



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine, the subject for late debate has been submitted and accepted:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly agree that the high-cost, job-killing policies of the NDP are to blame for the alarming amount of young people leaving Nova Scotia.

This was submitted by the honourable member for Inverness.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: As the Speaker, I am tabling the Nova Scotia MLA Pension Review Report, dated November 3, 2011. I am having the Pages distribute the report to any members who would like a printed copy. The entire report is available on-line so if any members don't really need one of these printed copies, you could just tell the Pages. We printed a very limited number of copies to keep the cost down.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1975

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

Whereas in 1975 Dr. Shelagh Leahey graduated from Dalhousie Medical School and moved to Yarmouth to establish her family practice; and

Whereas over the years Dr. Leahey has been a dedicated volunteer to the medical community, both locally and provincially, by volunteering in a number of organizations, including Doctors Nova Scotia for 24 years; and

Whereas Dr. Leahey even postponed her retirement to remain involved while serving as a physician supervisor and mentor to international medical graduates;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize the outstanding efforts of Dr. Shelagh Leahey and congratulate her for being named Nova Scotia Family Physician of the Year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1976

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

Whereas Tracey Jones-Grant is the manager of Literacy, English as a Second Language, and Diversity Services at Halifax Public Libraries; and

Whereas Ms. Jones-Grant worked with colleagues from Toronto, Regina and Vancouver on the Working Together Project, which led to the creation of a new community-led service model for public libraries; and

Whereas she was honoured for her innovative work with the 2011 Norman Horrocks Award for Library Leadership, becoming the first African Nova Scotian to win the award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House join me in congratulating Tracey Jones-Grant for this well-deserved award, and thank her for her commitment to improving diversity and access in our public libraries.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1977

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

Whereas Leaders of Today, a network of Nova Scotia's youth, held a summit from October 28th to October 30th at Brigadoon Village in the Annapolis Valley; and

Whereas the goal of Leaders of Today is to create a place of intercultural learning between youth and government, and to amplify the voice of youth in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Leaders of Today is an excellent opportunity for young people to give their input into the province's Child and Youth Strategy and to develop vital leadership skills;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize the youth who took part in last weekend's summit, and thank them for the leadership they are providing for their communities and for Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1978

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

Whereas October 31st through November 4th is Canadian Patient Safety Week and the goal of this week is to increase awareness of patient safety issues; and

Whereas it is also important to share information about best practices in patient safety at national, regional, and local levels; and

Whereas the theme of Canadian Patient Safety Week - "Ask. Listen. Talk." - encourages all health care professionals, patients, clients, residents, and their families to ask questions, listen carefully, and talk openly about concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize Patient Safety Week and join me to encourage all Nova Scotians to embrace the week's theme of "Ask. Listen. Talk." when it comes to patient safety.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1979

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

Whereas this year Nova Scotia celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Treaty Day, a day we remember the treaties between the Crown and the Mi'kmaq and renew our relationship with Mi'kmaq people; and

Whereas over the past few decades Nova Scotia has seen considerable progress in how we work together from a cultural perspective and how we do business and set policies to achieve our shared vision of a healthy and prosperous Nova Scotia for all its inhabitants; and

Whereas on Treaty Day this year we unveiled a new exhibit of Mi'kmaq artifacts and historic photographs and other images to be kept permanently on display in Province House, a sign of our enduring relationship and the significance of the Mi'kmaq to Nova Scotia's future;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and all Nova Scotians on the 25th Anniversary of Treaty Day and in thanking them for working with the government toward our common goals with focus and a strong relationship.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs on an introduction.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I stand in my place today with a great amount of pride and with pleasure, because today we are joined in the audience by a group of individuals representative of the African Nova Scotian community of Nova Scotia. I would say that this representation is from all over the province. If the House will indulge me, I would like to read the names of those individuals, and I have a little something to say afterward.

Without putting anybody on the hot seat, I want to start with Mrs. Laura Daye, who's in the House. As I call your name, I would ask you to stand: Leslie Daye, Paul Ash, Walter Borden, LeeAnne Crawley, Brad Barton, Douglas Sparks, Garry James, Walter Peters - maybe I should say "Major Peters" - Lucky Campbell, Melinda Daye, Donnie Peters, Adam Miller, Aaron Miller, Merlita Williams, Jason Wilson, Colin Campbell, Kyle States, Courtenay Howe, Lynn Crouse, Reena Desmond, Delvina Bernard and Juanita Peters. I trust I haven't missed anyone; if I have, please forgive me.

I would like the House to give these individuals a round of applause but I would also say that starting tomorrow there will be a conference taking place here in the metro area, entitled Empowering African Nova Scotian Males: An Education Summit. I certainly welcome you to the House, you do me proud. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Cape Breton South on an introduction.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the attention of members to a gentleman in the west gallery visiting us today. Derek Mombourquette is a councillor with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and is in Halifax today with the UNSM meetings that we all know are very important. Derek is not only a councillor in the CBRM but he's my councillor and he's doing a good job as councillor. I would like you to give Derek a welcome. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 74 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Income Tax Act. (Hon. Stephen McNeil)

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

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, if I may be allowed, I would also like to do an introduction before this resolution, even though it's not connected with the resolution. In the east gallery today are students from Saint Mary's University who are here with their instructor, Mr. Russell Prime, a distinguished professor himself and member of a fast-growing and very successful program. I would like the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 1980

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

Whereas the Halifax Mission to Seafarers is a not-for-profit charity providing help and support to seafarers from around the world; and

Whereas the Mission to Seafarers' chaplain, staff, and volunteers reach out to seafarers arriving at the Port of Halifax, visiting them on their ships and offering a warm welcome at a time when they are separated from loved ones; and

Whereas on November 6, 2011, the Mission to Seafarers will host the Great Sea Tea, bringing together community members, volunteers, and supporters to celebrate a tradition of caring for the seafaring men and women who arrive in Halifax each year;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the Halifax Mission to Seafarers for its work in providing a hand of friendship to visiting seafarers of all nationalities and faiths.

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. 1981

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

Whereas three-year-old Jacob Rus had been granted his wish to visit Disney World by the Children's Wish Foundation, but he passed away on September 2006, four months before his granted wish was to take place; and

Whereas Jacob's parents, Stephanie and Dave Rus, of Masstown, Colcheser North, have never forgotten the Children's Wish Foundation and wanted to do something in Jacob's memory to help other children; and

Whereas Stephanie and Dave shaved their heads as part of a fundraiser which raised \$3,000 for the Children's Wish Foundation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this generous couple who, in memory of their own son, have benefited the lives of so many other sick children.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1982

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

Whereas for 89 years young people in Nova Scotia have been learning by doing, thanks to the 4-H program in the province; and

Whereas 4-H is a nationwide program dedicated to the development of young people to help them become responsible members of society; and

Whereas the four Hs in 4-H symbolize the head, heart, hands and health;

Therefore be it resolved that during 4-H Week, and at every opportunity, all members of this House of Assembly thank the many volunteers who continue to make the 4-H program an important institution in rural Nova Scotia and support the efforts to bring 4-H to urban youth.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1983

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

Whereas Lois MacNeil, a three-time participant in the Annual Giant Pumpkin Contest held during the Octoberfest celebrations at the Millville Community Centre, was crowned 2011 champion; and

Whereas despite a less than ideal growing season, Lois was successful in nurturing her prize pumpkin to a whopping 338 pounds; and

Whereas Lois, a sheep and beef farmer from Mill Creek, has put her agricultural skills to the test and incorporated a variety of strategies to be successful;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lois MacNeil on her success in being the 2011 Giant Pumpkin Champion for Cape Breton and wish her all the best in next year's growing season.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 1984

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: M. le Président, par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que le Festival acadien de Clare est une célébration annuelle d'une partie intégrante du patrimoine historique et culturel de notre province; et

Attendu que le Festival acadien de Clare figure à la liste des 100 principales activités touristiques en Amérique du Nord par l'Association américaine des autobus touristiques; et

Attendu que nombreux bénévoles s'engagent à chaque année pour assurer l'organisation et le bon déroulement du festival;

Par conséquent, il soit résolu que cette assemblée se joigne à moi pour féliciter et remercier les organisateurs et les participants du 56ième Festival acadien de Clare.

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

Whereas the Clare Acadian Festival is an annual celebration of an important social fabric of our culture heritage in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival was designated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2011 by the American Bus Association; and

Whereas dedicated volunteers are engaged in the organization of the festival every summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the organizers and participants of this year's Clare 56th Acadian Festival.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1985

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

Whereas this summer the 95th annual Cape Breton County Farmers' Exhibition was such a tremendous success; and

Whereas the exhibition showcases skills, competition, 4-H events, horsemanship, demonstrations, exhibits, displays, entertainment, amusements and rides; and

Whereas this long-running event is growing in size and attendance every year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the management, staff and many volunteers who make the Cape Breton Farmers' Exhibition an annual 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 Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1986

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 Masstown Market in Colchester North is a well-known and respected business that began as a small vegetable and fruit stand; and

Whereas this family business has steadily grown to become known throughout the province and beyond; and

Whereas the Truro and District Chamber of Commerce recently presented Lisa and Laurie Jennings of the Masstown Market with a Small Business Achievement Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Masstown Market for receiving this prestigious award, and for the entrepreneurial skills which they have used, and continue to use, to make their business so successful.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1987

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

Whereas Dr. Bernie MacLean of Inverness completed his last official day on October 28, 2011, marking almost 50 years of caring for the medical needs of thousands of Nova Scotians; and

Whereas Dr. MacLean has been a three-time chief of staff at the Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital, a general practitioner in the community since 1962, and the recipient of the Outstanding Health Care Professional Award presented by the Dr. M.A. Naqvi Health Authority; and

Whereas Dr. Bernie has delivered four generations of Nova Scotians, approximately 4,000 babies, truly making an incredible contribution to mankind;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Dr. Bernie MacLean on his retirement, and thank him for his generosity and compassion.

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. 1988

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

Whereas during the weekend of September 2-4, 2011, the Nova Scotia Intermediate AA Baseball Provincial Tournament was held in Yarmouth; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Dooly's Gateways, consisting of Derrick Surette, Tristan Reede, Trevor Wallace, Cory Higgins, Darren Ogden, Julian Dease, Steve Haley, Alain Bourque, Roger Williams, Ben Hurlburt, Chris Macdonald, Russ Grant, Kevin Gobien, Jeremy Dease, Robbie LeBlanc, and Duane Doucette, went undefeated throughout the three-day provincial tournament; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Dooly's Gateways won the tournament by defeating the Amherst Dooly's Coors Light Blues by a score of 3-1 in the championship game;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Yarmouth Dooly's Gateways on becoming the 2011 Nova Scotia Intermediate AA Baseball Provincial Champions, and recognize their contributions to Yarmouth's impressive and rich sporting tradition.

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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1989

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

Whereas each year more than 25,000 students choose to grow and learn with Nova Scotia community colleges across the province; and

Whereas Don Bureaux, an accountant with a Masters in Business Administration, was named as the new president of the Nova Scotia Community College in April 2011; and

Whereas Mr. Bureaux is an experienced leader, dedicated to the education of adult learners throughout Nova Scotia, whose background includes teaching, program development, and administration, and collaborating with educational institutions around the globe to create successful learning opportunities for students;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Don Bureaux on his appointment as president of the Nova Scotia Community College, and thank him for his commitment to the success of adult learners.

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. 1990

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

Whereas on August 21st, Bedford resident Peter McCormick and Halifax residents Chris Dobbin and Todd MacDonald completed a five-hour, 13.2 kilometre swim through daunting conditions across the Northumberland Strait from New Brunswick to P.E.I.; and

Whereas this brave venture called, Swim for Kids, was intended as a fundraiser for charities supporting children fighting illness; and

Whereas Swim for Kids raised \$45,000 to be distributed to camps for children with cancer, cancer research, as well as the Jack in the Clouds Foundation, a charity established by Chris Dobbin in memory of his five-year-old son who died in February of influenza;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly applaud Chris Dobbin, Todd MacDonald and Peter McCormick for their courageous mission, which will serve to help many children struggling with illness.

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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1991

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

Whereas a 44-foot white spruce tree growing on the Argyle property of Ken and Donna Spinney has been chosen to be this year's annual Christmas tree gift to the City of Boston; and

Whereas since 1971, the Province of Nova Scotia has sent a tree to the City of Boston for their official tree lighting ceremony as a symbol of thanks for the assistance it received from them in the aftermath of the Halifax Explosion in 1917; and

Whereas the tree will be cut on Tuesday, November 15th, with an anticipated audience expected to include several of the Spinney's grandchildren, along with local students;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ken and Donna Spinney on being chosen as donors of the 2011 Nova Scotia Christmas tree to the City of Boston and thank them for helping to carry on this wonderful tradition.

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 Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 1992

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

Whereas an international dimension was brought to this year's Royal National Mod in Stornoway, United Kingdom, as the distinguished Bardic Crown was presented to a Nova Scotian, with the award crossing the Atlantic for the first time; and

Whereas the recipient of this honour, Lewis MacKinnon, who has written a book of poetry in the Nova Scotian dialect and is a Gaelic teacher, was born in Cape Breton, the district where Gaels first landed after emigrating from the Highlands; and

Whereas this honour is a testament to Lewis's contribution to the Gaelic language, music and literature, and his devotion to preserving and nurturing the Gaelic heritage in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Lewis MacKinnon on this outstanding accomplishment.

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. 1993

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

Whereas Jeffrey 'JB' Tambeau, a 14-year-old resident of Parrsboro, premiered his first film at the Parrsboro Film Festival; and

Whereas Jeffrey spent eight months planning his film, which was shot this summer mainly in the woods near Brookfield and Parrsboro where he played the lead role in the production that he wrote and also directed; and

Whereas Jeffrey is already working on his next film project, which will be made with storyboards and a script and will feature young people from Parrsboro as actors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Jeffrey Tambeau on this outstanding achievement and wish him much success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1994

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

Whereas Long & McQuade has been a Canadian family-owned business since 1956; and

Whereas Long & McQuade music stores provide musical instruments to buy and rent, and accessories for aspiring musicians of all ages; and

Whereas the owners of Long & McQuade just completed a massive renovation of their Main Street, Dartmouth, location;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating manager Wayne Hunt, regional manager Brian McConnell, and the entire Long family on their grand reopening of this location and wish them many more years of facilitating the gift of music.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1995

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

Whereas GIVETOLIVE, an organization determined to help fight the war on cancer, has raised \$1.3 million in the past five years and has launched its first-ever ride in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Paul MacQueen from Sydney Mines convinced his two brothers, Steven and Kenneth, to join him in a three-day adult cycling event around the Cabot Trail where each rider must raise a minimum of \$1,000 and pay a registration fee of \$159 and be capable of cycling 100 kilometres per day; and

Whereas every penny raised through GIVETOLIVE goes directly to support kids battling cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate GIVETOLIVE for their volunteer efforts in the war on cancer and wish all participants good luck on the inaugural cycling event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1996

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

Whereas Shayleigh Doucet of Yarmouth, a Grade 2 student at Meadowfields Community School, is a member of the Yarmouth Skating Club, who passed five badges during the last skating season and also won two golds and two silvers in the Cook's Dairy FunSkate; and

Whereas Shayleigh Doucet, six years old at the time, was named the 2011 BMO Financial Group CanSkater of the Year; and

Whereas the criteria to be named CanSkater of the Year include talent and skill achievement, commitment, dedication, physical fitness, and the spirit of a champion, demonstrating the values of determination, discipline, perseverance, and a positive attitude;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Shayleigh Doucet on being named the 2011 BMO Financial Group CanSkater of the Year and wish her much success in what will surely be a very bright future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1997

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

Whereas Jack Beaton, superintendent of the Strait Regional School Board, announced he would be resigning from his position this coming summer, in July 2012; and

Whereas Mr. Beaton began his career in education nearly 37 years ago and has worked as a teacher, a vice-principal, and a principal in several different schools before joining the board; and

Whereas Mr. Beaton has been described as an advocate for students and staff and the board has communicated their appreciation for his service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to Mr. Beaton for his dedication to the education of young Nova Scotians and wish him all the best in his official retirement in July.

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. 1998

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

Whereas the Committee to Preserve the Willett Street Reserve led a group of Clayton Park residents in cleaning up the Willett Street Reserve this past May; and

Whereas the green space had been littered with garbage and unwanted items and at least 20 bags of trash were collected; and

Whereas the committee has been working diligently to convince HRM to reconsider the recommendation to put a bus terminal on the land, which is currently a beautiful green space;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding the committee's efforts to preserve this important green space in Clayton Park.

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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1999

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

Whereas Tim Hortons Camp Day is an annual fundraiser where proceeds from coffee sales go toward the Tim Hortons Children's Foundation to send more than 14,000 kids, who could otherwise not afford it, on the camping adventure of a lifetime; and

Whereas Kim Strong, president and manager, Indoor Environments Division Maritime Testing, made a very generous donation of \$500 on Camp Day while stopping for a coffee on June 1st in Windsor; and

Whereas the overwhelming display of generosity from people such as Mr. Strong assisted in raising \$9.9 million on Camp Day 2011 to support the foundation and help contribute to positive change in a child's life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Kim Strong wholeheartedly for his generous donation and wish him all the best.

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 Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2000

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

Whereas 17 Special Olympics athletics and coaches from la Baie Sainte-Marie participated in the 2011 Special Olympics Nova Scotia Provincial Summer Games in Halifax, July 15th to July 17th; and

Whereas the athletes excelled in the sport of swimming, bowling and athletics; and

Whereas 20 medals were won at these games - 13 gold, 2 silver and 5 bronze;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate all the athletes of the 2011 Special Olympics Nova Scotia Provincial Summer Games.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2001

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

Whereas community markets provide a showcase for a variety of products in a local area as well as celebrate crafters and artists; and

Whereas the Baddeck and Area Community Market is in its second year of operation and continues to show tremendous growth; and

Whereas the goal of the Baddeck and Area Community Market is to develop and maintain a sustainable market for the area where a community comes together and learns from each other;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Baddeck and Area Community Market on its continued growth and wish them every future 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. 2002

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is awarded to one boy and one girl in each Nova Scotia high school who has demonstrated qualities of leadership and service in their school and community; and

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is awarded to students who have exceptional performance in the courses in which they are enrolled; and

Whereas Micayla Matthews was chosen from Richmond Academy as the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal at a ceremony which took place on June 10, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Micayla Matthews for receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Medal and commend her for being a positive role model in her school and 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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2003

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

Whereas on May 28, 2011, Hope Swinimer, a former Argyle resident who founded Hope for Wildlife Society, was in Yarmouth for a book signing with Ray MacLeod, the author of a book about her work rehabilitating wild animals; and

Whereas the book, *Hope for Wildlife: True Stories of Animal Rescue*, tells stories about 14 different wild animals that have passed through the Hope for Wildlife Society's rehabilitation centre in Seaforth, near Dartmouth; and

Whereas Swinimer has been rescuing animals since 1995 and is internationally known for rescuing and rehabilitating wild animals, being the focus of a book and stresses the importance of education when it comes to wildlife;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hope Swinimer for the book and for her dedication to rescuing and rehabilitating wild animals.

