision-making on which projects are selected and to ensure those that merit the greatest need are first in the queue.

As well, the department began using service agreements in 2006 for all new and replacement beds, and within a year, Mr. Speaker, we'll have service agreements for other long-term care facilities as well, another recommendation of the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, we realize that we have more work to do in our area of continuing care and addressing outstanding recommendations from the Auditor General. Work has begun on identifying recommendations that have not been fully implemented. Again, I believe we must be accountable with health care funding. I can assure you, as Minister of Health and Wellness that I, and this government are working very hard to use the funds we have prudently and effectively. Thank you.

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for a copy of her statement in advance. The one portion of the Auditor General's Report that the minister neglected to speak to directly is Chapter 2, which indicates how well departments are doing in implementing earlier recommendations of the Auditor General. The Department of Health and Wellness stood out as having only 36 per cent of their recommendations implemented and these are recommendations that came between 2005 and 2008, so they are many years ago. They have only implemented 36 per cent of those recommendations so one can only hope that they'll do better with this report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in a few short words, of course, the Colchester Regional Hospital is one that is important to that area to have the updated facility that they so deserve. Ultimately when this first got going, if you look at the community, the community was able to raise somewhere near \$25 million, where the original estimate for the hospital was sort of extrapolated from that issue which was somewhere near the \$100,000 range. The controls within the department were such that we didn't have the expertise in which to guide us along this process. I know that expertise has changed over time and that they do now have it.

The thing that the minister didn't say, though, is that they'll probably require more money to complete that hospital. Today they are still waiting to complete it; there are still mechanicals and electrical left to do in that hospital. I would suggest to the minister that she be ready for the next ask for the Colchester Regional Hospital.

Number 2, when it comes to the long-term care program - even with all this build up, because it's only a partial of the original Continuing Care Plan, there are still wait times and wait lists for these facilities. We still need to continue the expansion of the program and have more capacity for people searching for placement for their loved ones in our long-term care system.

With that I thank the minister for her comments and I wish her well in adopting the recommendations by the Auditor General. Thank you.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that my colleagues across the floor got their statements in a timely way.

I rise today to speak to the Auditor General's Report and its recommendations on the Registry of Motor Vehicles. First of all, I would like to thank the Auditor General for his extensive work in reviewing this registry. The independent review provided by the Auditor General's office will help us improve our processes and our systems.

At Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, we're always looking for ways to improve. My department takes road safety and the security of Nova Scotians' personal information very seriously. I'd like to point out that the Auditor General has not identified any breach of private or sensitive information from the Registry of Motor Vehicles. What he has done is show us some areas where we can improve, by increasing our controls, by not collecting and storing personal information we do not need, and by more monitoring and better managing access to our registry system.

We agree with those recommendations and we have reinforced our existing policy that we will not store credit card information as part of a client's transaction record. We are happy to have these recommendations so we can further ensure that our policies protect Nova Scotians' personal information.

I would also like to touch on our inspection process for a moment. Nova Scotia is one of the few provinces in Canada that requires a regular motor vehicle inspection. Many provinces only require that a vehicle be inspected when it enters their borders or when it's sold. Our regular inspections are an important tool in promoting road safety.

The Auditor General recommended that we improve our auditing of the 1,200 licensed inspection stations across Nova Scotia. Currently, we respond to complaints about specific inspection stations and periodically audit some stations. During the period of time the Auditor General was reviewing the Registry of Motor Vehicles, we audited 294 inspection stations. However, we accept the Auditor General's recommendation and will move to a risk-based audit plan that will give us more uniform coverage.

We will consider new ways to ensure that inspection stations and tester licences are timely and complete and that they renew their licences before they expire. As the Auditor General has recommended, we will strengthen the process by which motor vehicle inspection booklets are issued and reconciled. We will update our inspectors' manual and policies to provide clear guidance to motor vehicle inspectors. We will also provide clear guidance on enforcement to our inspectors, to help them determine the best course of action if they encounter vehicle safety inspection violations.

Mr. Speaker, this month we will begin a comprehensive review of motor vehicle compliance operations and I'd like to mention that my department also performs roadside inspections for passenger vehicles, at upwards of 35 checkpoints per year. We screen many thousands of vehicles at these checkpoints and if there are visible defects or a vehicle appears to be in poor condition, we do a further inspection.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's recommendations will help us strengthen what we feel is an already strong road safety program. The Auditor General also pointed out need for a policy ensuring that our driving enhancement officers, who perform all drivers' tests in the province, have a valid driver's licence and a clean driving record at all times. I am happy to say that we have already implemented that recommendation. We always check to ensure that our driver examiners have a valid driver's licence and a clean driving record when they are hired.

In March, we put a policy in place to ensure that we check that information annually. Mr. Speaker, as part of this process, we reviewed the driving records of all our driver examiner staff and determined that over the last five years, they have all held valid licences and safe driving records.

The Auditor General also recommended that we put in place standards to ensure that we regularly review and act on the records of some drivers whose behaviour makes them a higher risk on our roads. Mr. Speaker, we agree with this recommendation and over the next 18 months we will develop a set of standards, compliance procedures and a plan for implementing them. We will also ensure that there is a common set of criteria that can be used in assessing these drivers' records.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome the Auditor General's recommendations and the opportunity he has provided us to review and improve our processes. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for the advance copy of his announcement. I would say, though, that the security in the computer systems in the province seems to be an ongoing problem with the Auditor General in different departments. How do we expect the government to keep information, such as birth dates and addresses that are proposed in the new Elections Act, confidential when they can't keep the everyday information confidential? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for providing us with his remarks ahead of time today, earlier today. I know that regarding the recommendations the Auditor General made, Nova Scotians expect these matters will be addressed and we expect that the minister and his department will be sincere in addressing those recommendations. We also would like to recommend that they be done in a timely fashion. Thank you.

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes talking about today's report from the Auditor General which contains a chapter on the Office of the Fire Marshal. Responsibility for the Office of the Fire Marshal falls under the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. The report contains 25 recommendations that cover the areas of management information, monitoring of fire inspection activities in municipalities, inspection, compliance and enforcement and fire safety education.

I want to assure everyone in the House, as well as the public, that government takes this report seriously and will act quickly. In fact, we are already acting. By the end of this year, the department will have addressed the majority of the recommendations in the report or will be well underway to completing them. The last will be addressed within 18 months.

We have appointed a project director who has developed a working plan to address each of the recommendations. We have started an inventory of buildings which require fire inspections. We have implemented daily and monthly reporting routines. Our IT staff is planning an interim management information system. We have worked out an agreement to ensure all public schools will be inspected as required under legislation. We will continue to ensure that fire and safety systems are maintained in accordance with the code.

The dedicated professionals working at the Office of the Fire Marshal help protect the public from fire safety risks. The job of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education is to address the deficiencies identified in the Auditor General's Report. This is a priority and it will be done quickly. The Auditor General's Report makes clear that progress was lacking in addressing previous audit findings with the Office of the Fire Marshal. Senior management at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education is committed to ensuring all the recommendations contained in this latest report are addressed and addressed quickly.

When the audit began last summer, the department started to take action that would improve fire prevention and investigation in this province. Last March, a project director was appointed who immediately began developing a working plan for those improvements. That plan addresses each of the recommendations contained in the audit. We have been working with staff at the Office of the Fire Marshal to improve record keeping and reporting. We are developing a checklist that will be signed by each deputy fire marshal. We will ensure the development of an orientation and training policy based on best practices and existing programs within the department. Guidelines will be developed for inspections to ensure there is consistency. We will develop time frames for building owners to address any deficiencies found during an inspection.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the Department of Education have agreed that all public schools will be inspected as required under legislation. The Office of the Fire Marshal will inspect schools outside of HRM and municipal fire inspectors will inspect schools located within HRM. Our goal is to work with the Department of Education and school boards so that all schools will eventually be doing self inspections and the Office of the Fire Marshal will then audit the inspection process.

Responsibility for oversight of municipal fire inspection activities falls under the province and we have started discussions with our colleagues at the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations about areas of the report that involve municipalities. We will ensure the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities is consulted. Together, we will look at ways to co-operate and coordinate so everyone is working together to ensure public safety.

In closing, I want to assure everyone again that we are going to fix the issues identified in this report. We have already taken action in a number of areas and most of the recommendations will be addressed or underway by the end of this year. We will issue progress reports so everyone can see what action is being taken to address the recommendations.

Public safety is a priority and we are now acting to improve fire prevention and investigation in Nova Scotia. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for providing remarks for the ministerial statement in advance. It's evident by all the ministerial statements today that the government is worried about the fallout from the Auditor General's Report, and they should be. The chapter on the Office of the Fire Marshal is really quite appalling. They don't know what they've inspected, what they need to inspect and whether anything has been done as a result of their previous inspections. They are not protecting the public. Schools have been the subject of a jurisdictional dispute between the municipalities and the province. Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more to say on this issue but I'll save that for Question Period, thank you.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I too would like to thank the minister for providing our caucus with her comments ahead of time. Public safety is as critical an issue as any government will face so we're pleased to see that the minister has given it her prompt attention and we'll be reviewing her comments and continue to follow up in the progress of how and when these recommendations are addressed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1728

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

Whereas recently five new partners from across Nova Scotia signed on to the Lighthouses Program to help keep youth from becoming involved in crime; and

Whereas from building a mural for the Supreme Court to getting afterschool support with math and reading, Lighthouses Program partners offer many activities to keep young people away from crime; and

Whereas the new partners complete government's commitment of 20 renewable partnerships, at \$12,000 each, for a total investment of \$240,000;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the positive impact Lighthouses programs are having on over 1,300 youth per month in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of the Voluntary Sector.

RESOLUTION NO. 1729

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

Whereas Threads of Life is a national charitable organization that is helping more than 1,200 Canadian family members deal with a workplace death or a life-altering, work-related injury or disease; and

Whereas the contributions made by volunteers have an impact across the province each and every day; and

Whereas Steps for Life is an annual event organized by that organization that helps us to remember those who were injured or killed on the job and reinforces our resolve not to let their deaths be in vain;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House congratulate and thank the hundreds of men, women, girls and boys who participated in Steps for Life events in Halifax, Windsor and Sydney on May 1st and in Antigonish on May 15th, raising thousands of dollars to support the work of Threads of Life.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1730

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

Whereas building and maintaining roads creates thousands of jobs, allows local businesses to transport goods, connects Nova Scotians and leads visitors to every corner of our beautiful province; and

Whereas hundreds of men and women will be working hard this construction season improving roads across Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the province, Nova Scotia Highway Workers' Union, and Nova Scotia Road Builders are working together to promote the safety of these workers, who must often carry out their work in high traffic areas;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in asking all Nova Scotia drivers and visitors from across the continent and the rest of the country to help keep road builders safe by reducing speeds, being patient and using caution in work zones.

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 Seniors.

RESOLUTION NO. 1731

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

Whereas on May 17th, seniors and youth working together to make life better in their communities were recognized with the presentation of the Intergenerational Awards; and

Whereas the recipients of the Intergenerational Award are wonderful volunteers who promote the importance of youth and seniors working together to make their communities better; and

Whereas awards were presented to the Beaver Bank Kinsac Seniors Association, Katie Dawn Reashore of Baddeck, and Jocelyn Morris of Cumberland County for their outstanding contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Beaver Bank Kinsac Seniors Association, Katie Dawn Reashore, and Jocelyn Morris for receiving the Intergenerational Award on May 17th and thank them for their work in the community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

RESOLUTION NO. 1732

HON. GRAHAM STEELE : Monsieur le président, à une date ultérieure, j'ai l'intention de proposer l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que plus de 700 jeunes participeront aux Jeux de l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui se dérouleront cette fin de semaine à Greenwood dans la région de la Vallée de l'Annapolis; et

Attendu que les Jeux régionaux sont un événement spécial qui rassemble toutes les régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que les Jeux de l'Acadie contribuent au développement du leadership et de l'excellence dans les sports chez la jeunesse francophone et acadienne;

Qu'il soit résolu que cette Chambre souhaite bon succès à tous les athlètes qui participeront aux Jeux régionaux de l'Acadie et remercie les bénévoles pour leur contribution au développement de la jeunesse francophone et acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

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

Whereas more than 700 young people will be participating in the Acadian Games, Jeux de l'Acadie, being held in Greenwood in the Annapolis Valley this weekend; and

Whereas the Acadian Games is a special event that brings together youth from Acadian communities across Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Acadian Games contribute to the development of leadership skills and athletic achievement among young Acadians and francophones;

Therefore be it resolved that this House wish success to the young athletes taking part in the Acadian Games and thank all volunteers for their commitment to the development of young Acadians and francophones from across 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. 1733

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

Whereas Tuesday, May 17th was World Hypertension Day; and

Whereas hypertension, or high blood pressure, damages blood vessels and significantly increases the risk of stroke, heart attack and kidney disease; and

Whereas almost one-third of Nova Scotia adults have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, a preventable, measurable and controllable illness;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in acknowledging the importance of 'knowing your numbers' and having your blood pressure checked regularly by a health care provider.

