



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

Third Session

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

11:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Accountability Report on Emergency Departments.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION****INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1778

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

Whereas Leica Hardy is the artistic director of the Leica Hardy School of Dance in Dartmouth; and

Whereas after years of professional training at some of Canada's finest dance institutions with many of our nation's best-known modern dance pioneers, Leica has worked for over 30 years in Nova Scotia teaching dance, creating and performing; and

Whereas Leica will receive an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Saint Mary's University in Halifax tomorrow, May 20, 2011, for her contribution to Nova Scotia's dance community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Leica Hardy on this outstanding accolade, and thank her for her dedication and tremendous contribution to Nova Scotia's artistic 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 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1779

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

Whereas Peter MacIssac, who started policing in his hometown of New Waterford in 1986 and has an extensive policing career in Cape Breton, was named police chief of the Cape Breton Regional Police Service; and

Whereas Mr. MacIssac became the east division's platoon sergeant for the Cape Breton Regional Police Service following its amalgamation in 1995, then the New Waterford community sergeant, followed by sergeant in charge of major crime; and

Whereas Mr. MacIssac, as chief, will continue to enforce the service's top priorities of crime prevention and community policing, including a crackdown on illegal drugs and arson;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the accomplishments of Peter MacIssac, and wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1780

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

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

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Kaleigh Brinkhurst of Earltown, Colchester North, for the prestigious honour of being named to the President's List.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1781

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

Whereas Ron Marks, a member of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board and a past president of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, was recently honoured with the Education Week Partner Award; and

Whereas Ron, who received the award from the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, was described as "deserving because of his strong advocacy work in the area of developing a vision for education in the 21st century"; and

Whereas Ron is a member of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board for the Stellarton-Westville area;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Ron for his commitment to education, and his outstanding work with both the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board and his past association with the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1782

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

Whereas high school, junior high, and even elementary school kids in Cape Breton are exposed to the perilous path of drug use and addiction on the school grounds; and

Whereas community liaison police officers are the front-line protectors of youth at risk and have the experience, expertise, and mandate to identify issues related to drugs, crime, violence, and bullying at schools; and

Whereas principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and all community stakeholders were relieved to read in Saturday's Cape Breton Post what they thought was a commitment from the Minister of Education to support this vital service that has been helping kids find their way through the most important years of their lives;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House urge the Ministers of Education and Justice to work with stakeholders and accept nothing less than the restoration of these officers in the schools - let's make saving kids a priority, not who is responsible for paying the bill.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1783

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

Whereas Bernice Innes, The Chickenburger Lady, was a pioneer among Nova Scotia's women business owners; and

Whereas Bernice and her husband, Jack, opened their roadside snack bar on March 10, 1940, and Bernice ran the Shadyside and then The Chickenburger for decades while raising a large family, turning The Chickenburger into a Halifax-area icon; and

Whereas Bernice was buried on March 10, 2011, 71 years to the day after she and Jack founded "The Chick", still the most recognized landmark in Bedford;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly pause to remember Bernice Innes - hard-working mother, tough but fair boss, doting cookie-baking grandmother, and loyal friend - and wish her family our sincere condolences on their loss.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1784

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: M. le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que la Caisse populaire St-Joseph a été formée en 1936 pour servir les résidents de Petit-de-Grat et de l'Isle Madame, avec seize membres fondateurs; et

Attendu que la Caisse populaire St-Joseph, qui comprend 2,800 actionnaires et des actifs de 45 millions de dollars, continue de jouer un rôle de premier plan dans le développement social, culturel et économique des communautés qu'elle sert; et

Attendu que le mardi 19 avril, le gérant Michel Boudreau et le président du conseil d'administration David George ont organisé un vin et fromage au Centre la Picasse à l'intention des actionnaires afin de célébrer le 75^e anniversaire de la Caisse populaire St-Joseph;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que tous les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent sincèrement la direction, le personnel, le conseil d'administration et tous les actionnaires de la Caisse populaire St-Joseph dans le cadre de leur 75^e anniversaire, et leur souhaitent un succès continu.

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

Whereas St. Joseph's Credit Union was formed in 1936 to serve the residents of Petit-de-Grat and Isle Madame with 16 charter members; and

Whereas St. Joseph's Credit Union, with 2,800 owners along with \$45 million in assets, continues to play a lead role in the social, cultural and economic development of the communities they serve; and

Whereas on Tuesday, April 19th, manager Michel Boudreau and board of directors chairman David George hosted the membership with a wine and cheese social at Centre la Picasse to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of St. Joseph's Credit Union;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly extend their sincerest congratulations to the management, staff, board of directors, and the entire membership of St. Joseph's Credit Union on celebrating their 75th Anniversary, and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1785

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: M. le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que le magasin Co-op Charles Forest a ouvert ses portes à Petit-de-Grat en 1981, et a déménagé plus tard vers son emplacement actuel à Arichat; et

Attendu que ce qui était auparavant une épicerie plein service offer maintenant davantage d'espace et de produits et comprend une succursale de la Commission des alcools de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que le conseil d'administration, la direction et le personnel accueilleront leurs membres et leurs clients le jeudi 19 mai pour célébrer la réouverture officielle du magasin Co-op Charles Forest;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que tous les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent sincèrement le président du conseil d'administration Adrian Boudreau, le gérant Gérard Samson, le personnel et tous les membres du magasin Co-op Charles Forest dans le cadre de leur réouverture officielle et pour leur investissement considérable dans notre communauté.

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

Whereas the Charles Forest Co-op store opened in Petit-de-Grat in 1981 and later moved to its current location in Arichat; and

Whereas what started as a full-service grocery store has now expanded to provide more space and products, along with a new Nova Scotia Liquor Commission outlet store; and

Whereas the board of directors, management, and staff will greet their members and customers on Thursday, May 19th, to celebrate the grand reopening of the Charles Forest Co-op;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly extend their sincerest congratulations to board of directors president Adrian Boudreau, store manager Gerard Samson, staff, and the entire membership of Charles Forest Co-op on their grand reopening, and for their significant investment in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1786

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

Whereas type 1 diabetics require careful attention when in school, especially when they are very young; and

Whereas budget cuts made by the Minister of Education have forced reductions in support services for students with type 1 diabetes in Cape Breton, which will soon permeate across the province; and

Whereas yesterday the Minister of Health and Wellness was unaware that this responsibility now falls to the health care system for both training and personal support in the classroom;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Wellness announce her action plan to deal with the downloading of these responsibilities from the Department of Education so that parents can be reassured appropriate services will be provided and maintained come September.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 1787

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, 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, better known as IBANS, held its fourth annual Insurance Awards Dinner to honour performance and innovation among members of the industry; and

Whereas A.P. Reid Insurance Stores was named Brokerage of the Year for best reflecting the values of the association; and

Whereas these values include dedication to clients, the industry, community involvement, volunteerism and professional development as all being key to their core business values;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Aileen Reid, Jamie Reid, and the staff of A.P. Reid Insurance Stores on their award, and wish them well in all their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1788

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

Whereas C. Arnold Patterson was a pioneer in Nova Scotia business; and

Whereas Arnie was “Mr. Dartmouth”, owner of the iconic CFDR - the call letters of which shone out over Halifax Harbour for years - and the rock station Q104, and gave many young reporters their start in the business, including this member and the member for Cole Harbour; and

Whereas Arnie had an impressive and varied working life: he worked as a reporter and columnist, as a public relations professional - winning the Canadian Public Relations Man of the Year award for his handling of the Springhill Mining Disaster of 1958 - as Pierre Trudeau’s press secretary, and he ran for federal office twice;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly mark the passing of Arnie Patterson earlier this year, and send our condolences to his wife, Glorena, and daughters, Carol and Lori, and their families on their loss and ours - he will be missed.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1789

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

Whereas Leo Mooney has been an involved member of the Yarmouth community for decades as an active member of the Knights of Columbus, a volunteer for Meals on Wheels and Addiction Services, and is a long-standing Liberal; and

Whereas when Mr. Mooney was inducted as an umpire into the Yarmouth Town and County Sports Hall of Fame in 2003, it was stated about him that “the contributions Leo Mooney has made to baseball in the Yarmouth area over almost half of [sic] century is as important as any team or individual player”; and

Whereas Mr. Mooney is also an avid and competitive bridge player whose skill and talent at the game have made him a Life Master bridge player, the most highly sought level of bridge achievement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Leo Mooney for his many outstanding contributions to and achievements in Yarmouth's sports history, his dedication to his community, and thank him for his natural gift of bringing a smile to the hearts of many.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1790

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

Whereas Donna MacDonald and Mary Ellen Eyland had a vision - to build an Adult Day Program for the people in the Cobequid region suffering from Alzheimer's disease and dementia; and

Whereas three local churches supported the two women, allowing the program to get underway in their facilities, while the local Cobequid community raised \$22,000 to help fund the program; and

Whereas Northwood's Ivany Place in Bedford has become the new home of the program, allowing secured access for participants to the outdoors where they run a gardening program in the Spring and summer, as well as offering woodworking and giving participants a friendly, open space in which to participate, all the while providing respite for caregivers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Northwood Care, Christina and Hedley Ivany Place, program director Donna MacDonald and senior programmer Mary Ellen Eyland on creating a positive and inviting space for

those living with Alzheimer's and dementia, and thank them for making a difference in their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1791

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

Whereas the original Glace Bay Town Hall, a three-storey brick building located at the top of McKeen Street, was built in 1903 to house the civic offices, police and fire departments, Glace Bay Court House, and community jail - not that we needed a jail; and

Whereas the Old Town Hall was destined for the wrecking ball in 1989 due to maintenance and renovation costs, but the structure was saved by a committed community group, the Glace Bay Historical Society, who came together with a detailed restoration plan and idea for a heritage museum; and

Whereas in 2003 the Glace Bay Heritage Museum officially opened the doors of the Old Town Hall to provide visitors with an opportunity to peer into our past with displays commemorating our town's mining, fishing, sports, music, civic and cultural legacy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Elke Ibrahim, Isabel Harris, and the countless volunteers who continue to make the Glace Bay Heritage Museum a magical place to visit and learn about our proud community - we wish them much success and heavy foot traffic in 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1792

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, 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 held its fourth annual Insurance Awards Dinner to honour performance and innovation among members of the industry; and

Whereas Stephen Zwicker of Salvatore Insurance Brokers Limited was the recipient of the Client Service Award; and

Whereas this award honours a brokerage employee for going above and beyond the regular call of duty, to ensure clients' needs are met;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Stephen Zwicker on his award and wish him well in all future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1793

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

Whereas on Thursday, May 13th, NDP backbencher and member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, my friend, said the government was rushing through the Elections Act because in a British parliamentary system, a government can fall at any time; and

Whereas this government holds a majority of the seats in this House and the only way for the government to fall would be for its own members to vote against their own government; and

Whereas the Opposition and the people of this province have lost confidence in this government and the only logical conclusion we can draw from the political science professor's comments is that some NDP members have no confidence in their own government as well;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly call on the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island to release the plans for his upcoming coup so he and his merry band of NDP backbenchers can join the Opposition to topple this government.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 1794

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

Whereas Northwood Care's Christina and Hedley Ivany Place opened on April 2010; and

Whereas Celebrate Living is the Northwood Foundation's \$3 million campaign to furnish the new facility with items like art, televisions, musical instruments and a courtyard so that the residents will have all the trappings of home; and

Whereas Clayton Developments and Cresco Homes have purchased a piano for the Great Room, thereby giving residents an opportunity to hear the music they love;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House commend Northwood Foundation on raising \$2.6 million thus far, thank Clayton Developments and Cresco Homes for their generous gift and wish all three organizations continued success in their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of order. Yesterday in Question Period, the member for Kings West asked that I table information with respect to provincial wait times for addiction services. I am very pleased to do this but, in doing so, I just want to inform members of the House that wait time information with respect to addiction services is not, as the member indicated yesterday, on the department's Web site but it is our plan to have that added to the Web site in June, around the first of June of this year.

Mr. Speaker, when that occurs, Nova Scotia will be the first and the only province in the country to bring reporting of addiction service wait times into the public arena through our provincial wait times Web site. It is part of our commitment to providing good information to the people of the province, particularly people who are looking for addiction services, which are a priority for this government. We will continue to work to improve not just the information but the access to addiction services.

I'm pleased to say that typically we are meeting the wait time guarantees, which are 10 days for urgent clients and 15 days for general clients, so I'd like to table that information, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I would tell the honourable member that it is not a point of order. If we're tabling reports it's done during the order of business, Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

If we have unanimous consent of the House, we can table that report. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The report is tabled.

Thank you.

We've also had another request to revert back in the order paper, to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a petition calling on the government to bring relief to independent businesses in Nova Scotia. This petition has 64 signatures and I have affixed my name in accordance with the Rules of the House.

The signatories to this petition are calling on government to "Lower the HST when the budget is balanced; Index personal income tax - as government promised five years ago; Outline a long-term tax plan to improve Nova Scotia's business competitiveness; and restrain government spending to population growth plus inflation."

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time now is 11:32 a.m. and we will finish at 12:32 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - IEF: ACCOUNTABILITY - PLANS

MR. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, after two years of spending record amounts of money through the IEF, the Premier announced yesterday that he is going to do away with this fund - except that he is not going to do it right away. The Premier is going to have a full year to use this seriously flawed fund, with no oversight on how money is spent. My question to the Premier is, given that the Auditor General has made it clear that this fund has no controls or accountability, what is the Premier going to do to ensure that there are some measures of oversight for next year?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, of course we take all of the recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously. What I can tell the Leader of the Official Opposition is that of course, as was pointed out before, these audits are simply a snapshot in time. In fact, already we had put in place an oversight committee, already we had put in place a new financial officer and already that financial officer was looking at things like the checklist, like the arrears reporting. All of those controls are already underway with respect to implementation and, of course, we expect that the administrators of the fund will properly respond.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Auditor General made it very clear that the advisory committee that the Premier is hiding behind has no teeth. As a matter of fact, when the advisory committee made a recommendation to Cabinet not to invest, they ignored it and went ahead and invested anyway. The fact of the matter is that this fund has no accountability to protect the taxpayers of this province. So my question to the Premier is, how much more money is the Premier going to spend through the IEF next year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, that is not what the Auditor General said about the advisory committee and that is not what the advisory committee did. In fact, what the Auditor General did quote was one piece of the advice that came from the advisory committee and, of course, there were additional pieces of advice that came as well - just so the record is clear, Mr. Speaker.

The Industrial Expansion Fund had a return to Nova Scotians of \$2.89 for every dollar invested; this is a very good record. In fact, it has paid a dividend to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia not just in money but in the jobs created, in the investments in communities and, Mr. Speaker, throughout the rest of our mandate, wherever we see those opportunities, of course we intend to support our communities.

MR. MCNEIL: Yesterday the Premier told Nova Scotians he was going to scrap the flawed fund, now today he's telling this House what a great fund it is - no wonder people are confused. Nova Scotians are demanding that a business model be used in distributing their hard-earned money, not a political model. The Premier has another year to hand out taxpayers' money without any accountability and no oversight.

My question to the Premier is, why should Nova Scotians believe next year will be any different than your track record of the last two years?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the track record of this government, which has been good investments that have solidified jobs in communities, will continue. I certainly intend to ensure that. Ultimately the accountability for every investment we make is right here in this House.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: CONTINUING CARE STRATEGY
- UPDATE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In the Auditor General's Report yesterday, he indicated he had completed a performance audit of the long-term care program at the Department of Health and Wellness. That performance audit showed that although the number of long-term care beds has been increasing over the last three years, wait lists continued to rise. In fact, the Auditor General found that wait lists for long-term care are up 38 per cent since 2007.