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. 2004

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is awarded to one boy and one girl in each Nova Scotia high school who has demonstrated qualities of leadership and service in their school and their community; and

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Medal is awarded to students who have exceptional performance in the courses in which they are enrolled; and

Whereas Cody Marchand was chosen from Richmond Academy as the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal in a ceremony which took place on June 10, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Cody Marchand for receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Medal, and commend him for being a positive role model in his school and 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 Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville on an introduction.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery, where there's a student from Sackville High School, the Grade 11 class, Alex Holmes, and he will be lucky enough to be following me for 100 hours for his co-op class. So I'd ask Alex to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

The honourable member for Antigonish on an introduction.

MR. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this afternoon in the east gallery, Mr. Larry Graham. Lawrence is a Q.C. and is counsel now at BoyneClarke in Dartmouth. He is a very close personal friend of mine. I would ask the House to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party on an introduction.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to introduce to this House in the west gallery today a number of visiting councillors from the Municipality of Cumberland, including Ron MacNutt who represents District 5, Wallace, - sorry, in the east gallery - Kathy Redmond from Wentworth, representing District 6, and Allison and Anne Gillis from District 4, Pugwash. I just want to point out that it is Anne's birthday today, so I hope everyone in the House will give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

[The members sang Happy Birthday.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 2:48 p.m. and end at 3:48 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM: FIRST CONTRACT ARBITRATION/UNIONIZATION RATE - CORRELATION

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Premier said that first contract arbitration did not result in mass unionization - Statistics Canada's data shows that the Premier is simply wrong. Since 1997 the construction industry in Newfoundland and Labrador saw a 122 per cent increase; in Quebec the construction industry saw a 129 per cent increase; and in Saskatchewan forestry, fishing, and mining saw a 145 per cent increase.

So my question to the Premier is, why is the Premier telling Nova Scotians that first contract arbitration has not resulted in mass unionization when it is clear that the rate of unionization more than doubled in some sectors?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, people are entitled to unionize because they make that decision; it's a democratic right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as you know. It is part of the freedom of choice that people have. That, in and of itself, has no relationship to first contract arbitration.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, first contract arbitration flies in the face of collective bargaining and common sense. Settlement tools for unions and employers already exist in this province. The Province of Nova Scotia has stable labour relations, but by forcing this legislation through, that may be in jeopardy. My question to the Premier is, why is his government pushing legislation through that is not necessary?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there is no legislation before the House: In fact, the LMRC hasn't even reported yet, and we're waiting to hear back from the LMRC on their report.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier, in this House and outside of this House, has made it very clear that we will see first contract arbitration in the first mandate of an NDP Government, because they owe those people who worked on their campaigns - it had been made very clear to him.

Mr. Speaker, Michelin has now warned the Premier that this misguided bill will strain relations and they may reconsider future investments in Nova Scotia. (Interruptions) As all members know in this House . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. MCNEIL: Do you want me to start over?

MR. SPEAKER: No, that's fine. Continue.

MR. MCNEIL: As all members of this House know, yesterday we talked about the loss of thousands of jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia. We've been talking about the loss of thousands of jobs in the Strait area. Mr. Speaker, there are 3,500 people that work for Michelin across this province. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier putting his political ideology ahead of jobs for Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: First, let me be clear with the Leader of the Official Opposition. No such thing was ever said, just so he knows that. I realize that that came about as a result of a press report, but it's simply not true. Furthermore, I was at a meeting of the International Association of Firefighters when the member for Cape Breton South was given an award for bringing forward contract arbitration. Why is it good enough in some sectors and not good enough in others?

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

PREM.: MICHELIN CONCERNS - RESPONSE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are the words of the Premier: I don't really make much of anything of it. It's what he said yesterday when asked about the concerns of Nova Scotia employer groups and their worries about first contract arbitration. Now we learn that two weeks ago he also met with Michelin, a large non-unionized employer in our province, where 3,500 Nova Scotians work. They told him that first contract arbitration would put a chill on the investment climate in this province and that they would consider holding back on future investment if he went forward with his plan. This is proof that first contract arbitration is a job killer. So my question to the Premier is, does he also make nothing of the concerns of Michelin, an employer of 3,500 people in our province?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, just so the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is well informed, no such thing was said. My relationship with Michelin has been a very good one. In fact, we have supported investments in the various plants that are here throughout Nova Scotia. I'm quite sure I was the only Premier ever to actually travel to South Carolina to meet with them.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's simply not true.

THE PREMIER: He says that's not true. I don't recall, and I was told by them that I was the only one. Of course we look forward to any future investments in Michelin, and further, they know perfectly well that if we can further support the expansion of well-paying jobs in this province we will do so.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we all know the problems with NewPage in the Strait area. We all know the problems with Bowater down in Queens. Some have argued that those issues are a result of global forces, the recession, declines in markets, and so on. But the concerns of Michelin and the concerns of all those employers who are worried about first-contract arbitration, they lie squarely on the Premier's shoulders. No one else can be blamed for their worries. So my question for the Premier is, why is he so determined to forge ahead with first contract arbitration when Michelin and their 3,500 families and all of those other employers tell them it is a bad idea?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I have already said which is that the Labour Management Review Committee has not yet reported. We're looking forward to receiving their report, and as I've indicated in the past, our marker for legislation is simply straightforward: is it or is it not good for the people of Nova Scotia?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not listening to Michelin and the Premier is not listening to those companies, small and large, that are responsible for employing so many tens and hundreds of thousands of Nova Scotians. It begs the question,

who has the Premier's ear on this issue? Who is the Premier listening to? Who is asking him for first contact arbitration? That is my question for the Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I've already pointed out, the Labour Management Review Committee has not yet reported. When they report, then we'll be happy to consider that report, and if legislation is good for the province, then of course we'll proceed with it. I point out to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that 80 per cent of Canadians are currently covered by first contract arbitration. First contract legislation was introduced by Progressive Conservative Governments and Liberal Governments because they determined it was simply good legislation.

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

PREM. - URB RATE HEARINGS: GOV'T. (N.S.) - RESPONSE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, energy costs are rising in this province. NewPage Port Hawkesbury, Bowater Mersey, and Minas Basin Pulp and Power have all shut down indefinitely or signalled layoffs are expected. Residents and small businesses across the province have told us they cannot handle another rate increase. All the while, the Premier remains silent on this general rate application in front of the URB. My question to the Premier is, what did government do during the general rate application hearing to oppose this rate increase?

THE PREMIER: I believe the Leader of the Official Opposition would know that I was very outspoken about my opposition to both an increase in the return on equity for the power company as I was opposed to the question of executive bonuses being included in a new power rate application. I pointed out that I do not feel this was an acceptable time to be making those kinds of asks before the Utility and Review Board.

MR. MCNEIL: I asked the Premier what he did about it, Mr. Speaker. Last year, Nova Scotia Power took \$121.5 million out of the Province of Nova Scotia and handed it to Emera to invest all over the globe. Under the Premier's advice to Nova Scotia Power, the rate of return has been reduced. But guess what? They're going to take \$122 million out of the Province of Nova Scotia, which actually is an increase out of the rate base in this province to invest globally - across the globe, not here in Nova Scotia.

I repeatedly asked the Premier and his government to step in and order a performance audit of Nova Scotia Power. My question to the Premier is, why does he continue to refuse to order a performance value audit of Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: I don't refuse at all. In fact, there was one done just a short time ago. They concluded that the operations of the company were in order. They, in fact, congratulated them on some of their operations and they pointed out in other areas where

there could be improvement. We're not going to resolve the energy price problem in this province by doing what the Liberal Party suggests, which is more paperwork.

MR. MCNEIL: We're not going to solve the energy crunch that Nova Scotians are suffering by burying our heads in the sand, as the Premier is doing; the performance audit that the Premier is talking about happened years ago. I went and asked questions of the president of Nova Scotia Power at the hearing and I asked him to present to Nova Scotians the executive compensation package for his executive. They were unwilling to do that but they boasted about the fact that they've reduced the number of executives from 12 to eight. I said to him, how did that affect the compensation package? He said it didn't. So you mean to tell me we have four fewer executives or we're just dividing the pie up amongst eight people instead of 12? How is that to the benefit of Nova Scotians? (Applause)

That is exactly why we want you to look inside of this company to make sure that the decisions that are being made are in the best interests of the rate base and not in the best interests of the executives of Nova Scotia Power. My question once again is, will you stand up for Nova Scotia ratepayers and demand a performance audit review of Nova Scotia Power so that we can protect Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: What we're going to do is make sure that we have energy costs that are stable and we are going to ensure that we get off of fossil fuels, because that's the way that you actually attack the cost of energy in the province. We don't do it through audits or through studies. In fact, the Liberals have a double-barrelled approach to energy pricing - useless and toothless.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

PREM. - NEWPAGE MANAGERS: PENSIONS - GOV'T. (N.S.) ACTIONS

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, last night 115 retired managers from the now-closed NewPage mill in Point Tupper, Richmond County, met to discuss their financial future, namely their lack of legal representation when it comes to protecting their pensions with the current court case that is taking place. These 200 retirees and 100 existing workers make up NewPage's salaried, non-union, pension plan members.

Mr. Speaker, these workers are very concerned about what could potentially happen should their pension plan remain underfunded and wound up. My question to the Premier is, could he advise what actions his government is taking to make sure that these workers are being represented in the court action regarding the closure of the NewPage mill?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what we're doing is keeping that asset in a "hot idle" position so that it can be sold and ultimately the best disposition for all the pensioners is to have an operating asset at NewPage, in Port Hawkesbury.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier would be aware, the four pension plans at the NewPage facility have a potential wind-up deficit of \$130.4 million, which would mean a significant reduction in pension benefits to hundreds of workers, existing workers and retirees in the Strait area. Needless to say, we're all hoping that that mill can be sold as a going concern but the workers are asking, what is plan B should that not happen. So my question is, has the Premier and his government worked out a plan as to what would happen should this wind-up deficit of \$130.4 million happen to take place?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course, we would offer any assistance we can in order to make sure that that process takes place in an orderly fashion and, of course, to the greatest possible benefit to the pensioners. As the honourable member would understand, there is a wind-up process that looks at the solvency, looks at the asset base, and distributes, through the retirees, the existing benefits of the fund. You know, we have seen over and over again across Canada, unfortunately, the consequences of underfunded pension plans and, you know, it can be extremely devastating to families. We hope that that is not the case. We really do hope that we'll be able to keep that asset running and, as I said, we'll offer whatever support we can through the wind-up process, should that take place.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure, as the Premier would be aware, many of the retirees and the pension-eligible workers are wondering why is it that legislation has permitted this underfunding to take place and are questioning whether government is looking at reviewing some of the laws that exist today in light of what has taken place at NewPage and in light of what has taken place at so many other companies, and maybe the Premier can address that.

Mr. Speaker, we now know that there are four bidders that are still being considered, two of which have indicated they would continue to operate the facility as a going concern. I'm wondering if the Premier could advise the House and all the former workers and current workers at NewPage as to whether there have been any discussions with these two bidders regarding the status and future of the existing plans at the former NewPage site.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can't advise the honourable member in that regard. I would expect that that's part of the assessment that any new purchaser would do in taking on those responsibilities but, of course, as he would know, it's currently before the monitor. They have now qualified the bids but the next thing that they're going to have to do is move forward to where those kinds of discussions would start to take place. In fact, it may even be a little further down the road because the first thing they will do is they will go kind of back through the mill, through the asset base, and try to determine what they would need in order to be able to bring that plant back on line and that's ultimately the disposition they're trying for. So it will be somewhat further down in the process before they actually get to those kinds of questions.

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

PREM.: UNION CERTIFICATION - VOTING

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Most Nova Scotians understand that workers have a right to vote, to form a union if they so choose, but guess who doesn't agree with that? The Deputy Premier doesn't agree. We've known since he introduced Bill No. 220 several years ago that he believes that a union should be able to be formed without actually bothering to ask the workers to vote on its certification. That was the point of Bill No. 220.

My question to the Premier is a pretty simple one. Does he agree with his Deputy Premier that a union can be formed without the messiness of actually asking the workers to vote, yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, that's a distortion of the process because, in fact, in order for people to form a union, they have to sign a union card, he knows that. He is just making mischief.

The reality is that labour legislation across the country has evolved over the last 25 years and many of the things that exist in other jurisdictions simply don't exist here in Atlantic Canada. They are changing over time, the Newfoundland and Labrador Government, as was pointed out, brought in, under Danny Williams I believe, the first contract legislation.

This is all about making sure that there are good, solid industrial relations between workers and the people they work for because it protects the workers from being out on strike and it protects the employer from not having access to their employees because of a strike.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that was a yes or a no but I'll just move on. The Premier's government quietly changed the Trade Union Procedure Regulations, recently, to make it easier to become a member in good standing of the union, even removing the minimal \$2 membership fee that used to be charged. My question to the Premier is this, who lobbied the Premier to make those changes that no one else appeared to be asking for?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, all legislation, it doesn't matter whether it's in environment or in labour or in health or in pensions, all legislation is always under review for the purposes of trying to bring it up to the best practices. Why should it be any different, or why would it be any different, in industrial and labour relations than it would be in the environment?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we have a government where the Deputy Premier thinks you don't even need to vote to form a union, they barrelled ahead with Bill No. 100, against the objections of virtually all of the non-unionized employers of the province. Now

we have a government that is determined to go ahead with first contract arbitration, which no one seems to want.

My question to the Premier is simple, will you stop the concessions to your special interests, then stop this plan to bring in something that no one wants and no one voted for?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, over the course of a number of elections now we talked about the necessity to have a Labour Management Review Committee so that questions related to labour relations would not be sprung on people, that there wouldn't be any surprises. I'm glad they are doing their job. I think it's a great forum for that kind of discussion and I look forward to the report when it is made public.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ER PROTECTION FUND - DISBURSEMENT

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much. I'm very pleased to get up. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last Spring the minister outlined a list of projects that benefited from the \$3 million Emergency Room Protection Fund. Earlier this week, during the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the member for Lunenburg West indicated that \$3 million was being used to hire doctors to keep ERs open.

Then we have written confirmation from departmental officials that the Emergency Room Protection Fund was not spent in 2010-11. Could the minister clarify once and for all which explanation is correct?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me an opportunity to tell members of the House of all the great things we are doing in the Department of Health and Wellness to improve emergency care in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have filled difficult shifts in several DHAs around the province. We've opened the first collaborative care centre in the country which has brought together primary care providers and we've kept an emergency room open overnight in the Parrsboro area. We've announced three more in Colchester, Tatamagouche as well as Springhill and Pugwash. I'm looking forward to making many more announcements of that sort.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I expected from the minister because for some reason, this minister had no problem misleading members of this House when she produced a list of projects last Spring. The only problem here is that the department has stated the fund was not spent. I can tell you our caucus and the good people of Nova Scotia have a problem with that. The list of the projects and their merits is not the

issue, the \$3 million is not the issue - the issue is the mixed messages being delivered by the minister and her colleagues. It's about credibility, accountability and believability.

My question to the minister is, why did the minister claim in the Spring the money was spent when she knew full well it wasn't?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this is the list of things that we've invested in in the Department of Health and Wellness with respect to emergency department and protection. We have provided funding to fill difficult ER shifts, we have provided funding for additional ER hours at both the Capital District Health Authority and the IWK. We have provided training for paramedics to administer clot-busting drugs in ambulances across the province, bringing the ER out to the living rooms and the front yards of people in the province. We provided funding for a physician to cover and fast-track non-emergent patients in the ER in the Annapolis Valley Health Authority.

I'll table this list of expenditures. It amounts to \$3.276 million. (Applause)

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the minister can provide whatever lists she wants, but I know how many people are spending six and seven hours waiting in the emergency rooms in the Annapolis Valley. I can tell her, it's only going to get worse. This government promised Nova Scotians they would spend \$3 million hiring doctors to keep ERs open during the last election campaign. That's a fact.

Last Spring and again today, we have a briefing over the list of projects. This minister attempted to pass off a list of projects for which the fund was tapped and claimed every red cent was spent. I will re-table Hansard from the Spring to prove that the minister said the fund was spent. How are we to ever believe what is being said by the minister or any of her colleagues inside or outside the Chamber when they keep stating that money has been spent when the facts state otherwise? (Applause)

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the only thing Nova Scotians have to fear is if that crowd ever got into government. The last time they were there, they ran a \$222 million deficit in the Department of Health. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

PREM.: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - CUTS EXPLAIN

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in 2008 the then-Opposition Leader criticized the government of the day for the pace it was delivering long-term care beds. There's a nice quote here: "These are of critical importance to people like Linda Hartson, to seniors in this community. They expect to be able to have access to the kind of care that their loved ones need." the Opposition Leader said in a newspaper article of April 23, 2008 and I'll table that.

My question through you to the Premier is, given his strong feelings about long-term care beds back in 2008, why has this government cut 200 promised beds for seniors and long-term care strategy? Why don't people like Linda Hartson deserve and expect to have access to the kind of care that their loved ones need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the member for Argyle was with me down at Bay Side when we had the opportunity to open the new, long-term care beds at Bay Side. Right across the province we have been opening new, long-term care facilities in order to care for seniors in our province.

We recognize, of course, that there's going to continue to be pressure in an aging population. Not only are we devoting ourselves to that aspect of care for our seniors - creating more long-term care beds - but we're also creating the opportunities for people to stay longer in their own homes, providing them with allowances to allow them to provide and select the kind of care that they need in order to be able to stay in their homes.