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. 1734

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 Truro Farmers' Market opened for the season on Saturday, May 14, 2011; and

Whereas despite the rain, more than 1,500 people visited the market on its opening day to browse the selections offered by 30 vendors; and

Whereas farmers' markets are great places to find fresh and local products, meet friends and neighbours and take home unique crafts and wares;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the organizers of the Truro Farmers' Market for a successful opening day, May 14, 2011, and wish them continued good luck through the rest of the season.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1735

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Envirothon opened on Thursday, May 12th, at Acadia University; and

Whereas the Envirothon is an environmental education program for high school students where teams work together to develop their knowledge of ecology and natural resource management; and

Whereas the students from Avon View High School placed first in this competition and will represent Nova Scotia at the International Canon Envirothon in Sackville, New Brunswick, this July;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the students of Avon View High School for their success and wish them all the best at the international competition.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1736

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

Whereas the Canadian Archaeological Association is holding its 44th annual conference in Halifax at the Lord Nelson Hotel starting today and running until Sunday, May 22nd; and

Whereas it is fitting that the CAA has chosen Halifax as the site for their annual conference as they will hear presenters talk about the latest work happening here in Nova Scotia to preserve and interpret Mi'kmaq culture and heritage, explore the impacts of European trade on aboriginal culture and consider the relationships between the environment and human communities; and

Whereas this government supports the work of the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society which has been facilitating the work of archaeologists, both amateur and professional, since 1987;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate and welcome the delegates of the Canadian Archaeological Association and wish them a successful annual conference and encourage them to visit all parts of Nova Scotia during their stay.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 1737

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

Whereas two-thirds of the surface of the planet is ocean, and the better we understand how to safely and reliably harness its energy potential the sooner we will see the benefits to both our economy and our environment; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has set some of the most aggressive renewable electricity targets in the world with a plan to quadruple our supply by 2020; and

Whereas today at the All Energy Conference in Aberdeen, Scotland, Mr. John Woods, chairman of Nova Scotia's own Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Excellence, and Mr. Richard Morris, commercial director of the European Marine Energy Centre, signed a strategic agreement to work together to coordinate their research efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that the House offer its congratulations to all involved and commend this step as a sign of the continuing momentum around tidal energy development 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 Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1738

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

Whereas Nova Scotians working to prevent crime and make their communities safer were recognized at the 25th Annual Atlantic Crime Prevention Conference in Halifax last week; and

Whereas a committee reviewed nominations from across the province and selected 10 recipients based on their commitment to local issues, empowering their community, leadership by encouraging and educating others, working together to build partnerships and innovation, inclusiveness and flexibility; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians should honour and recognize individuals and organizations dedicated to preventing crime who are making a difference in their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate this year's winners of the Minister's Leadership Award for Crime Prevention and thank them for their hard work and dedication to a very worthwhile cause.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1739

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

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia has a vibrant and successful arts and culture community that includes - to mention a few - members of the dance theatre, craft, visual arts and music sector; and

Whereas this government announced the five-point plan for arts and culture sector in February of this year, which called for the creation of Arts Nova Scotia, which will be an independent body to oversee funding that will go directly to artists; and

Whereas this government announced yesterday the names of the members of the transition committee for Arts Nova Scotia, which has a mandate to recommend terms of reference to set out Arts Nova Scotia's purpose, the roles and responsibilities of members

and to recommend criteria for appointment to the body, and where this committee will be chaired by my ministerial assistant, the honourable member got Lunenburg; and

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate and welcome Paul Caskey, artistic director with Live Art Dance Production, Leah Hamilton of Genesis Consulting, and Christopher Shore, executive director of Theatre Nova Scotia for the giving of their time to contribute to the establishment of Arts 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 the Voluntary Sector.

RESOLUTION NO. 1740

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

Whereas over 24,000 Nova Scotians are employed by the voluntary and non-profit sectors; and

Whereas voluntary sector and non-profit organizations provide essential services to individuals across the province; and

Whereas the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust is accepting applications until the end of the month for funding from voluntary sector and non-profit organizations to support developing human resource policies, business planning and assessing their needs;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in encouraging all eligible voluntary sector and non-profit organizations to apply to the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust and access funding to strengthen their workforce and grow their capacity 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 Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1741

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

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 15th of every year as the International Day of Families, providing an occasion to celebrate the importance of families around the world; and

Whereas the Department of Community Services plays a key role in providing programs and services for families across Nova Scotia; and

Whereas those government programs aim to increase awareness and understanding, and promote policies that will make life better for families in every region;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in recognizing and celebrating families of all shapes and sizes and their importance in 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1742

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

Whereas May 16th - 22nd marks Victorian Order of Nurses Week in Canada; and

Whereas the Victorian Order of Nurses have been providing health services in Canada for more than 100 years; and

Whereas there are more than 14,000 staff and volunteers providing care to more than 1,200 communities from coast to coast;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in recognizing and celebrating the important role and contribution the VON staff and volunteers provide, not just this week, but 365 days a 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.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1743

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 Apple Blossom Festival is an agricultural celebration held each year to recognize the Annapolis Valley region's tradition and heritage of apple production; and

Whereas experts predict trees will be adorned with signature apple blossoms in time for the festival in spite of a recent spell of cool temperatures and above average moisture; and

Whereas hundreds of volunteers spend many months organizing and promoting the Apple Blossom Festival and making it a family festival that's well known across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish all Apple Blossom Festival organizers and volunteers and the Greater Annapolis Valley community great success with the 2011 festival.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 1744

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

Whereas the 2011 Park Events Guide highlights more than 180 educational opportunities and fun outdoor activities in our provincial parks from May 2011 to March 2012; and

Whereas our improved parks system, wilderness areas, nature reserves and Crown land provide an affordable way for families and friends to spend quality time together and discover Nova Scotia's natural beauty; and

Whereas the Park Events Guide which lists attractions for all ages and activities for everyone is a co-operative effort by government agencies, recreation clubs, interested people and community organizations and is coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House encourage and join their fellow Nova Scotians in discovering nature this year by participating in events at provincial parks that promote a healthy, active lifestyle.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1745

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

Whereas the Resource Recovery Fund Board recently celebrated their 11th Annual Nova Scotia Recyclables Essay Contest; and

Whereas this annual initiative is to inspire youth to participate in recycling and composting programs and to celebrate Nova Scotia's reputation as a leader in waste reduction; and

Whereas over 8,000 entries were received demonstrating the importance that young Nova Scotians place on the protection of our environment, one being the grand prize winner Josh MacKinnon's essay *Paper Doesn't Grow on Trees*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate all who participated and the grand prize winner Josh MacKinnon for his outstanding and thoughtful essay, *Paper Doesn't Grow on Trees*.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1746

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

Whereas brothers Sean O'Neil and Ryan O'Neil of Halifax recently represented Canada at the International Taekwon-Do Federation World Championships in Wellington, New Zealand; and

Whereas 15-year old Sean and 14-year old Ryan won a silver medal in Junior Men's Team Patterns and Sean won a bronze medal in Junior Men's Patterns for 3rd degree Black Belts; and

Whereas they trained seven days a week for more than a year with the Canadian National Taekwon-Do team coach, Ken MacKenzie of MacKenzie Taekwon-Do in Bedford, to prepare for this competition;

Therefore be it resolved and the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sean O'Neil, Ryan O'Neil and Ken MacKenzie on their international recognition and wish them success in all future athletic endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1747

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

Whereas in November of 2009 Chuck and Donna Cornelius of Cambridge, Kings County, owners of Chuck's Auto Repair and Service in Nova Scotia, initiated a program called Undercoats for Kids; and

Whereas the Undercoats for Kids Program was designed to help children who are less fortunate in local schools obtain the proper winter clothing and footwear necessary to live comfortably in our Valley winters; and

Whereas a percentage of each undercoating completed at Chuck's Auto Repair and Service goes towards this program that has provided nearly 70 children in the past two years with proper winter gear;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Chuck and Donna Cornelius for their efforts to help children with appropriate winter clothing in the communities of Coldbrook and Cambridge, 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 Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 1748

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

Whereas Dr. Jim Spatz is a Halifax entrepreneur and philanthropist who has contributed immeasurably to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Dr. Jim Spatz has demonstrated his commitment to our community through his involvement in a wide range of community organizations and causes, including the Atlantic Jewish Council, the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank, Neptune Theatre and Point Pleasant Park Restoration, to name a few; and

Whereas in addition to contributing his time and considerable talents, Dr. Spatz provides vital financial support to various educational initiatives, most recently through the establishment of an endowed chair in Jewish Studies at Dalhousie University, as well as his generous gift to the Citadel Theatre Society, which has enabled the opening of the Spatz Theatre at Citadel High School;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Dr. Jim Spatz for his wide-ranging and generous community support, which helps elevate the quality of life and opportunities for Nova Scotian families, particularly our students.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 1749

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

Whereas the annual Hubtown Youth Fun Run was initiated five years ago by Dr. Barry Wheeler, a retired family physician, to promote physical activity among youth and to bring awareness about health concerns relating to childhood obesity; and

Whereas the Youth Fun Run continues each year with the support of local physicians, including doctors Mike and Roya Murray, event organizers; the Colchester

East Hants Health Authority; Moe Dunn, of the Big Dog radio station, and many community volunteers; and

Whereas this year the School Spirit Award, which acknowledges the school that demonstrates the best participation and has the best spirit, was awarded to the Truro Elementary School for having 130 students and six teachers take part in the run this year;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Truro Elementary School for being this year's recipient of the Hubtown Youth Fun Run School Spirit Award and thank them for their participation in recognizing the importance of physical activity as it relates to good health.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage

RESOLUTION NO. 1750

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

Whereas in 1996, Fisherman's Cove in Eastern Passage was developed as a tourist attraction to highlight a restored and working fishing village with gift shops and restaurants, promoting the rich culture and heritage of the local area; and

Whereas changes in the board of directors have brought new and exciting ideas and energy to face the substantial challenges of the association and to increase the success of this icon of the community; and

Whereas new board members Tom Harmes, Dorothy White, Jamie Cox, Marie Morash, Wayne Eddy, Kevin Deveaux and Anna Horsnell-Wade are committed to working with local elected officials, community partners, marketing and tourism and

economic development specialists to further develop the new goals and vision of the organization;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate members of the new board of Fisherman's Cove Development Association for their commitment to re-energize this icon of the community and wish them many more years of 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 Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 1751

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

Whereas architect Omar Gandhi of Halifax and contractor Deborah Herman-Spartinelli of Queens County have come together on a truly unique project in Liverpool; and

Whereas The Cedar in Three Textures project reconciles traditional building techniques and materials with contemporary style, design and function in a family home; and

Whereas The Cedar in Three Textures marries 100-year-old classic Nova Scotian architecture to 21st Century ideals, incorporating sustainable features including solar panels, energy-efficient foam insulation and high-efficiency boilers;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Omar Gandhi and Deborah Herman-Spartinelli for their creative collaboration which has resulted in a unique and innovative family home.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1752

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

Whereas the Help Line Society of Pictou County has been providing 24-hour service and referrals to residents of Pictou County and beyond for 28 years; and

Whereas the staffing of the Pictou County Help Line has been through the volunteerism of hundreds of Pictou County residents who have the desire to help others; and

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia is establishing a province-wide 211 help line because of the importance of this type of service to all residents and through the course of time, the Pictou County Help Line may be dissolved or integrated into the new system;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly acknowledge the commitment of volunteers for the past 28 years and extend congratulations to the board, staff and volunteers for the work of the Help Line Society of Pictou County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 1753

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

Whereas the oceans and rivers of the world have provided the earliest, and still often the easiest, way to transport goods over great distances, and maritime shipping is at the heart of Nova Scotia's economy; and

Whereas the Company of Master Mariners of Canada is a professional association for those qualified to command, established to encourage and maintain high and honourable standards within the nautical profession, further the efficiency of the sea service and uphold the status, dignity and prestige of Master Mariners; and

Whereas next month the International Federation of Shipmasters Associations will meet in Halifax and the Maritime Division of the Company of Master Mariners will host an introductory conference, chaired by Maritimes Division Master Captain Rick Gates, focusing on environmental issues associated with the carriage of goods by sea;

Therefore be it resolved that this House commend Captain Rick Gates and the Company of Master Mariners of Canada for hosting this conference at the Westin Hotel, June 7th and 8th, entitled Shipping and Environmental Issues in 2011 - What more can be done? and wish attendees all the best in their continued quest to provide safe, secure and environmentally responsible movement of goods around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 1754

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

Whereas National Nursing Week was celebrated from May 9th to 15th, during which time the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia announced the recipients of the 2011 Excellence in Nursing Awards; and

Whereas Patricia Hawley, an associate professor in the St. Francis Xavier University School of Nursing, was one of the Excellence in Nursing - Education Award recipients; and

Whereas Patricia Hawley brings extensive nursing experience to the classroom setting and her peers acknowledge her excellence in teaching, having previously awarded her the St. Francis Xavier University Research, Publication and Teaching Award in 2007;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Patricia Hawley on receiving a 2011 Excellence in Nursing Award, and thank all nurses for their dedication and continued provision of care.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1755

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

Whereas when Karen Marks took over as president of the Lawrencetown Community Centre she really wanted to improve the operation, so the management team looked at all possible ways to save energy and make their hall energy efficient; and

Whereas they started with Conserve Nova Scotia's cleaner, greener program and changed to LEDs in the exit signs and all bulbs to CFLs, engaging all user groups to make sure they turned the lights off; and

Whereas the community centre's management team used some of their very lean budget to buy an ENERGY STAR fridge and freezer from Sears bargain centre to replace a 30-year-old fridge and chest freezer, also partnering with Nova Scotia Power to upgrade all the lights to energy-efficient bulbs and ballasts;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature commend Karen Marks and the Lawrencetown Community Centre management team for their commitment to energy efficiency, and reducing costs at the Lawrencetown Community Centre.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1756

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

Whereas Mrs. Gladys Veinot recently celebrated her 90th birthday with an open house at the United Church in Bridgewater; and

Whereas we recognize the important contribution our seniors have made to raising their families and building our communities; and

Whereas we value all seniors and the myriad of contributions they have made to build the social fabric of this province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Mrs. Veinot and wish her all the best on achieving this important and impressive chronological milestone.