There is a Continuing Care Strategy that was first begun in 2006 and that strategy is now five years old and needs to be updated to reflect the realities of today. My question to the minister is, when will the minister provide an update to that Continuing Care Strategy and provide much needed relief to those Nova Scotians who are on those wait lists?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we take the Auditor General's Report very seriously. The Auditor General had many good recommendations in his report. The department's response is also contained in his report and the member will know that with respect to the Continuing Care Strategy, the department is in the process of evaluating that strategy and planning ahead for the next phase of that strategy.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in his report the Auditor General reported that the department is examining various options to deal with wait times for admission to long-term care facilities. My question to the minister is, what options is her department considering and when will the people of Nova Scotia find out what their plan is to deal with these wait lists?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there is a variety of options that are available when we're dealing with the aging population and sometimes the chronic health care needs of that population. Continuing to replace outdated nursing homes where the standards are not up to the level that we would expect is an option, and additionally providing an enhanced home care system to people. Members of this Assembly will have seen the range of new programs that have been introduced to assist seniors to stay in their

own homes. Things like the personal alert systems, the self-managed care program and other programs that this government has introduced in the short time we've been here to assist seniors.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the department is considering its options but the fact of the matter is that after two years, wait lists continue to grow and Nova Scotians require action now. In fact, the Auditor General's own report indicates that wait times for long-term care are not likely to become smaller and he cites specifically factors such as the desirability of the new facilities and barriers in accessing home care as reasons why wait lists will continue to climb while the department considers and considers and considers its options.

We know that the department had a budget of zero for hospital equipment for the upcoming year, as ridiculous as that sounds to anyone who ever thinks about it. What is the budget for long-term care facilities replacement in the current year's budget?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, if the former government hadn't mismanaged the building of the Colchester Regional Hospital so significantly, perhaps the options that seniors have in this province today would be much more robust.

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

NDP GOV'T.: BANKS/SM.BUS. - TREATMENT

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: The Premier has been directing his government to pressure municipal units in southwestern Nova Scotia to make payments on behalf of SWSDA. By all accounts, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will force municipalities to repay banks. However, he has remained silent on the many small businesses in the area, which are left holding the bag. My question for the Premier is, why is the NDP Government riding roughshod over municipalities to save banks while neglecting small business?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're doing no such thing. In fact, we've offered our assistance to the municipalities. The municipalities entered, on the basis of their own advice and with the consultation of their councils, into agreements that they are now being asked to live up to. That was completely a process for those municipal councils. We, of course, asked if we could be of assistance to them, but ultimately, as is the case, I would hope that the Leader of the Official Opposition would agree, if you make a commitment, you live up to it.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if when the Premier says, if you make a commitment you should live up to it, I'm wondering if he's talking about the MOU. (Applause)

The fact of the matter is, the Royal Bank is an unsecured creditor, like every small business in southwestern Nova Scotia. This government has directed the municipalities in southwestern Nova Scotia to deal with the banks and have ignored and never brought up the small, business people of that community in any of their discussions. A local hospitality business is owed \$1,500; various local festivals around \$27,000 and there are many more. In fact, there are well over 50 small businesses that are owed significant amounts of money, yet this government only seems concerned to deal with the Royal Bank's problem.

My question to the Premier is, why is his government so focused on banks while there are so many local businesses that are left out of the discussion?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm, in fact, not focused on the banks whatsoever. But I will explain a very basic detail to the Leader of the Official Opposition, which is that if the lines of credit or the guarantees are paid as a result of the agreement with the municipalities, there will be more money in the fund to pay out those exact creditors.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the only assets that SWSDA has are valued at approximately \$500,000 and we're lucky if they can get that. The only secured creditor is the Province of Nova Scotia for \$400,000, so instead of being concerned about the small businesses in southwestern Nova Scotia, he's concerned about the Royal Bank. That's what this is all about. If the Premier of this province is going to interfere in municipal relations, why is he not defending the small business people of this province instead of the Royal Bank?

THE PREMIER: I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time in my life I've ever been accused of being a booster of the big banks, so anything (Interruptions) This session is the first time I've ever been accused of being a booster of the big banks.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Preston.

SNSMR - MUN. AGREEMENTS: DEPT. - GAP

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier as well. Because of inadequate oversight by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, eight municipal units are now in an unwelcome position. They're going to have to make payments that the Ombudsman considers illegal or they will be forced to disobey a ministerial order that could result in a \$10,000 fine or a year in jail. This is because of a gap in the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, which the Ombudsman has identified. My question to the Premier is, how did the Premier let this gap exist for so long without taking corrective action?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I have no idea what that question is about but I can say this. The reality is that the councils entered in of their own free will, on

the basis of their own advice, into an agreement to guarantee certain sums that were being advanced. They entered into those agreements with the knowledge of forethought, that they may be called, at some point in time, to pay on those guarantees. That time has come.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, this Premier has put the interest of banks before the interest of small business. In addition, his minister has put municipalities in a position where they're going to have to break the law, no matter what they choose to do. My question to the Premier - is he trying to prevent the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who signed a loan on behalf of Shelburne County, from being involved in a court action with the Royal Bank?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in all cases, whether they are wardens or mayors or whatever, they sign on behalf of the municipality; it is the municipal council that makes those decisions. I expect the councils that made the agreement to live up their responsibility - I think that's a very fair thing to ask of the municipalities. In fact, it's not us who are asking this - it was us who went to the municipalities and offered to assist them with their negotiations.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has a history of getting into questionable situations in the past where public funding was concerned. Now, coincidentally, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is interfering with municipalities, on this particular loan, with this particular bank.

My question to the Premier is, is the Premier and the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations trying to cover for mistakes the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture made in his past political life?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's a disgrace that a member in this House would call into question the integrity of Ministers of the Crown. I think it is an absolute disgrace.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NAKILE HOME - EXPANSION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I could say a whole bunch there but I'm going to really stay away from it.

I've taken the opportunity on a number of occasions to talk and ask questions about a long-term care facility in my constituency, Nakile Home for Special Care. The community has been patiently waiting for its expansion for four years now and the department continues to say one thing but do another. They say they are committed to the project but they continue to delay it. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister

is, can the minister update us on when the board and the administrators can expect work on this home to begin?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this has been a bit of an arduous process, I would admit, but the bottom line with respect to Nakile and the project is that we are committed to this. We anticipate that construction will begin in September with tenders posted over the summer months. The small problems that we see in front of us are small; they're not problems that we don't think we can overcome. We are committed to this project.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, through you, the board of directors and administrator continue to feel a little abandoned and disconnected and maybe it is in part because of the project. The current facility is full and they are in desperate need of additional space. The administrator has already put more than \$0.5 million into getting ready for the project and with the rising costs, they are struggling to even pay their electricity bill. The people of the community are now convinced that the project will not be complete.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister - well, ultimately, the minister did commit to having tenders out in the summer, and then construction to start in September, but I just want to ask the minister whether or not this can actually happen. Is it her feeling that the department is going to get that done?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, again, I would say that we are very committed to this project. We recognize the need for the 10 additional beds. I was pleased to see in the Auditor General's Report yesterday that the process of the department establishing what the need is for additional long-term care beds around the province was supported by the Auditor General as a good process. I believe that he also found that the oversight and the due diligence in the department with respect to managing projects is up to speed.

With that in mind we try to proceed on these projects based on both what the community needs, in terms of the residents and the seniors and we work very hard to bring projects in within the budget that we have. We will continue to do that and we are committed to this project. We've worked really hard on it and I am anticipating that construction will begin there in the Fall.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, I thank you very much for that answer. The administrator of Nakile, Bertha Brannen, was very pleased when she called me on February 2nd because the mortgage to the project had been approved, or so she thought. However in conversation since then it's my understanding that the mortgage is now sitting with the Department of Community Services, maybe somewhere near the desk of the minister, so my question through you is to the Minister of Community Services. Is

she aware of this project and could she find a way to push that up the line just a little quicker?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: As the Minister of Health and Wellness commented, we're very committed to making this project go forward. That's why I'm so proud to be part of a government that works so closely with other departments, plus the community, plus the Opposition. So certainly the honourable member has my commitment to work with him and with the Minister of Health and Wellness to make this project a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERD & TOURISM - IEF: APPLICATION PROCEDURES - LACK EXPLAIN

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, one of the many serious problems which was identified by the Auditor General yesterday was the fact that there has been no record of who has applied to the IEF. There is no way to tell why an applicant was accepted or rejected at any stage of this process. The absence of any records speaks directly to the potential of politics outweighing business cases, in this case.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why did the minister not have any standard procedures around the IEF, including those around rejected applications?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, again I acknowledge the Auditor General's Report. I mentioned yesterday - or maybe it was the day before - that I respect the findings of the Auditor General. We recognize and we agree that there are some deficiencies within the IEF; we stated that clearly in the House when we were in Opposition. As a result of that Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite, we have taken some steps to correct those deficiencies. Are we finished yet? No, we're not. We will continue to address not only those concerns that we have as government, but also that have been validated by the Auditor General.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, what's confusing to this side of the House and to Nova Scotians is that, despite the fact that this government has said they acknowledge there are problems with the IEF, they still gave them more money than any other money before them in this program.

Mr. Speaker, to quote the Auditor General, ". . . potential clients may be rejected directly by management with no involvement of Cabinet." My question to the minister is, what involvement has the change secretariat had in deciding the winners and losers of the IEF funding?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I guess the question is, is zilch, none, zero. I would say that also the investment that this government has made through the IEF is for the betterment of people in all regions of the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that these concerns have been ignored for two years by this government. The NDP has given out hundreds of millions of dollars through the IEF with no accountability and from what we're hearing from the minister, no traceability as well. The minister needs to provide evidence that those who are turned away were not done so by the unelected political appointees at the so-called change secretariat. Will the minister table that evidence today?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, nothing has happened, but I will say the member raises a couple of things that are simply not true. We recognize those deficiencies within the IEF. As soon as we became government, we took corrective action. As was indicated yesterday during the press conference by the Premier, those actions still continue in the best interests of all Nova Scotians.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - BAYVIEW MEM. HEALTH CTR.:
PLANNING - UPDATE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Auditor General in his report yesterday indicated that wait lists are rising for long-term care facilities while the Department of Health and Wellness considers its options. One place the Department of Health and Wellness can make a real difference in long-term care is for the residents of Advocate Harbour. In October 2009, the then-member for Cumberland South asked this particular minister about Bayview Memorial Hospital in Advocate Harbour and her answer at that time, 18 months ago, was, from Hansard, "The department has a continuing care plan which includes either replacement or the building of new beds. The facility that the member refers to is part of the planning process."

That was 18 months ago and the citizens of Advocate Harbour are still waiting. This is an area where the department and that minister can actually do something about wait lists for long-term care. My question to the minister is, now 18 months later would she kindly update the citizens of Advocate Harbour on how this planning process is going?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the residents of Advocate Harbour have a very good health centre in that community, the Bayview Memorial Health Care Centre. That existing facility has eight long-term care beds and two acute care beds. It serves Advocate Harbour and the surrounding areas very well. As I said in an earlier response to another member, the Auditor General found that the planning for long-term care beds in the department is based on good solid evidence of what the need in a

community is, and then options are developed and decisions are made by the Cabinet. That will be the process that we will follow in keeping with the Auditor General's Report with respect to Advocate Harbour.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we're 18 months later and it doesn't sound like we're very much further ahead for the citizens of Advocate Harbour. I should point out that a master plan for the Bayview Memorial Health Care Centre was developed by the Department of Health and was completed with a proposed budget of \$1 million. The community was asked to raise 25 per cent of the funding and in fact sold property and engaged in fundraising to do their bit to raise their share of \$250,000 for that project - a project, by the way, that was announced in March 2009 as a result of the efforts of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I have with me a letter that was written to the Premier from Don Fletcher, the president of the Bayview Memorial Health Centre. He says in this letter: The hard work and dedication of the members of the foundation, and overwhelming support of the residents of the surrounding area, have allowed them to successfully meet their financial commitment to the project. Unfortunately, since the announcement in March, we've seen little evidence of movement on the project. My question to the minister is, the citizens of Advocate Harbour did their part - when will the department do its part?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the numbers that the member is referring to is more Tory math like we've seen with the Colchester hospital - what I said in my earlier response was that the government will make a decision with respect to that facility, that decision will be based on options that have been developed by the department and those options take into consideration what the needs are in the community, and that is what we will be considering.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it must be a pretty detailed consideration since we're still waiting 18 months later.

The fact of the matter is that the citizens of Advocate Harbour shouldn't be waiting at all. When he was in Opposition, the Premier was campaigning for his current job and he said he made a commitment to the people of Advocate Harbour that they would meet the commitments and announcements of the previous government; in fact, I have a Halifax ChronicleHerald article here where he said, "We need to know just exactly what it is that the government has committed to those communities, and what I have said is that we would live up to those."

That's what the Premier said, "we would live up to those." This is a great example of exactly that, Mr. Speaker, and so my question to the minister is, the people of Advocate Harbour took the Premier at his word, they raised their share of the money - when will the department live up to their end of the deal?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that there was ever a decision made by the previous government to fund the cost of these two additional beds. I do know that this is something we are looking at in terms of what the requirements in the community are and what the options are in terms of meeting the local requirements. We certainly will be making a decision on this, and when a decision is made the honourable member will be among the first people we will inform, as the member for that area.

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

**LBR. & ADV. EDUC.: FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
- ANL. REPTS.**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as soon as the Auditor General's Report was released yesterday, the government was quick to blame previous governments for inaction - this, even though the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education has had responsibility for the Office of the Fire Marshal for two years. During that time, during those two years, the Office of the Fire Marshal did not file a single annual report - not one - even though they are required to. My question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, why didn't the minister ask the Fire Marshal's Office to submit an annual report?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the honourable member that annual reports, as required by legislation, are very important. The acting fire marshal is currently working on the annual report. We cannot change the past, but we will ensure that there are annual reports every year from here on.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, this issue affects the safety of students and seniors across the province, it affects the safety of children in daycares, patients and staff in hospitals, students and staff in universities. None of these institutions have had regular inspections and no documentation exists to see whether any deficiencies have ever been addressed.

Mr. Speaker, this minister claims she has been working on this issue since last summer. On the day that the Auditor General presented his report, the minister has tried to tell us that she is fixing the problem, but what she is really trying to do is damage control. If the minister knew about this issue over the last year, as she claims, why didn't she come clean about it with the public instead of waiting for the Auditor General's Report?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually able, today, to release more details about the action plan that our government and our department are committed to. I have asked the associate deputy minister to work full time, effective immediately, on this file, to indicate the seriousness with which we take the recommendations from the Auditor General. As most members in this House would know, even the draft report from the Auditor General was only made available to departments for response a couple of months ago. We certainly

took it seriously at that time and have been working very hard to overcome the deficiencies.

We also have a project director. I am committed to having weekly meetings to get progress reports from the associate deputy minister and the deputy minister. We will, on a very regular basis, provide progress reports to the general public and the members of this House. We are releasing our action plan on May 31st. We are also working collaboratively with several other departments of government to make sure that we have our inspection schedules and expectations aligned. We're also engaging outside expertise to make sure that we are looking at best practices from across Canada. We inherited this problem and we will fix it.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, it's good that the minister is going to release the action plan on May 31st, but we want to know what institutions were not inspected over the past while. We want to know, parents want to know, children want to know about their parents' facilities. Give us the list. Will the minister release the list of public institutions that have not had regular inspections so that Nova Scotians can know whether their loved ones were in institutions that were not inspected?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, developing an inventory of facilities around this province that should be inspected was one of the deficiencies and we are currently working on that inventory. We are going to prioritize the inventory to make sure that any missing inspections will be done first, on those facilities that house our more vulnerable population - that would include daycares, nursing homes, homes for special care and schools. Some of those details will be more available next week in the action plan so that the public of Nova Scotia, the citizens of this province, can be reassured that we are getting back on track as quickly as possible and that safety standards will be maintained in this province. Thank you.