There's a complete continuum of care for seniors that this government is committed to and you can be assured that we will continue to follow through not only on that commitment but on the necessity that we identify in that sector.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, yes, I was there with the Premier when we did the opening of Bay Side Home for Special Care, in Barrington. I'm very happy that was finally opened after being announced, of course, by our government, some time ago. It was good to see that many of those beds are finally being opened as the construction did take a couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005 the Leader of the NDP asked, in this place, why a government would "... rather see seniors go without service than admit they need more nursing home beds?" The waiting list for long-term care beds is no longer than it was when this government got elected and yet the NDP decided not to build 200 beds that were promised to communities.

My question to the Premier - the time has come to be asked the same question that he asked five years ago. Why would the Premier rather see seniors go without service than admit that they need more nursing home beds?

THE PREMIER: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Argyle understated the amount of time it took for Bay Side to open. Of course it was promised for 20 years, through election after election, when both Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments were there, and they never did it. We got elected and we opened the facility.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I tell you, it's incredible how we forget how things are actually done when it was our government that announced Bay Side, it was our government that signed the contract for Bay Side, it was our government that did the

designs for Bay Side and it is their government that was lucky enough to open Bay Side. I am very happy, of course, for the residents of the Barrington area because those 40 beds have been needed for a long time.

My final supplementary - statistics from the Department of Finance's own Web site show that the need for long-term care beds in Nova Scotia will increase exponentially in the coming years. By 2036, the number of people over 85 will have doubled.

My question is, will the Premier admit today that his decision not to build 200 much-needed, long-term care beds is short-sighted and wrong-headed? Will he admit that his promise to seniors is another example of the NDP saying one thing in Opposition and doing something else now that they are in government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we have built and opened many long-term care facilities. We have put in place allowances so that people would be able to stay in their own home, with the appropriate supports. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to explain to the critic the scope of that program.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we have a Continuing Care Strategy in the department of which long-term care is a part, but it is certainly not the only part. As I travel around this province speaking with seniors' groups and health care providers, it is constantly being impressed upon me how much people in this province want to stay in their own homes for as long as they possibly can. They want enhanced and expanded home care; they want support for caregivers; they want day programs - they want a very broad continuum of services that aren't only the nursing home sector.

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly will continue to open long-term care beds. There are still more to come into our system before the end of this year, and we also have invested in things like the personal alert system, the caregiver's benefit, and the support program for seniors who live alone and who require additional supports to enhance the home care services they already have so they can remain at home as long as they wish and it's something that they're able to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC. - TEACHING POSITIONS: CUTS - NUMBERS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. The minister continues to try to convince Nova Scotians that slashing public education and downloading costs to the school boards to the tune of \$36 million is not affecting the classroom, but she is doing this without sharing real numbers. She's not sharing the realities that these cuts are affecting the classroom.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's deal with realities - will the minister tell Nova Scotians exactly how many teaching positions we have lost from our schools due to the budget cuts this year?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, no permanent teacher in the Province of Nova Scotia lost their job.

MS. CASEY: That's what I expected to hear, Mr. Speaker, because the question was "teaching positions," not "permanent teachers laid off". So let's go back to this. As caucus members, all three Parties, the members of all three Parties had presentations from the five education partners and those presentations included real numbers. The Nova Scotia School Boards Association and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union told all of us that 82 teaching positions were lost as a result of the minister's cuts - and I will table that report.

So my question to the minister is will she tell this House why she is not accepting, nor is she acknowledging, the real numbers from NSSBA and the NSTU?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to remind the member opposite that we have more teachers now teaching in our system - 73 more teachers are teaching this year in this system even though we are 30,000 students less.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, no answer to that question, so we'll try another one.

The numbers speak for themselves. If the minister won't acknowledge it, the numbers that we've received will speak for themselves. We have 82 fewer teaching positions due to budget cuts; we have Primary classes that exceed the cap; we have elementary classes that have over 30 students; we have combined classes with three grades in a room; we have chemistry classes with over 40 students - more than their science lab will allow them to accommodate; we have gym size classes of up to 60 students in the gym at one time; and not only do these numbers affect the ability of teachers to teach (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MS. CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only do these numbers affect the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn, but (Interruptions)

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

The honourable member for Colchester North on your question.

MS. CASEY: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. The minister has stated that she has been in many schools and Hansard will reflect that yesterday she said: "... the classes I've been in have all been under 20."

Mr. Speaker, those would be the safe classes for the minister to visit, so my question to the minister is, will she now commit to visiting those other classes, where teachers are struggling with classes of 30, 35, and 40 students?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just say that the class sizes and the student-teacher ratio is the lowest in this province - historically low, lower than 20 years in this province. We are dealing with a situation (Interruptions) We are at historic lows. Our student-teacher ratio is 1-13 and our average class size in the Province of Nova Scotia is 21.8.

I am quite sure that the honourable member will find anomalies across the system, but I will say that if there are anomalies I would definitely like to hear about them. Maybe the honourable member and I can speak about this, but I want to say that our class sizes are at historic lows and our ratio is at historic lows.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: RCMP SERV. (N.S.) - B.C. NEGOTIATIONS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I hope those numbers start reversing, because if we continue with the tax regime we have in this province you're going to see even more young people leave the province.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Nova Scotians recently learned that the Minister of Justice delegated responsibility for securing RCMP services for Nova Scotians to negotiators in British Columbia. B.C.'s Minister of Public Safety recently told an annual meeting of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities that negotiations with the federal government had broken down. She has also mused publicly about creating a provincial police force.

We are nearing the November 30th deadline. Has the Minister of Justice entered into bilateral negotiations with the federal government or is he continuing to leave our fate in the hands of British Columbia?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for that question. In any partnership - there are a number of provinces involved in this negotiation. You can well imagine that having eight people sitting at the table to negotiate, or you break your process up - and we've made our contribution over the extent of this contract, which has been going on for a couple of years.

I'm very confident in the work that B.C. is doing on our behalf. We have directed them to do that. We don't need eight people shouting at the federal government; we like to have one. Good, clear communication is critical. Nova Scotia's interests, I will assure you,

are well in hand. Our position is being clearly articulated and I'm very confident a negotiated settlement will be reached very soon.

MR. MACMASTER: It's very risky to place our fate in the hands of British Columbia, a province whose policing services are very different from those here in Nova Scotia. We believe the minister should be at the table, and we would ask again, when will this minister make an appearance at that table and negotiate a deal that works for our province?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the question. I want to assure this House that this province has been involved heavily with the negotiation from its beginning, right through. There are certain aspects that were broken up where Nova Scotia took the lead. On this particular element of the negotiated contract, B.C. has taken this clause. On the overall contract, though, Nova Scotia has made its position well known and has been an integral partner in the position of where this contract is right now. Once again, I want to reiterate that Nova Scotia has nothing to fear from this. It's a very positive approach, and a very open and clear dialogue is occurring.

MR. MACMASTER: If this November 30th deadline does pass with no agreement in place, the RCMP will begin a two-year process of pulling out of our province. Can the minister give us some assurance today - actually, we'd like to hear some specifics. What will the minister do to make sure that the many communities now served by the RCMP will have police service in 2014? What is the minister's Plan B?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, there is no need to go to Plan B, because I'm very confident in the professionalism and skills of the people who are conducting the negotiation at this time. I must reiterate and be very poignant on the point that this is a negotiation, and for this minister or this government to interfere with that process - unlike the Opposition, we stay out of that part and we respect and value our employees.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

NAT. RES.: HARDWOOD OPERATIONS - CROWN FIBRE ACCESS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. I think we've all come to understand that many of our forestry businesses in Nova Scotia are struggling, but while there has been a lot of talk about the pulp and softwood, many in the hardwood industry feel that the challenges of people working with hardwood have been ignored. Some of the challenges can be rectified by government, as for years Crown leases and government programs have set the needs of the hardwood industry aside or as secondary. Will the minister please tell us what his plans are to establish reliable access to Crown fibre for Nova Scotia's hardwood operations?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had the opportunity to sit down with the Eastern Hardwood Management Association, a mix of five different sawmills that specialize in hardwood in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia, and I heard first-hand some of their concerns, their issues. We're working now with them through our department and Groupe Savoie, Finewood Flooring, and others. They're an important part of our economy, and we'll continue to dialogue and work with them for sustainable use of our hardwood segment.

MR. YOUNGER: The minister will be well aware that Groupe Savoie Inc. came to Nova Scotia more than a decade ago to create jobs, yet continue to run into hurdles. Their Westville facility is currently operating at only 50 per cent capacity, and they tell us directly that this is because of restrictions and roadblocks they face from this government on access to hardwood. The department's own data from 2004 says that there is an abundance of hardwood volume in Nova Scotia, and yet it seems the hardwood industry is having trouble accessing it.

By now I'm sure the minister realizes that stumpage rates are higher for hardwoods than they are for other industries, and that much of the money actually stays in Nova Scotia, benefiting Nova Scotians in the hardwood industry. It's one of our highest-valued products from the forest. It is also generally harvested in a sustainable and selective manner. Mr. Speaker, will the minister guarantee to this House that he will ensure that the hardwood industry has reliable and sustainable access to forests for their work?

MR. PARKER: Certainly there have been many challenges in the forest industry, not just here in Nova Scotia but across Canada and around the world. Hardwood is one of our most valuable resources. As I mentioned, I recently met with the Eastern Hardwood Management Association, the group of five mills, and our goal is always to make sure there is the highest and best use of our hardwood supply. In our Code of Forest Practices those regulations are fully laid out, that that will just happen. We have recently added a liaison person from the Department of Natural Resources to sit down, to meet with them, hear their issues first-hand, and move forward from there.

MR. YOUNGER: While I'm glad to hear that the minister has a liaison for the hardwood industry, I'm a little bit concerned that he says the changes in regulations or policies will "just happen." It has to be more than "just happen." I think the minister has to make it happen. The minister must understand by now, if he's had these meetings, that the hardwood industry presents a great potential for real growth in Nova Scotia, contributing to our rural communities and putting a lot of money from forest products into the industry. The Westville facility represents \$10 million of this investment.

Now the minister has been quoted recently in various news sources as acknowledging that there are a number of Crown leases that will come up for renewal or come up for renegotiation in the coming months and weeks. This is a real opportunity to ensure that access for the hardwood industry is finally protected in those leases. It is

possible to protect access for the hardwood industry while still providing access to the softwood industry. Mr. Speaker, will the minister guarantee today that he will include access protections for the hardwood industry in the renegotiation of any future Crown leases for forest products?

MR. PARKER: Opportunity is written all over this industry, and it has a huge potential to create more jobs in our province. As we work on the value-added component of our Natural Resources Strategy, moving forward there is going to be more opportunity for hardwood and other forest products. So I agree with the honourable member that we do have an opportunity here. Crown allocation is part of that opportunity, and we're going to work with the industry to try to ensure that there is a good quality supply of hardwood logs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

FIN. - MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE: CUTS - DETAILS

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, during the Spring NDP budget, the Minister of Finance clearly targeted the Department of Justice for significant cuts to their budget, probably the largest percentage cut of any government department, to the tune of \$5.3 million. While I have talked on numerous occasions about the cuts made to crime prevention programs, we're curious to ask the minister about a specific line item where he intends to make a cut to the Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service to the tune of \$290,000. I wonder, could the Minister of Justice advise us, exactly what services is he planning on cutting to the Nova Scotia medical examiner's office?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, like every government department during these financial times, and in trying to get our house in order and make sure everyone is managing their departments to the best of their ability, the medical examiner's office is looking over their processes, their systems and looking at ways to increase efficiencies and make it more functional and cost effective. I'm very confident in the approach they have taken, and that they will continue to take, in looking at ways to identify those key areas where savings could be made.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, during the estimates we were able to find out from the Minister of Justice that it was this government's intention to cut autopsies on the weekend for non-essential situations. I have to say that's probably one of the more tasteless cuts that I've seen a government propose. The minister may have forgotten, but two weeks ago the Chief Medical Examiner's Office sent out notice to embalmers and undertakers advising that unless it was essential, the office would no longer be conducting autopsies on the weekends.

Within 48 hours this government saw the error of its ways and it reversed this decision. My question to the minister is, can the minister confirm whether the government

is still planning on pursuing this cut to autopsies on weekends or any further reductions in autopsies performed by the Nova Scotia medical examiner's office?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. He's correct on one point that he made there, the death in anyone's family is a very sensitive and emotional time in the lives of any family. The 24/7 service is costly but routine autopsies are not necessary on every weekend. Temporary measures, until April 2012, will be put in place. The medical examiner's office will continue to meet the special needs of families, especially when religious beliefs are requiring immediate burial. Autopsies for homicides will continue and autopsies on children will continue.

It's a matter of trying to be more pragmatic and practical in how we utilize resources and we're looking at this in a very constructive and sensitive way. I want to assure all Nova Scotians that we take each family member, in situations such as this, we take them seriously and we acknowledge the sensitivity of them.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we seem to be getting different messages here. In one sense the government seems to have withdrawn the reduction in service, yet the Minister of Justice is informing us today that there will still be a reduction in the sense that there will only be autopsies performed in select instances. Those who don't fall in those instances will be told to wait until Monday. The minister has acknowledged this is a sensitive issue. Families who lose a loved one for unknown reasons want answers immediately; to suggest that they have to wait until Monday is clearly unacceptable.

It was our understanding the government had done the right thing by withdrawing this reduction in service but it would now appear to be the case that a reduction is still taking place. My final supplementary is, will the minister confirm, yes or no, that he has ordered a reduction in the weekend services of autopsies performed by the Nova Scotia medical examiner's office?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, other provinces have a similar model in place. I'll repeat again what the medical examiner will continue to do. They'll meet the special needs of families, especially when religious beliefs require an immediate burial; autopsies dealing with homicides or suspicious deaths will be conducted immediately; and autopsies on children will be conducted immediately. This temporary process will be in place until the Spring. Each situation will be evaluated but the 24 hours, seven days a week has to be questioned in these economic times.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ENERGY: BIOMASS COGENERATION PROPOSAL - SUPPORT

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, after a three-week shutdown, yesterday Minas Basin Pulp and Power - eastern Canada's largest recycling entity, in business since

1927 - announced an 8 per cent layoff, which is equal to 13 jobs. Marketplace challenges and high energy rates were the reasons management cited for the layoffs.

This company has made a legitimate attempt to ease the burden of the high energy prices, they produce half of the energy they consume and, as the minister may know, there's a Minas Basin Pulp and Power proposal on the desk for a biomass cogeneration project that would further reduce their energy costs.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Energy is, will the minister commit today to give the biomass cogeneration proposal every consideration and help preserve hundreds of jobs in the Valley?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit Minas Basin Pulp and Power two or three weeks back. I'm quite impressed with their facility - good management, good workers and certainly in the recycling business a green industry from day one. Certainly as a government we're willing to work with any industry, including Minas Basin Pulp and Power, to work through any challenges they may have, so that offer is certainly fully open to them.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the minister; I'm pleased to hear that. Could the minister tell the House when this good corporate citizen and long-time job creator can expect maybe to hear from the minister and some kind of answer on this, given that - I know it's on the desk somewhere and it's going to mean a lot in the weeks, months and years ahead for job stability at Minas Basin.

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of being both the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Natural Resources. I've had the opportunity to talk to my deputy ministers in both departments and we're on this issue. We realize the important contribution this industry is in the Valley or in Hants County. We're aware of it, we're working with our departments and we'll see how we can best offer opportunity to them.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, high energy prices have crippled NewPage mill. We're seeing yesterday that it is certainly having an effect at BowaterAbitibi, as well, and they've put hundreds of jobs on the South Shore on the line, unfortunately, and now 13 more hard-working Nova Scotians. That doesn't sound like a big number in comparison but every job counts, as we all know in this House.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, when the minister could announce to this House or to all Nova Scotians for that matter, especially these businesses that are large consumers of great amounts of energy, when they're going to put forward something other than what apparently now is an expensive bite-the-bullet kind of energy plan that is not working? When are we going to start addressing in a positive way how energy rates in this province are hurting the employment sector?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly Minas Basin Pulp and Power has been a leader in green, clean, renewable energy for a long time. They've been recycling fibre there in their plant for decades and they are now also a leader in the tidal industry in this province, they are involved in the forest project in the Minas Basin. Really they are a leader in the clean, green, renewable energy and that's great to see a local, homegrown company doing that. We in the Department of Energy are excited about their potential and we're going to continue to work with them.

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

PREM. - HALLIDAY, PHILIP: CASE - FAMILIARITY

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Tomorrow in Digby there's going to be a march and rally for Philip Halliday. Mr. Halliday has been locked away in prison in Spain for two years and has yet to have a trial. My question to the minister is, is the minister aware of the situation faced by Mr. Halliday and his family from Digby, Nova Scotia?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: I'm going to pass that question on to the Premier as it deals with Intergovernmental Affairs.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to let the honourable member know that on April 28th, I wrote the Honourable Lawrence Cannon to raise the question of Mr. Halliday's detainment in Spain. I specifically asked the then-Minister of Foreign Affairs to investigate the access by Mr. Halliday to appropriate medical care and to ensure that he was receiving full consular services during his period of detainment and, of course, to seek an expeditious disposition of his case and I'll file that for you.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I have all the letters that have been written to the Premier and the Premier's letter also, and to Mr. Kerr and people in Ottawa. So I'll table all those letters.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that Mr. Halliday has had to wait two years for his trial is not fair. His health is not good and it's putting a heavy strain on his family and friends in the community. Slow justice is no justice. Will the Premier commit to do everything at his disposal to ensure that Mr. Halliday is returned to Nova Scotia and granted a fair trial as soon as possible?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the member has received a copy of the reply that came this time from the Honourable Diane Ablonczy. It's dated the 14th of June. In that reply - and I'm going to table this for you - she says: While Mr. Halliday is ultimately subject to the local laws and associated timelines, I would like to assure you that DFAIT officials will continue to seek to ensure that the Spanish authorities provide appropriate medical attention to Mr. Halliday and also request that he receive a timely and

transparent trial. Canadian consular officials will also continue to provide support to his family as per their mandate until the resolution of his case.