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. 1757

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

Whereas Brittney Lewis of Amherst, Nova Scotia, recently graduated from St. Francis Xavier University with a Bachelor of Science and has plans to attend medical school to become a doctor; and

Whereas Brittney Lewis will travel to Ecuador this month to volunteer with an international organization called Aide Abroad; and

Whereas Brittney Lewis will get some invaluable, hands-on experience volunteering in a medical clinic, taking vital signs and assisting with routine medical procedures;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly wish Brittney Lewis luck and success in her experience in Ecuador volunteering in a medical clinic and with her future career in medicine.

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. 1758

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

Whereas Justin Smith of Hammonds Plains is a management major at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and a junior forward with the Engineers, their men's hockey team; and

Whereas on May 7, 2011 Justin was recognized for an enthusiastic participation in the team's volunteer program with a Community Service Award; and

Whereas community service and volunteerism are commendable endeavours and vital components to every society;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Justin Smith of Hammonds Plains on receiving the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Engineers Community Service Award and wish him the best of luck in all of his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1759

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

Whereas the Canadian Institute of Planners - or CIP - represents 7,800 professional planners across Canada, maintains a code of professional practice for planners and sets national standards for training certification and best practices; and

Whereas CIP announced yesterday the 2011 winners of its Great Places in Canada Competition, which is a national recognition program to recognize the work of professional planners and to celebrate the great places in this country; and

Whereas the historic Hydrostone neighbourhood, built in Halifax's North End in the aftermath of the devastating Halifax Explosion of 1917, was named the second place winner in the category of Great Neighbourhoods;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Regional Municipality, the residents of the Hydrostone area and all those who visit or shop in this beautiful, unique neighbourhood, for their ongoing contributions to making the Hydrostone neighbourhood one of Canada's Great Places.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1760

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

Whereas the Timberlea Titans Football Association has a great tradition of involving young athletes in the sport of football and winning an occasional championship; and

Whereas the Timberlea Titans registration for the football season is now underway; and

Whereas the success of the Timberlea Titans football program can be attributed to the steadfast support of the parents, coaches and volunteers, and the level of community support;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Timberlea Titans football programs on their past successes with wishes of good luck in the upcoming football season.

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 Finance.

RESOLUTION NO. 1761

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

Whereas the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Nova Scotia is an organization committed to the development and growth of economic and commercial relations between Canada and Lebanon; and

Whereas the community of Nova Scotians tracing their origins back to Lebanon is large and vibrant and has added immensely to the society and economy of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Chamber is holding its 4th Annual Cedar and Maple Gala on May 19th at Pier 21 in Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Nova Scotia on its work building bridges between Canada and Lebanon and wish the Chamber's members much continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education

RESOLUTION NO. 1762

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

Whereas in the Lions Clubs of Nova Scotia calendar year, May of each year is designated Recycle for Sight Month; and

Whereas each Lions Club in the Kings South constituency: Coldbrook, New Minas and Wolfville, collect used eye glasses, not only in May, but year-round; and

Whereas these used eyeglasses are cleaned and sorted by prescription, at the Canadian Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centre and distributed free of charge to people needing glasses in developing counties by Lions International and other charitable organizations from across Canada that operate free eye examination clinics;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Coldbrook, New Minas and Wolfville Lions Clubs for their contribution to the 30,000-plus sets of eyeglasses collected in Nova Scotia each year that will help people in the developing countries around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1763

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

Whereas Joey Brannen is believed to be one of the oldest known men with Down Syndrome at the age of 63; and

Whereas Joey Brannen, upon learning of his church's Missions and Kids program, was motivated in his desire to help children in need of such basic necessities as food, clothing and shelter; and

Whereas Joey Brannen went from being a largely non-verbal individual to speaking with friends, family and anyone else he met, about the needs of children and asking for their pennies to help provide the necessary needs of life to these kids and thereby raising over \$4,500 for the Missions and Kids program;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the accomplishment and the efforts of Joey Brannen to raise money for the Missions and Kids programs to help provide children with the basic necessities of life.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 1764

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

Whereas Heart and Stroke Walkabout Walkability Awards were established in 2011 to recognize those communities, schools, workplaces and public institutions that have taken steps to improve the walkability of our surroundings or built environments; and

Whereas the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited was awarded one of the inaugural Walkabout Walkability Awards for its multi-faceted approach to increasing the walkability of Halifax's waterfront, through the development of a network of boardwalks and trails; and

Whereas the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited is encouraging walking and active living by providing safe, uninterrupted access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to one of the most visited destinations in our province;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited on winning the 2011 Heart and Stroke Walkabout Walkability Award and for its ongoing commitment to improving the health and wellness of Nova Scotians and enhancing the walkability of our historic waterfront.

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: I remind all honourable members that the use of BlackBerries, laptops and any other electronic devices is not permitted during Question Period. They are to remain off during that time period.

The time is now 3:46 p.m., Question Period will end at 5:16 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - IEF: ACTION - DETAILS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: My question is to the Premier. Today the Auditor General tabled a report on the Industrial Expansion Fund. He stated that, "IEF has few processes, controls or documentation to support the review and evaluation of applications for loans or other assistance. A recently established advisory committee has no oversight role." This confirms what our caucus has been saying all along, that the IEF is simply a political slush fund for Cabinet Ministers to dole out hundreds of millions of dollars. My question to the Premier, why has the Premier not taken any action on the Industrial Expansion Fund since he took office two years ago?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, of course we did, we took a lot of steps to try and improve the operations of the Industrial Expansion Fund. We appointed the advisory committee, we hired a new director, a new financial officer, we strengthened the management of the fund itself. In fact, many of the recommendations that the Auditor General was asking for in his report had started to be put in place.

Mr. Speaker, we also agree that this, of course, was a piece of legislation and a fund that was introduced in the 1950s by the Liberals, under Angus L. Macdonald and it is a fact that it has worn out its ability to respond in the modern context. That's why I was pleased to announce that we will be winding up the fund and putting in place a new vehicle whereby we'll be able to support business in this province.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said the advisory committee that the government has put in place had no teeth at all. As a matter of fact, he identified one loan where they recommended that they not proceed. Government ignored that recommendation and proceeded, spending taxpayers' money against the wishes of people who had looked at that business case and said it does not warrant spending our money on.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Premier that it was only a year ago that his government refused the Auditor General access to the IEF documents. This resulted in the denial of an audit by the Auditor General, a serious black mark on the NDP Government and the first in our country.

The Premier could have addressed this problem a year ago but he continued his veil of secrecy around the IEF. He could have addressed this problem by accepting our bill which would have taken the financial decisions out of the hands of politicians. But he was too busy doling out hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier decide to spend a record \$260 million in the IEF in the first two years, instead of fixing what is clearly a political slush fund?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is good at really fabricating history but that's not what happened. In fact what happened is that we strengthened the Auditor General's Office by bringing forward legislation that specifically provides for the documentation of information that he requested and needed and, in fact, allowed him to complete the report that he completed today.

What the Auditor General did not address in his report, of course, was the performance of the IEF, which has been successful 98 per cent of the time and in the last analysis the IEF showed that it returned, to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, \$3 for every \$1 that was invested.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, two years ago this Premier and this government knew that the IEF was nothing more than a political slush fund. Their response to that was to deny the Auditor General access to the records around the IEF so he could make it two years ago. The response to that was to dole out hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars, a record set by a government in this province, when they clearly knew there were problems with it. This government turned a blind eye so they could dole out our money under the guise of saying economic development, when very clearly it was nothing more than a political slush fund for the Premier.

My question to the Premier is, two years ago he knew (Interruption) I heard someone mention slush fund, if you want to talk about integrity and public money, I'll be more than willing to stand in this House . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. Order.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier and his government want to talk about trust, I'll talk about this Premier spending \$10 million of barrister fees.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. Question.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, if he knew two years ago it was a slush fund, why did it take him so long to respond and hide from the Auditor General?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it didn't take us that long. In fact, we moved to put in place the advisory committee almost right away, which, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, was not ignored. Their information was very helpful and these are dedicated Nova Scotians who provided their time and expertise to the government. The members opposite should be ashamed of themselves for suggesting otherwise.

Further, I've been in this House since 1998 and I've been here and I've watched while members of the Liberal Party doled out money to Orenda Recip, to Dynatech, to

Mac Timber; they put money into companies that went bankrupt four months after they gave them the money.

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

PREM. - IEF: FUNDING - RESULTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General confirmed today that this government added \$75 million to the Industrial Expansion Fund in 2010, a record amount. In fact, in the IEF 2010 Annual Report the government boasted, “Through the IEF, the province invested more than ever before . . . to assist Nova Scotia businesses . . .”

What did the taxpayers get in return? The loss of thousands of jobs, in fact, as we know from the most recent Statistics Canada report, we are down 14,700 full-time jobs since that government took over. My question to the Premier is can he tell the House today how he managed to spend \$75 million and lose 14,700 jobs for his efforts?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that’s just a fabrication and he knows that. The month over month employment numbers are continuing to climb. He’s quite right, it is simply not true. The reality is that the investments that we have made in jobs in this province are very important. I wonder if the member opposite is serious that he would not invest in companies like Irving Shipyards that are bidding on the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy, if they would not invest in the success of home grown companies. I wonder if that’s what he’s telling Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is talking about investments that this government has not yet made. He is talking about some hypothetical future investment. The fact of the matter is, during the time that his government was spending \$75 million through the IEF, we were losing jobs by the thousands. That is a fact, as per the Statistics Canada labour force characteristics tables that when they’re good, the Premier likes to quote but when they’re bad, as they’ve been for the last two years, he thinks that they are fabrications.

Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada didn’t make it up and neither did the annual report of the Industrial Expansion Fund, which says they made the largest expense in the history of the province. My question to the Premier is this, does he really believe that spending \$75 million to put 15,000 Nova Scotians out of work is a good use of taxpayers’ money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party insists in indulging in a fantasy that is simply not true. The reality is that we are engaged in the building of an economy in this province and I would like to point out that the Parties that sit opposite from us in this Legislature have governed this province for the last 20 years when we had the worst economic record in the country.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we have the tabled opinion of the Auditor General, we have tabled the Statistics Canada reports; the Premier will not accept them. I guess I'll have to find a report from the Canadian Labour Congress before he'll believe a number, from any other source other than them.

The fact of the matter is, in the IEF Annual Report, the government said, and I quote, "We know our economy must grow in order to meet the serious fiscal challenges facing the province, . . . That's why in February we increased the fund by \$75 million." Those are the words of his own government, the highest increase in the IEF in the history of the province.

What did we get for it? We lost thousands of jobs. The Auditor General says that we should have true measures of outcomes before making these types of investments, so my question to the Premier is this, will he admit that whatever their goal was, from that \$75 million, that Statistics Canada says it's a total failure?

THE PREMIER: Well, I'll say this, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should know failure when he sees it because he has been part of it long enough.

I want to say, that in fact, the last consulting report into the IEF said that the fund returned to taxpayers almost \$3 for every dollar invested, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERD & TOURISM - IEF: SPENDING - EXPLAIN

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, since taking office, this NDP has spent record amounts of money through the IEF. This is a fund that has, and I quote the Auditor General here, ". . . few processes, controls or documentation to support the review and evaluation of applications for loans or other assistance." In only two years, this NDP Government has doled out over \$260 million through this fund; that is \$260 million of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars, from Nova Scotians and the only people with any oversight whatsoever are the NDP Cabinet members.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, how could this minister spend hundreds of millions of dollars when he knew full well that there was no control, no oversight, no standards and no measures of transparency or accountability? (Interruptions)

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the IEF, I'm trying to understand the questioning. We've got an IEF that has been around for 60 years. When we came into government, we implemented a strategy called jobsHere. This was a

strategy that was an update strategy, which not only - it was a strategy complete with a business plan. What we tried to do initially is use an outdated formula for an updated plan. We tried immediately to address the deficiencies in the IEF and we continue to do that today.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report was clear - the measures that have been brought in by this government were ineffective and did nothing to increase transparency or accountability with the IEF. This government, while in Opposition, said that themselves but, despite that fact, over the course of the last two years they spent more money through this program than anybody else. My question to the minister is, why did he wait until he was called out by the Auditor General before you even think of making any meaningful changes to the IEF?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, that's simply not accurate. Successive past governments, for 50 and 60 years, put up with the deficiencies of the IEF. We came into government, we recognized the deficiencies in the IEF, and immediately we started to put in place mechanisms to address those deficiencies. So for the first time in 50 to 60 years, we had the courage, not only the courage (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Yarmouth on his final supplementary.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this government can continue to blame past governments for their mistakes, but I'll tell them what courage is. Courage is having the guts to take responsibility right now for their actions. That's what courage is, and that's what Nova Scotians demand. For two years, this government did nothing - did nothing - on the IEF and now they're doing something. Why did they wait so long?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the record will show that we had vision, we had courage, and we started to implement changes to the IEF right from the very beginning - for the first time in 60 years.

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

**LBR. & ADV. EDUC. - FIRE MARSHAL: INSPECTIONS
- INFO.**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report on the Office of the Fire Marshal shows gross incompetence - 47 per cent of required inspections were not completed, and there is no evidence that fire safety deficiencies discovered during the few inspections that were done were ever followed up on.

The Auditor General opens his report by saying, "The Office of the Fire Marshal is not doing an adequate job of protecting the public from fire safety risks in buildings."