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

**EDUC.: BADDECK ACAD./SCH. BD./EDUC. DEPT.
- MEETING DETAILS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. Last Thursday when the minister was asked about an update on Baddeck Academy renovations she said, "I do have that in my notes of things that I need to do with the department when I get back." My question is, does the minister have an update today on the recent meeting between Baddeck Academy school administration, the school board and the Department of Education?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, yes I do, and thank you very much for the question. There was a meeting that was held on May 11th, as the honourable member mentioned. At this point, they're still working on the project and some more information is

being gathered. I know that committee will be meeting again in June, so it's still a project in progress.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, on May 16th, the Baddeck Academy school advisory committee was granted 15 minutes of time to present the school situation to the school board. The SAC used the time to ask the school board for two things: to support and help push for additional funding from the Department of Education in their fight for three additional learning spaces; and to reopen the lines of communication with the SAC, who are closed until mid-June after the May 11th meeting. The school board apologized to the SAC for the confidentially order that had been placed on school administration, and once it was the lifted, the School Advisory Committee learned that nothing was further resolved in the May 11th meeting.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a serious breakdown in communication between these four groups. My question to the minister is, will she order the groups to re-evaluate the situation immediately and have these concerns over lack of classroom space addressed prior to the summer construction season?

MS. JENNEX: What I will be committing to is that we're going to be making sure that this school does meet the programming needs for the students. What we're doing right now is listening to the community and we're listening to the administration and we're going to make sure that that school is being renovated appropriately.

MR. BAIN: Last week in Question Period the minister said in reference to the Baddeck renovations, "It's going to be a nice place to be - to make the front look good coming into the school." So Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question through you the minister is, which is more important to her - the aesthetics of the entrance of the school or the safety and best interest of elementary students, who will have to share learning spaces with high school students, because the recent cutbacks have left them short three classroom spaces?

MS. JENNEX: I just would like to remind the member opposite that it's this government that took that project from \$6 million to over \$11 million to make sure that we were able to provide the appropriate space and I would think that the honourable member knows me well enough now, that we are going to be making sure that that school is a suitable school for programming and for students. But at the same time we also recognize that not only do schools need to be places for learning, we want our schools to look good too. So that was in addition to making sure that we meet the programming needs of our students and that students are safe and comfortable and enjoy their new school.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**PREM. - AG REPT.: RECOMMENDATIONS
- GOV'T. TRUSTWORTHINESS**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Auditor General officially released his annual report. The Auditor General's Report contains many criticisms, suggestions and recommendations. When asked if the government would accept the Auditor General's recommendations, we were told to trust this government. Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government has failed to listen to the concerns of the chief electoral officer, it abolished the Volunteering Planning Board and it has failed to consult the protection of privacy officer. So my question to the Premier - with a copyright acknowledgement to the Minister of Health and Wellness - since this government has failed to heed the advice of independent experts, why should the people of this province trust your government now?

THE PREMIER: We, of course, rely on the advice that we get. The Auditor General's Report - he is quite right that it contained a number of recommendations and criticisms. Mr. Speaker, I would like the honourable member to know that we take these very seriously and we intend to not only listen to them but track them and make sure that the commitment to change is kept. But I hope that the honourable member will understand that we inherited a mess that was made over, not just the last government but the previous government before that, and it does take time to move through all those.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, for a party that spent its entire existence in Opposition pointing out all the flaws of other administrations, one would have thought two years would have been lots of time to fix all the problems. As previous governments sure know, they got lectured long enough by the NDP while in Opposition so after two years, one would have thought the Auditor General wouldn't have found anymore of these problems.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report has said that the government's record of implementing his recommendations is, ". . . not adequate and is not improving significantly." This is further proof that this government ignores, silences or eliminates dissenting opinion. My question to the Premier is, given the Auditor General's scathing criticism of the government and given your unwillingness to listen to the advice of other independent experts, why should the people of Nova Scotia trust your government to implement the Auditor General's recommendations in a timely fashion?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the member opposite, the reality is that we have gone almost department by department through this, to deal with the very serious issues that we have found. We have reconstructed the economic development efforts in this province; we have attacked the issue of the long wait times in emergency rooms. We have, for the first time ever, brought in a decent student assistance program so that young people can go to university. I could go on, the list is long. The people of Nova Scotia of course should trust the government that is doing all the things to make their lives better. (Applause)

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier ran out of time so let me help him. This is also the government that raised the HST, this is the government that raised 1,400 user fees. This is the government that is going to allow teachers to be laid off, teachers assistants to be laid off and schools to close throughout this province. That is part of the legacy of what this government has done in two years. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is the government that abolished the Voluntary Planning Board and have now decided that they, and they themselves, will decide how Nova Scotians should be consulted on matters of public interest. They are the ones who continue to hide the gambling report from Nova Scotians even after the freedom of information and protection of privacy review officer told them it should be released.

Mr. Speaker, open government and transparency is how you establish trust and this government has failed to do so, so my final question to the Premier is, when will his government finally work to restore the trust of Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member forgot to mention that we are the Party that brought in the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Disability Tax Credit. We made the single largest investment in a decade in people who are the most vulnerable in our society. That is the record of this government, we are proud of it and we are building the trust of people one day at a time. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond on a new question.

**JUSTICE - BURNSIDE CORR. FACILITY:
INCIDENT REPT. - DELAY**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, see if we can get the same reaction this time. Today we learned that it took the Halifax Regional Police four and a half hours to learn that an inmate was seriously assaulted last week at the Burnside Correctional Facility. It took the police that long to find out about the incident because that is how long it took the jail staff to actually call the police. Meanwhile, Emergency Health Services was contacted a half hour after the incident, to deal with the injured inmate.

My question to the Minister of Justice is, the inmate is now on life support and in critical condition - why did it take the Burnside Correctional Facility staff four and a half hours to call the police?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. The first thing that the correctional staff have to do, in incidents where there's an altercation or where there's an injury that occurs, is to secure medical attention. That was done promptly. The second thing they need to do is to secure the facility and the inmates in there and ensure that the staff is safe. That was done. The third thing they need to do in sequence is to secure any

evidence that might be there, if they're aware that an altercation may have occurred. That was done. The next step that was taken is the overall security of the facility and then contact the police and that was done.

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, four and a half hours is a long time to wait when there's been an assault and waiting to contact the police so that they can carry out their investigation. Even the spokesperson for the Halifax Regional Police has indicated their concern with the delay in being contacted and the risks that that would put the securing of evidence. While in this case it would appear that the evidence has been secured, one has to wonder whether that will happen again, when such delays are taking place.

The Minister of Justice tells Nova Scotians that they should contact police as soon as they see a crime taking place. My question to the minister is, why would the minister not give that same instruction to staff at the Burnside facility?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, the situation at hand is that I'm very confident the staff followed good procedure and secured the evidence. I think one of the key points that the honourable member mentioned was that there was no contamination of the evidence and that the staff actually did a very professional job. I compliment the correctional officers in the way that they handled that. On the issue of the time, I've asked for a review and I'm seeking information as to the sequence of events that occurred that evening to get that information back.

A second thing that I've already put into the process is that I've asked my administrators to do a review of policies and practices in the past, to develop a policy or protocol in dealing with the phoning of police in that sequence. That's a gap that was in the system, that there is no policy there, but this government and this minister will have it in place shortly.

MR. SAMSON: Well, you'll have to forgive me if there is a bit of confusion here because the minister's first answer was that everything was done as it should have been done; now he tells us he has ordered a review. Now he has told us there is a policy gap and now he tells us that there needs to be an examination of what should be done in the future, so which one is it? Is it the fact that they should have called police earlier? Is it the fact there is no policy or is it once again a gap in the administration of our justice system taking place under this specific minister?

My final supplementary to the minister is, why is there not a policy in place at the Burnside facility to contact police immediately when a criminal act has taken place?

MR. LANDRY: I guess I'll have to go over the answer again because I thought I was clear and I do apologize for not being clear. The procedure here that was done - and I want to compliment the correctional officers on an outstanding job that they did in, first off, dealing with the medical safety of the individual; that's paramount. The second thing that is important is the overall safety of the facility; that was done. The third thing was the

security of evidence and, as in the honourable member's own words, that was done appropriately.

The next thing is that the policy and procedures - were they followed? We're following up on that, getting the feedback to see that logical processes were carried out. On the fact that there may not be an actual written policy, I will guarantee you that this minister will ensure that there is. I can't speak to all the gaps of the previous administrations, but this minister will take of it and make the corrections and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I will remind all honourable members in the Legislature who are recognized by the Chair that they must direct all comments and questions through the Chair. The word "you" seems to surface today, so I would remind all members in questions and answers to please remember that.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

ENVIRON.: CBRM WATER SYSTEM - FUNDING

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Environment and also in his capacity as Acting Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. On January 27th, the Cape Breton Regional Municipality received the risk rankings for the water system facilities as they fit within the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent. According to the list from the Department of Environment, eight facilities in the CBRM are high risk and will need to be rebuilt in the next decade. Another eight facilities will require further updates for a total anticipated cost of \$454 million.

My question is, what is this minister's plan - in conjunction with the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - to develop a funding formula that is both reasonable and realistic to assist the municipality to comply with these new regulations?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, that's a very complex question, but I can answer it from the Minister of Environment's portfolio and I'm sure the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is just as interested. The question that you raise here is a very interesting one. The infrastructure money for these upgrades usually comes from our federal counterparts and we have been working tirelessly to bring this issue forward. I can tell you that municipalities across Nova Scotia have invested in these facilities and we encourage that and will continue to take this message to our new federal government and look forward to doing that on behalf of the environment, and I'll relay the message to the minister responsible.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality said in an article in the Cape Breton Post on May 16th that the capital borrowing costs for these projects represent an astronomical increase in the CBRM's long-term debt - from \$106 million to \$631 million over 10 years. In order to pay these costs under the general tax rate, the municipality would have to raise the property tax by a whopping 66 per cent, or declare bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, which option does the minister suggest that the municipality take - raise the tax rate by 66 per cent or take the drastic action of declaring bankruptcy?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite, I can show you that I do have some experience at the municipal level, and again I reassure you that I'll direct the question back to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations - these infrastructure costs are supported by our federal counterpart and, again, I look forward to relaying that message and making these upgrades and for these facilities which are important to all Nova Scotians, not only this particular municipality.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the municipality has made numerous attempts to raise the issue with the department and they say they their pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The article, again in the Cape Breton Post on Monday, quotes a letter from the municipality that says "the province 'does not properly understand the capital requirements for the CBRM to comply . . .'" Then, in an article on May 17th, that I also tabled, the municipality's Director of Engineering and Public Works is quoted saying "requests to officials at the department on possible funding structures have so far gone unanswered."

Mr. Speaker, this government has already downloaded a significant burden onto the municipalities through the breaking of the MOU and, now, by not acting as a partner in the waste water facilities, it is causing even more destruction to our local towns and municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, when will this minister learn that there is only one taxpayer, and working with the municipalities, rather than against them, is in the best interest of the people of Nova Scotia?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite's question. I want to assure the member that I'll relay this message to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and this is an important issue.

I just want to add that again we know the importance of these facilities' upgrades and I want to tell you that just within 23 months this particular Department of Environment takes the environment very seriously. We have been recognized by two awards in Copenhagen, we have been recognized by the David Suzuki Foundation on what we are doing with the environment, and most recently we've been recognized by The Montreal Gazette on our work on pesticides.

Mr. Speaker, we take the environment very seriously and I stand by our record. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**AGRIC.: AGRIC. INDUSTRIES
- GOV'T. INVESTMENT**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government is neglecting agriculture in Nova Scotia. They cut funding to the Farm Investment Fund, a financial support mechanism that was essential to producers across this province, and one thing the Liberal caucus heard during consultations with stakeholders and farmers was please don't cut the Farm Investment Fund. My question is to the Acting Minister of Agriculture who can, I'm sure, move from fish to farming real quickly. What will the NDP Government do to invest in our agricultural industries and make them truly sustainable for the future?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I may feel like a fish out of water on this issue, and that's exactly where I am. I know that I'm acting for the minister, he is a very wise man and I'm never going to challenge him on that, but I can assure the member opposite that I'll relay the question, which is a very important question that comes to this House and I'll make sure that the minister will have it.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, any move away from supporting our agricultural sector is, frankly, a move in the wrong direction. Under the NDP Government food prices are skyrocketing, power rates are going up and life becomes less affordable for Nova Scotians. We need to invest. We need to invest in our agricultural producers and ensure that more Nova Scotians eat locally produced food. My question to the minister is, what is the NDP Government doing to make certain local food purchases increase in Nova Scotia in the immediate future?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I can tell you that we're doing quite a considerable amount and I'm sure that the minister will have a great response for that question, I'm sure he'll take it on a different line and we are doing tremendous, not only for our fishing industry but our farmers. We believe in Nova Scotia as a good place to live. Thank you.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, one of the important sections not renewed with the Farm Investment Fund was the drainage program for farmers. The minister knows how important drainage is to farming and that much of our land is low-lying. With the high volume of rainfall we've had these past few weeks, it simply reinforces the need for well-drained lowlands to remain productive with adequate drainage. My question to the minister, and I hope he passes it on, why did government cut funding to drainage for farmers in Nova Scotia?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, again to the member opposite, we've done tremendous work with our farmers and I can assure you the program Select Nova Scotia - I welcome the opportunity for all Nova Scotians to buy local, support our farm industry, it's a good thing to do. Thank you very much.

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

Before I recognize the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to make a ruling on a petition that was tabled earlier by the honourable member for Yarmouth. It is not in order. What was tabled was not a petition addressed to this House; it was a bundle of postcards addressed to various Liberal MLAs. It does not request the House of Assembly to do anything, so it is out of order and will be returned to the member. (Interruptions)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 59.

Bill No. 59 - Elections Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond. (Interruptions)

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I believe that's the most assertive I've seen the Premier all session, just in that brief exchange.

It's a pleasure as the Justice Critic to speak on third reading of Bill No. 59, the Elections Act. Let me start my comments by first expressing my sincerest thanks and the sincerest thanks of the members of the Liberal caucus to the chief electoral officer, Christine McCulloch, her hardworking staff and the representatives of each political Party who sit on the Election Commission. These are volunteers who give freely of their time on behalf of the political Parties in Nova Scotia to sit on the Election Commission and to work towards strengthening election laws in this province.

I'm also aware that the chief electoral officer has sought the advice of experts here in Nova Scotia and outside of our province, in bringing forward the recommendations which help form the basis of Bill No. 59. Allow me to express the thanks of our caucus for

the work they have done, the many hours they have put into bringing these changes. (Applause)

Allow me as well to indicate there are a number of very positive changes taking place in the Elections Act as contained in Bill No. 59. One of the changes, as I've mentioned before, that has received little notice but I think will be an important tool for the political Parties in this province of attracting new members and keeping members involved, a change to electoral finance in this province, under this bill, now allows Parties to issue tax receipts for registration costs to attend annual meetings of political Parties.

Prior to this, that was not taxable and therefore no receipt could be issued and it is certainly a challenge for all political Parties in this province to continue to ask its membership to attend annual meetings, especially with the cost of travel, the cost of accommodations plus the cost of registration. I believe this change, although some might see it as minor, is certainly an important tool for all political Parties in this province for recruiting members and making sure that our membership stays active in our Parties throughout the year.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of changes that will allow increased access to voting in our province by allowing more mobile polls, extending some of the dates of when elections can take place, simplifying the write-in ballot rules, all changes that we certainly hope will allow all Nova Scotians easier access to exercising their right to vote. I'm pleased to see, as the previous Chair of the Select Committee on Participation in the Democratic Process, the chief electoral officer has taken one of our recommendations and has put, as one of her objectives, more public education and undertaking more programs to encourage Nova Scotians to vote in the Province of Nova Scotia.

One of the other changes, which I believe brings some clarity to a very important issue, is that of public opinion surveys and the rules around them during an election period. There is now a specific criterion as to the reporting of those polls, the information that must be provided, as well as a total ban on new polls being disclosed on election day. Mr. Speaker, it would have been my wish, and I believe the wish of our entire caucus, had we been able to come into this House with Bill No. 59 and walked out of this House with the unanimous support of Bill No. 59. That is the way changes to our election laws should be made in this province, but unfortunately, as you know, it has not been the case. Instead we have seen politics stick its head into Bill No. 59 and to the election laws of our province. One of the glaring omissions, the minute Bill No. 59 was introduced by the Minister of Justice, was the lack of any controls on third party advertising.

