



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 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. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

Also, just a thank you to all of the committee members who have done great work over the past year, as well as the staff of the Committees Office, including our good friend, the clerk for the Human Resources Committee, Jana Hodgson. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the 2010-11 Annual Report and Audit Financial Statement of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a minute to stress with members today the importance of voting as much as we can for the Bay of Fundy in the last few days of the New7Wonders of Nature campaign. You all know the Bay of Fundy is the only Canadian finalist in that competition. With the highest tides in the world, the Bay of Fundy is truly an extraordinary natural wonder.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you know this or not but every day 100 billion tons of water flows in and out of the Bay of Fundy. That's more water than all the rivers in the world. We know how spectacular a natural resource the Bay of Fundy is but we want people all over the world to know, too, which is why the members of the House can help. Voting wraps up on Friday and I'm asking everyone to take a moment to go on-line to www.votemyfundy.com or text the word "Fundy" to 77077. The cost is 25 cents per text but it helps to ensure that the Bay of Fundy comes out on top at the end of this week.

Not that long ago I had the opportunity to go tidal bore rafting on the Shubenacadie River for a promotional video that we shot for the campaign, and for those who haven't had the chance to experience the Bay of Fundy, I would highly recommend it. Try the tidal bore rafting, take a whale watching tour, or visit the Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy. It's a new interpretive centre in Parrsboro where I was earlier this week with the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and many other folks I might add.

This beautiful new facility will allow the public to learn more about this amazing resource while watching first-hand the installation of the subsea cable that will soon connect Nova Scotia to the immense tidal power potential that exists in the Bay of Fundy. So once connected, the subsea cable will give the FORCE demonstration project the largest offshore transmission capacity in the world - 64 megawatts or enough energy to power 20,000 homes at peak tidal flows. The momentum around tidal energy in Nova Scotia continues to build and Nova Scotia is more than ready to lead the world in this new industry off our shores.

Each and every vote counts, as I know you know, Mr. Speaker. Nova Scotians, Maritimers, and all Canadians can help the Bay of Fundy become one of the New7Wonders of Nature, so do your part and vote. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to stand in my place and provide a quick reply here. Of course, all of us in this Chamber would like to see the Bay of Fundy become one of the seven wonders, although some of us get confused when we mention the seven wonders because I've often heard the seven colleagues to my left referred to as such, on occasion, the seven wonders here. (Interruptions)

This is a campaign that many of my caucus colleagues here have been supporting since the outset, on-line, on Facebook, on our Web sites, on Twitter. I know the member for Bedford-Birch Cove has been especially active in promoting this campaign but I would say that no one in this House loves and appreciates the beauty and the power of the Bay of Fundy more than the member for Digby-Annapolis. In fact, he loves it so much that he has spent quite a bit of time out there and it has almost killed him several times; it's a wonder that the member is actually sitting with us today. But I do pledge to this House that I will do what I can, as the MLA for Yarmouth, to promote this campaign and urge my colleagues to continue to do the same.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, working together, all of us will be able to bring this one home for Nova Scotia.

With that, I'll thank you very much and take my seat. (Applause)

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say in response to the statement that I am very pleased that the Premier has shown such a great interest in this topic. It's an important one in my own riding, in Cumberland South, a riding the Premier seems to have taken an amazing interest in over the last little while in a number of different areas. I'm sure the people of Cumberland South appreciate it.

The Bay of Fundy is truly one of the wonders of the modern world. Of course it's a bay that is bordered on one side by New Brunswick - and we'll leave it to the people of New Brunswick to do their bit. It is also a bay, along with the Minas Basin, that does a great service in uniting all Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker. What I mean by that is it was pointed out that on one side is Digby-Annapolis and Hants West and Annapolis and others, and on our side there is Cumberland South, Colchester North and so on. It is truly the heart of mainland Nova Scotia and a site that has great potential in the future, both as a tourism destination which, certainly, if it wins this designation will get greater awareness as a tourist destination.

But I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Bay of Fundy has great economic development potential for all of our province. Tourism is one area; energy is another. I'm very pleased that the people of Cumberland County, the municipalities of Cumberland County, have come together to develop an energy strategy that takes advantage of some of the unique energy opportunities of that part of Nova Scotia. They look to the wind profile of the area and its potential for wind energy; they look to the mine water of Springhill and the potential for geothermal - and indeed many companies are already benefiting from that source of energy, which is actually a renewable source; and to the Bay of Fundy itself; and the Town of Parrsboro, where the FORCE Interpretive Centre was opened earlier this week, and has a great opportunity to be at the centre of all that action.