My question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, if the Office of the Fire Marshal wasn't inspecting schools, keeping records, following up with violations, what the heck was it doing?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure like everyone in this Chamber, we take the advice and the recommendations of the Auditor General regarding the Office of the Fire Marshal very, very seriously. Public safety is a priority for this government and we will act very quickly; in fact, we started response to some of the concerns raised last year and we are fully committed to implement most of them this coming year. We will have public reports to let everyone know exactly the extent of the progress we're making and the changes we're making. There will be a public report this Fall, one over the winter, and one next year, but we are committed to making those improvements and ensuring that public safety in this province is not compromised.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as the parent of a child currently in the public school system, I am shocked by the fact that the fire marshal has not been inspecting schools, and I suspect a lot of other Nova Scotian parents will be shocked today too . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: And appalled too.

MS. REGAN: Shocked and appalled.

From the Auditor General's Report, it appears that regarding public schools, ". . . the municipalities have not been conducting these inspections as they feel they are owned by the province and are not within their mandate." Our children, therefore, may not be safe at school because of jurisdictional fighting between this government and municipalities. My question for the minister is, how many schools in this province have not been inspected in the last two years?

MS. MORE: I want to say that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education has been working very closely with the Department of Education in regard to adequate, full and regular school inspections regarding fire safety. I can say, as the former Minister of Education, that often schools would be complaining about the inspections and expectations of the fire marshal's staff, so I know that those inspections were happening.

We are committed to agreeing that the regular schedule would include a full inspection, every three years, as required under the legislation within HRM. That would happen with municipal fire inspectors outside HRM and that would happen with staff from the Office of the Fire Marshal. But certainly, I think we all understand it's a shared responsibility and we'd like to get to the point where there are self inspections done by the school boards and that the Office of the Fire Marshal would actually oversee the inspection process itself.

MS. REGAN: Great, Mr. Speaker, so now since the Fire Marshal's Office isn't doing its job, we are to actually ask schools to do yet another thing and they can inspect themselves - great.

In the sample the Auditor General imagined 15 of the 30 daycares weren't inspected, half the nursing homes weren't inspected, and no university buildings were inspected. This government owes an apology to Nova Scotians for their dereliction of duty. The Auditor General refused to release the names of the facilities that weren't inspected. Shouldn't the loved ones know if their children or parents are in a building that may not be safe? My question is, will this minister table a list of the uninspected facilities before the end of business today?

MS. MORE: I just want to remind everyone in the House that the Auditor General's Report is a snapshot in time and that's not to say that some of those facilities were not inspected shortly after that. But I do want to reassure the parents in this province who have children in daycare centres, certainly those inspections are part of the reports that are posted on the Department of Community Services Web site and if they want any reassurance as to the standards that are being maintained by their child's registered and licensed daycare centre, they certainly can access that information on the Web site.

We cannot go back and change what's happened in the past but our government is making a commitment that every one of those 25 recommendations will be implemented and that we will use this as an opportunity to improve public safety and inspection in this province.

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

**PREM. - AG REPT.: RECOMMENDATIONS
- ACTION**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, at the very beginning of the Auditor General's Report today he talks about the importance of following up on his recommendations. In every other walk of life when one has an auditor's report, they are judged on their ability to follow up on the Auditor General's recommendations. In fact, I will quote from the report itself where the Auditor General says, "Failure to address these weaknesses in a timely manner increases the risks of financial loss or failure to effectively deliver services."

Mr. Speaker, how is this government doing? Well, the Department of Health has only implemented 36 per cent of the last report's recommendations. The Department of Education has only implemented 14 per cent of the last Auditor General's recommendations since 2008 and he says the department is essentially ignoring his recommendations. Anywhere else this would be unacceptable. My question to the

Premier is, will he show some political leadership and assure Nova Scotians that every single recommendation will be acted upon this time?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, every now and then one of those questions gets asked that you just can't believe. That chapter of the Auditor General's Report is with respect to recommendations between 2005 and 2008, things that that government did not do. (Applause)

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I kind of expected the Premier to say that, because it's his stock answer. The fact of the matter is, the Auditor General is talking about the record of this government to act on past recommendations, which is in their power to do. In fact, he has a table in his report - which I will provide to this House - which shows that the worst record on implementation is from the current government. It is Table 3 from the slides that he released today which shows that this government has acted on none of the prior report results and on only 45 per cent - less than half - of the most immediate past Auditor General's results. I will table that for the House. In fact, I see the Minister of Finance looking incredulous, but I will quote him because in 2007 he said: The provincial government needs to buck up and take these recommendations more seriously.

My question to the Premier is, will he buck up, take his Minister of Finance's recommendation and assure us that every single one will be followed up this time?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is, what we're going to do is ensure that we track those recommendations appropriately and institute them in a timely manner. Of course, we are going to do the things they did not do.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if that includes running massive deficits and losing 14,700 jobs in two years, I agree, he's doing something that previous governments have not done.

While we're talking about the member for Halifax Fairview, the current Minister of Finance, I should say that he said in a Canadian Press article in February 2008 - that is, before he was on the government side - the responsibility goes to the top of government. If the Premier said he wanted quick implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations, it would be done. Now he's over there with that Premier so my question to the Premier is, was his Finance Minister wrong when he said that in Opposition or will the Premier show it is his responsibility to make sure these recommendations get followed and order that it be so?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the recommendations that come down from the Auditor General, if they are accepted by government, of course they should be implemented. The reality is that you can go through almost every department of

government, and the reality is that over the last 10 years there was such a mess created in so many of those departments that we are plowing through them and fixing them, but it will take time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**JUSTICE: INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES
- CONSULTATION**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's clear that this government has no interest in listening to expert and independent opinion. We've asked the government to let the chief electoral officer speak at the Law Amendments Committee, but they refused to accept our request. Today, we discovered that the NDP Government failed to consult with the protection of privacy officer on very important matters. Both the chief electoral officer and the protection of privacy officer are independent authorities that disagree with this government's position. My question to the Minister of Justice is, why did the NDP Government refuse to ask for and listen to the opinions of these independent authorities?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I'd really like to pose a question back. What documentation does he actually have that says we haven't? I've said from the start - you might not like my answer but I'm going to give you one, how I frame it is my choice. It's ironic that they frame it that way because when you talk about the Elections Act, we had deep consultation and I personally met with the CEO there. When you look at the other people that he mentions, I've listened and anything that's put in writing to me, we respond to. I would like to see that side of the House produce something that says I didn't listen or that we didn't act.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The member is using the word "you". I'd ask all honourable members in the Legislature and remind all honourable members if you are recognized by the Chair, you must direct all comments and questions through the Chair.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's clear that this government is more interested in ramming through laws and regulations than getting it right. This government has tried to make changes to laws that affect an individual's privacy and did not consult with the privacy officer. Instead, the privacy officer appears to have taken the initiative to express concerns directly to the Minister of Justice which, my understanding is, his office has confirmed receipt of that correspondence. My question to the minister is, will the minister indicate whether he has responded to the concerns raised by the protection of privacy officer regarding impending government legislation?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank that member. If I did use that three letter word, I apologize. But I will say that each and every letter from each and every person that comes into my office gets a response. If it's in my office, it's being developed with a response that clearly addresses the issue at hand and doesn't skirt around it.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we have a situation now where initially the government said it was simply the Liberal caucus raising concerns which are unfounded. Now we have Nova Scotia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Officer who has taken the initiative to write to the Minister of Justice expressing concerns over the protection of privacy of Nova Scotians' information. This is an independent individual, very qualified, very capable, very respected whose concerns should be taken seriously. I ask again, will the Minister of Justice confirm why he is not taking the concerns of the protection of privacy officer seriously when she says that Nova Scotians' personal information may be at risk?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear that I take each and every request from any of the departments and their concerns seriously. I'm unequivocally 100 per cent committed to addressing any outstanding issues. On the issue of security and privacy, if you're referring to a particular piece of legislation, I'm very confident that the approach we're taking with regard to that as a government is very sound. I think the interests of Nova Scotians as a whole is being taken into consideration and I am always cognizant about the taxpayer and the voter in this province.

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

**LBR. & ADV. EDUC. - FIRE MARSHAL: PUB. BLDGS.
- INSPECT**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. The Auditor General's Report today made 28 recommendations concerning the Office of the Fire Marshal. Public safety is critical to all Nova Scotians and people need to know that their children, their family and their loved ones are safe. The minister, in her statement today, spoke of schools being inspected, but no mention was made with respect to daycares, nursing homes, hospitals or other public buildings. Will the minister guarantee today that these public buildings will be inspected in addition to the public schools in our province?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, in an earlier answer, I already committed to timely regular inspections, fulfilling our regulatory role under legislation in this province. Those inspections have been ongoing. Part of the concern is that the documentation of those inspections has not been of the quality that it should be so that when the Auditor General's staff investigated, they weren't always able to find up-to-date information on the last inspection.

We have an implementation plan already in place, we are working very diligently to make sure that we meet our internally-imposed deadlines. We will notify the public on a regular basis as to the improvements and changes we are making. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, leadership is essential in building any team. The minister was specific about the appointment of a project director and that project director has begun developing a working plan. My question through you to the minister is, how will this project director work with the current interim fire marshal?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, in response to the honourable member's question, the project director has been working with the staff from the Office of the Fire Marshal since the end of March. They have made considerable progress.

I had a meeting with the project director and the acting fire marshal just last week and I'm very pleased with the speed with which they are responding to the recommendations. They have already come up with a plan and I am fully confident that the leadership of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the leadership within the Office of the Fire Marshal will guarantee that we will meet our necessary requirements under the legislation and the recommendations of the Auditor General. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke that it would be under the leadership of the fire marshal. In her statement today there's no mention made about the appointment of a permanent fire marshal to serve this province. Again, leadership has to be shown, it has to start at the top.

Will the minister indicate to the House today if a search has been launched for a permanent fire marshal for this province?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education is using the opportunity of the expanded role of the department, which took place in January, to review the responsibilities and roles of senior staff within the department, including the safety branch under which the Office of the Fire Marshal falls. We are in the midst of that review of roles and responsibilities and once it's completed, we anticipate that the position will be filled within the next 12 months. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

JUSTICE - VIOLENT CRIME: PREVENTION - STRATEGY

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, figures released yesterday by the Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP show that violent crime is up in the Halifax region by 7 per cent. We have been telling the Minister of Justice for weeks that he needs to address this problem and yet we have seen no action to date. Nova Scotians have endured a wave of homicides, stabbings and shootings in the past few months and we have yet to see a crime prevention strategy to address this issue, from the NDP Government.

My question to the minister is, with the Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP clearly showing that violent crime has risen 7 per cent, will the minister finally take this issue seriously and produce a strategy to prevent these violent crimes from happening?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I take violent crime seriously, without question, and to allude that we don't is a misrepresentation of the facts. The facts are that I had the pleasure of meeting with the mayor, the chief of police, the commander of the RCMP and other stakeholders recently and we are to meet within a month of that meeting. That's a couple of weeks away.

The issue of crime is not something that is solved at the flick of a switch, it takes time to study the root causes and the underlying problems. That's why we put such profound programs in, as the Lighthouses Program, and many on the Opposition side have them in the program and know the value and the richness but they are also cognizant of the fact that change doesn't happen because we said it's going to happen. We're taking sound steps and we're talking to stakeholders. Violence has increased, and we don't take that lightly - we take it seriously and we're committed.

I want to reassure all Nova Scotians that this minister not only spent a lifetime on the front lines of policing, but is still committed to this line of dealing with those issues.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. This minister has had repeated opportunities to tell Nova Scotians exactly what this government's plan is, what its strategy is for dealing with the issue of violent crime. Instead, the facts that we know is that the minister allowed a \$5.3 million cut to his budget, with \$475,000 cut from anti-crime prevention measures. Yes, the Lighthouses Program is a good program, but we need more and we need a strategy that Nova Scotians can see that we are working together, all agencies necessary, to address the problem of violent crime.

I ask the minister again, why is the minister delaying putting together a strategy to give Nova Scotians confidence that something is being done to address the issue of violent crime in this province?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate this question from my colleague across the line there.

First off, let's set the record straight. The violence in the overall of the Province of Nova Scotia is not going up. There is an increase in violence that is segregated to the HRM inner-city region. For that, we are committed and we are liaising with those people and individuals who have the responsibility to deliver those services. The Department of Justice is a stakeholder. We value the partnership and we're working with those who have the primary responsibility in providing assistance and guidance where asked for. We are committed to furthering crime prevention programs in the community, but it's

inappropriate for me to tell the Mayor of Halifax or the chief of police how they should run their business.

We work in partnership, we have a good relationship and we will expand on that. And just to set the record straight - to create fear that is rampant across the province is creating an illusion that's not true and not factual.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, if the minister was listening, I quoted that the increase of 7 per cent was in the Halifax Regional Municipality, so let's talk about facts here - instead the minister would throw out at us that we're creating fear.

There is a fear that exists - Nova Scotians are not accustomed to seeing shootings, stabbings and violence such as this in our society and they're looking for government to take action and give them a sense of confidence that something is being done - the minister having meetings that no one knows about is not giving confidence to Nova Scotians. We have asked for a strategy, we're prepared to work with the government and with every other agency to see how we can address the problem of violent crime and try to put an end to it here in our province. So my final supplementary is why is the Minister of Justice refusing to put together an anti-crime strategy for the Province of Nova Scotia?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, just to set the record straight - when he talks about listening, on both questions that he has just posed to me, he has ended with reference to the fullness of the Province of Nova Scotia, but he got up and spoke about the 7 per cent that I wasn't listening about in the HRM, and yet in both questions that he put he made that reference and made that distinction, so let's get that part of the record straight.

The second thing is the anti-crime strategy. This government has made the commitment and, as I stated, it is the Mayor of Halifax and their representatives and the chief of police to step forward. We are a welcoming partner, we have good dialogue and we are committed to deal with that. This government has shown leadership with a number of initiatives that we have put forward.