MR. THERIAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Premier, for that and I hope all goes well.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

The honourable Opposition House Leader on a point of order.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period today in response to a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition regarding the first contract arbitration, the Premier made reference to the member for Cape Breton South who was given an award by the International Association of Firefighters for that very issue, for promoting that very issue and promoting a bill to that effect in the House. He's right about one thing, I got a recommendation and a commendation, I guess, from the International Association of Firefighters. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I received that commendation from them for pursuing legislation to replace strike action with compulsory arbitration which was asked for by the firefighters – which has nothing to do with first contract. These people were already unionized. (Interruption) Yes, you did. Yes, you did. You might want to get better advisors or stop trying to (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I will take that under advisement and report back to the House.

The honourable member for Glace Bay on an introduction.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, thanks for that warm welcome from the House. I just want to quickly recognize two great people from Glace Bay whom we have in the west gallery this afternoon with us - George and Joanne MacDonald. They're up from Glace Bay. George is a District No. 4 councillor for the CBRM and they're up for the UNSM AGM.

George has been a long-time servant for Glace Bay. He was a teacher and a guidance counsellor - I won't say for how long, George, but it has been a few years. He was my guidance counsellor and he got me out of trouble a few times. (Interruptions) No, that's not true. I was never in trouble. But I will say George is also my municipal councillor and he's done a great job for us and he does great things in the riding and I get credit for a lot of

them. So, George and Joanne, good to see you, welcome. I'd like to ask the House for a warm round of applause for George and Joanne. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness on an introduction.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. In the west gallery, my warden from the Municipality of the County of Inverness, Duart MacAulay, is with us today. We've also had a couple of other members of the council, Dwayne MacDonald and Jim Mustard, who have visited with us today. I'd ask that you all extend them a warm round of applause. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's good to know someone is doing some work in Glace Bay. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1846.

Res. No. 1846, re Electoral Boundaries Commission: Select Comm. - Appoint - notice given Oct. 31/11 - (Hon. F. Corbett)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I'll just say a few words on this. This is a resolution that is similar - it's the same as we've seen in 1991 and in 2001 when it comes to establishing a select committee on boundary review. It's a resolution that empowers us to go out and hear from the public and then form a commission. We move this resolution and will sit and listen to debate, and hopefully it will pass today. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this resolution this afternoon. All Nova Scotians want to know that when the electoral boundaries are redrawn in our province, that it is done in a way that is fair in a number of different respects. First of all, that it is done in a way that is non-partisan. Secondly, that it's done in a way that no one Party gains an advantage over any other Party by virtue of the way the boundaries are drawn. Thirdly, and most importantly, Nova Scotians want to know

that when the boundaries of the province are redrawn, they're redrawn in a way that is fair to the Nova Scotia voters themselves. That is the most important point.

The reason I rise on this resolution is that I do not believe it meets the test of fairness in any of those respects. When Nova Scotians study the resolution and the way the government is proposing to redraw our boundaries, I know they will come to the same conclusion - this is not a fair process. That is the point that the Progressive Conservative caucus sought to make the other night when the government wanted to waive the rules and bring it in. That is why we're talking about it here today, on Thursday.

First of all, on the issue on equal by Party, the fact of the matter is, there are many examples of committees of this House that have been formed over the last few years that have been formed on the basis of equality of Party, regardless of the standings at any given time in the House of Assembly. The Electoral Commission itself, which will ultimately redraw the boundaries as a matter of law, is a commission that is equal by Party. Each Party appoints two members and then there is a Chair. That is how the commission itself has been determined, by a matter of law that all Parties in this House have agreed to.

As recently as 2007, this House appointed a Select Committee on Participation in the Democratic Process, a very important select committee that received all-Party support, that is studying a very important issue that touches on these very points of how Nova Scotians participate, equal to each other, in the democratic process. In that select committee, it was determined that all Parties would be equal. It had a mandate very similar to the mandate of the committee the government wants to form today - that is, to travel the province and consult with Nova Scotians on how best for them to participate in our process, something that we all cherish very much and believe is very important.

With regard to being fair to all voters, Mr. Speaker, this is something the government has not even written into the resolution, which is very different than past resolutions. I know the government likes to say, well, this is just the same as the resolution from 10 long years ago in the composition of the committee. That may be true but it is not the same in the direction that it gives to the committee because 10 years ago, when the boundaries were last redrawn, decisions about what fairness means for voters, decisions about how to ensure that no one Party gets an advantage, how to ensure that it's a non-partisan exercise - those decisions were made here in the House of Assembly, in the full light of day, where every Nova Scotian can keep track of what is going on.

The resolution is silent on all those things and I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that was a deliberate choice because it would have been very easy to just photocopy the old resolution and bring it to this House. Indeed, on the composition of the committee, the government has done that, but someone had to decide specifically to take out certain provisions, like how to ensure fairness, whether we should have protected seats for certain minority groups, whether we should respect municipal boundaries, whether we should seek

out communities of interest and when we're putting groups of people together for the purpose of electing their MLA. It is silent on all of those issues.

Those are great debates that could have happened in this House of Assembly and informed the committee before it went to do its work. That's how it was done in the past, that met the test of fairness, but to be silent on these very important things and then to send an NDP majority committee off to do its work - I would say to you, Madam Speaker, the government can't have it both ways. It should be one or the other. If you want to meet the test of fairness, it should be one or the other.

I know that political Parties need to do their bit to ensure that the committee is fair to the Parties, but that is not why I rise today. It is the voters of Nova Scotia. It is fairness to them that is the reason that this resolution is actually so offensive in its current form, because it is silent on important principles of fairness to voters, like the equality of their vote.

That important principle is actually enshrined in the Constitution of Canada, the constitution of our country, in Section 3. I will quote from Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Madam Speaker, which is entitled "Democratic rights of citizens". Section 3 of the Charter says: "Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein."

Now, Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of legal work done on the exact meaning of Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What does it mean that they have a right to vote? It has been determined - in fact the Supreme Court has ruled - that Section 3 not only means you get the right to vote but you are guaranteed a measure of equality of your voting. Equality was determined this way, Madam Speaker, by the Supreme Court of Canada, and I'll just quote from their decision. It was found that constituencies should have roughly the same number of voters, although perfection was not required.

There's a lot of legal room there, Madam Speaker, about what exactly equality of vote means when perfection is not required. It is that very wiggle room that should make Nova Scotians nervous, that in a decision as important as the equality of their vote, when perfection is not required, is going to be made by a select committee, out of the light of day of this Legislature, that has a majority of NDP members on it. That is why the resolution is so offensive in its current form.

Madam Speaker, this very principle was tested in the case of *The Attorney General of Saskatchewan versus Roger Carter, Q.C.*, who argued that it's important that we have clarity about what equality of vote means. The decision in that case was, and I'll quote from it: "The purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se but the right to 'effective representation'."

This is the big issue because this is fundamentally what the committee is all about: determining that Nova Scotians, each and every one of them, get effective representation in this House of Assembly. Yet the resolution that the NDP has brought forward, which creates a committee that they are in control of, is going to determine this very important fundamental point - enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms - out of the light of day of this Legislature, and I have a problem with that.

We'll work on equality of Parties and ensuring no Party gets an advantage, but what we won't see, once it leaves this House - because the committee goes beyond this House - is who has an opinion about what "effective representation" means. That is the big issue, and who is going to determine it? A committee that has a majority of NDP members. Madam Speaker, with all due respect, that does not meet any test of fairness that any reasonable Nova Scotian would have and would expect when this House of Assembly takes responsibility for redrawing the electoral boundaries, as it is charged to do by the election laws.

There are other obvious deficiencies in the bill. It's not gone unnoticed that it sets deadlines for the select committee to report back and deadlines for the appointment of the Election Commission, but it's actually silent on when the commission has to report back, something I'm sure that Nova Scotians would be interested to know before their vote needs to be cast in the next election. It's something they deserve to know so they can test whether their vote is fair, effective, and equal to their fellow citizens'. But the resolution doesn't even tell them when they're going to find out those important things.

With those few words, I will just conclude where I started: that a resolution as important as this, that deals with equality of vote, with effective representation, with fairness - not only for our fellow Nova Scotians but between political parties - a resolution that should ensure that no one has an advantage. This resolution fails the test in every one of those instances, and that is why we oppose it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and make a few brief comments on Resolution No. 1846, which is the "Electoral Boundaries Commission: Select Comm. - Appoint, Hon. F. Corbett." I had the privilege almost 10 years ago to be part of the select committee that did the boundary review back in 2002, its final report. I am pleased that our Leader has asked me to once again represent our caucus on the select committee, which was actually highlighted in the resolution read by the Government House Leader.

I have to say I found it slightly bizarre to see the apparent tactics of the Progressive Conservative caucus as it relates to this specific resolution. There seems to be a theme that's developing with members of the Progressive Conservative Party somehow wanting government to be run differently than how they ran it for 10 years in this province. I have to

say it's not every day I agree with my good friend the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, but I found his response to the member for Victoria-The Lakes, who talked about the Keltic Lodge falling apart, amusing. I think the minister indicated that unless it started falling apart in the last two years, somebody else was in government for the previous 10 years and failed to make investments in that facility. (Interruption) I may have to change my approach here.

AN HON. MEMBER: Which team are you on?

MR. SAMSON: I was not looking for the approval of the government caucus, I assure you, but I think it's important that we have a bit of context as to how this process takes place. Unfortunately, I know the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at one point was chief of staff to the Premier; I'm not sure if he was chief of staff during the last boundary review.

It was a majority Progressive Conservative Government that set up the Select Committee on Electoral Boundaries. I listened as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party talked about the wonderful debate that took place at that time to talk about equality of vote, to talk about seat counts, to talk about protected ridings, to talk about everything democratic about boundary reviews. Well, unfortunately, that didn't happen.

What happened was we got notice one day from the then Minister of Justice, the late Michael Baker - it was sent over to us by fax saying, here is the resolution I will read tomorrow on the composition of the Select Committee on Electoral Boundaries. He came the next day and stood in the House, as was done previously, read the resolution and it was passed. There was no debate; no one talked about the Charter; no one talked about equality of vote - none of that took place. The resolution was passed and there was no further debate. So let's be realistic here as to what took place.

Now, naturally, we would love to see equality on every committee in this House? We would, and we did see it under minority government - under the previous Progressive Conservative majority we did not see it. They had a majority on every committee there was in the House. When it came to the select committee and every other committee under their majority governments, on every other select committee there was a majority of members from the Progressive Conservative caucus as they had a majority at that time.

Our goal as the elected members on that committee is to make sure that the process is open, fair, and transparent, because at the end of the day it is not us who should judge as to whether it was done properly - it is Nova Scotians, and they will hold this government accountable if they find in any way that this government used its majority on the select committee or on the composition of the Electoral Boundaries Commission itself to try to give itself some type of an advantage in the structure of the future boundaries for this province.

It is our goal to watch closely how this evolves and to make sure Nova Scotians can say at the end of the day that this process was fair or this process was not fair. That is the goal. At the same time, with all due respect to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, in the past the men and women who have served on the Electoral Boundaries Commission of Nova Scotia have been very respected Nova Scotians, and unless somehow that process of putting well-respected Nova Scotians on the Electoral Boundaries Commission varies by this government, which I doubt, I don't see well-respected Nova Scotians serving on the Electoral Boundaries Commission being accused of gerrymandering and being known for their future as having been part of a process that gave a political Party in Nova Scotia an advantage. I don't think any of those members would want that to be held over their heads. (Applause)

So I think that is another safeguard that we have, and we'll watch closely to see who the government appoints as the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, whether the other Parties will be asked to name representation on that, which I believe was done in the past, again with the government having the chairman and an appointee and possibly a majority on that as well, but for the most part the men and women who have served on that have served with distinction. At the end of the day, I don't think anybody questioned the decisions that were made, even when it was 10 years ago under a majority Progressive Conservative Government where they clearly had a majority.

You know, I want to point out, as well, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has sent mixed messages today, because in one sense he said that the previous resolution 10 years ago clearly stated that the Acadian ridings and the riding of Preston were to be protected. That was not so, and I will tell you why that wasn't so. The interim report provided by the Electoral Boundaries Commission 10 years ago recommended that the Town of Port Hawkesbury be put in with Richmond, therefore no longer having it as a protected riding.

So even though there was some indication in the resolution about trying to maintain protected ridings; in fact, the interim report would have done the exact opposite. Fortunately, at the end of the day, the final report did protect all four ridings as they were. That's why putting stuff in a resolution is no guarantee - it's up to us as the elected members, and it's up to Nova Scotians, to be watching as to how this process is going to unfold.

At the same time, I had the sense that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was supportive of our protected ridings, yet after reading his case law on equality of votes, I'm not really sure whether he believes in it anymore because with equality of vote, you have to vary it to maintain protected ridings in this province. So I'm not really sure what his position is on this very issue because he kind of talked out of both sides of his mouth, if I can use that term, Madam Speaker. I'm not quite sure, because when he talked about protected ridings and then turned around and started citing the Charter and case law about equality of vote, they kind of don't jibe and he didn't give a distinction as to what his

position would be on that. So that remains to be seen and maybe the Progressive Conservative caucus will advise at some point what their position is.

I can tell you that our caucus certainly supports maintaining the protected ridings that we have here in Nova Scotia. I think we should be extremely proud, as a province, to be able to say that we have highlighted the importance of the Acadian community, of the African Nova Scotian community in this province, and I know there was even an attempt at one point to create a seat for the Aboriginal community of Nova Scotia. Obviously the Aboriginal community decided they did not want to pursue that option but that offer was made as a result of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, I believe 10 years ago, and possibly even the one 20 years ago had floated that suggestion as well.

Madam Speaker, there are changing demographics in our province. I believe Nova Scotians expect they will see some changes. It is important that we try to protect communities of interest. I can tell you that in the Strait area we had a situation a few years ago where there were boundaries drawn that put the Town of Port Hawkesbury in with Guysborough. That never fit and I'm sure that the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour would acknowledge that, I'm sure the member for Inverness would acknowledge that. That just was not a fit. Those communities didn't have the link to be a provincial riding and I'm sure the Town of Port Hawkesbury is much happier being within the County of Inverness and in the riding of Inverness, which is where they previously were, although at one point there were two ridings in the County of Inverness.

Those are some of the issues we'll want to keep in mind. I look forward to seeing exactly how many public meetings are going to be held. I don't believe that information has been provided yet. If I'm not mistaken, the Minister of Justice will be chairing that committee. I certainly look forward to participating with him in that and I certainly hope Nova Scotians will engage themselves in this process and that they will either make submissions or will appear in person when public hearings take place, so that when we meet at the end to set forth the guidelines to be used by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, that we will truly have received positive and meaningful feedback from Nova Scotians as to where they see changes that should be made and where they see areas that should be protected, and any other concerns that they might bring forward.

My final point, Madam Speaker, is that this process is not perfect. There's no real manual that tells you how to do this in a perfect fashion, but our goal is to try to make sure that while it may not be perfect, Nova Scotians will have seen this process as being open, transparent, democratic and not in any way favouring one political Party over another. We want to do everything we can to make sure there is equality of vote, looking at some of our special considerations here in Nova Scotia and doing everything we can, as legislators, not only to make sure that Nova Scotians have good representation but to make sure Nova Scotians get out, vote, and feel part of their constituencies, and want to play an active role in the democracy that we have here in Nova Scotia.

Needless to say, Madam Speaker, in case there was any doubt, our caucus will be supporting this resolution.

MADAM SPEAKER: If I recognize the honourable Deputy Premier it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the interveners on this resolution. The member for Richmond had brought up that - because we were both on the last select committee together. It was the member for Halifax Chebucto and myself, the member for Cape Breton South, and the majority of the government members at the time who were on that were Cabinet Ministers, I believe. All but one, I think, was a Cabinet Minister.

We didn't send - like in the last minute, we did advise. I think it was October 11th we sent notice to both caucuses that it was coming forward, so we knew it was ample time. But in no way did I, on Monday night when looking for waiver, mean to stifle debate in this House. It was not a means to cut off, it's something - if you remember in 1991, those who were here, that's exactly how it was, but it was after all Parties had time to reflect, and if you had differences then we could debate them, and that's fine. That's the purpose of this House.

Suffice it to say, the Third Party Leader's intervention had a considerable number of inaccuracies. I'm not going to dwell on them, but with these few words, Madam Speaker, I close debate on this resolution.

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

The motion is carried. (Applause)

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 65.

Bill No. 65 - Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Madam Speaker, could you tell me how much time I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has one hour.

MR. COLWELL: One hour. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Excuse me, I will defer to the Clerk for a moment, please.

Could you repeat your question, please, to be clear about what you're asking - how much time do you have remaining?

MR. COLWELL: How much time have I got left to speak on this bill?

MADAM SPEAKER: How much time do you have left to speak on this?

MR. COLWELL: Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: In the interest of today's proceedings, I'm going to ask the honourable member to begin his debate. We know that there is some time, so we'll advise him in the middle of his debate.

MR. COLWELL: Madam Speaker, my time will start from now?

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was talking the other day about the dire situation in Nova Scotia with some of the problems that Nova Scotians are facing with the high cost of energy, the high cost of income tax, and the burden that has been put on people because of the GST that has been added - 2 per cent on people's incomes - and the real result of those things.

I'm just going to reiterate what it means - the 2 per cent GST hike - to Nova Scotians. People don't really realize how it has happened. For every \$10,000 you clear after taxes, you lose \$200 immediately - and I stress after taxes. Now, the problem with that is the income taxes in this province are among the highest in the whole country and every year they go up - every single year. So that \$10,000 that you would have cleared two or three years ago has shrunk, and it has shrunk even further because of the 2 per cent GST that has been added by this government, this NDP Government. So much for a better deal for today's families - more tax, more regulation, and everything you can imagine.

Now, I just want to use one example here that I talked about the other day - how it affects families and businesses. It makes it less competitive for businesses to operate in Nova Scotia, which means less employment for Nova Scotians. Since 2002 to 2009 the compounded rate increase from Nova Scotia Power to all users of power in this province is 36.2 per cent - 36.2 per cent. In other words, for every \$100 power bill you used to have in 2002, you're now paying \$136.2 more than you were in 2002. Now that's a drastic increase - a drastic increase. It just shows how non-competitive this province is becoming; that's a scary statement to make, but it's true.