Madam Speaker, you would recall that following the last provincial election in June 2009 the chief electoral officer received complaints about third party advertising supporting candidates and political Parties in this province that had absolutely no control or limits attached to them. In her report following the election of 2009 the chief electoral

officer highlighted this as a concern, so the government was aware this was an issue. When Bill No. 59 was tabled, the report that was accompanied with that from the chief electoral officer also had a section in it dealing with the fact that third party advertising was not contained in Bill No. 59 and she set out her concerns.

Now there has been a bit of a debate as to what the rules of Nova Scotia stated, previously, on third party advertising. The chief electoral officer's view, which I share, is that there were no limits placed on third party advertising in this province. The government has turned around and said that it was their opinion, once they looked at the Act, that there actually was a ban in Nova Scotia under the Act and that because of the Supreme Court of Canada decision they would have to bring in limits. No one really believes that but the government has used that as a way of trying to explain its flip-flop and about-face in bringing forward changes to third party advertising.

When the government finally acknowledged this - one of the other things, before I go on on third party advertising, because I think that's a subject that needs a bit more discussion - one of the other glaring admissions from Bill No. 59 is fixed election dates. Madam Speaker, as you know, as I already pointed out and it's in the report of the chief electoral officer that accompanies this, Nova Scotia is now in the minority of Canadian provinces and jurisdictions that do not have fixed election dates. Our caucus, under our Leader, has tabled legislation calling for fixed election dates in this province. It is my understanding, I believe, that the Progressive Conservative caucus has supported that as well. Right now, in the Province of Nova Scotia, the only political Party that does not support fixed date elections is the New Democratic Party.

Fixed date elections allow some certainty for Nova Scotians, allow some certainty for the chief electoral officer and those who run elections in our province, and it takes the politics away from setting election dates. Instead, the Premier, who although campaigned saying he would do government differently, has decided to maintain the ability to call an election at his convenience, rather than having the fixed election dates that the vast majority of Canadian jurisdictions now have.

Now back to third party advertising. When this came about, the government initially - I believe it was on a Monday - said they were prepared. Upon reflection, the minister went to his riding and he was overwhelmed with his constituents who told him that he had to change his mind on third party advertising, so on Monday morning, following his conversion on the weekend, he indicated he was now prepared to bring in third party advertising limits.

What we received was 18 pages of amendments. Initially we were told, or led to believe, that those amendments strictly dealt with third party advertising. We now know that is not the case. Because of the work of our Leader and of our caucus, we were able to discover the government had more changes in mind. Two of the most significant changes which we have raised concerns with have been that now, after this bill is passed, which the government will use its majority with the support of the Progressive Conservatives to pass,

political Parties and candidates in the next election will be given a voters list that will include the year of birth of the voter, of the elector, and whether or not they voted in the June 9, 2009 provincial election.

Madam Speaker, we are forced to ask, where is this request coming from and where is this change coming from? As I indicated before, when we were at the Law Amendments Committee, I made the request that the chief electoral officer, who was in the room, appear in front of the committee to answer that question as to whether this was an initiative that she was pursuing and, second, did she have any concerns with it?

As you know, the majority of the members on that committee are government members and they used their majority to prevent the chief electoral officer from being able to come and answer that question, so anyone who doubts now whether there are politics at play, there should be no doubt at all.

Subsequently, the chief electoral officer has now come out and said that she has concerns whether she can even adhere to the requests being imposed by the NDP Government, with the support of the Progressive Conservative caucus. She has indicated, first thing, they don't track whether people voted or not, so that's one thing, they'll have to go through the lists and start keeping a database of who has voted and who has not voted. Second, she was unsure if she would even be able to provide the year of birth of the elector because that information is part of an agreement she shares with the federal government in obtaining the information used for the permanent list of electors. So why would a government, a majority government, bring in changes that the chief electoral officer questions can even be implemented?

Again one has to question, what are the politics at play? Then, naturally, our Leader continued to raise the issues of what the privacy concerns are about disclosing someone's year of birth and whether they voted. The chief electoral officer expressed her concerns and the Premier's response was, well, we have a difference of opinion. Then lo and behold, the protection of privacy officer arrives and took the initiative to write to the Minister of Justice, once she saw the changes, and raise her concerns as to whether this would violate the protection of privacy laws in Nova Scotia.

When we brought this forward, again the government refused to acknowledge the concerns raised and father knows best was their response, the NDP Government knows best when it comes to privacy and they are moving forward with these changes.

Madam Speaker, this House potentially could have ended last Friday, had it not been for the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Liberal caucus who said, this is not right, this is not the way election laws should be made in Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians have a right to know the changes being made could have an impact on them. We know the Progressive Conservative caucus was happy to go home with watered-down amendments

but it is the Liberal caucus that said, we are prepared to stay, we are prepared to fight and we are prepared to make sure that Nova Scotians know that their best interests are being fought for in this House by the Nova Scotia Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, the government turned around on Monday and called hours from 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight, on the Elections Act - 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight, a 12-hour day - extended hours is how we refer to it, a majority government having to bring in extended hours on the Elections Act. The Liberal caucus had a choice to make: we could have said 12 hours, that's too much; instead, we took the challenge because we knew Nova Scotians shared the concerns we had, so we continued to raise our concerns.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I'm extremely proud of my caucus colleagues and of being a member of a caucus that stood up for Nova Scotians. While the Tories decided to take a back seat and watch, we stood up for Nova Scotians, we brought their concerns to the floor of this House, and we made sure that the government knew what they were doing was wrong and it was not in the best interests of Nova Scotians. As I've indicated before, third party advertising limits are essential to ensure fair elections in this province.

During Committee of the Whole House on Bills, I took the opportunity to share with members of the government our concerns about their relationship with organized labour in this province and the history of that relationship. In the past, I've said since 1998 that the NDP as a Party had received over \$1 million from organized labour. I was wrong and I admit I was wrong. Upon review, when not only looking at the donations to the Party but to individual candidates, the figure is closer to \$2 million, double what I had suggested. Any interest group that has given a political Party in Nova Scotia almost \$2 million since 1998 should be of utmost concern to Nova Scotians. That is why we wanted to make sure that the playing field was fair.

If one has to look further in case there are still members of the government who say it's unfair to point out that is the relationship, let's look at what happened days before the last provincial election where the unions tried to find a way of getting around electoral financing rules to fund money to the NDP. At the end, the chief electoral officer fined the NDP \$10,000; I believe it's the first time in the history of Nova Scotia that a Party has been fined by the chief electoral officer. Once again, the NDP made history. Then she referred the matter to the police for investigation and upon review, the statute of limitations was only six months and it expired. So we still never had the opportunity to see whether criminal charges were warranted in the financing scheme that took place between organized labour and the NDP prior to the last election.

One of the positive changes, as well, in this Act is that the statute of limitations has been increased to one year. It is certainly our hope that all political Parties and all candidates will adhere to the election laws of this province, will respect them, and ensure that Nova Scotians know elections were carried out in a fair and impartial manner in our province.

As we stand here today, our caucus realizes that this bill is going to pass. Under the Rules of this Legislature, the government has a majority. We have limited tools available to us to raise the concerns on behalf of Nova Scotians. I believe we have done so on this bill and I believe a number of my colleagues will express some of their concerns as well. At Committee of the Whole House on Bills we held recorded votes and when it was at the end in committee as to whether this bill should move forward, the Liberal caucus clearly said no; the Progressive Conservative caucus voted with the government in saying yes. This bill, I believe, has clearly shown Nova Scotians who and which Leader is truly standing up for the interests of Nova Scotians in this House. I believe, without a doubt, that the actions of the Leader of the Liberal caucus has removed any doubt as to who has the commitment, the passion and determination to fight for Nova Scotians here in this House of Assembly.

It was our Leader who was the first to call for the elimination of the Industrial Expansion Fund. It was our Leader who was the one who called upon the government to address increases to Nova Scotia Power rates for Nova Scotians. It was our Leader who called for a value-for-money audit of Nova Scotia Power, which the Premier has rejected. It is our Leader who has continued to call for a fairer tax system here in Nova Scotia.

I'm proud of my colleague, the member for Kings West, who has been standing in this House passionately speaking about constituents in his riding and in the Valley who have been affected by drug addiction and drug abuse and the lack of support being made available to them. As well, my colleague, the member for Kings West, is the one who has continually talked about support for our farmers and support for locally grown food here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, our member for Halifax Clayton Park has been the voice joining our Leader in fighting for pharmacies throughout the Province of Nova Scotia while supporting lower drug prices for Nova Scotians. She has continued her call for a holiday known as Joe Howe Day, for families in Nova Scotia. She, as well, has been fighting for more support for Nova Scotians who suffer from multiple sclerosis here in this province and she has, as well, introduced legislation for insulin pumps for diabetes patients in this province.

My colleague, the member for Digby-Annapolis, as well, has continued his fight for fishermen throughout Nova Scotia by raising their issues here in this House. He, as well, I must point out, has been the one who has tabled legislation to support the music industry in Nova Scotia so it continues to grow and prosper. My colleague, the member for Bedford-Birch Cove, has held this government accountable on the issue of tuition increases for university students here in this province.

The NDP spent years fighting for students yet, while in government, have fallen silent. I believe, today, we learned that St. F.X. University has joined other universities in another 3 per cent increase on tuition here in this province. It would be wrong if I did not

recognize my colleague, the member for Bedford-Birch Cove, for her passion and concern over the issues of ticks and Lyme disease for both her constituents and pets throughout her riding and throughout Nova Scotia. I have no doubt that one day her concerns will be vindicated and she will be the first to remind me of that when that day arrives.

Our colleague, the member for Dartmouth East, has been talking about this government's refusal to stand up to Nova Scotia Power in trying to have the concerns of ratepayers dealt with by this government rather than simply watching rates increase and doing nothing about it. As well, he has been calling upon the government to bring about regulations and deal with the issue of fracking in the Province of Nova Scotia, which is of great concern. As well, my colleague, the member for Glace Bay, one of our new colleagues here, has certainly been fighting as well.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I could just remind the member it is Bill No. 59 that we are intending to speak to, if you could bring it back to the bill, thank you. (Interruptions) Order. I'm asking that the member return to the debate on the bill. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: Madam Speaker, I think it's important to point out that Bill No. 59 is the bill that brought us here. It's the bill that sets out the rules as to how some of us might return here after the following election. It is the basis on which we are able to carry out our duties here, as members in the Legislature. I believe a review of what our members do is a reflection of the importance of Bill No. 59, a reflection of the importance of making sure we get the legislation right, a reflection of the importance of making sure that this brings to Nova Scotians the best possible representatives that they can have, following the next election.

In referring to that, I think it's important to look at what the Elections Act has been able to give to Nova Scotians and the quality representation that they have received here in this House. We will want to make sure those changes do not impact the quality of the representation we receive, which is why I believe it's important to highlight the member for Glace Bay, one of our new members here, and how he has brought the issues of his riding to the floor of this House with his support for a geothermal project for the Glace Bay BAYplex, which will be an important investment into the environment and sustainability for that facility and for the community. As well, he has given an impassioned call to the Minister of Education to maintain liaison officers in the schools of Glace Bay and the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board.

As well, we are fortunate to have with us one of our new colleagues, the member for Colchester North, who has brought her experience as an educator and administrator to the floor of this House, and to our caucus, working to make sure that students and their best interests are protected in this province. She has stood up and defended Reading Recovery, and as well has criticized cuts to the classrooms of teachers and teachers' assistants.

Nova Scotians and members of this House will never forget that the NDP Government is the one that cut the Yarmouth ferry as long as the member for Yarmouth remains in this House. He has spoken passionately about the 11,000 Nova Scotians who have lost their jobs because of the cuts made by the government. As well, he has been a leading voice on issues of economic development and development of tourism here in this province.

Madam Speaker, my colleague, the member for Preston, has certainly reminded this government that Nova Scotians expect a deal to be a deal. When this government turned around and broke the memorandum of understanding with municipal units in this province, he has continued to remind them of that, and remind them of the fact that property taxes will increase in this province as a result of the decisions made by this NDP Government.

Madam Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the efforts of the member for Dartmouth North who has stood in this House on a number of occasions to continue to speak for the people who are underprivileged, the poor, those who have tremendous concerns in this province. I certainly want to acknowledge his efforts, as an Independent member of this House, to continue to fight for his constituents and those who do not have a voice here in this province.

Madam Speaker, with those comments, as I indicated, Bill No. 59, we have basically used the legislative tools that are available to us to allow this government the opportunity to see that this bill has flaws, and it's a bill that Nova Scotians are expressing concern with. I know some of my colleagues were receiving phone calls even this morning with concerns about their year of birth being disclosed.

The Minister of Justice has told us that by having access to a person's year of birth it was going to increase voter participation in this province. My question - and I think the question of all Nova Scotians - how? How is that going to increase voter participation? How will Parties use that information to increase voter participation? He has never answered that.

I have to say that I do feel bad for the Minister of Justice. I do believe he is an honourable gentleman. He has been given this file and he has been asked to make excuses for political decisions made by this government, decisions that I believe were made by people who sit in the gallery, not on the floor of this House, yet he is the one who has been forced to try to provide explanations which Nova Scotians and members of this House simply are not buying.

With that, Madam Speaker, it is clear that the government, with the support of the Progressive Conservatives, is going to allow the passage of Bill No. 59. We asked that this bill be held over until the Fall; our Leader spoke very clearly about that. There is no

impending election - let's work on this bill so that all Parties can stand in this House, all Leaders can stand in this House and say that it has unanimous support, that it is a fair piece of legislation and one that should go forward to meet the ground rules for the next provincial campaign.

That is not going to happen. Unfortunately we leave this House with the passage of updating our Elections Act, which still has the ugly hand of politics on it and this is as a result of the interventions by the New Democratic Party.

As I indicated before, Madam Speaker, I'm proud to be a member of a caucus that decided it wasn't time to go home - it was time to take a stand, it was time to fight for Nova Scotians, and it was time to hold this government accountable. We have done so, and I can assure you that under the leadership of our Leader, and the strength of our caucus, we will be back next session to do the very same thing. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker I would remind all members that the bill on the floor is Bill No. 59. I would ask you to speak to the bill and stick with that, please. Thank you very much.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, I would just like to begin my brief remarks by expressing a degree of appreciation and thanks to the many volunteers and advisers to all Parties, including our own, who participated in the process over the past year and a bit of gathering information, of providing feedback to the Election Commission. I know in the case of the PC Party that it was a volunteer effort that included both those who have legal expertise and those who have on-the-ground elections expertise, who participated in meetings and hearings around the province, as did similar volunteers from all Parties, in putting together a new Elections Act.

I do just want to start by thanking them for doing their homework and doing their bit by trying to make our electoral process work better. It is with them in mind that I say how sad I am that, unfortunately after all their work, it was toward the end of this session that flawed bill did come before this House of Assembly for the consideration by the members here - it came late, it was flawed, it had obvious holes, it required repeated rewrites and amendments and, despite all of this, remains a flawed bill, Madam Speaker.

I am glad to report that our approach, the PC caucus approach, was to take the work of our own advisers and volunteers when it came to the Elections Act and attempt to fix the bill by drafting amendments that we identified as important, to attempt to make the bill a better bill and worthy of more support - I speak specifically of the amendment to ensure that the voices of disabled Nova Scotians are, by law, taken into account when regulations around access to polling stations and the ballot box itself are being drafted and enforced. We heard, from the League for Equal Opportunities, of many examples of where a regulation access may exist, but the access nevertheless remains denied. I suspect that other

caucuses have heard the same concern over time and I'm glad that we were able to bring forward that amendment to make the bill better when it comes to access for disabled Nova Scotians.

Both Opposition Parties recognized that there were serious flaws in the bill with regard to third party advertising; in fact it was silent on third party advertising at a time when, without some legislative limits, the sky would be the limit on third party advertising. We found it odd that on Page 6 of the Election Commission Report there is an entire section on the need for regulations of third party advertising, and yet the bill that came forward as a result of that report was silent on that issue.

So, in the Law Amendments Committee, both Opposition Parties brought forward amendments to restrict third party advertising and then again, in this House, we brought forward an amendment to restrict third party advertising, importantly to ensure that there a remedy when the law is broken, before the damage is done, when an election campaign is still underway. Those are some examples of how we have attempted to work constructively here in this House to make a flawed bill a better bill.