When you look at our restorative justice, I will quote the member for Yarmouth for the Liberal Party who yesterday came to me and said "what a great job." He came and spoke to me about what a great job this government has done on restorative justice and would I please support that area in looking at restoring monies to the Restorative Justice Program there. So I'm getting confused messages from the Opposition. Which is it? Is it working down there? You can't have it both ways.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**SNSMR - AG REPT.: REG. OF MOTOR VEHICLES
- RECOMMENDATIONS**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

The Auditor General, in his report that was released today, made 21 recommendations to improve the operating procedures at the Registry of Motor Vehicles and made a further 13 recommendations to improve the registry's information technology.

My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to ensuring that all 34 of the Auditor General's recommendations are implemented?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: We certainly take the Auditor General's recommendations seriously and I do make a commitment to implement the recommendations that the Auditor General has suggested.

MR. MACMASTER: The Auditor General also highlighted the need for a more effective approach to identifying at-risk drivers' records that might need further review. The audit identified a 10-month backlog in collision reports and a three-month backlog of medical reports, two key reports used to identify and assist drivers who pose a safety risk to the public. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, what plan is there to remediate the considerable backlog of reports?

MR. MACDONELL: We have thought about this for some time. The thought is you can try to increase resources, more people on the job, but it is thought that may not eliminate that backlog as quickly as we want. We have moved the backlog from 10 months down to eight months by hiring temporary staff, but I think we really are going to have to look at the possibility of electronic collision data entry, Mr. Speaker, and we think that this may help reduce the backlog even further.

MR. MACMASTER: The Auditor General expressed concerns about the inadequate controls over the accuracy of security of Registry of Motor Vehicles data. He expressed the real fear about the possibility of fraudulent licences or IDs being issued. My final question for the minister is, how long will we wait for the information issues at the Registry of Motor Vehicles to be addressed?

MR. MACDONELL: I want to make clear that the Auditor General didn't identify any breaches in that regard but we do take his concerns seriously. I'm going to say 18 months, but if we can shorten that up, certainly as soon as possible is what our commitment is.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - DIABETIC STUDENTS: DHAs
- MIN. ADVICE**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On November 5, 2010, the Minister of Education introduced a set of guidelines for students with type 1 diabetes in schools. Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House agree that constant guidelines are the right way to go and, in fact, we introduced a Private Member's Bill a couple of years ago that called for safety for diabetic students. However, as with everything else with this government, the challenge is not in the intent but in the implementation. My question to the Minister of Health of Wellness is, what role did the minister play in developing and advising DHAs on their new responsibilities as outlined in the Department of Education's document entitled *Guidelines for Supporting Students with Type 1 Diabetes*?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: As the honourable member will know the Department of Health and Wellness provides financial support into district health authorities and they provide a variety of hospital services but they also do a lot of work around health promotion and protection. We have diabetes programs, and particularly here in the Capital District Health Authority we have quite strong, good diabetes programs. People who are on the front lines of health care are working on a regular basis in a variety of settings, including in our school system, and they would work with officials from school boards as well as the department when guidelines are being developed.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, parents in Cape Breton are particularly concerned and, in fact, they are frightened. I'd like to table a letter from Cape Breton, a letter to the editor that expresses their views. The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board is eliminating LPNs in the classroom for very young students who require assistance with managing their type 1 diabetes. That's the content of the letter that the minister will be seeing.

The EPAs are also being cut at the school board level, so even if EPAs provide the proper training or get the proper training, the question remains, will they have the time to assist students who have type 1 diabetes? Mr. Speaker, this definitely leaves a gap and it is this gap that is providing a great deal of anxiety and concern right now for parents in Cape Breton.

My question for the minister is, given that school boards are cutting health support staff and EPAs from their budgets and the DHA budgets have been frozen and effectively cut, is the minister confident that DHAs will be able to provide the necessary health-related supports that are needed by type 1 diabetics in the classroom?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, to the honourable member, as Minister of Health and Wellness I have no responsibility for dealing with school boards and school board services. Those are services that are provided by the Department of Education or by the school boards with funds through the Department of Education. LPNs in the classroom would not be something that the Department of Health and Wellness are involved in. This is a school board decision. I certainly would be interested in looking at any correspondence, and the Minister of Education and I could discuss it. Beyond that, this is not an area that I have direct responsibility for.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it goes without saying that the Minister of Health and Wellness is responsible for the well-being of students in our schools, just as she is responsible for health care delivery across the province. For some of these students an insulin pump might be the right answer, a cost-effective way to ensure their health, but the government is refusing stubbornly to look at the evidence.

The guidelines that I'm speaking about today in the schools call for an inter-agency agreement between school boards and DHAs. As part of the agreement, DHAs would be responsible for training school support staff and providing individualized health support, if required.

Mr. Speaker, to return to this issue at hand, my question to the minister is, in response to the very real concerns and fears of parents in Cape Breton today and soon in other areas, no doubt, can the minister tell us whether at this time any inter-agency agreements between DHAs and school boards have been put in place?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, what I will do is I will undertake to get some information on this matter for the honourable member.

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

LBR. & ADV. EDUC.: UNIV. MOU NEGOTIATIONS - TIME FRAME

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Earlier this year the minister indicated that her department would begin meetings with individual universities, in preparation for MOU negotiations in May. It is now more than halfway through May. My question is, has the department begun its individual MOU meetings with universities?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, due to graduations and unavailability of some of the presidents, some of the schedule has been delayed. I understand that it's going to be fast-tracked as much as possible during the month of June, because everyone is interested in getting their particular situation at their institution in front of the deputy

minister and her staff before the official and formal MOU discussions and negotiations start. So things are progressing. A meeting has also been held with university presidents, I understand, with the representatives from the student organizations and things are progressing in a timely way. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, much of the O'Neill report is predicated on the assumption that enrolment at our universities is declining. These words are taken as gospel, but our universities are coming up with solutions to address Nova Scotia's population decline. Universities are attracting and retaining young people from other provinces and around the world. We have world-class universities and, of course, they should be reaching outside our provincial borders. Attracting students from other provinces and countries will help our demographic challenges, provided this government doesn't stand in the way by increasing tuition and preventing students from coming to our province. My question is, will the minister acknowledge that attracting foreign students to Nova Scotia is a positive step toward addressing our demographic challenges?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly we value the contribution that international students make, currently, to broadening the cultural experience of students here in Nova Scotia, but also because of the economic impact that they have in their institutions and the surrounding areas. We have done a number of things through various strategies, including the immigration strategy and others, to try to encourage them to stay here in Nova Scotia. They only help our demographic challenge if they decide to make Nova Scotia their permanent home, to raise families, to take positions or to start businesses within this province. We have a multi-strand strategy to encourage them, to make sure that they know they're welcome, and we certainly would be very pleased with an increase in the numbers of international students.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia will need more workers to address our labour market demands. In order for Nova Scotia to prosper, we need all of our young people to pursue higher education and meet their full potential. Now, the ministry could have started their negotiations, their individual meetings on the MOU, earlier than May if they were concerned about problems. Students in our universities could, in fact, take this delay in negotiating the MOU as yet another sign the minister is still planning to hack 10 per cent from university budgets in the next few years. My question to the minister is, is the minister stalling negotiations so universities are forced to accept less funding and higher tuition fees at the last minute?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, contrary to the information used in the question, this government is actually protecting access to post-secondary education in this province by putting a cap on tuition fees, by increasing the tuition support package. We will continue to listen to students and their families. We understand that having a post-secondary education in this province is going to be a necessity for about 75 per cent of new job openings that occur in Nova Scotia, and we want to encourage as many Nova Scotians and others to take advantage of higher education.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**COM. SERV.: CHILDHOOD OBESITY STRATEGY
- DEVELOPMENT**

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, today my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Poverty is a reality for many Nova Scotians and its presence was exemplified by the recent release of the Nova Scotia food costing data, showing that many individuals and families are unable to afford a healthy diet. Research shows that this puts individuals at risk of developing a variety of chronic disease or worsening existing ones. Can the minister tell the House what role her department has played in the development of the childhood obesity strategy that is due out this coming Fall?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the honourable member for the question. We do, in fact, understand that food prices have risen. It's a worldwide trend that every country in this world has been facing. We also understand that the obesity factor is critical to our health care system. As a government that works interdepartmentally, our department has conversations with the Department of Health and Wellness, or whatever department is necessary, in order to go forward with any type of strategy to look at the solution to those types of situations such as obesity.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, many low-income Nova Scotians who rely on the minister's department for assistance will benefit this coming July from the \$15 a month increase in personal allowance. This is a welcome announcement, but this will not go far, when there is an increase in food costs, rents and power rate hikes that we'll once again see in the coming year. Quite simply put, there are families in Nova Scotia that will have to choose between purchasing food or paying their power bills. I'm wondering if the minister can tell the House, how much of her department's budget goes towards paying outstanding power bills for clients who are at risk of being disconnected?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that one of the things that we have done, as a government, over the last two years we've taken a multiple-type strategy, in terms of helping Nova Scotians. We have offered many different new programs, such as the affordable tax credit and the poverty reduction tax credit. The affordable tax credit was a \$75 million investment. We just recently also announced many other programs of another \$22 million that will be rolled out over the next several years.

I've mentioned before, now, a single mom, with two children, is presently receiving up to over \$2,900 more than they did before this government came into place. That shows the increase. When there are issues with regard to power, we work on an individual basis and we work with Nova Scotia Power. They've been very, very good to

work with our department to help people out that have that type of crisis on their hands. Thank you.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, poverty tax credits, affordable tax credits, just aren't enough with ever increasing power rate hikes. Quite simply put, so individuals understand, when the Department of Community Services assists an individual with an outstanding power bill, that is like a small, one-time loan that is later on taken off their cheques.

In light of this and the department loaning out extensive amounts of money to bail out individuals on power bills, I'm wondering if the minister is prepared to commit today to writing the Utility and Review Board in light of another Nova Scotia Power increase; it will further inhibit and greatly affect her department from living within its means.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as I said, our government will be watching and we will be there when the utility board is reviewing any increase in power. Therefore, they'll know what our position is, in terms of they know that we are working very hard in order to make a difference and I have to say, Nova Scotia Power has been very good to our department in terms of working out what they can in payment plans, paying back and we work very closely with our clients. I think that's what's very important to know. The fact is that, we have increased the investment in low-income individuals in this province more - much, much more - than any other government ever has and I'm very proud of that. I know our colleagues here are very proud of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - ADDICTION SERV.: WAIT TIMES
- TABLE**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday during Question Period, the minister indicated there are wait-time standards associated with treatment to addiction services in the Valley and presumably around the province. However, when you visit the department's Web site on wait times and you scroll through the alphabetical list of procedures posted, addiction treatment services are not among them. Given the minister stated yesterday during Question Period, the Annapolis Valley DHA is meeting the standards established, standards which are not available to the general public, will the minister table the wait times for access to addiction services, treatment services in the Valley, before the end of the Spring session, likely tomorrow?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will provide the member with information on wait times for addiction treatment, both in the Annapolis Valley and elsewhere.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for being willing to provide that information. Yesterday when I asked the minister a question about residents of the Valley, and they could expect timely access to long-term treatment services, the minister replied that the residents of the Valley are meeting wait-time standards established. Here is what I know. Residents in the Valley have been in and out of detox over and over again, in some cases seven or eight times, costing our health care system money, only to find themselves back in detox due to lack of treatment. If the Valley is meeting wait-time standards, and we have rotating visits to detox, well, that doesn't bode well for the standards.

My question to the minister is, will the minister table the wait-time data for addiction treatment services for all district health authorities, again before the end of the session, possibly tomorrow?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment to table the wait-time information for addiction treatment and I will fulfill that commitment. There are many services that we offer, in terms of addiction treatment, and detox is one of those services but it's not the only service.

It's true that there are people who go into detox, repeatedly sometimes, and sometimes that's what has to happen, in terms of breaking the cycle of addiction. Some people will not be successful with only one admission to a detox program, for whatever reason. These addictions are a very serious situation people find themselves in. Being able to overcome addiction can, for many people, be a lifelong struggle that requires multiple points of entry into our health care system.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, people in the Valley have attempted to access treatment services, they haven't been able to do so; despite what the minister says about meeting standards, access has been challenging. My question to the minister is, given that the minister claims the Annapolis Valley is meeting standards, people are still waiting. Will the minister commit to revisit the standards established, to determine whether they are appropriate?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we are constantly reviewing the services and the programs that we provide, particularly as new research, new evidence indicates that there are better practices available. It is on the basis of best practices that we develop our services and they should not and they do not, stay fixed as services but they, based on our evaluations, change over time.