At the same time, Nova Scotia Power Corporation contributed to Emera - I was even shocked by this number, I knew there was a lot of money going out, think about this, contributed, a non-Nova Scotia company, Emera, who has holdings all over the place, outside of Nova Scotia - between 2000 and 2010, \$1.06 billion - \$1.06 billion. That's a lot of money gone out of the Nova Scotia economy. That has affected the economy. You see the drastic increases in the price of energy.

When we look at the other energy item that everybody in this province uses, everybody, even if you don't own a property - if you live in an apartment, though, the power rates will affect your rent on the property. I can tell you, since this government took power, the price of gas has risen \$0.25 a litre. That's a 25 per cent increase. We have, in that time, a 25 per cent increase in gasoline, a 36.2 per cent increase in power. Then the government looks at me and says, this isn't true, the things you're telling me. But they are true.

Then they wonder why we have fewer and fewer companies that want to stay in Nova Scotia. We have the pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury that's shutting down because of the high cost of doing business here, among other things. We're looking at Bowater that could possibly shut down. We're looking at all the other things that this government is enforcing on the people and businesses of this province to the point that it's not going to be competitive to work here anymore. It's to that point now, I think.

As this continues, and entrepreneurs start looking to a place to set up a business, they're not going to come to Nova Scotia. Those are the people who make the economy grow. Those are the people who make things happen in the province that really do make a difference to ensure that the economy grows.

The government has touted the huge deal for the shipyards. I quoted the numbers yesterday, the actual numbers that Irving is saying, and if you look at the peak of this program, there will be 1,900 new jobs at the Irving shipyard. They were quoting 11,500 as a spinoff with all the jobs combined. That may or may not be true. In the program to build the ships here in Nova Scotia, they've neglected to mention that the engines for these ships won't be built in Nova Scotia, they'll be imported. They neglected to mention that the generators in these ships, which are worth millions of dollars, are only made in one place in

the world and that's in Europe. All the weapons systems on these ships won't be coming from Nova Scotia. That money will be gone. The list goes on and on.

At the same time, in part of the bid process, they have said they're going to look at other shipyards outside of Nova Scotia to make sure they get the work done on time. From a business standpoint, that probably makes sense, especially with the high cost of doing business in Nova Scotia.

When you look at the whole impact of this, this new thing that's going to save everybody in the province, and that's the way it's been touted, it is indeed a great thing for Nova Scotia, it's a wonderful thing for Nova Scotia. The problem is the contract hasn't even been signed yet. Irving has only got the ability to negotiate the contract. It'll probably take another year before this contract will be signed, if indeed the government doesn't change its mind or cut some of their budgets and eliminate some of the money.

After that is signed, if indeed it is signed - and I stress "if indeed it is signed" - there are another two to three years or more to do the design work on the new ships. That means you'll see little or no work done at the shipyards here for at least four to five years. As I said last night in late debate, that's two elections away. What can happen in an election? Programs are cancelled. Programs are changed. Until this actually gets under construction and a long-term commitment is signed, it's really not a deal that is going to be for sure in Nova Scotia. I truly hope it is. I want to see Nova Scotians working here in Nova Scotia and producing the high-quality products that they do at the shipyards.

Now, if you take that same information that was provided by or to government about the spinoffs of this, and you look at the jobs at the two pulp mills that are in definite jeopardy and see the spinoffs of those, if you take approximately - I think somebody told me it was - 3,000 jobs that could be lost if these pulp mills close, you're talking about 1,900 new jobs at the Irving shipyard and you're talking 3,000 potential lost jobs. That's a net loss in jobs.

When you look at the pulp mill and see how a pulp mill operates, the raw materials come from Nova Scotia and it's harvested here in Nova Scotia. While the steel and a lot of the components that I already talked about will not be produced in Nova Scotia to build these ships, they will simply be assembled here, tested here, and hopefully some of these will stay in Nova Scotia to operate here in the naval yard as they are launched. When you go through this and see the impact of that and see the impact of the mills that are here and you take 1,900 jobs and 3,000, so actually you're going to probably have an impact on 15,000 people, without doing the proper math on this, that are going to be negatively affected if these sawmills close.

If you're going to put in four or five years, maybe a bit longer, people working at the Irving shipyard, it's a long ways away from a pulp mill that could probably close very

shortly, one is already closed and one may be in the process of closing. Hopefully those won't close or they'll operate at a different level and at least employ some of the people.

This is what I've been talking about. We've got businesses here that are struggling, the highest power rates in the country, some of the highest corporate taxes in the country, some of the lowest thresholds before you pay corporate tax for small businesses; these things all add up. It's the nickels, dimes and pennies that make a business grow and prosper and it's very difficult to make a profit in a small business, very difficult. Then you add high property tax that's being imposed on the small businesses by the municipalities that are struggling to keep their inner structure together. I've met with a lot of them and they have a lot of issues with inner structure and find that the MOU that this government cancelled with the municipalities has, indeed, a negative impact on municipalities.

I talked the other day about that, HRM has got to be close to \$44 million over a very short period of time. So what does that mean? It means property taxes will increase. If property taxes increase, the cost of doing business in Nova Scotia increases. With HRM being the centre at the present time of a lot of industry in Nova Scotia and a lot of business in Nova Scotia, it will negatively affect them. If HRM decides not to do that and they decide, well, we'll cut the services, where will they cut? We're already running to the limit; they can't maintain the facilities they already have, the community centres and the other ones. I know that for a fact from being on council. So where do they get the money from? It's either eliminate service or raise taxes, or do both, and \$44 million, even to HRM's budget is a significant hit.

When you go to the small municipalities that are absolutely struggling to get the service they've provided and this government came along and they said we're going to cancel the MOU but you have to improve, from the Department of Environment, your treatment systems. One municipality told me today that it was \$44 million a year they are going to have to spend on this; they don't have \$44 million a year to do this. So where will they get the money? Again, raise taxes or cut services. The government said this MOU won't have any effect; it is definitely having a bad effect on the economy.

When you add all these things up and you put them all together the average individual in this province has less money to spend. A better deal for today's families, well, I don't know where the better deal is, it sure isn't here. I see these signs, I talked about these before and they're so annoying. Here we are cutting money out of health care, education, the places we need it, and great big signs up that the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or some other minister is doing this wonderful job for Nova Scotia. It costs a fortune to build these plywood signs, a fortune to put them up; I would like to know from this government exactly how many hundreds of thousands of dollars it costs for these signs. They're political signs, no other way to put it. They're political signs to try to make people think that really something positive is happening.

I can tell you when I see people in my constituency office that are losing their homes because they can't pay the property taxes so many people from all the communities I represent are having difficulty paying their power bills. They are having trouble paying all the bills they have, and it is largely to do with the high increase in all the fuel costs we've seen.

Nobody talks about this too much, but regulation on gasoline costs \$1 million to \$3 million a year. Where does that money come from? The people who drive. And it is on diesel fuel, too. So every time a truck moves in Nova Scotia and they have to buy diesel fuel here, it costs them more. So what do they do? They've got to put the freight costs up. You see the price of groceries go up because of the freight costs and the costs to operate these large stores. When you add the power bills and the increased property tax that they have to put in place, Nova Scotia is not a place that is amenable for business.

Now they talk about this new bill, this Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act that is going to save everything, right? It's just a new name for the old IEF. The Cabinet's supposed slush fund, that's what the members of the NDP said when they weren't in government, but they have yet to show that it's any different than the Tories did when they were in.

When you add all these things together and see what is going on here, it's a serious situation for Nova Scotians. There are so many issues about this that make a difference and make it difficult here.

With my last few minutes I have here, I really want to talk again about the negative impact on business. People think that businesses can pay for everything and do everything, that they can do all these things, and it is true that businesses can contribute a lot to the economy. As this progresses, the trouble with businesses is that they've got to have a favourable climate to work in. In other words, they've got to have many, many things. They've got to have a skilled workforce, they've got to have reasonable tax rates, they've got to have markets, they have to have facilities, they have to have communications - all those things.

Well, we do have the communications system now. We do have a relatively well-trained workforce - one that could be trained better. We have a very regressive tax system, a system that is going to eventually cause serious grief for this province.

As people start to realize, "I can't spend as much money as I had" - most people don't really realize what has happened to them, because you pay a couple of cents on this or a dollar more on that and two or three dollars more on that. Then all of a sudden you don't have that money that you had last year or the year before to buy the tank of oil you need to get you through the winter. I get tons of calls from people looking for oil or firewood, whatever they can get to heat their homes. They don't have the money to upgrade their home to make sure it is more energy efficient to resolve that problem. So the whole system just collapses over time.

It takes a long time for people to realize where this is coming from, but I can tell you that I am going to remind them. I'm going to continue to remind them about the tax increases, about how it has cost them more money to live in Nova Scotia, more money to operate a business in Nova Scotia, and making the businesses, in particular, non-competitive. A non-competitive business means they don't employ as many people. If people aren't employed, they can't pay the bills.

As I've said before, we've got way too much government in this province, with a very high percentage of all the jobs in the province in government. Now, government employees are very important people. They do a lot of very good things and help a lot, but they don't add new money into the economy. Only businesses that produce products that are exported out of Nova Scotia or prevent an import from coming into Nova Scotia really add money.

We've talked here about tourism over and over again. This cancellation of the Yarmouth ferry has had a devastating effect on the tourism operators, even in my area. I don't have a lot of them, but everyone I have has been telling me the same thing: our revenue is down. The minister told us last year that this would have no effect at all, absolutely none; everything would be wonderful and the tourism industry would still grow. Well, the numbers came in and that wasn't the case. It has dropped, and it has dropped drastically.

Why would someone come here and spend money in Nova Scotia if you are in the U.S. and paying 85 or 86 cents a litre for fuel, and here you are paying \$1.25? Think about that. It just doesn't make any sense. It was okay one time when their dollar was higher than ours but now it doesn't make sense, plus their economy is in hard shape and they're spending more money at home. But if we're not competitive and we can't put the services out there that we need to ensure that people have a job here, have a job here that they can make good money at, but if you don't have an environment where business is competitive and can be competitive outside of Nova Scotia, we're not going to survive here. We're not going to prosper here and we're not going to do the things we want to see our children do.

So many young people have moved out of the province, and even out of the country, to secure jobs, and a lot of those people are the brightest and best we have. Those are the young people who really make this economy grow in the province and make things go and make things prosper here. This province is not prospering now. It won't prosper in the future under the present regime. The NDP has many regressive bills they've put forward. Bill No. 100 was a very regressive bill. They're talking about putting another arbitration bill in here, which would be very regressive to business, and it's going to be very difficult for people to operate here.

As this goes on, it's going to take many, many years to sort it out. You know, you can only spend so long. If the interest rate goes up in this province, this province will be bankrupt. It's that simple, and this government over here added a tremendous amount to

the debt. They may say, no, they didn't, but they did. So it's very difficult and very disappointing for me to see how this province is going really in the wrong direction and indeed very soon there won't be jobs for Nova Scotians. Thank you.

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

HON. PERCY PARIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: One moment. It appears that we have a member from the Progressive Conservative Party who was prepared to speak but was not up. So with the minister's indulgence, I would like to give him that opportunity.

MR. PARIS: Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister for being gracious. I was completing my remarks and in my diligence was not right off the mark when I should have been.

Madam Speaker, the Industrial Expansion Fund was started by Stanfield, a great Premier for our province, and it has been invaluable for government to have a mechanism to respond to special situations which may be opportunities to grow our economy. I think of a couple of examples. We have Scott Paper, which is now Northern Pulp. I think of Michelin, which we spoke about today in the Legislature, which employs - I heard a figure today of upwards of 3,500 people in our province. That came about because of the vision of Stanfield and the need to have a fund like the Industrial Expansion Fund.

I do remember hearing a bit about Michelin and the owner from France at the time was looking for a population - because we know they have plants all over the world - they were looking for a plant location which would have a lot of people who were good to work with their hands. Nova Scotia fit the bill because we had lots of farmers, fishermen and miners, some of whom were being displaced from work in those industries, and today, of course, we have many skilled people in Nova Scotia who work at Michelin making tires that are distributed all over the world.

So the Industrial Expansion Fund, Madam Speaker, I believe has been a good thing for our province. One thing about that fund is that it was done with criteria, at the time, and it was important that there were clear criteria on how you could access the fund and how it was evaluated. Now, the minister has recognized that, you know - he says that he recognizes the 1950's model for economic development could not be adapted to meet today's growing needs, but I don't think a lot has changed. At the end of the day, what this

fund is about is finding a way to support a business opportunity and to do it in a manner that's flexible, because sometimes opportunities come to government, maybe because they're very large opportunities, that do not fit in the box of existing programs. So it's important for government to have a tool at its disposal to be able to accommodate those opportunities to ensure that we realize them.

Now I've heard a most relevant case made by Nova Scotia small business, and excuse me if I'm generalizing, but I think that they would agree with the spirit of this statement: make one program of support with the same rules for all. I think that makes a lot of sense. When you look at the case of some of the failures of the past Industrial Expansion Fund - and yes, there have been failures because that's the nature of business and while we'd all hope and, anybody who starts a business in this province would hope, that that business would be successful, there are times when, because of competition, that cannot be so and that is a reality.

I certainly support small business in Nova Scotia when they make that suggestion that there should be one program for all and that it should have the same rules for all, but there are times when there are special situations and I don't think it would be wise of government to completely close the door on opportunities which it may be able to support with an Industrial Expansion Fund.

Another thing I'd like to say about Nova Scotia small business is that we should be focused on trying to help them add one or two employees, or five or 10 employees, or 10 or 20 employees.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, the chatter is getting a little high. If we can offer the honourable member for Inverness the floor. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: There's great - and I think this is interesting, the Minister of Finance doesn't think this is interesting, but I think it's a very interesting point - helping small business in Nova Scotia grow, even by small numbers, makes a significant difference in our economy and it also gives us more stability. We're less subject to what people might call a black swan. There was belief at one time that there were no black swans in the world and then people discovered that, in fact, there were. In this day and age we're seeing more of them, and when I say more of them, I mean in the sense of more extreme events that affect our economy. If you look at it in the example I've just given, in the case of small business, by finding ways to increase their numbers incrementally, even in small amounts, we're warding off against putting all of our eggs in one basket in large industry.

I do believe there is still a place for the IEF. I spoke to one prominent businessman in this province, who has been very successful, and he has the philosophy - and I think he makes a lot of sense - that government should be helping to form economic bases around the province and let small business feed off that and grow off that base. We look at the case of NewPage, in the Strait area, right now. If you look at all the truckers, the pulp

contractors and the equipment suppliers and sadly, if you look at the list of creditors for that mill right now, here's a case of an industry that has brought tremendous wealth into the province, there's no question that the demand for paper has declined, but there are an enormous amount of people who have been making their living directly, or at least partially, right around the province. Take a look at the list of creditors, the people who are owed money, there are companies all over this province. There are industries like the pulp and paper industry, I know Scott Paper for sure has in the past, and now Northern Pulp, has received support from the Industrial Expansion Fund and look at all the people it is helping and look at all the small businesses it is helping.

I am worried more than ever about the health of our rural economies in this province and I do believe that our hubs are in jeopardy. Certainly in my own area, the Strait area, our hub is in jeopardy. There are people from an hour's drive from Point Tupper, whether they are in Guysborough County, Richmond County, Inverness County, Victoria County, Antigonish County and into the Pictou Counties, who are driving into work at the pulp mill or supplying it with what it needs to operate. I've heard comments that, gee, we really need another paper mill, or we should really be trying to put stock in that paper mill at this stage in the game. I've heard it from people here in the city and I think it's almost as if it's some kind of handout.

When you look at the amount of wealth that that pulp and paper mill has brought into this province since the 1960s, it's amazing. It's money that has been brought into our economy and it has reverberated all across our province. You might be surprised, but in Inverness County we have the fourth largest income per capita in the province - which might seem strange for a rural area, but it's because of the pulp mill. It's because of that investment.

I am concerned about rural areas in the province. I look at a lot of my friends who have moved on. I just have to pull out an old year book - well, it can't be that old, I guess - if I pull out a yearbook and look at who has left our communities from my school, there are very few people in that yearbook who are still around home.

When I look at this Industrial Expansion Fund, it has really been the "go to" to assist large industry in the province, and I think it should continue, along with competitive tax rates, power rates that are affordable, that are based on good energy policy. This fund that we've been asked to vote for, I believe that it should have clear criteria and benchmarks and transparent reporting.

We don't see how these components are contained in the actual legislation. There doesn't appear to be any changes of any substance between the legislation that governed the Industrial Expansion Fund and this new proposed fund. We also have a concern about the Farm and Aquaculture Loan Boards which have, up until this point, been independent and specialized to serve those industries. We're curious to hear what people in those

industries would think about having their traditional lending arms being housed under this new arrangement.

We would support modifications to the Industrial Expansion Fund that would include clear application criteria, so that anybody applying to the fund understands how to do so and what the rules are. We would want to have transparency on why projects received support, and performance measurement - how can we improve government investment if we never look back to see how our past investment has done? At the end of the day the government is going to be responsible for its investments, depending on the success or failure of the enterprise, but these modifications are ones we would support.

We also wonder what the Auditor General will have to say about these changes once they're enacted. This bill that we've been asked to vote for does not appear to address the issues of the Auditor General but rather only changes the fund's name, increases the control of Cabinet over arm's-length bodies such as Nova Scotia Business Inc., and includes a very broad objective with no measurements for success.

Just because you have a pot of money and call it the jobs fund, it doesn't mean you've created the right business climate in Nova Scotia to create jobs. We've seen 5,000 fewer jobs in this province - 5,000 lost jobs since this government has come to power. We've seen taxes go up. Power rates have gone up, not entirely because of the energy policy of the government - some of that is due to the rising costs of energy inputs, but some of it, and according to Nova Scotia Power 25 per cent of the increases are due to the government's energy policy. That's not good for business, Madam Speaker, it's not good for creating jobs in the province. No matter what the government is trying to do with this new fund, those are factors that are going to impair its ability to create jobs and to replace the 5,000 we've lost in the last two years.