That, Madam Speaker, brings me to Clause 44 of the bill which is the clause that, as amended, allows for the collection and transmission of year of birth data of electors. I will say - and I mean this - that I do want to commend the members of the Liberal caucus, the member previous who just spoke on their behalf and the rest of the members, for identifying a remaining flaw in the amended bill around year of birth. I recognize that they took the lead in arguing that that was wrong, and it remains wrong. I think that it's important that in this House we recognize when someone has identified a flaw and done what they can to address it - and I say that sincerely. In fact, just as I appreciate that the Liberal caucus supported our amendments, and I know they received all-Party support and got included in the final bill, we did listen to the views of the Liberal caucus on the issue of the year of birth and we ended up voting with them against Clause 44 when we went clause by clause in Committee of the Whole House.

I just want to make clear that not only did we vote with the Liberal caucus in opposition to that particular provision, we remain opposed to that particular provision; in fact I will add that I can assure all members of this House that the transmission of information of that nature around year of birth is not an item that our Party ever asked for, ever wanted, ever considered, ever thought about, ever dreamed would become part of the final Elections Act - it certainly did not come from here. And, obviously, given the actions of the Liberal caucus in the last few days, it didn't come from there. It begs the question, of course, where did it come from? We remain opposed to that provision and we remain concerned about it.

As the bill moves forward, I know that all Parties in this House - not caucuses, but certainly the Parties that do the work to identify voters and get out to the polls - need to

make some decisions as result of the bill about how they handle information if they receive it, and ensure that they're in compliance with the provisions of the bill that are there to protect people's privacy, and make their own decisions about whether they'll receive it and what will happen to that information if we get there. I say that, Madam Speaker, because our approach to this bill all along has been to attempt to find ways to make it worthy of support in this House, to try to find ways to amend it to make it a better bill.

It is true we did not join in the Liberal Party's efforts on Clause 44, although we did vote with them in the end, because our approach was different. It was to try to find solutions and that is why we brought forward the amendments that we did. I think we'll all have to think through, or ask ourselves why we weren't able to get to an amendment on Clause 44 that would have struck the offensive provision of Clause 44 from the bill. Certainly, if it had come forward from any place in this House, we would have been supportive of such an amendment, but no amendment has been forthcoming. That is why I say it will now fall to all of us to ensure that our respective Parties act in a responsible manner respecting people's privacy when it comes to the information that Clause 44 will provide.

Madam Speaker, there are 375 clauses in the bill. We are offended by Clause 44. We do agree, as the previous member had indicated, that on a bill as important as the Elections Act, it should have the support of all Parties in the House when it goes through. That is exactly why we took the approach of bringing forward amendments to make it a better bill - but here we are with a 375-clause bill, one offensive clause and many other clauses that we need to weigh against that offensive clause.

I raised the amendments that we had brought ourselves, the disabled Nova Scotia consultation provisions, the access to voting stations that that provision will allow for. The previous member mentioned some of the other parts of the bill that are at least an improvement over the status quo, provisions that will make it easier for people to vote, make voting more accessible, allow the Election Commission to do work to try to increase participation in our elections, which is a very worthy objective. I should add that when it comes to third party ads, without this bill the sky would remain the limit, that we have in our country a Supreme Court ruling that struck down limits on third party advertising and left it to our provincial Legislatures to come up with reasonable limits, limits that balance freedom of speech with the need to conduct fair and impartial elections.

To our Party it would be offensive to allow the status quo to be maintained, a status quo where third parties are without limit, where there is not enough provision for access to voting stations for disabled Nova Scotians, where there is not enough power being conveyed to the Election Commission to ensure that as many Nova Scotians vote as possible. So, because of all those things, we have a choice to make and we are going to allow the bill to proceed because of the 374 other provisions in the bill.

I certainly want to call on all Parties to continue to work on a solution to Clause 44, because it is a shame that we have a bill before the House that won't, in the end, receive

unanimous supports when it comes to our elections. It is a shame that we have a provision in the bill that no Opposition Party asked for - and I have yet to understand where it came from on the government side, but here we are, Madam Speaker.

So I hope that as we proceed this afternoon that all Parties will renew their commitment to working on the remaining flaws in the bill, as we go forward and see it through the House. Then get on to hopefully, what will be a day when we can all be comfortable with the Elections Act as it stands. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill No. 59. I want to first all thank the members of this caucus who have been so diligent in looking out for and defending what, I believe, are the privacy rights of Nova Scotians when it comes to this piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, we have raised a number of concerns. One of these is around privacy issues. The fact that now political Parties will have the right to know whether or not you have voted, know the year you were born in and other personal information which, quite frankly, I don't believe any political Party has the right to know.

We've also raised the issue of third party advertising which, in the original bill and as the previous speaker had mentioned, all political Parties had participated in trying to put Bill No. 59 together, so that when it came to this House it would have unanimous support. When it came, we were surprised. The third party advertising was left out of it, a flaw that had been identified during the last campaign. It had been identified following the last campaign and, quite frankly, the chief electoral officer identified it to the government of today, and told them that this was a serious flaw in the Elections Bill and had to be addressed.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice went home to Pictou County and had an epiphany; all of a sudden he realized that third party advertising had been left out of the Elections Bill. Well, he came back with 18 pages of amendments but I'm not sure that it actually addresses the real problem with third party advertising. Yes, third parties have to register, yes, you have to identify your organization but it doesn't anywhere address the issue of who is funding that organization and are there limits on that. How many third party organizations can you have? Those were questions that we wanted the Chief Electoral Officer to have an opportunity to look at.

All we asked of this government was to step back, that's all we said - let's step back and have our concerns addressed. It took over a year for all of our Parties to come together with Bill No. 59, to put together the changes that were presently going to happen to the Elections Act. Then, all of a sudden - I think it was on May 6th - when the bill was

introduced - early the next week we bring in 18 pages of amendments that we have to rush through this House.

Madam Speaker, there is no election on the horizon and contrary to what is said, whether that by-election is called in the next two weeks or three months, this bill will not be in place to deal with the by-election in Cape Breton North. It is a misnomer, it is a mis-truth and it is a way to try to spin a flawed bill through this House and justify the rushing of this bill through the Legislature. This will have nothing to do with the by-election in Cape Breton North.

Madam Speaker, we think the right thing for this House to do would have been to set this bill aside and allow the professionals in this province, who deal with this issue every day - the chief electoral officer and her team - an opportunity to assess the amendments that were in front of us, to make sure that we were actually closing the loophole that had been identified, one that had been, quite frankly, abused by political Parties and organizations, to help manipulate the outcome of elections. It has been mentioned in this House about the changes that come through Bill No. 59. It is so flawed, Madam Speaker, that making a few changes to it is not good enough to get our support for this piece of legislation.

When you look at the fact that we still do not know whether or not the loophole around third party advertising has been closed, for the life of me, I do not understand why the Progressive Conservative Party would be supporting this flawed piece of legislation. Why would they allow a Party that has a history of using that piece to go forward - why would they not want the chief electoral officer to have an opportunity to review the amendments and then make judgment on them and then express to us here in the House how she feels about it, so that we could have a debate on that; not a debate on one that, in our view, has been rushed through this House and we've had to stand up here and debate and defend the interests of Nova Scotians when it comes not only to the privacy issue, but third party advertising.

This week, because we've delayed this bill, the privacy commissioner had an opportunity to tell us that she's written to the government expressing her concerns about privacy issues. It's rather interesting that over the last week a member of this House made it clear in public that she did not want her banking records known by the government of today. She wanted a cheque written. I agree with her, I absolutely agree with her. Today we're standing in this House - she was waiting for six months to be paid by the Province of Nova Scotia because she wanted a cheque written and didn't want to disclose her personal banking information. I agree with her. She shouldn't have to.

My father died in 1973, my mother died two years ago. Up until that day, her phone number in that phone book was never in her own name. Her civic address was never identified in the phone book for one reason - she wanted to protect her privacy. She did not want someone to know her number. Those in the community knew it, people in our surrounding areas knew it, but people who lived across the province didn't know it and no

political Party knew it. Why should they know it? If you didn't have the courage to knock on her door or doors across this province and ask for support, why should you have the right to find out that she's living in a particular house, living alone now - we'll figure that out - and have someone representing a political Party call and harass her, based on information that is none of their business. That's what's happening in this House. (Applause)

AN. HON. MEMBER: That must be the way the Liberals do it.

MR. MCNEIL: I hear some chirping in the background on the other side of the House. It has not been the Liberal Party that's been accused of harassing voters in this province. It has not been the Liberal Party that has been charged for manipulating financing in the Province of Nova Scotia. It's been the ones sitting across from us. (Applause)

While Bill No. 59 may be a joke to the members across and the privacy issues faced by Nova Scotians may be a joke to them, it is not to this caucus. If they believed in that piece of legislation, they should have stepped back, they should have allowed Elections Nova Scotia to have a review of the amendments and they should have let the privacy commissioner review it. As a matter of fact, Elections Nova Scotia is not sure they will even be able to comply with the law.

But what does that matter? This is a government that has forced the municipalities to break the law. Why would it matter in Bill No. 59 that the Elections Commission can't meet the legislation. This is a government that is trying to bully its way through, trying to make sure that it is going to force on Nova Scotians to have to give up their personal information so that they can find a way to manipulate the elections in this province.

We should be stepping back and doing what is right for the people of this province. As the member for Glace Bay identified a few nights ago, these are the rules that we're setting out on how the elections will be run over the next number of years. (Interruption) He is a good member. He said, let's get it right, let's get it right. There are people across this province who work for all political Parties. As a matter of fact, I've heard from some who work for other political Parties telling us, keep up the fight.

It is none of the business of the government or any other Party in the House in what year I was born. What's the need for that? It's an invasion of privacy. I've yet to figure out why the government wants to infringe on the rights of Nova Scotians and dig into their private matters. This piece of legislation is so flawed that two independent people, the Elections Nova Scotia commissioner and the privacy commissioner, have raised serious concerns. It's not just the Liberal caucus that has been raising those concerns - they have raised serious concerns about this piece of legislation and the privacy issues.

Since we've been talking about this issue since Monday, Nova Scotians have been responding to us. I'm sure the members have been reading letters to the editor and the responses that Nova Scotians have had on-line to articles when it comes to the privacy issue. En masse, Nova Scotians have said this is wrong and that government should move away from asking for that personal information to ensure that there will be no undue influence on voters across this province.

Do the work. Don't ask Elections Nova Scotia to do the work that your political Party is unwilling to do. Don't ask them to do it. It is an invasion of privacy and they know it. There is only one reason why they want this information and that is to infringe on the privacy of Nova Scotians and to manipulate the outcome of election campaigns; that's the way it is. Bill No. 59 is flawed and this caucus will not be supporting it. As I said a few nights ago, one of the first things we would do - if we get the privilege to govern this province - is strike out this piece. It is not the right of politicians or particularly the government to be sticking their noses in the private business of Nova Scotians. This caucus will not sell itself out for an amended piece of legislation, for a few short crumbs added for the Progressive Conservative caucus. This is based on principle and we will make our stand and we've made our stand.

I've gone across this province and I will continue to go across, talking about the fact (Interruptions) I'm sure if someone wants to get up to talk about why they want to stick their nose in the private business of every Nova Scotian, I'd be more than happy to hear it. Stand up, be counted. It's not just the Liberal caucus. It's the Privacy Commissioner who said they have no business asking for it. It is Elections Nova Scotia that said, give us the time to review your flawed piece of legislation.

I don't think it's any accident that third party advertising was left out of the original bill. It was no accident, it was a calculated plan on behalf of this government. Elections Nova Scotia would have told them, first of all, there are still loopholes with third party advertising and furthermore, it is none of your business on the privacy matters of Nova Scotians. Instead, they didn't want that answer. They wanted to be able to find a back door, a sleazy way to get it in, to manipulate the process and that's exactly what has happened in this House. They sat here and they slid it in the backdoor, behind the backs of Nova Scotians, away from the very person that this piece of legislation will make an officer of the House and moved it away from making sure that it went through the test and been reviewed by an outside party.

Why would you do that? For one reason - you didn't want the answer they were going to give you because they would have said, stay out of there, it is none of your business and it infringes on the private rights of Nova Scotians. Why would we be surprised? This is a government that was infringing on the rights of one of its own members, trying to force them to give out their banking information instead of writing a cheque. It's a manipulation, an abuse of power, as they would say. It wasn't good enough to dig in on their own member; they want to dig into the rights of Nova Scotians.

As we continue on, this piece of legislation is flawed from the very beginning and this caucus will not sell itself out for some small amendments to ensure that we support that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask that the honourable member retract the word “sleazy”. It is deemed unparliamentary and we can proceed.

MR. MCNEIL: Madam Speaker, let me be clear that I was referring to the process of being sleazy, no individual, but I will remove, strike that word from the record and apologize for that. (Applause)

What would you suggest would be the appropriate word I call them, Madam Speaker? They have done and gone around the rules of the process and manipulated them. There is only one reason why that was left out of the original bill - they were hoping to slide it in under the eyes of the members of this House. I’m extremely proud of the fact that the Liberal caucus stood up and defended the rights of Nova Scotians

The minister is going to get an opportunity to explain to every Nova Scotian why he was sticking his nose in their business. He will get an opportunity to do that, as a matter of fact I’m sure he’ll enjoy it. He’ll get an opportunity to explain why he needs to know the year of birth of every Nova Scotian. Since he hasn’t done it outside this House, I hope he gets an opportunity to do it soon. But it is inappropriate and unnecessary for any political Party to know the personal information of Nova Scotians; do the work.

I’ll go back to the very beginning. This piece of legislation is flawed in many cases. Let’s back away from it, set it aside and let the independent bodies outside of the Legislature review it and then we can continue this debate in the Fall. With those few remarks, Madam Speaker, I will take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: I guess there is one last option for the government here and that is, at the end of debate today, to not actually even call a vote on this bill, to call an end to business and hold it over for a vote in the Fall. Of course that would be the right thing to do.

The fact is, at the beginning of this debate, there were a number of members on the opposite side who said the elections officer is fine with it, the privacy officer is fine it. They were chirping that across in heckles and, lo and behold, both have now been in the paper indicating they are not. The elections officer has issued a statement, a very clear statement, saying that her office needs time to review the bill because it may actually violate their agreement with Elections Canada, as it is currently worded. I would think that that alone would be reason enough to delay passage of this bill to sort that issue out, but it wasn’t.

Then the next day the freedom of information officer indicated that she had written a letter - that her office had written a letter - to the government to indicate that her office also had concerns with the provisions. You would think that by that second item that that would be enough to put a hold on it and address those issues before it's finally voted on, that that would be the right thing to do because there isn't a rush on this bill.

Madam Speaker, thus far that hasn't been done but that still remains an option today in the Legislature. Those concerns are real. Elections Nova Scotia has indicated it has not been able to find a single other jurisdiction that includes these rules. We said that on day one, and when I stood up and said that, the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island yelled across the floor that I was wrong and now the CEO of Elections Nova Scotia has come out and said that I was right. The government has not tabled any information to dispute either what has been suggested by myself or other members of our caucus or what has been now said by the CEO of Elections Nova Scotia, nothing. In fact, when the Premier was asked in the House by the media, he didn't dispute it. He said that it was a difference of opinion on whether it was an important issue and that very well may be the case, it may very well be a difference of opinion on how important the issue it, but it should be reason enough to hold the bill over.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important to understand why this bill was so important and why now, as the Leader of the Official Opposition quite rightly said, we're hearing from Nova Scotians of all political persuasion and people, frankly, of no specific political persuasion on the issue. To look at that, we need to go back to the 18th Century in Nova Scotia and why this is an issue, because the issues that are being addressed today are not new. On February 7, 1758, the London Board of Trade asked Governor Charles Lawrence to convene a General Assembly in Nova Scotia because they were tired of the kind of rule that was going on at the time. It took some time, but on May 20th, eight days before he left to lead the siege against Fortress Louisbourg, he ordered the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly to be constituted and he established the regulations for Nova Scotia's very first election.