I also want to inform members, Mr. Speaker, that when there is a need for someone to go into a program and there is capacity in another district and no capacity in the local district where the person resides, we have a policy - and we're very open to assisting people into getting access to programs in a different district health authority. So

the system is certainly not a perfect system but it is one that we constantly evaluate and we will continue to do so, in the hopes that we can offer the best services that people need in this province who suffer from addictions.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: ER RM. PROTECTION FUND
- EXPENDITURE (2010-11)**

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week during Question Period I asked the minister a very simple question about the Emergency Room Protection Fund. She has now had a few days to reflect on the answer and gather the information that we need for the record. So I'd like to ask that question again and that is, to the minister, how much of the \$3 million Emergency Room Protection Fund did the minister spend for that purpose in the 2010-11 fiscal year?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, actually, our department spent \$3 million and more on improving emergency room services around the province.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, on May 14, 2009, the Leader and now-Premier held a press conference and announced that if elected they would establish a \$3 million Emergency Department Protection Fund to keep emergency rooms open. In fact, the information I have here, which I'd like to table, went on to say that the \$3 million fund would be used to hire doctors for hard-to-fill shifts so that emergency rooms would stay open. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, how many doctors were hired for hard-to-fill shifts with this \$3 million Emergency Room Protection Fund so that ERs could remain open as promised?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous question, we, in fact, spent the \$3 million, and we spent more than \$3 million, in improving emergency room services around the province.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think the point that may be missed here is that the government had planned and promised to spend the money on more doctors to keep the shifts open all the time in the ERs around the province and there was a subtle - or perhaps not so subtle - shift in the spending for emergency rooms. If you look at the budget highlights for last year, or for 2010-11, in last year's budget they actually changed their purpose to say that the \$3 million ER Protection Fund will improve service and access by implementing initiatives identified by the province's emergency care advisor and that would be Dr. John Ross. My question to the minister - which I would like to have an answer to - is what did the minister do with the Emergency Room Protection Fund? Did she hire doctors as planned, or fund initiatives recommended by Dr. John Ross, or did she give money back to the Minister of Finance?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, once again, we spent all of the \$3 million earmarked for the emergency room fund and more. That did, in fact, get us ER doctors, but it also got us other personnel in the ER. It helped us open the Rapid Assessment Unit over at the Queen Elizabeth II, which has now diverted literally hundreds of patients from having to wait and go through the ER. It has also allowed us to develop and put in place more services that are performed by paramedics and other personnel. The fund is a very useful fund and we have not returned one penny of that to the Minister of Finance.

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

**EDUC. - C.B.-VICTORIA REG. SCH. BD.:
SCH. LIAISON OFFICERS - FUNDING**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, way back on May 3rd, by way of a question, I informed the Minister of Education that five community liaison officers, serving in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, would be cut. At that time the minister was unfamiliar with the issue, but promised to investigate the situation and to work with the board to deal with that issue. Recently, in the Cape Breton Post, the minister said, "We need to have the good service that community liaison officers provide and Cape Breton will be no different than the rest of the province." My question through you to the Minister of Education is, on May 3rd the minister said the funding for the community liaison officers at the Cape Breton-Victoria School Board was an anomaly. Does the minister's statement in the Cape Breton Post mean that she is changing the way these important officers will be funded at that school board?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for bringing this issue up again. The liaison officers that we have in the province are very important. People want our schools to be safe, but liaison officers provide a very valuable service for other areas, too, because children can speak with the liaison officer. As you know from the news in the last day, our liaison officers have been very busy in the province with our students and our schools.

What I would like to say, and the honourable member opposite knows that I'm taking this issue extremely seriously and that Cape Breton schools - we'll be making sure we have the appropriate liaison officers. The honourable member opposite I've had in a conversation - I'm working on this. It's not how I answer my question in the House, what it is that I am committed to is the action and I am committed to making sure that the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board and the police department - that we work together so that we can maintain service in Cape Breton. (Applause)

MR. MACLEOD: I'm sure that the minister is sincere and I would never question that. However, there are a number of parents that need some reassurance now and not

later. I understand that the number of community liaison officers varies dramatically from board to board in this province. Currently there are five community liaison officers serving the students in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. My question to the minister is, will the minister confirm today that the number of community liaison officers will not decrease in Cape Breton?

MS. JENNEX: What I'm committed to is making sure that we are going to be having service in Cape Breton and I'm not going to guarantee any number because I only know about the services that the honourable member has brought up and also the members for Cape Breton South and Cape Breton Centre. I'm looking at the whole school board because I'm not absolutely sure that those are the only liaison officers that we have in Cape Breton; I have an investigation underway at this time. We're not absolutely sure if you only have five. We might have more liaison officers in other schools, I'm getting all of that information at this time.

MR. MACLEOD: I want to inform the minister and all members of this House that these five members that we have now are very valuable and the member for Glace Bay and I have been talking about this and other members from Cape Breton have the same concerns. This issue is not about politics, this issue is about the safety and the concerns that we have for our children. (Applause)

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we took the time to go and check with all the other boards, to see the number of liaison officers they have and we've checked it around the province and they vary greatly. As a matter of fact, if anything, we need more in Cape Breton because Riverview - due to the closure of Holy Angels School - will now have close to 1,100 students and no liaison officer.

The minister herself has said publicly that CLOs always are invaluable resources in our schools and as she said in her reply earlier, they've shown that this week. They are front-line workers who act as mentors, role models and advisers to students who face bullying, mental health concerns, substance abuse and family instability. When will the minister tell parents, teachers and students how many community liaison officers will serve the Cape Breton Victoria School Board in September?

MS. JENNEX: I want to stand here today and to repeat what I've said, that I am committed to working with the school board and with the Cape Breton Regional Police, to maintain liaison services in our Cape Breton schools.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East. (Applause)

**PREM. - POWER RATES: INCREASES
- CONDITIONS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. While in Opposition, the Premier launched a province-wide petition, which called for no power rate increases until Nova Scotia Power and the province were required to help people save at least 15 per cent on their power bills. Mr. Speaker, the now-Deputy Premier tabled a petition on the floor of the House on November 3, 2005, with almost 32,000 signatures.

Now the NDP will say they've taken steps towards this, with their gesture of removing the provincial portion of the HST. However, the reality is the total cost of electricity that people pay on their bills has increased since this government took power. The province added charges to the bill through the Efficiency Nova Scotia tax it opposed during the election. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier deliver on his demand that power bills go down by at least 15 per cent before allowing power rate increases?

THE PREMIER: Well, he's right, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that I would be able to be instructive as to what an activist MLA actually looks like; I know he has difficulty understanding what that looks like. The reality is that after 2005, we also conducted a successful campaign, both electorally and otherwise, to have the province's portion of the HST removed from power bills in this province. We're very pleased and proud that is the case. In addition, part of saving the money is having an appropriate Efficiency Nova Scotia program that can help consumers do what is the very best in the way of reducing power bills, which is simply not using the electricity in the first place.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, all of what the Premier just said is irrelevant. He committed that an NDP Government would help Nova Scotians reduce their power bills by 15 per cent and they've gone up since he took office, including the HST cut. That doesn't answer the question. The Premier also said at the time, ". . . with power bills going up. . . they are rightfully worried about freezing in the dark next winter." People are even more worried now since over the next three years, power bills will go up by 20 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier live up to the commitment they made in 2005 that before they allow any power rate increases, they will ensure that residents of Nova Scotia see their bills and their power usage drop by 15 per cent, at least?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's just ridiculous. We never made any such commitment and we have implemented the only real measures that have been aimed at reducing the cost of electricity for consumers including taking the provincial portion of the HST not just off electricity but off power costs or energy costs, which for many

people means considerable rebates on things like home heating oil, which, of course, we have some of the highest usage in the country.

In addition, we have also launched the most aggressive renewable electricity plan, in fact, the only renewable electricity plan in this province's history that is aimed at stabilizing rates and ensuring that consumers, over the years to come, will be able to take advantage of stable rates. This is something that is opposed by that member.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked by the Premier's comments. First of all, I will table the commitment by the Premier from The ChronicleHerald on November 5, 2005 where he made the commitment. Second of all, the Premier is absolutely incorrect when he said that we opposed the renewable electricity plan. In fact, we stood in this House and supported it. The only concern we had was the inclusion of biomass and the fact they spent \$10,000 for a photo op on a mountain instead of protecting taxpayers' dollars.

This is a real issue. Power rates are rising under this government. This government added the Efficiency Nova Scotia tax to power bills that they opposed in the election. This government put the health of Nova Scotians at risk and guaranteed significantly higher bills in the future by relaxing mercury emission rates. Now, it's this government that will not live up to its demand that power rate bills come down 15 per cent before increases are contemplated. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell Nova Scotians why he cared so much about power rate increases in Opposition and demanded that government and not the Utility and Review Board do something, but now is content with his minister saying that ultimately it is the URB that's going to make the final decision.

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all let me just set the record straight, what the member has just tabled does not say what he led the House to believe it says. That's the first thing.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the function of the Utility and Review Board is to impartially assess the rate cases so that consumers can be assured that what they are being charged is fair. I find it hard to believe that the honourable member would suggest there should be political interference in that process.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - PHARMACISTS: NEGOTIATION OFFER
- MIN. ACCEPTANCE**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. Thank you. The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Last week the minister indicated it was her intention all along to pass the Fair Drug Pricing Bill at the same time that a tariff agreement and expanded scope of practice package were negotiated. Since then, we know that a negotiation date was cancelled last week and this week the first and only day scheduled for negotiations is tomorrow. As you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, the Pharmacy Association made an offer to the government to negotiate 24 hours a day until an agreement can be reached.

My question to the minister is, given the minister's goal of having a settlement reached by July 1st and given the willingness of PANS to negotiate 24 hours a day, why hasn't the minister taken the pharmacists up on their offer?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated many times here on the floor of the House as we debated the Fair Drug Prices Bill, we are in the process of negotiating with the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia. Those negotiations will take place somewhere other than on the floor of this Chamber and we will approach those negotiations with a view to putting in place a fair and balanced settlement that will serve both the taxpayers of the province and the pharmacists and pharmacies of this province.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important to remind the minister that we're not trying to have the negotiations on the floor of the House, but we're asking why the government isn't at the table with the pharmacists today, if there's urgency.

Earlier in the House the minister said this was a priority, that it is an urgent matter, so my question to the minister is, why isn't the government there now sitting with the pharmacists, more than taking this casual approach of once a week?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I know it's quite late in Question Period and that's why the questions tend to get a little thin in terms of the content. Just to reiterate the point, the government is at the table in negotiations on the agreement with the pharmacists right now, in terms of their dispensing fees and the markup that they put on prescription drugs.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that while the minister talks about thin questions, it is more like thin-skinned ministers. (Applause)

I'd like to ask the minister another question to do with pharmacies, as my final supplementary. The minister has estimated that there is a saving of \$6 million coming from this Fair Drug Pricing Bill in the first year, but that figure is a far cry from what the pharmacists are estimating, which is \$15 million in the first year alone and even more than that in the second year, going up to \$26 million in savings so it seems disingenuous at the moment that there is such a difference in those figures. I would like to ask the minister, as my final supplementary, if she will table for the House today the actual calculations used to arrive at the \$6 million figure for savings in this first year, because it seems completely absurd.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the honourable member persists in wanting to undermine the negotiations that are going on at the table. This government is at the table on behalf of the taxpayers, on behalf of the seniors. I direct the honourable member to today's ChronicleHerald where Mr. Van Gorder, the head of the Seniors Group of IX, as well as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, wrote a letter endorsing Bill No. 17 in saying this is a great opportunity for seniors.

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in this abbreviated Opposition Day, I would like you to call Resolution No. 1241.

Res. No. 1241, re Educ.: Cuts - NDP Gov't. Reconsider - notice given May 10/11 - (Hon. K. Casey)

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Resolution No. 1241, the operative clause of which is:

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

Mr. Speaker, here we are again talking about education cuts. The Opposition has brought this up as Opposition Members' Business week after week because we believe these cuts are wrong - but we're not the only people who believe these cuts are wrong.

Robert Zoellick of the World Bank said “tough economic times are not the time to cut education spending.” Instead, what we have is funding for literacy and math mentors cut by 50 per cent; math mentors cut by \$1.05 million; and literacy mentors cut by \$773,000.

Madam Speaker, I must say that I have heard from people all across the spectrum about these education cuts. A couple of weeks ago I was at Bedford Place Mall selling carnations for MS, and almost every single person who stopped to talk with the woman I was selling the flowers with talked to us about education cuts - and they could not believe what was coming down the pike. Now, they may have talked to me because I’m the former Education Critic, and they may have talked to my partner because she is a retired teacher, but the fact of the matter is people are very concerned about these cuts.

We’ve heard from teachers who are concerned about what is going to happen to their students in their classrooms if they are not getting appropriate instruction; we have heard from special education teachers who cannot imagine how they will be able to teach the students they have in their classes without the assistance of EPAs; and we’ve heard from parents of children either with learning disabilities or who have special needs, who cannot imagine how their children are going to make it through the days without the assistance of EPAs.

We’ve seen the spectre of the Reading Recovery program being axed and the substitute program being put in place so they can save \$2 million. What concerns me about this is there is no evidence that this program that they have cobbled together in record time will actually do anything.

AN HON. MEMBER: It’s not even a program yet.

MS. REGAN: It’s not even a program yet. It’s a framework, if that. If they wanted, as the minister claims, to reach more students, then why wouldn’t we have put more money into Reading Recovery? Reading Recovery is at least proven; we know it works. But, instead, we’re going with a program that has no evidence behind it at all - there’s no evidence behind it at all. We’re going to make this thing up and it’s going to work and we’re going to do it because, well, we want it to work. So it’s magical thinking, Madam Speaker. There’s no evidence behind it.

I’ve heard comments from across the way that teachers are saying that this isn’t going to work because they’re just worried about losing their jobs. That’s not why the teachers are concerned. The Reading Recovery teachers will just bump into the classroom, they’re not going to lose their jobs. They’re going to go into the classroom. The fact is, it’s the young teachers who are not going to get jobs; it’s the new teachers who are not going to get jobs.

So, if a Reading Recovery teacher is telling us they're concerned about the program that's coming in, it's not because they're worried about losing their jobs, they will still have a job, they've got seniority.

The department has said that cuts will not impact students but this simply isn't possible. We've heard an evolving, changing story along the way. Initially, they were just going to cut money from the board level. Then we pointed out, that's a bit of a problem since HRSB, for example, their board costs, for running the board, is 4 per cent. What are you going to do, shut the whole board office down?