There has been a lot of talk of - I think I'll skip that point. I'm going to try to go a little easier on the government today, Madam Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, give it to them.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, maybe I will. We talked about the shipbuilding contract and I know my colleague, the member for Preston, made a good point about if we lose the paper mills in our province, these shipbuilding jobs are only going to fill the void those jobs leave, so there's really no net benefit. (Interruption)

We don't want to be negative, but we have to be realistic about our economy and if we're not paying attention (Interruptions) we have to be realistic about power rates - if we're not paying attention to our energy policy and we're causing power rates to increase by 25 per cent more than they have to, and we're hurting energy intensive businesses like paper mills in the province and we lose those jobs (Interruption) Well, 20 years ago, we probably would have lost the pulp mills (Interruption). Well, we would have, if you went to

wind energy at that time, if you went to tidal energy at that time. They're still trying to figure out tidal energy now, and I wish them all the best.

Madam Speaker, we're not ready for that, and if we did that 20 years ago we could have shut the mills 20 years ago. So we have to be realistic. I don't want to be negative, but I do want the government to start listening, because these are real issues. Energy is a big issue, it's a big issue everywhere, and we need to pay attention to it here, if our policies are going to make business less competitive.

To the point that I was about to leave out and decided, based on my colleague's advice, to include: we saw the federal NDP say "spread that shipbuilding contract around." Now thank God the federal government decided to keep politics out of the matter and our province benefited from the full value of a \$25 billion contract. Bringing it back (Interruption)

I hope they do, and I take the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism's word on that, that that will be spread around the province.

I know that companies like Mulgrave Machine Works - which is not in my riding, but it's right on the border - and people who work there, I'm sure they'll receive business because that's the nature of their work, and we want to be positive about that in this province. I'm looking forward to the economic benefits trickling into Inverness County. I hope they will be augmenting our existing economy, because of course I hope that NewPage is able to resume operations under a new owner.

Now one thing that amuses me, because I know when you are in Opposition you have to make complaints about the government because you have to discredit them . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: You have a choice.

MR. MACMASTER: Now the members opposite are counselling me not to do such a thing. (Interruptions) Life is about choices - yes, it is - but it amuses me because the government members, when they were in Opposition, used to rail against the then-Progressive Conservative Government for investments they were making under the Industrial Expansion Fund.

In the first year this government spent \$221 million under that program. That was in their first year, and when they were questioned by the Auditor General about the accountability of that expenditure, they decided to launch a rebranding of the same fund. I just want to point that out.

The minister also mentioned in his remarks last Spring - you referred to a new Cabinet committee being the beginning of transparency and accountability for the fund. I

don't see the connection between this new bill, any requirement for open reporting, transparency, or additional accountability. Maybe I will be surprised.

Madam Speaker, this is about where I got to in my speech, so I haven't really been able to put a formal closure on it. We do have concerns about what we're really being asked to vote on here. Is it really that much different? I think I should get back to the highlights of it: we certainly support clear application criteria and we support transparency on projects and why they've received support. We certainly support performance measurement, and we do recognize that at the end of the day, even if all of this is in place - much as it has been since the 1950s - this is still a tool that government is going to use, and they will be judged on it, based on the success or failure of the venture. (Interruption)

Madam Speaker, that's good. I'm glad he is not. That shows that there has been value to the Industrial Expansion Fund, and that's what I've been trying to convey in my remarks today as well. With that, I will conclude my remarks.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased today to get up and say a few words and join the debate on a piece of legislation that really doesn't change too much in the way business will be conducted here in the province, as far as the IEF goes.

I was very, very hopeful when the Auditor General did his report because as we know, in late 2009 when he was doing his audit of the Industrial Expansion Fund, he ran into a situation that no Auditor General had encountered before and that was he was stymied in his work. He wasn't provided with the information that he required to do an audit and it was in this context that the Auditor General began to look at the IEF. At that time he said, "IEF has few processes, controls or documentation to support the review and evaluation of applications for loans or other assistance. The only substantial documentation consists of confidential reports to Cabinet. This enhances the risk of inconsistent or inequitable treatment of applicants, inaccurate or incomplete analysis and recommendations, and poorly informed decisions. A recently established Advisory Committee has no oversight role. Confidential Cabinet review and approval is the only significant control or oversight of this program."

Now we have a piece of legislation before us that in effect is titled Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act. We know, if we look at the nature of the bill and look for substantive change, I think we don't need to do much analysis and scrutiny to realize that it still remains a secretive political slush fund controlled by Cabinet. Really, the Auditor General pointed the way and he said Nova Scotia Business Inc. has all the credentials, has the professional expertise; it has people with a business history, those who have been dealing with international companies know the trends and patterns that are happening globally in order to attract business to Nova Scotia. The Auditor General pointed government in that direction that Nova Scotia Business Inc. would become the arm's length body to take a

look at the kinds of decisions that allow for an investment that has a great chance of success in the province.

What we have now is a name change and we know that Cabinet Ministers will still control a substantial amount of money, an amount of money that has grown, again, to great amounts in the last two years. Cabinet should not have the final say here. I know that they can draw upon the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism but to have this large group of people who bring a great business sense to the table is really the kind of business decision, and not a political decision, because at the end, the Cabinet is making a political decision.

The IEF goes back to the 1950s and has always been used by Cabinet to hand out cash to their favourite business. We have seen this through all governments. I'm not here defending how my Party conducted itself in regard to the IEF; it's just that I think the climate in Nova Scotia for a new approach is very, very strong. I think in this case, to be submissive about what the Auditor General pointed out, and a path of action to correct, is very much the way that we need to be going.

In some ways I guess we can sum it up almost in one neat little sentence - the fund ballooned under the MacDonald Government and exploded under the Dexter NDP. That's exactly what has happened to the IEF. So in his report in May the Auditor General, Jacques Lapointe, concluded the fund had no application system, no documented approval process, it really had inadequate controls and it needed to change direction.

Now, the bill as we currently see it, unless we're going to get some major amendments as we go along but we know that doesn't have to be the case under a majority - this bill is not going to change the direction around the IEF.

In March 2010, the Leader of the Official Opposition presented Bill No. 6. A section in the bill speaks directly to the fact that this is simply the same slush fund by a different name. The Industrial Expansion Fund, established under the former Industrial Development Act, is continued for the purpose of this bill as a special account in the office of the Deputy Minister of Finance to be known as the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund.

This is a symptom really of a larger issue, that perhaps without that five-year plan, or even a 10-year plan as to how you're going to develop a business strategy, a development strategy for the province, then you have the ad hoc manner in which monies are divvied out and so I think that's really at the crux of why Nova Scotians don't like the direction of this bill. I think it does now speak very, very strongly with the present climate that we're experiencing in the province. We've had a number of MLAs allude to this, whether through Question Period, whether through commentary on this bill today - we live in a very uneasy business climate in our province.

I know for a fact that when we take all of the factors together - the uncompetitive tax regime, the high energy costs and the general costs of doing business in the province here - we know that both large and small businesses are struggling. This is why having an IEF fund that remains as a handout to favoured businesses, large or small - we tend to see them going mostly to the large business sector - is indeed problematic for Nova Scotians. Establishing perhaps even a screening body with Nova Scotia Business Inc., made up of some of the top people, the very successful business people, those able to make tough and hard-nosed decisions. A panel that scrutinizes where our money goes to hopefully lay the groundwork for jobs in the future and, again, a sustainable pattern of industry that we so need for the future of our province.

While we all bask in the wonderful announcement of the shipbuilding contract, we do have to look beyond that as well because we have to look at the entire Province of Nova Scotia. That's going to be wonderful and it's going to provide those steady jobs, professional jobs but, again, it's only part of the measure that we need. Especially in a province that has so many wonderful academic institutions, we have to find ways of taking those innovative minds, those brilliant minds, and getting them to work in our province. I think incenting young people with ideas rather than have a fund that gives out money - in so many cases historically, decisions by Cabinet that have not multiplied those investment dollars. This is why, rather than an Industrial Expansion Fund, if we had a small business expansion fund, we may be going down a much stronger path of good financial security, higher employment and a sustainable economy.

I see in my area where sometimes the private investment in agriculture, in particular, how those dollars circulate many times through the economy and create good jobs, that are there year after year after year. Although we know that, again, on the manufacturing side, due to the uncompetitive nature of what it costs to produce a product if you have to use a great deal of electricity to do so, we've also been impacted in the area where I live. We've lost close to 3,000 jobs now in the manufacturing of agriculture products.

We do need some new thinking around how we take millions of dollars and invest. I think what we're talking about, doing this comprehensive tax review and getting a look at where we can take taxes wisely for the province and take ourselves out of that league of being the most highly taxed province in the country, I think, would be a step in the right direction. This would get businesses freely looking at Nova Scotia as a place to invest. Unless we do something in that way, we're going to be saddled with the kind of economic climate that we currently have in the province. We need a new approach, to economic development and we need a fair playing field for businesses in the province for the larger business, but even more importantly for the medium and small business. The business for which most Nova Scotians work for, we know that probably about 75 per cent of Nova Scotians work in small business.

I've been able to see some of the best examples. We look at a business investor and developer in my area such as Henry Endres and the Annapolis Valley cranberry bog. He has taken almost exclusively private money, quadrupled his work force and dramatically changed the number of acres that he is now farming. Seeing those jobs there year after year after year - you know, before he ever built a storage facility that can handle a million pounds or more of cranberries, he sought out markets. He went to Europe and he did the whole business practice and process that is so important. We look at somebody like Ray Parsons who took a three or four person construction company to one now that moves across Nova Scotia with highly qualified workers, again, very strongly, his own investment dollars. These are the people that we need to call upon to assist with making good business decisions and take this away from Cabinet. I think Cabinet would, in fact, look even stronger by allowing these people to make good investment decisions.

It will be interesting, if we do hear from Nova Scotians as we move this bill through the Legislature, on what they will have to say and how they perceive the IEF working or not working to the greatest advantage of Nova Scotians. It's their dollars and I think they want to see greater outcomes for the next generation of Nova Scotians. The one-offs that seem to continually come out of the IEF have not given us the kind of good-paying jobs, consistently. Yes, there have been some investments there that are doing very well but the track record is not what it needs to be when we're using the taxpayer dollar.

So Madam Speaker, it will be interesting to see what Nova Scotians have to say. Perhaps there will be some change in amendment as this bill works its way through the Legislature. With that, I take my place.

MADAM SPEAKER: I now recognize the honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to say a few words on Bill No. 65, which is the old Industrial Expansion Fund now known as the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act.

Having been in the Legislature since 1998 gives me a bit of memory as to some of the debates which took place around this fund. Just for the information of some of my colleagues in the PC caucus - ironically, none of them that I see here today would have been elected back then - in the 1999 campaign, John Hamm said, we need to put a stop to handing out money to business in Nova Scotia. He was openly critical of the previous Liberal government giving money to the Industrial Expansion Fund, and through other means, to support business growth in the province. He ran a campaign on that, that he would stop that practice, in 1999. John Hamm got elected, the PCs had a majority and I have to say, they couldn't go fast enough to write their first check and they never looked back. They used the Industrial Expansion Fund repeatedly, even after having campaigned on saying they would abolish it and they would abolish supports to business. Then, they got cute and they came back and said, well, we're going to start these payroll rebates. So it's not direct money to them, but it's still supporting them.

We all know that payroll rebates is an initiative that started when the member from Cape Breton South was the Minister of Economic Development, under the previous Liberal government. I believe now the Progressive Conservatives will actually acknowledge that it was not their idea, it was actually a practice that had been in place and they expanded upon it and used it more frequently. In fact, it's still being used today by the current NDP government.

So the Tories didn't like it, said they'd get rid of it, got elected to a majority government, never looked back, used the fund repeatedly, pumped a bunch of money into it and kept writing checks for business.

So that takes us from 1999 to 2009 and during those 10 years, we listened to the Official Opposition - which was the NDP - say how bad the Industrial Expansion Fund was. We listened over and over and over again to the member for Halifax Fairview, the Finance Critic. Madam Speaker, I don't have in front of me all of the quotes from Hansard, but some have been referenced before and I'm sure they will be referenced again, of how critical the member for Halifax Fairview was of the Industrial Expansion Fund, the secrecy around the fund, the fact that Cabinet controlled it, and the fact that Nova Scotia taxpayers deserved better transparency.

One has to ask, was the member for Halifax Fairview at any point put in a position where he could change these things that he had so criticized? Well, we now know that in 2009 the NDP won a majority government. Now what did they do? As soon as they got in office, they put more money in the fund and they started spending and writing cheques from the fund, which led us to ask, well, hold on now, what happened to everything that the member for Halifax Fairview said in Opposition? He sounded serious when he said it, I can tell you, having been in the House. He said it often enough that those of us who are here haven't forgotten, yet he is now the Minister of Finance after the 2009 election. Surely, he is the one person who is going to clean up the Industrial Expansion Fund, make it transparent and stand up to the criticisms that he made in Opposition and put in a new fund.

Well, the minister says he cleaned up the fund but, at the end of the day, any monies spent by the government come from the Minister of Finance. So considering his criticisms, one would have thought that this bill would have provided the transparency, the accountability and the assurance to Nova Scotians that their tax dollars are being spent wisely and in a prudent fashion.

Madam Speaker, I believe the public reaction, the reaction in this House, the reaction in the media from those who have watched is, this bill does not do that. This bill rebrands the naming, but at the end of the day Cabinet will still control this fund and Cabinet will make decisions in the Cabinet Room, where there is Cabinet confidentiality, where we don't have access to the documents that Cabinet is looking at - having had the privilege of serving in Cabinet, I know how it works - and that certainly doesn't provide the

transparency that the member for Halifax Fairview, now the Finance Minister, was looking for.

I'm not sure here if it's the fact that the Minister of Finance lost this battle, that he fought the good fight, but at the end of the day he was overruled by Cabinet. Because we don't know what Cabinet discussions take place, we have no means of knowing. Maybe some of his colleagues can confirm whether he tried and he failed or whether there was an attempt at all, we don't know. He certainly hasn't publicly said a word about it, since the NDP formed the government.

Madam Speaker, I've spoken about this before and I think that's where not only Nova Scotians, but especially core NDP supporters, have been so disappointed in what this government has done because all along they truly and sincerely believed this government would do things differently. They really believed that. They really did believe that. Some of us, I would say, were watching to see if maybe they were going to do things completely differently.

At the end of the day they haven't. This government is governing like other governments and other Parties have done in this province and they are now governing in the hopes of being able to be re-elected. I would say that that is the primary focus of the decisions that they make - being re-elected, not necessarily doing exactly what is right. If they were, they would look back at some of the comments that were made by the member for Halifax Fairview in *The Halifax ChronicleHerald*, November 17, 2005, where they reported: When it comes to the Industrial Expansion Fund, it seems like anything goes.

Now the Minister of Finance also said in *The Halifax ChronicleHerald*, on April 6, 2006: The problem here is that government can allocate itself a very large amount of money, in this case \$50 million, without ever informing the House, without requiring the approval of the House, without any accountability to the House. That can't be right and the Auditor General has said so.

So one has to ask, what does Bill No. 65 have to do with addressing the very concerns raised by the member for Halifax Fairview, now the Minister of Finance? The answer is, absolutely nothing. It does not provide the transparency or the accountability that he was looking for, decisions are still made in Cabinet, decisions are still made in secret, and Nova Scotians are left to trust the decisions made behind closed doors as to how their tax dollars are being invested.

Madam Speaker, I have a few more comments to make on this bill but it is my understanding that there has been a request for an introduction, which I am more than happy to allow to take place.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my colleague, the member for Richmond, for his indulgence. I'd like to bring the House's attention to the east gallery, where we have Mayor Frank Fraser from the Town of Canso visiting this afternoon. Mayor Fraser is attending the UNSM conference, and he is certainly no stranger to this House. Mayor Fraser has been here on many occasions for the opening of the House and has always taken a keen interest in what takes place here in this Legislature and what takes place within all of Nova Scotia, especially the area he represents. I ask the House to give Mayor Fraser a warm welcome.

MADAM SPEAKER: I welcome all guests and hope you enjoy the proceedings.

The honourable member for Richmond has the floor.

MR. SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I certainly welcome Mayor Fraser here this evening. I know there are a number of municipal colleagues from Richmond County who are here as well.

As I was saying, when one looks at the comments made by the member for Halifax Fairview, now the Minister of Finance, I do believe there is a responsibility to be able to tell Nova Scotians what has changed and why. Now that he's the Minister of Finance, technically he controls any expenditures made by government. Why would he not address the very issues that he spoke of so frequently in Opposition? His silence on this, to me, speaks of a larger problem of what the current government said while they were in Opposition, and we've given many of those examples.

This bill deals with economic development and the economy, and I want to make mention of when the Premier was in Opposition. When he talked about the tax structure for gasoline in this province, the tax on tax, he said it was immoral - an immoral tax. Yet two years into his mandate he hasn't changed it. Why hasn't he changed it? Because he now realizes we need that money for the finances of this province.

At a minimum, I would have thought he would have said: I regret the comments I made in Opposition against the previous government when I said that tax was immoral, or suggested they were immoral by having that tax, because now that I'm in government, I see that I can't change it either. I think that that would have been the decent thing to do, to say: You know what? I criticized it, I said they should have done it, I thought they should do it, I felt they could do it, and yet here I am two years into my mandate and I haven't been able to do it either, so I take back my comments. But that hasn't happened, and I think that's what the core NDP supporters and many Nova Scotians thought would be different about this government - that they would be able to say: You know what? We thought we could change this, but we can't. Maybe our criticisms before were not fair, because of the fact that now that we're here and we see the books, we can't make a difference, not yet at least.

This is another example of so much criticism made by the NDP in Opposition about the Industrial Expansion Fund, and now two years in we had the sad situation of this government preventing the Auditor General from being able to have access to applications made and documents from the Industrial Expansion Fund. The government came back and said, well, legally we can't. The Minister of Finance said, we'll have to change the law because the law doesn't allow us to do it.

It's ironic because the Minister of Finance, when he was in Opposition, was known for the number of court cases that he led to try to improve access to information, to try to fight against government rules and regulations that were impacting Nova Scotians negatively. Yet here he is now in government, with the ability to make it right, and instead he says, nope, we have a legal opinion telling us we can't allow the Auditor General to look at these documents. What did they think the Auditor General was going to do? That he was going to publish this information? What were they afraid of? At the end of the day a political determination was made that they had to keep this fund and they had to keep it under the control of Cabinet.