It was almost a full century later that, in fact, you had elections in this province that were governed in a way where people had privacy of how they voted, so this is not a new issue, the issue of who voted and when they voted and what community they were in. Of course, what would happen before 1847 is the candidates would stand up at the hustings and the sheriff would be the returning officer. People would come in and put their name down and they would show that they owned property and then people would dispute that and the candidates would sit there and they would dispute that people were eligible to vote. Part of their dispute of how they would vote is when they watched them vote, they would look and they would say, I don't think that person is going to support me so I'm going to challenge their vote. The sheriff, who was the returning officer at the time, would know how each person voted and would put a tick mark by the disputed elector.

Some of these elections would take a long time. In fact the longest one at the time, or one of the longest ones, was actually in the Cape Breton township and it went on for

almost a month, the voting, because they didn't have all the voting on the same day. So by the time they worked their way from Sydney down to Arichat, by the time the sheriff worked his way from Sydney down to Arichat, they were keeping a running total every day and people knew who was winning in the election and they could get their people out to vote, and rush them down to different polls and different areas, because they knew who had voted. Not only did they know who had voted, but they had a pretty good idea of who had voted, and the candidates had stood up and objected to the voters who they didn't support.

It wasn't until 1870 that we ended up with all the voting happening on one day. It was significant because - there was a book in the library and there was an interesting petition that came forward to change this. At the time it was as much about the privacy issue as it was about the fact that this resulted in drunkenness and violence because what candidates would do is they would rent out a house or a location where they would provide accommodation and lodging and alcohol.

The folks down in Musquodoboit sent a petition in at the time, and I'll quote that and obviously table it. It is the opening to a book called *Electioneering Against Johnny Blue Nose*. The petition at the time said, "... your petitioners lament ... the Occurrence and Prevailing extent to which the Scenes of Riot and dissipation have been carried in the late County Elections ... [and] suggest that the opening of the poll in so very few places ... Collects the freeholders from the extremes so far distant they frequently ... are compelled to take Shelter in that worst of asylums (the Candidates Open Houses) and in very many instances are rendered unfit either to demean [sic] themselves as tolerable members of the civil society. . ." I'll table that.

It was that push at the time, Madam Speaker, that went to this idea that we should have private voting, that we should have all the polls happen in the same day, regardless of where they were in the province, and that was important. So we dealt with one issue and they brought in an Act at the time called The Simultaneous Polling Act of 1847, an Act of this Legislature, which has obviously been repeated and has been incorporated in the Elections Act ever since and it is incorporated in this Elections Bill; that very move is incorporated in this Elections Bill that is before the House today. It is extraordinarily important; I think we would all agree that that's very important. It led to all kinds of other things.

Members are probably well aware that officially women didn't vote in Nova Scotia until 1920, but it wasn't originally ruled out of order. In fact, in 1793 six women voted and people issued that as challenges against an election in Windsor, but those were issues that have been dealt with in Elections Acts because they came forward, and if you read the accounts of each one of these issues, they were dealt with by the Legislature, sometimes over raucous debates, but at the end of the day these issues were generally dealt with by consensus of the House when it came to the Elections Act and how elections were conducted.

It was after those 1847 elections that we had that switch to responsible government. One of the challenges - and of course they took force because of a whole lot of reasons; the Tories didn't want to resign at the time and so they waited until a confidence vote months later, so you didn't end up with a responsible government actually taking effect until 1848. We just celebrated 250 years of that just a couple years ago, 250 years of that.

We think that these are new issues, but it was then, so there's the first instance of that privacy issue being dealt with. Now we would call it third party advertizing, at the time they didn't call it that, but it was at those elections that all of a sudden you had various religious factions and various church groups trying to influence elections in certain polling districts. Starting in the mid-1800s Samuel Cunard and Enos Collins were probably the best known fundraisers to the Tories at the time, who were trying to get these elections won in certain districts.

You could spend what you wanted on some of these elections and if you looked at some of the numbers it was the wealthiest of Nova Scotians and it was the church organizations and all these, what we would almost call - Samuel Cunard Shipping Line or the church group - third party advertisers today. So this isn't a new issue, the privacy issue isn't a new issue, the third party advertising, who can spend money, these aren't new issues; they go back to the beginning of elections in Nova Scotia and repeatedly they've had to be addressed through Elections Acts.

We stand here today, on a day that, instead holding this bill, which the government could have done a week ago, the government could have done this a week ago - you know, we'll put it on hold, we'll listen to folks, we may not make any changes before we vote on it as the first piece of legislations at the end of the session, but we will at least listen to Nova Scotians. We will respond to, and see if we can resolve the issues of the Chief Electoral Officer. We'll see if we can respond to the issues of the privacy officer. We'll see if we can respond to the issues of the fact that the electoral officer doesn't even think she can live up to this and meet the condition of the Elections Canada rules on the voters list, which Elections Canada owns.

But that didn't happen and so there were some amendments - the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party commented that there was no amendment around Clause 44, but he may misunderstand the process slightly, because there was a vote on that. The member is absolutely right that both Opposition Parties voted against Clause 44, there wouldn't be an amendment to repeal that section because that would be just a vote against it. So you can't amend it to not be there, you just vote against that clause, which we did.

The Progressive Conservative Party Leader is absolutely correct that they had a couple of amendments there. It unfortunate that they actually didn't get what they asked for originally on having a representative for the physically challenged on there, they actually wanted a representative on the commission, they wanted a representative on the commission.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's a good thing.

MR. YOUNGER: It's a great thing but they settled for legislated consultation and I've talked to a couple of groups already who said, well, they already consulted us. Yes it is a step forward, it's there; it means that it's easier to challenge if it doesn't happen, but to give in on the whole bill just because there are a couple of modest improvements - and they are improvements, I don't want to take that away, but the fact is the decision has to be made. There may be no perfect bill; there may be no perfect bill of the Legislature, but the question comes down to, how important are specific issues?

I would argue that the issues of privacy are among the most important issues, not only in Nova Scotia but around the world these days. We need only look at issues - I mean, go to something as silly as Sony PlayStation which - I've never used the Sony PlayStation but apparently it was down for weeks because of a privacy issue. These are not small issues, these are hugely critical issues. Privacy issues are the paramount issues.

The other thing we've seen in the past week or two, especially since the federal election on May 2nd, is the number of provinces moving to amend their own elections legislation. On the weekend - I think it was on the weekend - I picked up the paper and the first thing I noticed was Ontario trying to address issues that have come up federally. One of the issues that they addressed was one that I faced and that we had filed a complaint with Elections Nova Scotia after my own election to this Assembly.

There were a number of people making phone calls on election day to people with Liberal signs on their lawn telling them not to worry, the polls were having extended hours and they would be open until 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. and they could go out and vote. A couple of people had recorded the message on their phone and Elections Nova Scotia had looked into it, they investigated and it was from a disposable cellphone so they couldn't trace it. They agreed it happened, yes, it did happen, it's definitely not allowed, but it was a disposable cellphone. Unfortunately, as we all know with disposable cellphones, they're generally untraceable and so it was dropped.

Ontario's move to actually place specific fines for things like that, that doesn't matter whether that's action that's conducted by a political Party or whether that's action just by an individual. It just points out the fact that there was another opportunity here, by leaving it for the summer and having this be the first thing we vote on in the Fall, it would have allowed us to also look at things that had come up in the federal election. Some things have come up as a result of new technology that exists now that didn't exist 22 years ago when the last major amendments to the Elections Act happened.

We could have looked at those and said, my goodness, are any of the issues that other provinces are now looking at addressing, maybe we should include those as well at the same time? To me, that's what this is really about.

The final issue I wanted to address is, let's not forget that this is retroactive legislation. This legislation provides information to political Parties about who voted in the last election, not on a go-forward basis, but in the last election. We're changing the rules of engagement. The member for Glace Bay used the phrase that, these are the rules of engagement and that's exactly right. It's the best description of what the Elections Act is that I've heard said in the House.

We're changing them retroactively. We're going back to the last election and saying, all those people who went to the polls not realizing this information was going to be provided, guess what? It's going to be provided now. It's going to be provided without ever having the permission that that happened.

I can stand here and hope the government would, at the end of debate today, call the end of business without a vote and allow the vote to happen when we return in the Fall. I don't believe that will happen, but it's a way out for the government. I think the most important thing with this, in light of the fact that we're not in a minority government situation, would be to have a bill that addresses the concerns that have been brought up, responds to those concerns and the Minister of Justice can sit there and yell across the floor that they've responded to the concerns but you have the CEO of Elections Nova Scotia and the privacy commissioner both saying that they haven't. I'll take their word above the Minister of Justice on this issue, that they feel those issues haven't been satisfactorily addressed to their concern. In fact, the CEO of Elections Nova Scotia is saying they haven't even finished looking into that yet.

The fact is, I will take their word, because they are the independent officers of this body and this Act, in fact, proposes to make the CEO of Elections Nova Scotia, the chief electoral officer, an Officer of this Legislature, just like the Auditor General. That's a good thing, Madam Speaker, that is a very good thing, but it's ironic that just before making that person an Officer of the Legislature, just before doing that, they are not going to take her advice and put this on hold. That's problematic to me.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time of the House and I appreciate that the honourable members across the floor, even though I'm sure they disagreed with much of what I said, I appreciate that they listened.

I think this is an important issue, I don't think that this is a new issue, I think it goes back to the days that elections started in Nova Scotia, and I think that this is being handled wrong and could be handled better, so thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure just to say a few words on this third reading of Bill No. 59, the Elections Act. What I really feel at this time is a sense of pride about the work that was done by the Liberal Party and the members of this caucus, over the last week, in terms of speaking loudly and at length. I

know that some of the members may not have appreciated that because these are things that you didn't want to hear and these are things that you hoped would go unnoticed.

I know that. I believe that what the Leader of the Liberal Party said when the amendments were brought in - 18 pages of amendments, on the fly - that the intent was to overwhelm the Opposition, that we wouldn't pay attention, and that exactly what you wanted would go through unnoticed. We were told and given assurances that the amendments put before us were nothing more than a reflection of what is in federal legislation and that it would reflect what Opposition members were asking for, that we now have, in the bill, provisions to restrict and control third party contributions and advertising during an election. That kind of third party activity, which can unduly influence the outcome of an election, is really interference in an election, in many ways, if it's left completely wide open.

We understand there's a right for organizations to speak and to have some say but political Parties have limits and so, too, should third party involvement in an election. We wanted that in the Act, and it wasn't there to begin with, despite two previous reports by the chief electoral officer calling for it and recommending it. As I said before, one expert in this province on elections, or the best expert, is the chief electoral officer. We also look to the advice of the Election Commission, which included all-Party membership; they also were asking for third party restrictions on advertising, yet it wasn't in the original bill.

As I said, the amendments thrown in front of us, after the bill had already come out, were 18 pages in length and were really done on the fly. The fact was, we didn't trust what was in them and when we took a closer look, Madam Speaker, we found we were right to be concerned and to be alert because there were, in fact, privacy issues that are raised by the amendments that were put before us.

We spoke about this on Monday, at great length, and following the government's call of hours that was a 12-hour sitting of the Legislature, a session going from 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight, our members stood up and took their turn and spoke against these amendments and spoke in favour of greater clarity and transparency. In fact, what I spoke most strongly on was why we haven't heard from the chief electoral officer. Why isn't the government taking a moment to see whether the expert who we trust enough to make an independent Officer of the Legislature - the bill, in fact, does change the status of the chief electoral officer and we were taking that step to elevate the status of the chief electoral officer and the work she does, yet we didn't take enough time or show enough respect to hear whether or not those amendments had been considered by that office and whether or not they were, in fact, possible, did they contravene any other Act or did they create other problems?

Madam Speaker, as I stand here and say I'm proud of the work that we did here as a caucus and that our Leader did in leading us in this charge, at the same time, there is an

element of embarrassment that I think this House should recognize and that is that the history of voting in this province has not always been stellar in terms of our practice. I believe we have heard some of the history of it in the past and how we came to address certain problems over the history. We've had a long history of democracy, 250 years in Nova Scotia, but not always the best electoral practices.

A recent opinion article by Marilla Stephenson basically ended on the note that we have once again - I'll just quote from this article - and I think it is an embarrassment. It says, " So Nova Scotia's political system, which has such a stellar record of avoiding political shenanigans" - and that's very tongue-in-cheek - "that take voters and their money for granted time and time again, has found a way once again to distinguish itself from the rest of the country." That isn't distinguishing itself in a way that we would like to be distinguished as having the best Act or the best standards. It's once again finding loopholes and finding a way around what is most transparent and most proper in terms of how we would run our affairs in this province.

So rather than moving forward and becoming more modern and more progressive in this province, which we would have expected over the last two years, we've taken another step backwards with the amendments that are before us today. That is why we spoke out against them and that's why we will vote against them because it's just not right. We didn't support the amendments as they came through, other than the amendments that we did agree with, from the Progressive Conservative Party. We did not support the amendments that affect people's privacy in this province and we know that is a regressive step.

Again, as I say, the word 'loophole' certainly is allowed here in the House and I will say that there was a loophole put in there or an extra provision that was, I guess, a bonus for the government while they tried to do the right thing on third party advertising. They slipped an extra clause in there that requires the chief electoral officer to provide information on people's age - or at least their year of birth, which would equate roughly to their age - and also on their voting habits; whether or not they voted in the last election.

The chief electoral officer as well has had the opportunity to make a statement after we delayed the passage of that bill here on Monday and Tuesday so that we were able to hear from the officers of this House that we rely on for information like this. One of them is the protection of privacy review officer. I think that's very important, the individual who we rely on to make sure that all legislation complies with the privacy Acts and requirements of a modern day democracy, has spoken out and raised a red flag about this proposal. A proposal which is about to become law here today as we go to third reading and continue a little bit of debate on third reading.

I, in fact, feel vindicated and I think our entire caucus has been shown to be on the right track because we've heard not only from the protection of privacy review officer, we've heard from the chief electoral officer, we've heard from Democracy Watch Canada, all of whom have said this is wrong. I think that means that the government has to look

squarely in the mirror and see exactly what it is that they're doing here today. It can't be brushed under the rug. All the members of the government, including backbenchers who probably weren't involved in these kinds of shenanigans now have a clear view of what exactly has gone on.

As we go forward, I would ask again - just as other members of this caucus have - that perhaps a little bit of sober second thought be exercised, that the government perhaps hold that bill and bring it back in the Fall, having done more consultation and discussion with the very officers of this House that are engaged and paid well to guide us and help us to do the right thing at all times. I mean, these are independent officers of the House who really, we should regard with a higher level of respect and we should be listening to the advice they provide. I would ask that the government consider that again.

In light of the embarrassment and the black eye that we are getting once again in the national scene, to be seen as the one province in Canada that would take a step like this at this point in time when privacy is so much in the news and so much an important factor to all Canadians, I think in view of that and in view of this embarrassment, the government should reconsider and hold back the Act. Do the right thing and just correct this mistake that was brought in on the fly, for us at least - maybe well planned on the government's part - but thrown at us as a set of 18 pages of amendments to a bill that people very sincerely worked on for over a year to see that the best bill could come forward, that the electoral commission representing all Parties, sat and worked out and crafted, with the blessing of the chief electoral officer, to bring before us a good bill.

It has essentially been undermined by these 18 pages of amendments, which, as I say, Madam Speaker, we take exception with and we stand up to point out the errors in there and the fact that this is regressive and takes us back in time to an era of elections in Nova Scotia that were an embarrassment. I think we should be moving beyond that and not repeating those mistakes of the past. With that, Madam Speaker, I would like to complete my comments for today. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I just want to make a few comments today. I spoke at length Monday evening on this bill and there's no question that this bill has an important place to play in the province, in relation to our electoral process. It did need an updating and as a number of members have pointed out, there are many positive aspects about this bill. I know that the one, as a long-time educator, that I very much found myself akin to was to see that 16- and 17-year-olds could now be engaged in the electoral process. What a wonderful learning and mentoring opportunity, to have an understanding of that process and to engage themselves.

I just really wanted to stand today and say that over the past week, especially since Monday - of four of the areas that I heard my constituents speaking about, one of them was they were hoping that the Elections Bill would actually make a provision around enumeration. Because I live in the Kingston-Greenwood area, 14 Wing Greenwood, with 2,000 Forces personnel moving in and out of the area, there were a lot of people who felt there should be some designated areas where enumeration should be a natural part of the process of conducting a provincial election.