The South Shore Regional School Board took a 2.47 per cent cut, according to government. In reality, this is a 4 per cent cut when you add in all the cost pressures. They can say, we're not cutting money from per student funding, but the fact is they're getting rid of programs that have made a huge difference to students over the last number of years. Things like math mentors, things like literacy mentors, even a status quo budget would have meant significant cost pressures, negotiated salary increases, upgrades to teacher licences and inflationary increases in operating costs. As we continuously pointed out, you can say there are fewer students but if you still have the school open and you still have the bus route, it's going to cost the same amount to pick up 20 students as it will be to pick up 30 students. You still have to have those aspects of education there.

There are things that make education work that are being cut. For example, the South Shore Regional School Board has been forced to cut library services and this government really hasn't given them a choice. School library staff are going to be cut by half, school libraries will only be open half the week or less in many cases. For many of us, I know that the pleasure of going to the school library and having a librarian who had chosen a book for you, that will be gone. I can tell you for a while there, there weren't a whole lot of librarians in the school system anyway. There were a lot of parents who came in and tried to fill in for the school librarian and the job we were doing, as parents, was a noble one but it was not the job that a paid school librarian would have done.

South Shore Regional School Board has said that historically, their literacy rates were low, when compared to other areas of the province. Now their incredibly successful Reading Recovery program has been axed - 90 per cent of students in that program met expectations under that program.

Literacy mentors, cut. Library staff, cut. All of these things went to support student literacy. In South Shore, we were told by board members, they would have kept, they would have liked to keep Reading Recovery but they're not allowed, they were banned by this government from keeping Reading Recovery even if they had the money. They were not allowed to keep it. Maybe that would have been a bit of a problem, because if their literacy rates kept improving and the rest of the province wasn't, then, in fact, they'd be showing up the government for the chimera that this program actually is, that they're planning to introduce.

Boards are doing more than ever before. There's increased special education challenges, legislative requirements, a diverse student population, supports to allow for greater student achievement and targeted government initiatives. But we are not giving them more money. If you look at HRSB, there's unique challenges there, there's an increasingly higher number of students at risk, more per capita than other boards.

Whether it's children with learning disabilities, whether it is programs that divert children, HRSB is not getting the assistances that it needs. Programs like Youth Pathways have been axed, EPAs are being axed, police officers in schools are being axed and you have to ask yourself what it's going to be like in a high school very soon. This week we saw a drug bust at Millwood High, if I were a parent of a child who were going to Millwood High I would be concerned.

The minister really made a mistake too, I think we were in Truro at the time when it happened, when she targeted boards' accumulated surpluses. Because in fact, that was not the boards' money to even touch, that was money that children has raised for their school trips and various things. Madam Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this issue today and I urge the government to rethink their cuts.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Well I always welcome the opportunity to talk about public education in our province and the important decisions government is making on behalf of our students, their families and all Nova Scotians. Nova Scotia is a place for our youth to get a high-quality education; the dedication, the expertise and the passion of our teachers and schools' support staff are second to none.

As Dr. Ben Levin recently stated in his report of public education, Nova Scotia has a very good public education system which has served the province well. He went on to add - any system no matter how good can get better. He also noted, getting better does not necessarily depend on more money. Madam Speaker, my goal as minister is to make sure our children receive the best possible education and that many more students achieve higher levels of accomplishments. As Dr. Levin rightly pointed out, the challenge we face as a province is to continue to improve our very good school system at a time when we face significant declining enrolments and fiscal pressures. It is imperative that we use our limited resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. That means doing a better job of matching our funding with the actual needs of our students. Just like Dr. Levin suggested in his report, good outcomes do not come from money alone but from the thoughtful application of resources to proven methods of good education.

We need to make wise choices so that we can continue to provide the best education to all students while living within our means. Every area of government, education included, must share in the responsibility of bringing Nova Scotia back to

financial good health. Madam Speaker, I believe the government has been successfully meeting this challenge of preserving what we value most in education. A little over three weeks ago this Legislature passed a budget that puts children first and protects learning in the classroom even as we, and school boards, deal with limited resources and enrolment decline.

You have heard me say many times, but it does bear repeating because it is the underlying reason for the need to right-size our public education system. We have almost 30,000 fewer students than we had a decade ago but we have, over that same period, more teachers and support staff hired. The previous government allowed spending to rise by more than 40 per cent and administration grew by 20 per cent, even as the numbers of students dropped by 18 per cent. Even more to the point, we will continue to see fewer and fewer students coming to school every year for the next 10 years. By the year 2020 we anticipate as few as 112,000 students and then it will probably, finally level off. That will be the same number of students who were in the school system in 1910.

Madam Speaker, we must position ourselves for the future so that we will have a strong and sustainable public school system for the students of today and tomorrow. Nova Scotians demand that government live within its means, they also demand that we do more to provide our children with the best education. The past several months have been challenging but I believe we and boards have made difficult decisions that will lead to a more effective and sustainable public education system. Let's not forget that Nova Scotia taxpayers are investing over \$1 billion for public education every year. They want us to use their hard-earned money as effectively as we can for the benefit of our children. Even with the fiscal pressures that we face, we must remember that our funding has increased by more than 200 students this year and the student ratio will remain among the lowest in a generation, at 13.4 to 1.

Madam Speaker, my government continues to put our children's education among its highest priorities. Like all other departments, we are doing our part to protect the taxpayers' investments in the education of our children. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand and speak for a few moments on this resolution. I know that the member who is going to be speaking after me is saying we've got a little extra time here and we do. Probably what I'll do is give her some of the time because ultimately, as a previous Minister of Education, I think she has a lot to bring to this discussion as well.

What I'm going to focus on quickly right now is the issue of cuts. The issue of cuts is that it forces the hand of school boards to find efficiencies within their own budgets, because what this government has done on many occasions already is really just

blame the school boards for spending too much money and forcing them to try to find cuts to education.

What we're hearing back from many of the school boards is the impossibility to do it without impacting the classroom. Impacting the classroom means maybe a larger number of students in classrooms, the student-to-teacher ratio ends up changing dramatically. What that does is it impacts the students' ability to learn because maybe the teacher doesn't have as much time to spend with particular students, depending on their learning requirements.

If you put 28 kids in a classroom versus 23 kids, for example, there's a huge difference in the learning ability of those students. So if you're getting rid of teachers, if you're bringing that number of teachers down because that's the only real mechanism with which to save money within the school system, or even with any system that government has, you forget 80 per cent or more is taken up by human resources, taken up by the people who are offering the services. In this particular case, of course, the teacher is offering their knowledge and their teaching ability to these students so that they can move through the school system.

We've heard from this government cutting literacy programs, or making dramatic changes to it under the guise of cuts, this has been a confusing one to many parents when it came to Reading Recovery. The issue of Reading Recovery was we had a very good program. We had a robust program - a program that was world-renown - that was providing tremendous literacy capabilities or literacy help to the students who needed it the most.

I've stood in this House on many occasions already and talked about the benefit that Reading Recovery had for my child who did have a reading difficulty. The minister, to her credit, stood here and said, here is the new program that we're going to be providing. Well, Madam Speaker, really what we got was a bunch of bullets on a piece of paper on what the program might look like, here's what it could do, and really just a sketch of a program - a framework is what they called it.

Well, Madam Speaker, quite honestly we need to have a program that is going to be up with true deliverables and ways to evaluate the program, ready for September. I don't think this government can actually get that done in time, so I think that's a tremendous loss for students in Nova Scotia, to not be able to access such an important program.

Madam Speaker, this whole thing, as bad as it is for students when cuts are happening, this is devastating for new teachers. I know a lot of individuals who are just graduating from our teacher programs across Nova Scotia and are now facing the prospect of having to go somewhere else to find a job. They're very good individuals,

people who have taken it seriously, gone to school for their five-year programs, six-year programs in some cases, and lo and behold, when they finally graduate, there is no job here in Nova Scotia for them. That's what these cuts mean.

As you're moving teachers around, because of the collective agreement, the ones on the bottom of that totem pole are the ones who end up getting bumped off. I can count a number of really good school teachers, really good individuals who we would love to have teaching our children, who are going to have to go somewhere else in order to find a job in the profession of their choice. I don't think that's fair, I really don't think that's fair when I think we had a school system that was really starting to respond to the needs of students.

Ten years ago - we hear that number a lot, 10 years ago - we paid 40 per cent more for education. Well, Madam Speaker, if you brought in an economist and looked at this one quite closely what you'd see is that in normal inflation there has been a growth in the education system. This has been natural inflation along the way, there have been some extra investments put in our education system but they've actually started to get real results.

Ten years ago the education system was not giving us the results that we required in literacy, in math, in sciences. When we were comparing the outcomes of our students compared to other jurisdictions in Canada and the U.S., we were at the bottom of that list. Through steady investment, smart investment, new programming we were able to get our kids to a point where they were performing extremely well, in comparison to other jurisdictions - maybe not first, but they were probably getting second and in a lot of cases they were getting first.

Madam Speaker, we still haven't seen the full fallout of the Ben Levin report. There are a couple of really good things in there. I'm not going to throw it all out just yet because it talks about success of our students, reducing failure in our education system. I can agree with that, if things aren't failing then we're not spending all our time trying to fix that failure - whether it's how the students are learning, what the program is doing, the inability of finding a way to fix things. But there are some things that really started to irk us, especially when Dr. Levin talked about the issue of educational assistants or TAs in our classroom. It talked about that there were competing bodies of evidence that would show that maybe teaching assistants, educational assistants, are actually detrimental to the learning of students.

Well, I can tell you I have never heard of that before and I've talked to a lot of individuals in our education system since that time that are pulling their hair out - they've never heard of this before. If you talk to teaching assistants, if you talk to resource teachers, if you talk to students who have had the opportunity to have a TA, where they have progressed in their lives through the education system, it has been absolutely tremendous. So for us to say maybe we should be reducing the number of TAs, I think is

really throwing out an educational aspect that has proven over and over, time and time again, to work.

We haven't actually heard of how many TAs are being knocked off this year. But even if we look at next year taking more of a cut, and the year after that taking more of a cut, eventually we'll get to where we were back in October/November when school boards came to us and said, oh my God, they're asking for a 23 per cent cut over three years. That's not right, it's just not right. We need to find a balance between good outcomes, we need to find a way to be able to afford the programming that we have and expand on it, because we want our kids to be able to succeed not just here in Nova Scotia, but right across the world.

Don't forget, we live in a world market today. There are no borders as we once would have believed in them, so you're not graduating from school and working for Aliant or working for MT&T or becoming a school teacher or working for a local company, you're working for international companies and you're travelling around the world. You need to be competitive in that market and I think that's where we were heading, until the black mark that we've got or the red mark that we've got - we've got a big "X" on our education system right now and it's a great, big question mark that I think this Party, the Progressive Conservatives, and I think the Liberals are also concerned about, that this is a big, black "X" that we need to find a way to get beyond.

I'm going to leave the rest of my time for this debate to the member for Colchester North because I believe she has a lot to offer to this issue, as well, but I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this resolution.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and speak to Resolution No. 2141, and in particular to some of the language in the resolution, which I think clearly defines why we are where we are in this debate over public education.

It talks about short-sighted and ill-advised decisions. I had the opportunity in Question Period, on more than one occasion, to ask the minister who she may have consulted with, what experts she may have talked to in order to help her make some of the decisions that were being made. For whatever reason, the minister chose not to share that with me or with the House. Again, that would suggest that either she didn't consult with anyone or, for whatever reason, is not proud to share the fact as to who those people were.

We have, Madam Speaker, a whole host of experts in the education field. As someone who spent their career in a classroom, a Grade 1 classroom, an elementary classroom I believe, the minister would have known who those experts were and nobody

works in isolation in the education profession or in others. They certainly do seek out opinions, advice and consultation because it's only when you do that thorough consultation and research that you can come up with a good decision. We can all make decisions, and people can all be critical of them, but if you have made the decisions with all of the information that you can have available, it does strengthen the outcome.

I would speak, if I could, about a couple of members in this House who helped me make some good decisions in Education. The member for Timberlea-Prospect - I respected his opinion, he is an educator - he was a person who would sit down with me and we would talk about issues that were important to kids. I valued that opportunity and I valued the opinion. I also had an opportunity to speak with the member for Kings West - again, an educator - and his perspective and opinions were different than mine and different from those of the member for Timberlea-Prospect. But together, instead of one person's mind and one person's experience, there were three. The minister has at her fingertips all of those experts and all of those people out there who can help her make decisions that won't be short-sighted or ill-advised.

Unfortunately, since that hasn't happened, we are dealing with some decisions that are devastating and will cripple the public education system that we currently have. The myth that has been shared across this province and not believed by anybody is that declining enrolment dictates a cut in funding. I think that is another example of short-sighted and ill-advised decisions. If the minister was aware of the programs that have been put in place to support students who have learning disabilities and who have challenges in the classroom and who are now able to better succeed in our public schools, that's where the money has been invested, that is something that the minister should be proud of and that's something that the minister should fight for to continue. Again, it's making decisions without either understanding or accepting or acknowledging that there are some good things that are in place. The short-sighted and ill-advised decisions that have been made are not in the best interest of kids.

I have listened as the minister read a script today and she talked about the Ben Levin report. We've heard from the member of the Progressive Conservative Party about some of the information in that report and I spoke about that earlier. That report has no relevance to what is happening in education in Nova Scotia. It's a model that has been plucked out. Dr. Levin is a great academic and a great educator and has done a lot in educational leadership, but the recommendations that he had, obviously, weren't based on circumstances in Nova Scotia.

Again, when I asked the minister, what schools did Dr. Levin visit, what information did he have about the schools in Nova Scotia, what does he understand about the rural part of our province - again, no answers to those questions. That leaves one to believe that perhaps he didn't have a lot of consultation with the people who do know what's going on in our province.