Our Leader has brought forward, I believe, a positive solution when he said we trust NSBI - Nova Scotia Business Incorporated - we trust the civil servants who work there. They are governed by a board of respected Nova Scotia business leaders and academics. We are going to allow them to make decisions as to how investments should be made of Nova Scotia taxpayers' money. I have yet to hear the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, or any other minister of this government, say why that's a bad idea. Why don't they trust those monies with NSBI? What is it that they still feel the need to make decisions in secrecy when it comes to taxpayers' dollars?

Mr. Speaker, that's what gets governments in trouble, because we'll recall under a previous Tory Government they got in trouble when they had approved a loan to a company that was doing business with a Cabinet Minister. Then we had the situation where a loan was approved for a business in the Premier's riding that was of questionable value, and it was questionable whether it actually fit into the parameters of the funding system that we had in place. We had both of those come before the Public Accounts Committee. It was a great embarrassment to the government of the day, and it certainly made us aware of the need to be more vigilant in watching where government was investing money. But it shouldn't have to be that way. Why is it that Cabinet still feels the need to control these funds and that all of these discussions are done in secret?

Now, Madam Speaker, we're reasonable people in the Opposition. One would not suggest that the application submitted by Nova Scotia businesses should be made public. There's information in there about their business that they would want to keep confidential due to competition and various other issues, but at the same time I believe businesses know when you're coming to ask for money from government you cannot expect the same level of privacy that you would have from going to a private bank. So, now, how can we manage

to balance the concerns over privacy that businesses deserve over the concerns of making sure there's transparency in how Nova Scotia taxpayers' dollars are invested?

This bill does nothing to address that very issue; it absolutely fails to address that issue because the discussions will continue to take place behind closed doors. They will be done by the appointed Cabinet of elected members of the government and they will make that decision. Their discussions, as we all know, fall under Cabinet confidentiality and can never be disclosed, so Nova Scotians are again left to wonder, are we investing in something that is good for our province, that is a good deal, that protects taxpayers' dollars?

That's not in this bill. Again, I haven't heard the minister or anyone else on the government side explain why they still feel the need to have Cabinet controlling it - and maybe there is a reason outside of politics. There might be, but let someone stand on the government side and give us that explanation. Maybe it is a legitimate reason as to why they feel that need, but I would love to hear that from the Minister of Finance because, again, maybe then he would be able to say to the previous governments that he was so critical of, I'm sorry, I made comments against your use of those funds that I am now defending, that our government will continue to do.

But up until now he has remained silent on this very topic and left it to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to try to explain the difference between the IEF and this new bill. At the end of the day the minister is on record as having said for the most part it's going to operate the same way as the previous fund - he has changed the name, but for all intents and purposes it's going to operate the same way.

Again, as I mentioned before, I simply want to highlight that I've yet to hear anyone in government explain why the proposal, put forward by our Leader, to have these funds controlled by NSBI doesn't work. Now, the old argument used to be, well, IEF, and now the new bill which we call the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act, that it can do stuff that NSBI couldn't do.

There's a simple way around that - change the criteria around what can be done by NSBI to better reflect some of the challenges that they are facing in not being able to provide funding to certain partners that Cabinet can. Because if Cabinet can approve it, why would you not allow NSBI to be able to take these requests into consideration as well. That's where there's a gap in the logic and that's where there is a gap, I would say, in the government's credibility.

Again, one could go through Hansard and spend hours reciting some of the criticisms made by the Minister of Finance when he was a Finance Critic in Opposition, by the Premier when he was Leader of the Official Opposition. I believe even the member for Halifax Chebucto, at one point, was a Critic for Economic Development and also spoke out, repeatedly, about this specific fund. Yet today they sit here almost in silence saying

we've changed the name, but for all intents and purposes we are going to be operating the fund in the same way.

Now to their credit, being that the Auditor General could not have access to certain documents under the existing rules, they did change those rules. But unless the Auditor General is going to be asked, on a yearly basis, to review the decisions made by Cabinet in regards to this new Nova Scotia Jobs Fund, who is the watchdog for Nova Scotia taxpayers? As the Opposition, we can't access those documents. We can put in freedom of information requests but all we're going to get is blanked out pages, so we can't do it because we can't have the information that Cabinet used to make their decisions. The only person who can is the Auditor General.

The question I would have is this - is the government prepared to amend this bill, to put in it that the Auditor General will undertake a yearly audit of funding decisions made under the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Act? I think that's a reasonable proposition. I think the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, if he wants to give Nova Scotians the assurance of transparency - he could say, I need to keep confidentiality but to give you assurance, I will ask the Auditor General and his office to conduct a yearly audit of this fund, to give Nova Scotians the confidence that we're following the rules, investment decisions are being made on a reasoned basis and that Nova Scotians are getting value for dollar under this fund.

I believe that is a reasonable request to make. Speaking about it, I think it could possibly be an amendment brought forward. The government could do it itself or maybe we will be of assistance and provide it for them. I think that would go a long way to providing a level of transparency for an officer of this Legislature who is very trusted, to give us - as the elected officials and Opposition - and Nova Scotians the sense that the decision is being made as to how their tax dollars will be used under this new Jobs Fund is going to be done in a prudent fashion.

Madam Speaker, with those comments, I do believe there is more the government can do if they are truly interested in addressing the issues of transparency that were raised by the Auditor General, whether they are actually sincere in addressing the concerns raised by their own Minister of Finance a mere two years ago, that he did on a repeated basis; the concerns raised by the Premier when he was Leader of the Official Opposition; by the member for Halifax Chebucto; and a number of others. Right now, as it now stands, this bill is a disservice to the criticisms that they made, which I truly believed at the time they were sincere in making them. After two years in government, Bill No. 65 as it now stands does not in any way show sincerity as to addressing the issues they so vociferously raised, when they were in opposition, regarding the Industrial Expansion Fund.

Madam Speaker, there is still time. I look forward to when this bill goes to the Law Amendments Committee. I would hope the minister would take my proposed amendment

under consideration and I see no reason why that could not be adopted as a means of strengthening this.

We have never suggested that governments should not be investing in Nova Scotia businesses. The Tories did it when they were in Opposition before 1999. The NDP did it when they were in Opposition before they got elected. We have never suggested that. We see there is a role to be played there but as well we see that over the passage of time there is better transparency and better accountability that should be put in place.

Right now, as it stands, Bill No. 65 does not achieve that. It takes baby steps - but there is still time to amend this bill to better reflect on the very concerns that have been raised and to better respect the concerns of Nova Scotians and their hard-earned tax dollars and how we spend it. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Madam Speaker, I stand in my place to move second reading of Bill No. 65, and I also want to acknowledge all members in the House who spoke on this bill; I listened with much interest. As we move forward, I will say to the House and to all members that the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund is extremely different from anything that's ever been envisioned by any previous governments. It will continue to do the good work on behalf of all Nova Scotians and it will be much to the pleasure of all members of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 65. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 72.

Bill No. 72 - Timely Medical Certificates Act.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Madam Speaker, I now move Bill No. 72 be read a second time.

The other day in the bill briefing, I was remiss in identifying where this came from. My colleague, the member for Lunenburg, brought this forward. (Applause) Actually she didn't necessarily bring it forward to me, but I think, if my memory is right, when my staff, the executive director for the Vital Statistics Division, Michelle MacFarlane, first briefed me on this, she identified the member for Lunenburg - this was an initiative that came from her. I had forgotten that during the bill briefing and I was asked where it came from. It was thought that maybe it had come from nurse practitioners, but I said I thought it was an initiative of government, but I didn't pinpoint it. So I want to make sure that I acknowledge my colleague for her good work.

Bill No. 72, the Timely Medical Certificates Act, will help grieving Nova Scotians in difficult circumstances. The death of a loved one is always painful, and the days immediately following the death are often especially difficult. Often, with an expected death, families have been stressed for some time - emotionally, physically, and financially, before they reach this point.

From the loss itself, to making the necessary funeral arrangements, to accommodating friends and family from away, it can all be very overwhelming. While the grief remains, families sometimes feel a sense of closure once the funeral or other arrangements are complete. Unfortunately for some Nova Scotians, this process can be delayed.

Madam Speaker, the funeral home cannot remove the body from the location of the death until the medical certificate of death has been signed by a doctor or medical examiner. This is necessary in order to determine the cause of the death but it can still be a hardship for loved ones. It also means that in some remote and rural areas of Nova Scotia the body of a loved one could remain in their home until a doctor or a medical examiner can be brought in to sign a certificate, causing even more distress for the family.

Madam Speaker, the proposed Timely Medical Certificates Bill would allow nurse practitioners, and other authorized through regulation, to sign medical certificates of death, in certain circumstances and as I said authorized through regulation. So there will be some consultation. I think the medical examiner's office is interested, thinking that possibly some of their investigators - and also we have two former paramedics in the House who have indicated some interest, that maybe paramedics might also take on that role. This means that families would be able to make arrangements more quickly following the death of their loved one.

The Department of Health and Wellness consultations on the proposed amendment with stakeholders this past summer - the feedback from stakeholders was positive. Further consultation has to take place around the regulations to determine the specific circumstances under which nurse practitioners, and others authorized through regulation, can sign the death certificate. The circumstances will then be detailed in the regulations. The ability to sign medical certificates of death will allow nurse practitioners to continue

the strong relationship they have with their communities by supporting end of life care for patients and families.

Nurse practitioners have advanced knowledge and skill in health assessment and diagnosis, and they work collaboratively with a physician. Madam Speaker, additional training will be provided in determining the cause of death and completing the necessary forms. In 2010-11, there were over 115 nurse practitioners licensed in Nova Scotia. Some are employed within the provincial health system in a variety of settings including long-term care, community primary health care and hospitals. Allowing these health care professionals to sign the certificate of death, in certain situations, will make a difficult situation a little easier for some grieving Nova Scotians. This change will make life better for Nova Scotians by supporting families who have lost a loved one. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to rise to make a few comments on Bill No. 72, the Timely Medical Certificates Act. For those wondering why would the Justice Critic be up speaking on this, I would refer you back to Question Period earlier today and I'll get to that in a few minutes. I do as well want to recognize the member for Lunenburg. I can tell you, having been a backbencher in government, it's not always a fun place to be, it can be lonely at times.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not for long.

MR. SAMSON: No, I can say I wasn't in the backbench for long and I wasn't in Cabinet for long either, in both instances, but I think there's always a very important role that back benchers can play. Too often, under the British parliamentary system, it makes it extremely different for government backbenchers to play as strong a role in this House, and outside of this House, as what I think they could do. I think that's something that we need to look at - the system that we have - because obviously it's an old system and for life in the backbench, as I said, it's not always fun and it's certainly very limiting as to what can be achieved when you're on the government side and required to support government decisions. With that I commend her for having brought this forward and I think all Nova Scotians would see this bill as a positive move.

I listened to the comments from the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations about the desire to be able to find a more timely way of dealing with grieving families and the loss of a loved one but I have to say, Madam Speaker, that flies in the face of a decision that was made by the Minister of Finance and by the Minister of Justice to limit what autopsies will be done by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Nova Scotia for the purposes of saving money. As I indicated earlier, I find this to be an extremely tasteless decision, by this government, to tell grieving families, wait until Monday, because you don't fit into the categories that we have now decided of who gets to have an autopsy on the weekend and who doesn't.

I can't imagine how the government somehow came up with this and thought Nova Scotians would see it as a good idea. At the end of the day there are certain services that government is expected to provide to the residents of Nova Scotia that you simply cannot put a price tag on. To tell the Chief Medical Examiner that he cannot perform autopsies on the weekend unless they fit into the category as was outlined today in Question Period by the Minister of Justice, I have to say is one of the most unfortunate decisions that I've seen a government make in my time. Yet to turn around and bring in legislation at the very same time and say, we want to allow nurse practitioners to sign death certificates because we don't want grieving families to wait. So we'll rush to make sure that they assist in getting you a death certificate but if the death was for unknown reasons and you don't fit into the specific criteria set out by the Minister of Justice, you have to wait until Monday morning.

Now, Madam Speaker, the confusion in all this is that two weeks ago, I believe on a Wednesday, the Chief Medical Examiner's Office sent out a memo to embalmers and undertakers, and crematoriums, I believe, to inform them of changes that were going to be made, including limits on autopsies performed during the weekend. Needless to say, there was an outcry and by Friday afternoon the Chief Medical Examiner had issued a statement to these very same embalmers and undertakers, saying they had reversed their decision and that's what we were under the belief of and, believe it or not, I was certainly prepared to tell the Minister of Justice, I think you were right in reversing that decision. I think it was a bad decision and you quickly found the reaction and good on you to have reversed it, but to my surprise, it was not reversed.

The Minister of Justice instead stood in his place and said, here is who gets to have an autopsy on the weekend and everybody else, wait until Monday morning. Now, what message does that send to Nova Scotia families who have lost a loved one for unknown reasons? There is no worse feeling for a family, to have someone die suddenly and everyone left asking what happened. Sadly, if it happened on a Friday night, a Saturday or a Sunday, this Minister of Justice, under the direction I'm sure of the Minister of Finance, is telling Nova Scotians and those families, wait until Monday because we need to save a few bucks. That's what it comes down to - wait until Monday so we can save a few bucks.

The Province of Nova Scotia right now, if I'm not mistaken - and the Minister of Finance can correct me - I believe it takes in approximately \$9 billion in total revenue. The line item from the Minister of Justice indicates that he expects the Chief Medical Examiner's Office is going to save \$290,000 this fiscal year by implementing changes to current service levels and procedures. Will it all come from limiting autopsies? We're not sure but when you're a \$9 billion operation and you decide that you need to find money, you need to reduce your spending, that you would look to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and tell Nova Scotia grieving families, you've got to wait until Monday morning because we need to save a few bucks.

I can't see how anybody in this government could stand in their place and say that was a wise decision and we think that that's the type of better deal for Nova Scotian

families that we campaigned on, and that's why Nova Scotians voted for us. It was tasteless, I believe it falls into the category of even being reprehensible to tell Nova Scotian families to wait. It's one thing if the service was never provided, but it's another thing when they were used to this, where it was there, to try to find answers for families, and now, to save a few bucks, wait until Monday morning.

I'll say again, as Justice Critic, I do feel bad for the Minister of Justice. I know the instructions for these changes are not coming from him and are not coming from his department. They're coming from the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance, because percentage-wise, Justice took probably the biggest cut of any department in government in the Spring budget - \$5.3 million - and they would look to find savings in the Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

The other irony in this, Madam Chairman, is that a few weeks ago, this summer, I joined the Minister of Finance and the Premier over in Burnside. Now, why were we in Burnside? Well, we were in Burnside for the sod-turning of the new Chief Medical Examiner's Office in Nova Scotia, a modern facility that is not only going to assist in the work of the Chief Medical Examiner, but I can tell you - due to my involvement in some of the decisions and some of the different meetings that took place that led up to this - it will not only enhance the services to the Chief Medical Examiner and everyone in his office, but it will provide a much more respectful place for grieving families who are forced to come to that office due to the death of a loved one.

The system that we previously had in place was clearly outdated and was not very respectful of Nova Scotia families who had to have interaction with the Chief Medical Examiner after the loss of a loved one, but this new, modern facility is going to be something Nova Scotians can be proud of. Death is not something that we often think of or that we debate about, but once you are impacted by it, we want to make sure, as a province, that we are providing the best level of service, the best level of compassion, and the best level of respect that we possibly can to grieving families.

I was proud, as an Opposition member, to be at that sod-turning and to clearly tell the media that we believe this is a wise investment of public funds. I attended when we went down with the former Minister of Justice, the former member for Cape Breton North, and the Premier on behalf of the NDP Opposition at the time. We went to see the Medical Examiner's Office in Miami-Dade, Florida - a modern facility, one of the busiest offices of a medical examiner in North America. And to see their operation and to see what we had, it was clear that investment had to be made.

So sod-turning first, a wonderful announcement, a brand-new facility, enhanced services, better quality, better respect, and better compassion, and yet in the budget, a \$290,000 cut to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

This comes right back to the whole purpose of the bill before us which, as the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations indicated, was to provide more timely responses to Nova Scotia families who had lost a loved one. That directly ties into the services provided by the government when it comes to the Chief Medical Examiner's Office. So cut the budget, build a new facility, have the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations say he's going to allow nurse practitioners to sign a death certificate on a more timely basis, and then tell Nova Scotians that unless you fit into a specific category set out by the Minister of Justice as to the type of death of your loved one, you have to wait until Monday because we want to save a few bucks on the weekend.

That is the message that this government is giving. It just doesn't add up. It just causes confusion, because on the one hand they're doing a great thing; on the other hand, who can stand on the government side and say, when we campaigned for a better deal for Nova Scotia families we thought limiting which families get to have a timely autopsy on the weekend and which ones don't was part of our plan for a better deal.

This government still has time to reverse this decision as more Nova Scotians find out. I know myself, when this issue first came out, I put out a press release on my own Facebook site - a wonderful thing - and people just generally made comments and they just couldn't believe it. The comments were along the lines of: What is the government thinking? - that you would find a way of saving money on the back of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office by telling Nova Scotia families to wait until Monday, because you don't fit into the specific criteria set out by the Minister of Justice. As I said, Madam Speaker, there is time to change this decision.

What's even more bizarre about it is that if this was something the government really believed was a good way of saving money for Nova Scotia taxpayers, why is it then, very peculiarly, that the Minister of Justice says these changes are in effect until April, 2012, which is the end of the fiscal year. So, at that point, is the minister going to say, well, it's now a fiscal year, I've talked to the Minister of Finance and he had a change of heart, we're not going to resume the service. We saved a few bucks during the last fiscal year by limiting who was going to be able to have an autopsy done on the weekend.

As I said, Madam Speaker, this is an issue that I will continue to raise on behalf of Nova Scotians, on behalf of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office, which I have to say, having had the opportunity to meet our Chief Medical Examiner, Matt Bowes, the new Assistant Chief Medical Examiner, the very nature of their business is to get answers for families in a timely fashion and that somehow we would tell them - can you imagine us telling doctors to tell people to come back on Monday, don't treat them right away, don't find answers for them right away? Yet this is what is being said to this office - we're going to build a brand-new building, a modern facility, but we're going to limit as to what work they can actually carry out on weekends.