I, too, would like to call on all members of this House and, through you, Mr. Speaker, to all the people of Nova Scotia to cast a vote for the future of our province, to cast a vote for this wonder of the world that we have here in the heart of Nova Scotia, the Bay of Fundy, by going to votemyfundy.com and voting "yes" for a great future for that part of Nova Scotia, or to text Fundy to 77077. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to make an introduction before presenting this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MORE: Here today in our east gallery are representatives of an intergovernmental and private sector partnership, who helped create an award-winning IT solution. The Labour Market Program Support System, often called LaMPSS, is now providing better results for government and better service for our stakeholders and clients.

I'd like to introduce - and I'll ask them to stand and remain standing as they are introduced - Lynn Hartwell, Executive Director, Skills and Learning Branch, Department of Labour and Advanced Education; Bev Corbin, Business Director and Integrated Services, Department of Community Services; Elizabeth Mills, Executive Director, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration; Cecil Smith, Regional Director of Atlantic Professional Services, Bell Canada; and Gary Kehoe, Director of Business Development, Public Sector CGI.

With them are other members of the project team and I'll ask them to all stand and receive congratulations from the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2115

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's Labour Market Programs Support System, an IT-enabled business solution, was developed in partnership with Labour and Advanced Education, Community Services, the Office of Immigration, Bell Canada, and CGI; and

Whereas this system is a great example of a partnership involving innovation, dedication, professionalism, and a can-do attitude; and

Whereas this new IT solution supports more than 40 different funding programs worth more than \$140 million and has resulted in more efficiency for government and better service delivery for stakeholders and clients;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in congratulating all those involved in creating the Labour Market Programs Support System, which recently won the Silver Award for Innovative Management from the Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2116

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

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia on Tuesday, October 25, 2011, officially announced the designation of the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness as our newest protected area; and

Whereas this area, bounded by Highways No. 103 and No. 333, includes forests, lakes, wetlands, and a herd of endangered mainland moose; and

Whereas 30 community groups under the leadership of the Chebucto Wilderness Coalition and the chairmanship of Tom Musial worked over the last decade to achieve this designation;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank the many community volunteers for their exemplary efforts in achieving protected status for the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Seniors.

RESOLUTION NO. 2117

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

Whereas the Remarkable Seniors Award is presented to a deserving person for their leadership, community service, and volunteer efforts; and

Whereas Terry Smith of Jordan in the Municipality of the District of Shelburne has played an extraordinary leadership role in the Tri-County area and at a provincial level; and

Whereas Mr. Smith is the president of Community Links and a founding member of the Shelburne County Transportation Society and the Falls Prevention efforts in Lockeport, as well as a member of the Group of IX, Tri-County VON, the John Howard Society, the South West District Health Authority, and the Rural Coastal Communities Network;

Therefore be it resolved that Mr. Terry Smith be congratulated by the members of this Legislature for his volunteer work to make life better in his community and for being recognized by his community as this year's recipient of the Remarkable Seniors Award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction before I read my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: I'd like to draw the House's attention to the opposite gallery. Seated with us today is not only a friend of mine but a friend of all Nova Scotians. I would ask Chief Petty Officer Second Class Perry Colley to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

RESOLUTION NO. 2118

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

Whereas since 1978, Perry Colley, originally of East Preston, has faithfully served with the HMCS Scotian, the Naval Reserve Division in Halifax, currently holding the rank of Chief Petty Officer Second Class; and

Whereas on September 28th, CPO 2 Colley was officially named the coxswain of the HMCS Scotian, making him the senior non-commissioned member of the ship and the first African Nova Scotian ever to hold this important position with HMCS Scotian; and

Whereas his commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Derek Vallis, has said CP02 Colley was chosen for this role “not only because of his achievements in the Navy, but his dedication to sailors, connection with community and example as an excellent role model.”

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Perry Colley on this historic appointment and thank him for his excellent and faithful service to our country.

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. 2119

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

Whereas Nova Scotia’s public libraries are important resources that support vibrant communities through programs that encourage lifelong learning and provide spaces for special events and activities; and

Whereas the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library Board has worked hard with its partners in government and the local community to create the People's Place Library in Antigonish as an example of the enormous contribution libraries make to better lives for families; and

Whereas the People's Place Project of the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library Board has been recognized as one of the Top 100 Public Spaces in the United States and Canada by Planetizen and the Project for Public Spaces;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library Board on this important recognition and encourage them to continue their outstanding efforts to make libraries centres of excellence in their communities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Seniors.