The other one that I heard about and again - of course, a lot of people in my riding associated with the military come from other provinces and were wondering why we didn't have a fixed date for elections since we're now part of a small minority in that regard. They were hoping to see in the Elections Bill - or as we talked about it - that it would have been one of the positives that we would have noted but, of course, it's not there.

The biggest outcry, as many of my colleagues have pointed out, are the 18 pages of amendments that came in from government to deal with third party advertising. Again, as several people pointed out, why wouldn't the chief electoral officer have an opportunity in some manner, before all 52 legislators, to provide some insight into how she thought this was going to be - what it would mean in its implementation, in its interpretation? That is the major aspect that more and more Nova Scotians, as we've talked at length on this bill, are coming to realize. In fact, it's now one of the real deficiencies that is in Bill No. 59, that the chief electoral officer did not have an opportunity to speak about how she saw where the amendments enter into Bill No. 59 and how it will play itself out.

The issue that has garnered the greatest amount of attention is the infringement on privacy. I can't think of any issue that triggers a more tremendous reaction from individuals and groups of people than when they feel their privacy has been disregarded. Our offices are asked to be places where we safeguard privacy, where I get people to sign a form to, in fact, allow their information to go forward. That I have cleared with them when I approach an agency or some department, that I can speak on their behalf. Privacy is a highly regarded aspect of living in the 21st Century.

Look at the outrage that we've seen with basic lists of people who subscribe to Time magazine or Maclean's and how those lists are sold to organizations. All of a sudden we get that third-class mail coming - how did they find out who I am and where I live? I think very strongly that that has been pointed out by three major bodies, that we've moved down a road that is unprecedented. The chief electoral officer, the privacy commissioner and Democracy Watch are all pointing out that we in Nova Scotia have moved into an area of violating privacy that government, organizations, agencies, or an electoral process should, in fact, have a hands-off approach to.

Madam Speaker, this is a bill that I think time will tell us very clearly that we should not have passed in this session of the legislature. That we should have put it in a holding pattern and allow those who know in the finest of detail and in the greatest of interpretation and in their wisdom guide the House through what will be a piece of

legislation - yes it can be amended in time and I'm sure it will be - that is going to guide elections for the next quarter century. That we should have done due diligence in the name of the people of the province and have this set aside for the summer months to once again to be looked at and to have Nova Scotians with great assurance and great comfort, that indeed it was going to be ultimately and 100 per cent in their best interest.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Again I rise on this bill. It's a great concern to me and many people I've been talking to. When you talk to people in the community there's a tremendous amount of concern over the bill. We've just seen recently in the Auditor General's Report that the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations has been chastised by the lack of security in their computer systems. If you look at that lack of security, which is totally within government, and they're going to make election lists available with people's birth dates on them, names and other information, I don't think it's appropriate. It was not necessary in any election I've ever run in and I've run probably as many as anyone in this House; it's not appropriate. So if you put that list out to many, many people eventually it's going to be a problem, there is going to be a problem. Somebody's identity is going to be stolen or maybe a whole group of people's identities are going to be stolen and then who's going to be responsible?

I guarantee you I do not support this bill in its present form, I agree with my colleagues that this should be held over for the summer to have more opportunity for people to have input into it and without that, I feel that we're going to be a lot worse off come the next election and the election after that. I'm sure this bill will be amended by members of a new government that would really look at the fairness of elections and the things that happen around elections. I can tell you in my own case, I've seen many questionable activities happen during election time and I think it will get worse if people have the personal information on people. I think that's one of the critical things in this bill and I think it could have very easily waited until next Fall to talk about this. All we've seen from everybody who has talked about it, the people that live with this and work with this every day and Elections Nova Scotia - they don't agree with the bill.

It really raises some very serious questions. Unfortunately the government has decided to ram this through. I want to give credit to my colleagues here for the work they've done to bring this to the attention of people in the province. Hopefully, as time goes on, they will become more aware of it and as I have told my colleagues over there on the backbenches, you want to watch out on the next election day and see what happens as people become aware of this activity and how it will negatively affect them in their areas.

I'm very disappointed in the Progressive Conservative Party that made a deal with the NDP to vote for the bill. I think it's a coalition that isn't in the best interest of Nova Scotians. They will, too, bear the fruit of their activities in that regard.

With those few words, I would just encourage the government, again, to hold this over until the Fall and have some more consultation on it, maybe some amendments in the Fall. I realize they're probably not going to do that and it's very unfortunate they're not going to do that. In any case, I would just encourage them to do it and look forward to their motion to that effect shortly. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: I'm rising today to speak very briefly on these changes to the Elections Bill. Some of the changes that the government brought in we thought were good. We were pleased to see the amendment that instituted some rules around third party spending, probably not as clear and transparent as we would have liked things to be. My concern is that, for example, we've taken out corporate and union spending from donations to campaigns but now can go to third party spending. It will not be clearly identified that those third parties will, in fact, be where the money came from. In some ways we've just sort of added another layer of opacity to the process.

I do think that the amendments that the Third Party brought in are improvements, although I would have liked to have seen someone from the disability community on the electoral commission board because that would have been a major step forward. Quite frankly, on consulting - they could call up my Aunt Janet, who's legally blind, and say what do you think of this bill and boom, they've consulted, that's it. There's no indication what groups they even have to consult with.

Our concern around the other amendments the government brought in at the eleventh hour was that it seemed to be done as if they were trying to sneak things in. I was sitting over in the Committee on Law Amendments when we first took a look at those changes and quite frankly, the age thing jumped out at me immediately. I was quite shocked that the government was trying to bring this in.

Some of the changes the government is planning to bring in will allow us to identify who voters are in very small polls and how they voted. If you believe that secret ballots should be sacrosanct, you should have concerns about that. Rest assured, we will be making sure that Nova Scotians know who brought this in.

I spoke to the Minister of Justice who told me that the age provision was just so they could identify young voters and get young people to vote. We all know there's another less invasive way and that would be to actually educate young voters about government, about the system, about an election, about forms of government. That hasn't happened, there's no civics course and why we would use this invasive tool instead of giving them proper tools to actually think about these things is beyond me. My concern is that the information the government is now asking for gives Parties information on the voting history of electors.

Quite frankly, I spoke to the Justice Minister about this; he said Parties already do this. I said, well then, why bother? The fact is some Parties do it better than others. If they're willing to do the work, they should get it, fine. But, to actually just haul off and give it to them, to have Elections Nova Scotia do the work that their volunteers should be doing on election day, I think is wrong.

I think it will not encourage electors to vote. I think when people realize what's happening, it will actually turn them away. They're not going to want to go to the polls because they don't need their neighbour or the person down the street knowing how old they are. It's none of their business; it's none of our business.

A number of columns have been written about some of the changes that are coming through. Marilla Stephenson from The ChronicleHerald wrote, "Why does it matter whether political parties are told how old you are, or whether you voted in the past few elections?" She goes on to say, "I'll tell you why. It matters because it gives those parties the ability to manipulate a process that is intended to be free of manipulation. It will take the parties no time at all to use that information to their political advantage. It's not supposed to work that way."

Later on she goes on to say, "While the NDP gave to the integrity of the process with one hand by restricting third-party advertising, they were busy taking away with the other by allowing parties to access voters' personal information. There is no other voting jurisdiction in the country that reveals voters' ages or voting records, according to Elections Nova Scotia." There is no reason for these changes, except to make the jobs of political Parties easier, and quite frankly I don't think they should be easier. I think we should have to work for the information.

The privacy commissioner sees problems with this aspect. It's funny because I went back to the May 6th press release from the Minister of Justice and the press release says, "The changes modernize language and offer improvements such as . . ." and it lists a number, and then it says, ". . . improved protection of personal information" - I fail to see how putting out personal information about people's ages and their past voting history is going to actually improve the protection of their personal information. In fact, it will not. I'll table that press release.

In his remarks when he introduced the bill in the first place, he said: The Act reflects a greater emphasis on the importance of protecting the personal information of electors. We are all well aware of the risks of personal information being misused. This Act ensures that the personal information in the list of electors is used for its intended purpose.

It does nothing of the sort. In fact, it puts more information out there. It makes a mockery of what this minister says the Act was actually doing.

Finally, if this government were really concerned about elections, they would have looked at what happened in the federal election and my colleague, the member for Dartmouth East referred to this. There were a number of instances where automated phone calls went out advising electors that their polls - in the case that happened in Ontario and in Cole Harbour - people were told to go to another polling station. When my colleague, the member for Dartmouth East, had the problem, they were told that the polls would be open longer, but in this past federal election it was around telling them to go to another polling station.

What did Ontario do? I'm quoting from *The Globe* on May 18, 2011, "The government introduced legislation on Tuesday that would make it illegal for anyone to attempt to stop voters from casting a ballot in a provincial election by tricking them into showing up at the wrong polling station. The Ontario Elections Act already bans 'corrupt' practices, but the amendments would explicitly target deliberate attempts to misdirect voters to the wrong polling station. The maximum penalty for those convicted of election fraud would be imprisonment for two years less a day plus a fine of up to \$25,000. The current maximum penalty is a jail term of six months and a fine of \$5,000."

Now there's a practical step that would make sure that conduct during elections is actually above reproach. Did this government bother to do that? No, they didn't, because they're too busy ramming it through, and they don't really care about running a fair election.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask that the member table that document, please.

MS. REGAN: Madam Speaker, I have to say that I'm sad today to see this go through. I honestly thought the government would sit back, take note of the objections raised by its own officers - and how ironic that this legislation is going to actually make the chief electoral officer an Officer of this Legislature, but we're not going to actually listen to her when she says, oh, hold on, this is not correct. How ironic is that?

I don't believe that the backbenchers knew this was going on, I don't think they knew about these amendments. I think that they were probably just as shocked as the rest of us. But it is wrong, it is not right, and the government should be ashamed. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 59. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today and for this session. We are awaiting the arrival of the Administrator.

We'll ask for a recess now.

[2:17 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:30 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we proceed with the assent ceremonies here this afternoon, I'd like to make a quick introduction. Joining us today from the U.S. and the Council of State Governments are Marge Kilkelly, Earl Eisenhart and David Ewing. Welcome. As you know, they are in town as we are hosting in the Province of Nova Scotia this year, the Council of State Governments conference from August 6th - 10th. Welcome to Nova Scotia and enjoy your time here. (Standing Ovation)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Administrator of Nova Scotia is without.

MR. SPEAKER: Let His Honour, be admitted.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

[The Administrator, Chief Justice Michael MacDonald, preceded by his escort, and by Mr. Ken Greenham, Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, entered the House of Assembly Chamber. The Administrator then took his seat on the Throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then departed and re-entered the Chamber followed by the Speaker, the Honourable Gordon Gosse; the Chief Clerk of the House, Neil Ferguson; Assistant Clerk, Annette Boucher.

The Speaker, with the Sergeant-at-Arms on his right and the Clerk on his left, took up his position at the foot of the Speaker's Table.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour that the ladies and gentlemen be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has, in its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's Assent.

THE ASSISTANT CLERK:

Bill No. 1 - Motor Vehicle Act.

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

Bill No. 13 - Pharmacy Act.

Bill No. 15 - Electricity Act.

Bill No. 17 - Fair Drug Pricing Act.

Bill No. 19 - Nova Scotia Business Incorporated Act.

Bill No. 20 – Trustees of Liverpool United Baptist Church Act.

Bill No. 21 - Public Archives Act.

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

Bill No. 23 - Public Procurement Act.

Bill No. 25 - Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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

Bill No. 30 - Land Registration Act.

Bill No. 33 - Court Administrative Reform Act.

Bill No. 35 - Body Armour Control Act.

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

Bill No. 40 - Liquor Control Act.

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

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

Bill No. 43 - Interior Designers Act.

Bill No. 47 - Summary Proceedings Act.

Bill No. 51 - Public Highways Act.

Bill No. 52 - Government Administration Amendment (2011) Act.

Bill No. 53 - Labour Standards Code.

Bill No. 54 - Cemeteries Protection Act.

Bill No. 56 - Real Estate Trading Act.

Bill No. 57 - Private Ways Act.

Bill No. 59 - Elections Act.

Bill No. 62 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

THE ADMINISTRATOR: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Your Honour, having been graciously pleased to give your Assent to the Bills passed during the present Session, it becomes my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her faithful Commons of Nova Scotia, to present to Your Honour a bill for the Appropriation of Supply granted in the present Session for the support of the Public Service and to request Your Honour's Assent thereto.

THE CLERK:

Bill No. 50 - An Act to Provide for Defraying Certain Charges and Expenses of the Public Service of the Province.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE:

In Her Majesty's name, I thank her loyal subjects. I accept their benevolence and I Assent to this Bill.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

[The Chief Administrator left the Chamber.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour, the Speaker.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: I would ask all honourable members to please join with me in the singing of the national anthem.

[The national anthem was sung by the members.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Please be seated.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker and members of the House of Assembly, I move that this General Assembly be adjourned to meet again at the call of the Speaker.

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

The motion is carried.

Thank you. May you all have an enjoyable summer with your families, with your friends and especially all your constituents; represent them with respect and dignity. Farewell, see you in September.

[The House rose at 3:44 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1795**

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 the Canadian Bar Association's Douglas Miller Award honours a CBA member who demonstrated outstanding dedication and team spirit; and

Whereas Jack Innes, Q.C., a partner with McInnes Cooper here in Halifax, was named winner of the Doug Miller Award at the association's President's Dinner in Charlevoix, Quebec, on February 20, 2011; and

Whereas Jack has been involved in CBA activities for 42 years, serving in a wide variety of roles, including president of CBA - Nova Scotia; president of the Canadian Bar Insurance Association; and president of the Legal Professional Assistance Conference; and has previously been honoured with the Nova Scotia Distinguished Service Award in 1999; the Louis St. Laurent Award of Excellence in 2000 for his exceptional service to the goals of the CBA; and the naming of an annual staff award in his honour when he left the CBA Treasury in 2007;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jack Innes, Q.C., on receiving the Canadian Bar Association's Doug Miller Award, and laud him for his decades of leadership, people skills and his infectious sense of humour that made honouring him a natural choice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1796

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas the Barrington Municipal High School Club is made up of students of that school who are concerned about the needs of at-risk youth in their communities; and

Whereas the Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team is a program based in Yarmouth and affiliated with the Tri-County Women's Centre that provides services to homeless youths; and

Whereas the students from the Barrington Municipal High School Club have undertaken many efforts to assist the Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team including raising money, holding clothing and food drives, providing peer mentoring, and have plans this Spring to plant a vegetable garden with the at-risk youth;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the past and ongoing efforts of the Barrington Municipal High School Club members in support of youths who are at risk in their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1797

By: Mr. Harold Theriault (Digby-Annapolis)

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 4th Annual Insurance Awards Dinner to honour performance and innovation among members of the industry; and

Whereas Lynne Gerhardt of The Dominion General Insurance was named Insurance Representative of the Year; and

Whereas the award recognized Lynne as a representative working for a general insurance company, for her product and service innovation, and for her all-round service to brokers;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lynne Gerhardt on being named Insurance Representative of the Year and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1798

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Willis Leslie Parks, who passed away on June 12, 2010, will not only be remembered by his wife Elaine but by those who live in homes that he designed; and

Whereas Willis was an award-winning architectural designer recognized by his peers as having a special talent for developing unique home designs that are now located from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia; and

Whereas Willis had a passion for design and how it could benefit our lives, and added his gift and love of painting that was recognized internationally;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the lifetime professional and personal contribution he made to our province and well beyond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1799

By: Mr. Gary Ramey (Lunenburg West)

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

Whereas Jamie Richards, an employee of Michelin Tire Canada Inc., in Bridgewater, started Jamie's Jam 13 years ago to provide a supportive venue to showcase local musicians and raise money for local charitable causes; and

Whereas Jamie's Jam did exactly that, providing a venue for over 40 different musical acts and 150 musicians during that time and raised considerable funds for local charitable causes; and

Whereas after 13 years of diligent work promoting local artists and raising funds that have supported many activities in the community such as local school music and drama clubs, and purchasing drapes and equipment for the Michelin Social Club, which serves the greater community, Jamie Richards is taking a well-deserved rest from this feverish activity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Jamie Richards for being a conscientious and caring member of his community, applaud him for a job well done and wish him health, success and happiness in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1800

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Donald Pinsent started his career as a heavy duty mechanic and spent many years with Ronn Baltzer Equipment which became Nova International and was recognized as a highly regarded employee; and

Whereas Donald decided late in his work life to follow a dream and his passion to care for people by becoming a paramedic and quickly established an excellent reputation in his second career; and

Whereas in addition to his careers, Donald has been a long-time member of the Aylesford and District Volunteer Fire Department, and continues to give back to the community through this volunteer work;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Donald Pinsent on his well-deserved retirement and wish him, and his wife Barb, many years of health and happiness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1801

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Muriel Craig, Linda Desmond, Marg Morse, Rose Fitzgerald, Norma Stoddart, and Vicki Parker demonstrated a deep commitment to the Apple Blossom Festival by organizing and hosting both the Kingston Apple Blossom Princess Tea and the Valley-wide event on two occasions; and

Whereas the Princess Tea in Kingston, under the direction of this group, made the event a special celebration for the local princess candidates and surrounding communities; and

Whereas Norma, Muriel, Linda, Rose, Marg, and Vicki added immensely to the Apple Blossom Festival and the selection of Queen Annapolisa, who is central to this provincial event, through years of volunteering;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Norma, Muriel, Linda, Rose, Marg, and Vicki for their outstanding commitment to the historic Apple Blossom Festival.