Madam Speaker, nurse practitioners are playing a bigger and bigger role in our health care system. I can say that in Richmond County, we have Bonnie Samson-Gagnon, who is operating out of the Kingston Clinic in l'Ardoise. She has been a tremendous addition to the health care of the residents of Richmond County, and it is something that I know many of our communities are asking: How can we obtain the services of a nurse practitioner? And more and more Nova Scotians are showing confidence in finding alternative ways of getting the services which they had so traditionally relied upon doctors for, before.

Madam Speaker, I know that we're getting close to the end of our time for today. I still have some remarks to make on this bill, so I would move that for the moment we adjourn debate on Bill No. 72, and we can resume that debate on another day. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 72.

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 Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet tomorrow between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, when we will resume debate on Bill No. 72 and, if that concludes, we will move on to Bill No. 73.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We are now at the moment of interruption. The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Inverness:

"Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly agree that the high-cost, job-killing policies of the NDP are to blame for the alarming amount of young people leaving Nova Scotia."

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

NDP GOV'T.: POLICIES - YOUTH MIGRATION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, we are here to debate this resolution:

"Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly agree that the high-cost, job-killing policies of the NDP are to blame for the alarming amount of young people leaving Nova Scotia."

Madam Speaker, young people are leaving our province and they are having their families elsewhere and that's going to have a significant impact on the future of our province and our economy. We need people here to grow our economy. One of the chief components in economic growth is population growth.

We don't have that. That didn't happen overnight but it's something that we need to start addressing. We see it in our schools, we heard during Question Period today, some comment about the number of children in classes and, yes, there are some classes where there are a lot of children, maybe more than should be in those classes. I know there are other classes where the exact opposite is happening. I think that's why the government is able to claim that its number of students per teacher in the classroom is actually lower now.

I don't think that's a great achievement, I think that's happened because young people are leaving our province. Where is our province going to be? We have a lot of seniors in our province. Seniors have always been able to, maybe not always but in the last maybe 30 or 40 years ago, we could say that seniors were able to depend on the population coming up behind them to help. Those are the people that would be working and paying the taxes to support the social programs, the things that we need to be able to provide for seniors. At some point, if we're lucky enough, if we're blessed enough, we will all live to become a senior in this province.

The question that needs to be asked, is it the government's fault that we are seeing young people leave the province? We're seeing it in our schools, we're seeing it at the rinks, is it the government's fault?

Let's look at this a little bit. In Canada right now, natural resources are really the main reason why we have wealth in this country. It's behind our economic strength. It's giving life to rural parts of our country. Most of that is out of our control. The world happens to want our resources if we have them. In Nova Scotia we haven't discovered, at

least yet, the kind of resources we see in Alberta or Saskatchewan or B.C. Natural resources would certainly help our province.

The other thing that we look at in our economy when you move from natural resources, you look at manufacturing. Manufacturing, in our world, is moving towards emerging economies and has been for quite some time. Why? Because wages are a lot lower. But people are happy in those economies and appreciative because relatively speaking, the kind of work they're doing for those lower wages is bringing them a higher standard of living and a higher quality of life. We can't control that, at least in the sense that we cannot expect people here in Nova Scotia to work for the same rates of pay that they would work for in emerging economies. The goods that we purchase here in our economy are much more expensive than a lot of those same goods are in those emerging economies.

We have to start looking at what is in our control. When I think about that, I think about taxes, energy policy which affects power rates. I'm not going to go on at great length on that because I've already spoken about that today in the Legislature. The other thing that I think is very important, it may be one of the intangibles - if you're watching Hockey Night in Canada, sometimes they talk about the teams and where are the intangibles? It's something you can't really maybe put your finger on as something that's physical, but the economic culture in our province. Are we supportive of business? Are we trying to give young people in our province experiences so that they will be led maybe towards a career as an entrepreneur?

We know a lot of people in our province work for government or government organizations so it's natural that their children will look to their parents and see what their parents have done and perhaps choose a career in the same field. I really wish we had a lot more entrepreneurs in the province. I do believe one of the ways we can do that, because that's good for people who work in government too, because those entrepreneurs are the people that bring in money from outside into our economy, to give greater support, greater tax revenues. Not through increased taxation but through increased economic activity to support services in government.

For Nova Scotia to be the best that it can be and to have the most jobs we can have, those factors need to be properly managed. If they are not managed, well, then I do believe it's government's fault when we see young people leaving the province.

Madam Speaker, how much time would I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: About four minutes.

MR. MACMASTER: About four minutes, okay thank you. What have we seen in this province? Well, we've seen the loss of 5,000 jobs in the last two years, since this government has held power in this province. That is, in an economy that's defensive by its very nature, we don't have a cyclical economy in this province, certainly nothing compared

to what we would see in Alberta with the oil industry because we don't have as much dependence. I wish we did have dependence on natural resources, Madam Speaker, because those resources would be providing us with a lot of wealth and they would certainly help our economy right now.

We've seen the loss of 5,000 jobs in an economy that's very defensive, that has a lot of government employment, and we've also seen that loss of 5,000 jobs during one of the largest infrastructure investments made by any federal government in the history of our country. We've seen that right across the province in water and sewer projects, in paving projects and in what the term had been called shovel-ready projects. The government was doing its best to try to get money out into the economy to help against the economic downturn. During the recovery in a defensive economy, with all that increased investment, we've still seen the loss of 5,000 jobs and I believe this government has made mistakes and it's a shame because the government has choices to make and it has chosen to make life less affordable for Nova Scotians because it has chosen to allow government to become more expensive.

We've seen a billion dollars added to our debt since this government has been elected. That's more per year than any other political Party has ever added to the debt in the history of our province. We've not seen any evidence of cost control, we've seen a couple of small measures that have been talked about, and I know there's March Madness. When you look at it in the grand scheme of things, Madam Speaker, we've certainly not seen people marching in the streets because government has tried to reduce costs, and not that we like to see that, but it's usually a sign that government is actually taking some meaningful steps towards keeping costs under control.

That may not be popular but, you know what, it makes for a better economy and when we have an economy that has a culture that is more favourable to business and makes people more willing to take risks, then we get more economic activity and we can start growing our revenues by that increased economic activity instead of just increasing taxes. When that happens we will have young people staying in the province because they'll have opportunities here. I'm going to conclude my remarks with that and I do call upon this government to be cognizant of their decisions around the expense of government and taxes and energy policy and how it impacts power rates, how that's having an impact on young people who are having to leave our province.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise tonight in this debate. It might be questioned why one of the oldest members in the House wanted to speak on this subject tonight, but I want to speak on it for a number of reasons. At the end of the Progressive Conservative regime in this province, when we look at the Elections Nova Scotia 2009 figures for my constituency, we see that 72 per cent of the voting population was between the ages of 18 and 24, and 20.9 per cent

were over the age of 65. It's very interesting that the MLA for Fort McMurray, this week, was talking about the optimism that there is in Nova Scotia. It's very interesting to point out that that member of the Legislature in Fort McMurray is a former Cape Bretoner and he's talking about all the people who are thinking about coming back to Nova Scotia because there is hope. But there is more than hope. In this province there are concrete measures being taken by this government to make fundamental changes, and when I'm talking about changes that are taking place in this province, I'm talking about changes that are taking place in industry after industry after industry.

All we have to do is look at our investment in the aerospace industry. Since coming to office we have invested \$10 million in the aerospace industry. From Protocase in Cape Breton to IMP in Amherst to Allendale Electronics in Lockeport, we continue to support our aerospace industry, and that industry is employing a lot of young people. The aerospace and defence industries account for more than 6,000 good jobs across this province and they contribute about \$600 million annually to our Gross Domestic Product.

What are we doing for young people? Think for a moment that this is the government that capped tuition. We capped the maximum student loan. We increased the number of seats in Nova Scotia community colleges. We've expanded programs in Nova Scotia community colleges, and in 2009 our government introduced a tax credit to encourage graduates to live and work in Nova Scotia. University graduates of a Bachelor, Masters, or Doctorate degree in 2009 and after, are eligible to reduce their Nova Scotia income taxes by a maximum of \$2,500 per year in the year of graduation and in each of the next five years, to a maximum of \$15,000 over the six-year period.

Now, what's that doing to the tax level of young people, I ask? If we look at the Progressive Conservative and Liberal days, in my grandparents' day it was the Boston States that everybody went to. In my dad's day and mum's day, they went to Ontario looking for jobs. In my day it was Ontario and the West. Today it's Fort McMurray, but people are talking about coming home.

I left on my 20th birthday to go to work as a roughneck in southern Saskatchewan - not Alberta, but Manor/Carlyle, Saskatchewan, at 20 years of age. We, in fact, have so many positive things happening in this province that I can't believe that we are dealing with some of the issues that are coming forward. You know, all we have to do (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACKINNON: You know, Jack Layton said that hope is better than fear, and we have more than hope in this province. I just want to for a moment talk about Dave Freckleton, who is involved with the Community College Pictou Campus in Stellarton. Dave Freckleton, a great guy, and this is what he had to say about Nova Scotia right now,

talking about Irving: “A young person graduating today from NSCC could still be working on this contract when they retire. This is historical and I am very excited about it.” He added, “The Pictou Campus offers a lot of trades, such as welding and machinery, that will graduate workers able to use their skills not only in manufacturing but in other areas that can benefit from the spinoffs. For example, the predicted rise in employment will create the need for more houses, so people will be looking for more carpenters and more plumbers, but they will also be traveling more and eating out more, which will impact tourism and culinary students. He goes on and on about the benefits that are taking place.

Now I could talk at length about DSME in Trenton, which this government was responsible for making fundamental changes and revamping that industry. Anyhow, let’s look at LED Roadway Lighting, a \$10 million loan guarantee to LED Roadway Lighting in Amherst and look at this - 100 people are working there now and we expect to see that more than triple by 2014.

We look at shipbuilding outside of the Irving contract and our government invested \$8.8 million to revive the Shelburne Shipyard. This will have the impact of creating 70 jobs in the region. By investing \$190,000 to redevelop and expand the metal fabrication program at Nova Scotia Community College, more Nova Scotians will be prepared for careers in the steel manufacturing industry.

Let’s look at the PIP program - the Productivity Investment Program. These are some of the industries we have supported: Seaforth Energy Inc., in Dartmouth; Intelivote Systems Inc., in Halifax; Crown Fibre Tube Inc., in Kentville; A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd., which the member certainly from . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: It’s in Clare.

MR. MACKINNON: I know it’s in Clare but it’s in southwestern Nova Scotia. I know very well where it is.

Anyhow, these are, in fact, industries that will be employing young folk in our province. You know one thing that I’m seeing in the last two years, I would really like to take those demographics that we have at the end of the Progressive Conservative Government with the population in Pictou East and look at those when we’re halfway through our third mandate in this province. You will see that there will be fundamental changes there as well.

What we are dealing with is looking at rural fire departments. In the last two years I see - I have 13 fire departments in my constituency. (Interruption) All right, well somebody has to hear it but perhaps I can have another talk later.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: It certainly is a pleasure to rise in my place and speak on this resolution. We all shared the day that the shipbuilding contracts were announced and the day that Irving was the successful - the right to negotiate the successful bid was Irving and it certainly did mean a lot, for sure. Again, we're glad there was no politics involved in that, that no one influenced this decision, other than the merit.

We were told months ago by representatives from the Irving Shipbuilding group that if this process is followed as it is intended and as it is written, there will be no politics involved and we will easily be the successful bid for the right to negotiate these contracts.

Again, to the member across, to his points, we all certainly are happy with Irving and with the prospects that may bring to the province. The reality, to speak to the resolution that was put forth by the member for Inverness, this is a problem, what we're talking about with youth leaving. It speaks to one of probably the two main philosophical issues that we deal with as a province, and certainly as legislators - the things that contribute to quality of life.

On one hand, you have the social side, the social programs - what are we doing with health care? Where are we at with education, with housing, with care for seniors, with youth initiatives, with those types of things? Where are we going and how are we protecting, at the very fundamental level and the very basic level - how are we looking after the needs of those Nova Scotians? That's obviously an important one.

The other side of that, of course, is, it comes down to jobs. It's economic development. It's the creation and the distribution of wealth. It's employment opportunities and that's what we're here to talk about basically today is, how are Nova Scotians feeding their families and what are the future prospects for those questions? The resolution states, "... the alarming amount of young people ..." Without question, in my opinion, that would be certainly accurate. It's undeniable. Thousands of Nova Scotians have left over the last few decades and I think the telltale sign for this, if you look at those thousands of people that are spread in western Canada and Ontario and the U.S. and everywhere outside of our boundaries - how many of those, honestly, would come back if they had the opportunity?

I think that's the question. It's one thing to leave and they're gone because they like a different area or they like a better place or they like a warmer climate or they like one thing or the other. But at the end of the day, how many want to return? My guess is probably 90 per cent and that's probably low balling. I think that 9 of every 10 people that you see in Fort Mac, this is a guarantee, 9 out of every 10 Nova Scotian that's in Alberta would come home in a second. Regardless of how this is spun politically with the Irvings, I was ecstatic the day that was announced because that represents families coming home, it represents people coming home and I don't care what the political implications are for that. This is about our province, our future - it's about our economy and that ultimately is a very important contributing factor to the quality of life in this province.

I've been fortunate in my 14 or so years of a working life, I've had many great jobs. This certainly being the best, but I've had some good ones outside of this one that were tremendous building blocks for me and experiences. One that wasn't so great that, unfortunately, I had to do at a time, was work out west. I worked in the pipeline industry, in Northern Alberta, I worked in Grande Cache, Grand Prairie, Vernon, B.C. - basically anywhere that's the foothills of the Rockies, I was there for a year.

You're living in a camp 40 kilometres into the woods, you're eating processed foods, you're driving in trucks on logging roads with animals, it's a treacherous path just to get to work every day, it's - 30 if you're lucky and those types of things. I guarantee 80 per cent of camps, minimum, were Maritimers who said I'm doing this for one reason or the other - to pay off a bill, to pay off a house, to go back to school, because I can't stand this. That's with all due respect to the Alberta oil industry and the province itself and the people; I'm sure it's a great place to be from. But for those who go there, who travel there for work, who want to be home, it's never an easy thing.

Forget about the notion that when you make a lot of money you can be happy anywhere, it's absolutely not true. It doesn't matter if you're a labourer, a fitter, a carpenter, an engineer or a welder. You want to be home in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

That's the reality that we've sort of come to. When I was a teenager I remember so many people going and leaving and they were gone for good. The reality that Nova Scotia offers to our people, to each other, is that people have figured out a way - Atlantic Canadians, not just Nova Scotians - have figured out a way that they can work and extract a pay cheque from Alberta and elsewhere and come home. If it's a two week in and two week out and the company pays your flight or 21 days in and 8 days off and the company pays your travel and gives you those vacation days to get out, people manage. They want to live in Yarmouth, in Clare, in Truro and Sydney Mines and Victoria and Glace Bay. That's what it comes down to.

How do we get those people home? How do we get them here for good? That becomes basically the question. It's tough for me and a lot of my classmates but even more so in the last 15 years or so from high school, the default response is, I'm going to school - particularly for the trades but if it's university as well - I'm going to go to school and I'm going to graduate and go off to post-secondary and then I'm going out west. Very few of us talk about where you're going to finish high school, go to post-secondary training or education of some sort and then work in your town and live next door to your folks or live with your family.

It becomes, I'm going to go and I'm going to make the big dollars elsewhere and then maybe I'll retire here if I'm lucky and I'll vacation here. That's kind of a tough reality that people go through a lot of the time and what we're speaking about here and what this resolution kind of focuses on is what policies are at play.

I think there are a few and one that I particularly find that's very impactful to this resolution is this problem of losing youth. It gets back to our economics and it goes back to our economy. I think that the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Bill, to me, and again my comments to the bill earlier in the week were similar - I don't see this being anything other than simply renaming of the IEF. What I struggle with, with this notion is that this, the IEF, the Jobs Fund Bill, all these things are part of that program and that fund is Cabinet-controlled. As we know, if you follow economics, if you do any of those analyses of business and how economies roll and function and succeed, ultimately it's what the private sector will do. It's how the private sector grows the economy. It's how they make money. It's how they expand businesses. What I think that we've got to look at is, how do we, as legislators and as a government across the House - what decisions can we make to positively impact the business environment? This is what it's about.

What we've done for many generations of governments and politics is that we've done these one-off injections into certain projects here, there and everywhere and then we become pot-committed to these things, as opposed to just looking at where we're at tax wise, where are we at with red tape, where are we at with power rates? Let's make those decisions, set up a platform where businesses can thrive, and then get out of the way. So I think that's a huge problem and I think that that's something that we have to deal with.

I think that what we want to do is put this money in these funds into the hands of the private sector and businesses, to look at the business case, make the independent analysis, and decide through NSBI, who have done great work developing and supporting economic opportunities in this province. To have it in the hands of Cabinet and to have it linked to politics isn't the way we're going to transform the economy.

So in any event, we are losing our youth at a very rapid rate and we've got to do what we can, using public policy to make those changes and stop that flow. With that, I will take my seat. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for late debate has elapsed. I would like to thank all members for a lively debate this evening.

The House now stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow.

[The House rose at 6:28 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2005**

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas Wednesday, November 2, 2011 was the 17th annual Take Our Kids to Work Day, in which 200,000 students and 75,000 employers participated this year; and

Whereas unlike most teens, 14-year old Guysborough student, Jacob Halloran, had the opportunity to shadow with Governor General David Johnston and the Speaker of the House of Commons, in Ottawa; and

Whereas Jacob earned this opportunity by placing first among 400,000 people nationally and internationally who competed in the Ultimate Dream Job Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate Jacob Halloran on his accomplishments in academics and music at his young age, which earned him a fantastic and unique Take Our Kids to Work Day opportunity.

RESOLUTION NO. 2006

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 Conrad Brothers Quarry is one of the largest rock quarries in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the rock and gravel that the Conrads began hauling from the Eastern Shore to Dartmouth became, literally, the foundation of a thriving community; and

Whereas the Conrad Brothers also incorporated Conrad Transport, in 1978, as the Port of Halifax began to receive containerized goods;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Conrad Brothers company on their 55th year of operation and wish them many more years of being “rock solid” members of the Dartmouth community.