RESOLUTION NO. 2120

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

Whereas the Remarkable Seniors Award is presented to a deserving person for their leadership, community service and volunteer efforts; and

Whereas Roseline LeBlanc of West Pubnico returned to Nova Scotia following her retirement in 1982 from a successful career as a nurse in the Montreal area; and

Whereas she volunteers with many organizations, celebrating and recording the rich history of the area, participating in two choirs and writing and publishing three books on local history;

Therefore be it resolved that Ms. Roseline LeBlanc be congratulated by the members of this Legislature for her volunteerism to make life better in her community and for receiving a Remarkable Seniors Award presented at this year's 50+ Expo 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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm rising in my capacity as Minister of the Insurance Act. I wonder if I might begin with an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. STEELE: Thank you. I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where several distinguished people are present in association with the bill that I'm about to introduce and I'd just like to ask them to rise as I read their name. Dr. Ward MacDonald, the president of the Council of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors, Dan Purcell from the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association and Liz van Zutphen also of the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association. I'd like to ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

Bill No. 86 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 231 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Insurance Act. (Hon. Graham Steele)

Bill No. 87 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 504 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Wildlife Act. (Mr. Andrew Younger)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2121

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

Whereas 73 years ago today the precursor to the Holocaust was unleashed when the Nazis brutally orchestrated widespread attacks against the Jewish by torching Jewish-owned properties, demolishing their homes, and burning synagogues to the ground; and

Whereas Kristallnacht, or Night of the Broken Glass, so named for the broken glass that covered the streets of Nazi Germany, represents a dark day in history that still serves as a chilling reminder of where unchecked prejudice can lead; and

Whereas this evening at 5:45 p.m., residents will gather at the Parade Square for Dignity Day, a ceremony that remembers the victims of Kristallnacht and celebrates the need for tolerance;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House never forget the history of Kristallnacht and be ever mindful of the need to be vigilant in our promotion of tolerance and in the protection of human rights for minorities.

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. 2122

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

Bho 'n a tha Coinneach Nilsen air roinn mhath dhe' shaoghal a chuir seachad a' saothrachadh gus canan, dualchas is eachdraidh nan Gaidheal a theagasg do dhaoine; agus

Bho 'n a tha Cathair Eolas Ceilteach na Peathar Ban-naomh Bhearonaga aig an Ollamh Nilsen agus e 'na cheann air an Roinn Cheiltich aig StFX; agus

Bho 'n a tha an t-Ollamh Nilsen air roinn do dhaoine ann an Albainn Uir a bhrosnachadh gu'n ionnsaich iad an canan duthchasach aca le bhith a' meas nan dualchainntean ionadail againn fhin a' seo agus a' cumail suas cliu agus cumadh-inntinn ar sinnsrean;

Mar sin, biodh e 'na run aig a' pharlamaid seo gu'n toir Buill an Taighe Seo cliu do Choinneach Nilsen airson na taice bhuaibh a thug agus a bheir e dha 'n Ghaidhlig agus do Ghaidheil na h-Albann Uire agus gu'n guidh sinn gu'm meal an t-Ollamh Nilsen an oidhche a tha 'ga cur air doigh a-nochd as a leth gus urram air a' bheil e airidh a thoirt dha.

Mr. Speaker, a chinn-suidhe, tha mi airson gu'n gabhar ri aobhar mo chuspair agus gu'm bi an deasbad air a sheachnadh.

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

Whereas Ken Nilsen has devoted his life to teaching others Gaelic language, tradition and history - and maybe he should have spent a little more time on me; and

Whereas Dr. Nilsen is the Sister Saint Veronica Chair of Celtic Studies and head of the Celtic Studies Department at St. F.X. University; and

Whereas Ken has inspired many Nova Scotians to learn their native language by maintaining a respect for local Gaelic dialects and pride in the experiences and way of life of our ancestors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Ken Nilsen for his lifelong support of Gaelic, and pass along our regards for an enjoyable evening at the appreciation event held in his honour tonight.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might be able to make an introduction before I read my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

THE PREMIER: Thank you. Today I'd like to bring to the attention of the members of the House that we have in our gallery members of the Metro Sheriff Services. I'm going to introduce them, and I'd like to get them to stand up. We have Rory Fraser, Kevin Hurst, Earl Mosher, and Tony Bremner.