Classroom teachers are probably the best source of information about what is needed in our classrooms. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter is getting a little high; it's difficult to hear. The honourable member for Colchester North has the floor.

MS. CASEY: Madam Speaker, it is decisions like that - why would you give credibility to a report and talk about the recommendations in the report, when you know they're not relevant to the circumstance that we're in? The suggestion by Dr. Levin, that we would have to have school closures in our province, was certainly out of context and when questioned on that, again, the answers that came back didn't give anybody much confidence that he had talked to people in rural communities about their schools, that he had talked to the minister and/or her staff about what we currently have in place with respect to school closures.

We have a school closure policy in place, we know that it's working, we know we've had schools close in many communities across the province and we know that we've had schools stay open because the circumstances were such that we were not going to take away an opportunity for students in some of our rural communities to stay close to their homes.

Again, I go back - I cannot understand why the minister is not prepared to listen and then make the decisions. First of all, she was going to take 22 per cent out of the budget for school boards and when it became clear that that was an impossible task, then backtracked a bit and she said, well, we'll get boards to take it from the accumulated surplus. Well the next day someone must have told her what "accumulated surplus" was because she backtracked on that. Accumulated surplus is something that the boards cannot touch. It's the money that kids raise for class trips; it is money that they raise from their cupcake sales and their cheese sales and whatever. That's what accumulated surplus is. To suggest to the media and to the public that boards might be able to achieve these savings through accumulated surplus was ridiculous.

Then the minister came out and said, well, we can achieve it all through attrition. Well, you know, attrition means that when someone retires, you don't replace them. I think the numbers the minister was using were 1,000 over three years. Well, a thousand teachers over three years is a lot of positions to take out of our system. Then, when it became obvious that wasn't going to work, then we went to another plan. The other plan was, well, we'll cut programs. We'll balance the books of this province on the backs of kids and that is exactly what people believe is happening. We're going to cut programs that were designed and proven to help kids succeed. I could go on with a list of them.

The Minister of Education should well be aware of what those programs are, why they were put in place, who they're helping, what the impact will be when those positions

are gone and then make a decision. For example, I can go through the list, but if we look at the whole notion of teacher assistants - and my colleague for Argyle suggested that there are many, many kids who have benefited from the programs that have been put in place and teacher assistants have been put in place to support students, who are not able to be successful in a classroom without some kind of assistance.

That assistance varies. It may be one assistant working with two or three students or it may be one on one. There is criteria that's been set. If the minister believes the criteria is not right, you review the criteria and then you look at, are we assigning EAs the best way possible? Are we using the funds within the EA budget the best possible? That would be a better approach than just to take a recommendation from somebody from Ontario to say, well, we're going to get rid of EAs, we have too many. We need to base our decisions on sound evidence and on consultation.

We have now, the minister has now, the level limit of anxiety amongst parents in this province and teachers raised to an unfortunate high. Any parent that I'm talking to, who has a student who has been getting support from an EA is saying, will that support be there when my child goes back? They're saying my child cannot survive in a classroom without additional supports. Why not take the time, do the homework, do the research, talk to the people who are affected by this. What is the positive impact of the decision? What is the negative impact of the decision before you make a statement to the public.

Once that statement was made, people were worried, people were in tears. People whose child has been able to cope in a classroom only because they've had supports there, are afraid that that support will be gone. I can tell you, when we get into September and parents are sending their children back to school, if that's when they're going to find out that the support their child needed in order to even go to school in some cases, secondly to be functional in the classroom and to be included with others - when they find out that support is gone, it's very unfair to put parents and students through that.

Again, it's a matter of looking at the decision that has to be made, the impact that it will have and do all of that before you come out with some statement. People have said - the teachers who are responding daily to the request that we put out for how will this impact the classroom are saying, why would the minister do this? They are not saying it because they want to protect their job, they're saying it because they're dedicated to the kids that they're working with. We have a very dedicated team of teachers in this province and they have understood the challenges some of their students have. They have accepted some of the supports and programs that have been put in place so that child can be successful and their question to the minister is, how can the minister stand up and say that this cut will not affect the classroom?

Anyone who's been in a classroom knows the composition of a class that we have now and anybody who has moved up the system as a classroom teacher, as I believe the

minister has, would have seen the composition of that class change. Most every teacher accepts the fact that they don't know everything and they want students to get support from Reading Recovery and they want their students to get support from EAs and they are not so proud that they won't accept a little bit of help. The reason that they accept that help, Madam Speaker, is because they want the best for the kids in their classroom and I would think that the Minister of Education would want that for every student in this province and I think it's her responsibility to stand up for every student in this province.

By slashing the budget and by cutting EAs and by getting rid of Reading Recovery program that works - the minister is quite happy to say, no it doesn't work. While I'm sure you can find one classroom where there's only a 30 per cent success rate, that's not the figure that we should be quoting. We should be quoting the total success of Reading Recovery. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Deputy Opposition House Leader.

MS. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, that concludes our Opposition Business for the day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow at the hour of 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 midnight, with the order of business being Third Reading of Bill No. 59.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 5:57 p.m.]

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

Given on May 17, 2011

(Pursuant to Rule 30)

QUESTION NO. 4

By: Mr. C. Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. C. Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) Will the Minister of Natural Resources provide background information, if any exists, so when a hunter travels on land he does not own and is looking for deer, and encounters a sign while he is hunting reading "Hunting with Permission Only", can the minister advise whether the landowner has any rights or is the hunter free to do whatever hunting he would like?

QUESTION NO. 5

By: Mr. C. Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. C. Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) The former Progressive Conservative Government in 2000, established a detailed trespassing policy which clearly states that hunters are not allowed to enter private land. Is the minister aware of any legislation overriding this trespassing policy?

QUESTION NO. 6

By: Mr. C. Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. C. Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) Section 15 of the provincial Protection of Property Act - "No person may be prosecuted for contravening any notice given pursuant to this Act prohibiting entry or prohibiting activity on forest land if that person is hunting as defined in the *Wildlife Act*, fishing, picnicking, camping, hiking, skiing or engaged in another recreational activity . . ." Mr. Lee Watson of Falmouth believes he has little rights as a forested land owner and I would like to know if the minister might possibly have any solutions for Mr. Watson?

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1765**

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

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

Whereas on April 6, 2011, the Insurance Brokers Association of Nova Scotia (IBANS) held its fourth annual Insurance Awards Dinner to honour performance and innovation among members of the industry; and

Whereas Sean Murray of W.C.L. Bauld Insurance Brokers in Bedford was named Young Broker of the Year; and

Whereas Sean received this award because, as a broker below the age of 40, he made significant strides in professional development over the previous year and he clearly demonstrated his contribution to his brokerage, clients, IBANS and the industry;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sean Murray on being named Young Broker of the Year and wish him well in all future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1766

By: Ms . Vicki Conrad, (Queens)

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

Whereas Halifax so proudly hosted the Canada Winter Games, which brought people from all over the country to enjoy our hospitality and to be treated to wonderful sporting accomplishments by all of the athletes, and

Whereas to enable the Canada Winter Games to be so successful it took thousands of volunteers, including Ruth Smith of Queens County, to be helpful and positive at all of the venues throughout the province; and

Whereas Ruth Smith provided 25 hours of volunteer time, at Mount Martock, with the media relations and communications centre;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize and thank Ruth Smith of Queens County for taking the time to volunteer at the media relations and communications centre for the Canada Winter Games at Mount Martock.

RESOLUTION NO. 1767

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

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

Whereas volunteer firefighters are heroes who spring into action day or night to protect their neighbours and communities; and

Whereas the number of Nova Scotians who are able to commit the time and effort required to become a volunteer firefighter is dwindling, putting public safety at risk; and

Whereas the NDP Government has done nothing to encourage membership in volunteer fire departments or to make sure people in all parts of the province benefit from the services volunteer firefighters provide;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to act now, before it's too late, to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters and to ensure public safety is safeguarded from Meat Cove to Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1768

By: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Community Services)

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

Whereas on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, the honourable Mayann E. Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, visited Forest Heights Community School to present the Lieutenant Governor's Awards to Grade 11 students of South Shore Regional School Board District; and

Whereas Lianne Lenihan is the female recipient for Forest Heights Community School; and

Whereas Lianne Lenihan is a leader within the student-led organization, encouraging participation, self-confidence, inclusion and positive attitudes among her peers and she still maintains high standards within academics and she is always quick with a smile and a helping hand whenever needed;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lianne Lenihan on being the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award for a female Grade 11 student at Forest Heights School and wish her the best in her academic life and chosen field.

RESOLUTION NO. 1769

By: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Community Services)

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

Whereas on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, the honourable Mayann E. Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, visited Forest Heights Community School to present the Lieutenant Governor's Awards to Grade 11 students of South Shore Regional School Board District; and

Whereas Zackery Miller is the male recipient for Forest Heights Community School; and

Whereas Zackery Miller is a hardworking and dedicated young man who maintains an extremely high standard of academic excellence, while being active within his school and home community and has lead the school's robotics team to two consecutive championship wins, is an active participant with NSSSA and is a leader within the school's Options and Opportunities program;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Zackery Miller on being the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award for a male Grade 11 student at Forest Heights School and wish him the best in his academic life and chosen field.

RESOLUTION NO. 1770

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

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

Whereas the 15th annual Albert Bridge Recreation Association Trout Derby was held on May 6th at the Tank Pond in Mira Gut; and

Whereas the derby is designed to attract youth into the sport of angling, with anyone up to the age of 17 being able to participate; and

Whereas Harold Lamson, a long-time judge at the derby, recently told the Cape Breton Post that it is the look on the faces of the participating youth and teenagers that make it all worthwhile;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Albert Bridge Recreational Association Trout Derby organizers and Judge Harold Lamson for their commitment to this event and making it so special for participants year after year.

RESOLUTION NO. 1771

By: Hon. Marilyn More (Labour and Advanced Education)

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

Whereas this June more than 500 Nova Scotians will graduate with the High School Graduation Diploma for Adults, bringing the total number of graduates to over 4,200 since the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning was established in 2001; and

Whereas adult learners who embrace continued learning will increase their skill set and their opportunities - leading to a more knowledgeable and skilled workforce; and

Whereas these graduates are a shining example of the value of lifelong learning;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the more than 500 adult Nova Scotians who will graduate this June with the High School Graduation Diploma for Adults, and recognize the important role of all adult learners in contributing to the growth of our economy and the strength of our workforce.

RESOLUTION NO. 1772

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Atlantic Communities Newspaper Association is a non-profit membership organization, established in 1972 and representing community newspapers throughout Atlantic Canada, with a membership of 70 newspapers and a combined circulation of more than 450,000; and

Whereas Lighthouse Publishing has provided coverage of local issues and events on the South Shore of Nova Scotia for over 125 years; and

Whereas on May 14th the Bridgewater Bulletin, published by Lighthouse Publishing, was awarded the General Excellence Award to recognize overall achievement by circulation class in editorial, advertising, and layout in Atlantic Canada for an unprecedented third consecutive year;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the important contributions made by Lighthouse Publishing and the Bridgewater Bulletin, and congratulate Lighthouse Publishing on their award from the Atlantic Communities Newspaper Association.

RESOLUTION NO. 1773

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas Brenda Mathieu is the music teacher at Brookhouse Elementary School in Dartmouth; and

Whereas Ms. Mathieu has taught within the Halifax Regional School Board for more than 30 years; and

Whereas Ms. Mathieu will celebrate her retirement on June 16, 2011, with family, friends, and colleagues;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ms. Mathieu on her long-standing teaching career and wish her many happy years of retirement.

RESOLUTION NO. 1774

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Ecology Action Centre is celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2011 by calling on Nova Scotians to participate in 40 fun and innovative days of action; and

Whereas today, May 18, 2011, calls for Action # 27: Thank a bus driver day; and

Whereas Thank a bus driver day encourages riders to express their appreciation to their transit drivers, whether through words, written notes, high fives - or maybe even baked goods;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly pledge to honour Thank a bus driver day and promise to engage a bus driver today with his or her words of appreciation.

RESOLUTION NO. 1775

By: Hon. John MacDonell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas part of our heritage is expressed by the architecture and memories contained within country churches found throughout the province; and

Whereas many country churches are increasingly under the threat of being abandoned due to a lack of ability to maintain them by their aging congregations; and

Whereas on May 4, 2011, the former St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Walton was floated by its new owner, Lorraine Vassalo, by barge down the coast to a new home in Avondale;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lorraine Vassalo for caring enough about our heritage to go to extraordinary lengths to preserve one piece of it.

RESOLUTION NO. 1776

By: Hon. John MacDonell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Ettinger's Home Hardware in Shubenacadie has been a fixture since the early part of the 20th Century; and

Whereas the owners of Ettinger's Home Hardware recently completely rebuilt the store and moved it back to allow better parking; and

Whereas on May 5, 2011, Ettinger's Home Hardware celebrated its new building and slightly different location with a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the owners and staff of Ettinger's Home Hardware on their new premises, and wish them success for the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1777

By: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Adsum for Women and Children is a non-profit community organization that has been working since 1983 to provide housing services and programs for women and children in the Halifax area; and

Whereas there is a great and increasing need for affordable housing for families, and for services and supports for families which have experienced homelessness or are at risk of being homeless; and

Whereas tomorrow, May 19, 2011, Adsum for Women and Children will open a new 10-unit facility, the Alders, on Gottingen Street in Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly express their sincere appreciation to Adsum for Women and Children for its ongoing efforts, as demonstrated by the opening of the Alders, and extend their best wishes to all of the women and children who will live at the Alders or benefit from its services and programs.