RESOLUTION NO. 1802

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1803

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1804

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 Ray MacKay has been playing the organ for almost 80 years; and

Whereas Mr. MacKay has been playing for decades in churches as well as for choirs, first playing at a church service in 1943 aboard the HMCS Cornwallis; and

Whereas Mr. MacKay was honoured for his long-time service during a testimonial black-tie dinner at the Westside Legion in Westmount on Saturday evening, April 30th, that was attended by approximately 200 guests;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the tremendous musical work Ray MacKay has done for churches over the years and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1805

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas the issue of cyber-bullying may be a new concept, its roots in bullying may be a familiar struggle; and

Whereas the students at the junior and senior high schools of Queens County have formed a Social Justice Team to take charge and bring attention to the insidious nature of cyber-bullying; and

Whereas the Social Justice Team helped organize a gathering of students from Grades 6 to 10 on May 6, 2011, to hear Bill Belsey, president of bullying.org Canada Incorporated, speak on the issue of cyber-bullying and its digital footprint;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Social Justice Team for bringing attention to the issue of cyber-bullying and its potential future ramifications to the students of Queens County.

RESOLUTION NO. 1806

By: Hon. David Wilson (Communities, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas homophobia is a form of prejudice against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities; and

Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and the Declaration of Montreal in 2006 recommended May 17th as International Day Against Homophobia; and

Whereas homophobia unfortunately still persists in Canadian society and can lead to bullying, intimidation and, in some cases, violence;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature recognize May 17th as International Day Against Homophobia and applaud those in our province who are working to eliminate this form of discrimination.

RESOLUTION NO. 1807

By: Hon. Marilyn More (Voluntary Sector)

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

Whereas Spring is a time of fresh starts and hope - as in we hope we see some sun soon; and

Whereas Spring is a time when people wait anxiously to find out if their application to Nova Scotia Community College, or one of our 11 universities, has been accepted; and

Whereas Spring also marks a time when many gather at their campus with friends and family for convocation ceremonies, ready to take that next step in life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate those who will enter one of this province's exemplary colleges and universities in the Fall, and those who are graduating and beginning new careers and life paths, and that we wish all of them a long, joyous and prosperous life here in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 1808

By: Hon. Marilyn More (Voluntary Sector)

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

Whereas over 460,000 Nova Scotians volunteer their time and efforts; and

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

Whereas during the summer there is a wide variety of opportunities to get out in the community and help a worthy cause;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in encouraging all Nova Scotians to explore the fun and rewarding ways they can get involved in their communities over the summer and throughout the year.

RESOLUTION NO. 1809

By: Ms. Becky Kent (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalos Eastern Lodge 8686 is a service club that was founded in 1954, and today has over 1,100 members; and

Whereas the Buffalo Club is a charitable organization that has contributed well over \$1 million into the community through their volunteer efforts and the hard work and passion of its members; and

Whereas the Buffalo Club contributes to many charities, provides entertainment for both children and adults in the community, supports community events, and offers a club for members to share camaraderie, loyalty and pride;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly commend the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalos Eastern Lodge 8686 (Buffalo Club) for their years of service to the community of Eastern Passage and Cow Bay, and wish them many more years of success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1810

By: Mr. Brian Skabar (Cumberland North)

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

Whereas Jim Ripley, the instructor at JC's Tae Kwon-Do in Amherst, Nova Scotia, participated in a fundraising goal of breaking 1,000 boards in one hour with his hands and feet; and

Whereas Jim Ripley, with the assistance of many volunteers holding boards in place, exceeded this goal by breaking the 1,000 boards in less than 20 minutes; and

Whereas all funds raised will go toward the purchase of new safety mats for JC's Tae Kwon-Do;

Therefore be it resolved that this House commend Jim Ripley for his mental and physical strength and for the leadership he has shown in setting an exceptional goal, and not only achieving it but exceeding it.

RESOLUTION NO. 1811

By: Mr. Clarrie MacKinnon (Pictou East)

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

Whereas Stark Oil International, headquartered in Pictou County, has been an industry leader with more than 16 years of experience providing oil services for transformers, hydraulic and lubrication oils; and

Whereas Stark Oil uses state-of-the-art technology offering expert on-site inspection, transformer repair, transformer commissioning and decommissioning and laboratory services, along with new monitoring and conditioning processes, which ultimately reduces the need for costly industry shutdowns; and

Whereas Stark International, lead by owners Scott and Doug MacEachern of Baileys Brook, has shown a growth rate of 80 per cent over the past three years, and was recognized by both the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce and the Nova Scotia Export Achievement Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Scott and Doug MacEachern, along with all staff of Stark Oil International for a job well done.

RESOLUTION NO. 1812

By: Hon. Charlie Parker (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association held its 14th Annual Awards Gala in April 2011, to honour its members and their contributors to the tourist industry in Pictou County; and

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association presented the North Star Award to Jeanette Hermanson of the Green Thumb Farmers Market; and

Whereas it is hoped that Jeanette Hermanson and the Green Thumb Farmers Market will continue to service the needs of tourists and their community for many years to come;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Jeanette Hermanson of the Green Thumb Farmers Market on their North Star Award at the 14th Annual Pictou County Tourist Association Awards Gala.

RESOLUTION NO. 1813

By: Hon. Charlie Parker (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association held its 14th Annual Awards Gala in April 2011, to honour its members and their contributors to the tourist industry in Pictou County; and

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association presented the Shining Star Award to Anne Emmett of the Hector Heritage Quay in Pictou; and

Whereas it is hoped that the Hector Heritage Quay will continue to be a major heritage attraction in Pictou County, providing tourists a glimpse into Nova Scotia's past;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Anne Emmett on behalf of the Hector Heritage Quay for their Shining Star Award at the 14th Annual Pictou County Tourist Association Awards Gala.

RESOLUTION NO. 1814

By: Hon. Charlie Parker (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association held its 14th Annual Awards Gala in April 2011, to honour its members and their contributors to the tourist industry in Pictou County; and

Whereas the Pictou County Tourist Association presented the North Star Award to Danny Bartlett on behalf of Northumberland Ferries; and

Whereas it is hoped that Northumberland Ferries will continue to service the transportation needs for people travelling between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Danny Bartlett on behalf of Northumberland Ferries on their North Star Award at the 14th Annual Pictou County Tourist Association Awards Gala.

RESOLUTION NO. 1815

By: Hon. Graham Steele (Finance)

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

Whereas Canadian Blood Services is a not-for-profit, charitable organization whose mission is to manage the blood and blood products supply for Canadians; and

Whereas on May 9th, Canadian Blood Services held the grand opening of its new permanent Halifax clinic at 7071 Bayers Road in Fairview; and

Whereas this beautiful new clinic is a design model for other clinics across the country;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Canadian Blood Services, its dedicated staff, and especially all blood donors on the grand opening of the new blood services clinic in Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 1816

By: Ms. Lenore Zann (Truro-Bible Hill)

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

Whereas Dan Criss is a faculty member for the Foundational Human Services Program at the Nova Scotia Community College, Truro Campus; and

Whereas Mr. Criss worked for several years as a youth worker with the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, building positive relationships with young offenders, has served on the Kings County Black Education Committee, and has assisted with organizing many African Heritage Month celebrations; and

Whereas Dan Criss has recently been chosen as a recipient of the Recognition Program through the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, being celebrated as an individual who has made many positive contributions to the African Nova Scotian community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Dan Criss for being a recipient of the Recognition Program through the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs and acknowledge his many positive contributions.

RESOLUTION NO. 1817

By: Ms. Lenore Zann (Truro-Bible Hill)

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

Whereas the Colchester Regional Hospital's coffee shop opened its doors in the hospital on May 9, 1986; and

Whereas the coffee shop, run by approximately 60 volunteers, including three women of the original group of volunteers, Betty Giffin, Erma Henderson, and Marg Mackenzie, has always donated revenue from the coffee shop to the operation of the hospital; and

Whereas the coffee shop recently held a day-long open house to celebrate their 25 years of service to the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Colchester Regional Hospital's coffee shop on serving the community for 25 years, and thank the many volunteers for their dedication and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1818

By: Mr. Maurice Smith (Antigonish)

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

Whereas Antigonish resident Molly Thomason is a talented musician who has accomplished much by a relatively young age; and

Whereas at the age of 14, Molly was the youngest-ever recipient of an Emerging Music grant from Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage for work on her debut CD, which was also nominated for New Artist Recording of the year during Molson Canadian Nova Scotia Music Week in 2009; and

Whereas on May 27th, Molly Thomason will release her second CD, *Beauty Queen*, with a concert in Antigonish;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate Molly Thomason on her success, and wish her all the best with the release of her second album, *Beauty Queen*.

RESOLUTION NO. 1819

By: Mr. Matt Whynott (Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville)

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

Whereas Ben Jessome of Hammonds Plains is a Bachelor of Recreation student at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and is committed to student life at his school; and

Whereas Ben continued to live out his commitment to leadership and community service by offering to serve on the executive of the Acadia University Students' Union; and

Whereas after being duly elected by the student body earlier this year, on May 2, 2011, Ben began his tenure as the president of the ASU;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Ben Jessome of Hammonds Plains on being elected president of the Acadia University Students' Union and wish him best of luck in all his future endeavors.

RESOLUTION NO. 1820

By: Mr. Sidney Prest (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Mary MacDonald and John Hawkins are passionate advocates for health promotion and community development through active transportation trail development on the Eastern Shore and throughout Nova Scotia; and

Whereas John and Mary show great leadership and commitment to the cause by initiating discussions with neighbours and politicians, attending various organizations' meetings, and working with other volunteers to develop strategies to help move forward active transportation trail development in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas John Hawkins and Mary MacDonald of Lower East Chezzetcook took home the Family Volunteer of the Year Award at the 37th Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony held this Spring;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate John Hawkins and Mary MacDonald on their Family Volunteer of the Year Award and thank them for the good work they are doing in their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1821

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from Mary 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Andrew Marrie and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1822

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from Mary 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the players and coaches of the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1823

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from Mary 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Aidan Sampson and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1824

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Blake Rogers and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1825

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Liam Kidney and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1826

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Brett Delorey and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1827

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Ryan Francis and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1828

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Joe McDonald and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1829

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup Hockey Tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Savannah Hartt and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1830

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Taylor Ewing and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1831

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15 , 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Cameron Gannon and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1832

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Ben Gibbon and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1833

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Jacob Doggett and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1834

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Gavin Hart and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1835

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Daniel Surette and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1836

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Bruen Fisher and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1837

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Mitchell Comeau and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1838

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 Nova Scotia Selects team is comprised of 17 talented and hard-working players who exemplify positive sportsmanship and teamwork; and

Whereas the Junior X-Men Nova Scotia Cup hockey tournament took place in Antigonish from May 13 to 15, 2011; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Selects defeated the New Brunswick Stars 3-0 in the gold medal game;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly applaud Robbie Dowell and the Nova Scotia Selects on their win, and congratulate the team on another rewarding hockey season.

RESOLUTION NO. 1839

By: Ms. Diana Whalen (Halifax Clayton Park)

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

Whereas many community groups and organizations in our province would not be able to continue their work without the commitment and dedication of volunteers; and

Whereas on May 5, 2011, the Halifax Mainland North Volunteer Recognition Committee held their 8th Annual Community Champion Awards dinner to recognize outstanding volunteers who consistently dedicate their time and talents to improving the lives of others; and

Whereas Dr. David Wilson, PhD, the founding chairman of the Dalhousie Music Degree Program, has worked tirelessly to promote music in our society and counts among his accomplishments being one of the founders of Musique Royale, a co-founder and current board member of the Early Music Society of N.S., and the music director and organist at St. James Anglican Church;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate David Wilson on receiving the 2011 Mainland North Champion Award for his tremendous contributions to improving the lives of others through music, and wish him every success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1840

By: Ms. Diana Whalen (Halifax Clayton Park)

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

Whereas many community groups and organizations in our province would not be able to continue their work without the commitment and dedication of volunteers; and

Whereas on May 5, 2011, the Halifax Mainland North Volunteer Recognition Committee held their 8th Annual Community Champion Awards dinner to recognize outstanding volunteers who consistently dedicate their time and talents to improving the lives of others; and

Whereas Brent Macdonald was nominated by staff at Parkland Estates for outstanding volunteer activities over many years, including 28 years of helping hundreds of sick children at the IWK Health Centre, being a founding member of the Halifax Kiwanis Club, and encouraging and organizing others to get involved and give back to their community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Brent Macdonald on receiving the 2011 Mainland North Champion Award for his tremendous contributions which continue to improve the lives of others, and wish him every success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1841

By: Ms. Diana Whalen (Halifax Clayton Park)

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

Whereas many community groups and organizations in our province would not be able to continue their work without the commitment and dedication of volunteers; and

Whereas on May 5, 2011, the Halifax Mainland North Volunteer Recognition Committee held their 8th Annual Community Champion Awards dinner to recognize outstanding volunteers who consistently dedicate their time and talents to improving the lives of others; and

Whereas Michael Kabalen was recognized at the event for his important contributions to his community through such activities as being the co-director of music and youth choir director at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church, volunteering for many years for the Diman Association Canada, and being a volunteer at IPONS (Investment Property Owners of Nova Scotia);

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael Kabalen on receiving the 2011 Mainland North Champion Award for his tremendous contributions to our community, and wish him continued success in all his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1842

By: Ms. Diana Whalen (Halifax Clayton Park)

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

Whereas on February 10, 2011, the Bella Rose Arts Centre was filled with local residents, sponsors, and supporters to celebrate the official gala opening of this wonderful 600-seat professional theatre; and

Whereas the MacDonald family, who grew up in Fairview, stepped forward early in the fundraising campaign to support the new theatre and to name it after their mother, and after her granddaughter and namesake, Bella Rose MacDonald; and

Whereas Mrs. Bella MacDonald was a remarkable woman who raised her seven children to be kind and generous, who taught them that success comes from hard work and focus, and instilled in each of them the value and importance of being generous to community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly thank the MacDonald family for fostering and encouraging the arts in our community through their generous contribution, which inspired other sponsors to get involved and resulted in the official opening of the Bella Rose Arts Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 1843

By: Ms. Diana Whalen (Halifax Clayton Park)

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 Salvatore Insurance Brokers Limited won the Professional Development Award; and

Whereas this award honours the brokerage that best promotes and encourages the professional development of its staff;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate J.D. Salvatore, Robyn Salvatore, and Salvatore Insurance Brokers Limited on their award and wish them success in all their future endeavours.