These gentlemen, along with their colleagues in Correctional Services, were involved in this year's charity baseball game in Cole Harbour, to support the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada. I would ask all the members of the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2123

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

Whereas for the past two years local deputy sheriffs and members of the Correctional Services have held a charity baseball game at Bissett Ball Park in Cole Harbour, raising a grand total of more than \$21,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada; and

Whereas this event was once again widely supported by people and businesses throughout the community and beyond, including West Coast Authentic, Navy Seal Time, UFC champion Georges St.-Pierre, Shannon Lee, Sin on Skin Tattooing, T.J. Grant, and Randy Couture; and

Whereas this year the event raised \$10,800, money used to send a five-year-old cancer patient and her family to Disney World for a week, so she could become a princess with Cinderella;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly thank the organizers of this event for their continued support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada and its efforts to make life better for sick children and their families across the country.

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. 2124

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

Whereas on June 6, 1944, D-Day, a team of Canadian sappers, including Nova Scotia's Raymond Williams, landed on Juno Beach in German-occupied France, with the mission to clear mines and tank traps for those who followed; and

Whereas Raymond was later to discover that this mission, labelled a "suicide mission," was one of the most unforgettable and extremely dangerous episodes in his Second World War experience; and

Whereas during the weeks that followed, although constantly aware that the enemy was still trying to defeat them, Raymond was among the first Canadians to pass through Belgium and enter into Holland, where they were under direct enemy fire;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize the hero in Raymond Williams, while thanking him for our freedom and never forgetting his courage.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2125

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

Whereas the communities along the St. Margarets Bay Road, from Hubley to Lewis Lake and Upper Tantallon, have had a strong attachment to the Bay Road Hall as an integral part of our community; and

Whereas our dedicated group of volunteers has shown the initiative to form an association to ensure continued community access to this hall; and

Whereas those involved area residents have patiently worked with provincial and municipal officials to make a forward-thinking proposal for the use of this facility by the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank the Bay Road Community Hall Association on its leadership with best wishes in its endeavours with the future use of the Hubley Centre in Lewis Lake.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2126

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

Whereas on October 14, 2011, the Portraits of Honour National Tour, sponsored by Kin Canada, visited Bridgewater, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this tour provides Canadians from coast to coast the opportunity to honour and celebrate Canadian soldiers who have paid the ultimate price, and those who still continue to serve this country, by viewing a breathtaking mural of portraits of, at that time, 157 fallen soldiers painted by the talented artist Dave Sopha; and

Whereas Private Richard Green of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, one of the first four soldiers killed in the conflict on April 18, 2002, at the age of 21, was from Mill Cove, Nova Scotia, and was recognized at the Bridgewater event;

Therefore be it resolved that we never forget our soldiers who have paid the ultimate price, as well as those who still serve our country, and thank Kin Canada for supporting this project to help all Canadians grieve and heal.

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. 2127

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

Whereas yesterday Margaret McCain honoured the wishes of her late husband, Wallace McCain, by making an \$8 million donation in his name to Dalhousie University Life Sciences Centre; and

Whereas the new Wallace McCain Science Learning Commons will enhance the out-of-classroom experience for students; and

Whereas this new commons will ensure students are able to gather in a welcoming setting to exchange ideas and discuss ways to enhance productivity and revolutionize the world - a most fitting tribute to the successful hallmarks of Mr. Wallace McCain, a successful business person;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House join me in thanking Margaret McCain and the McCain family for their generous donation of \$8 million in support of students working toward their future in science.

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.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make an introduction before I do my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of all members of the House to the east gallery. As you know, this is Movember, and we have lots of people in the House who are sporting a little more hair than normal, perhaps, in some cases.

Today in our east gallery we have some people who are associated with Prostate Cancer Canada, the Atlantic regional group, and I would ask them to stand as I read their names: Rob Isbister; Peter Mallette, who is the director of Prostate Cancer Canada for the Atlantic Region; and Carol Murray, community development manager, Prostate Cancer Canada, Atlantic Region - I'm not sure if Carol Murray is here or not. I would ask the members to give a warm welcome to our guests. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2128

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

Whereas Prostate Cancer Canada, Atlantic Region, through its Prostate Cancer Canada Network, continues to support men and their families; and

Whereas on November 16th prostate cancer survivor Rob Isbister, a resident of North End Halifax, will lead a support group for gay men diagnosed with prostate cancer, which will be the first support group of its kind in Canada; and

Whereas this initiative is another example of Prostate Cancer Canada's Atlantic mission to reach out to diverse communities through its PCCN support network, providing a forum for personal discussion with prostate cancer survivors, newly diagnosed men, and their caregivers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rob Isbister on becoming the first leader of a gay men's prostate cancer support group in Canada and wish him and all members of his support group much deserved 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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2129

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

Whereas Live at 5 producer and co-host Starr Dobson has penned a lively children's book, *My Goat Gertrude*, based on the true adventures of the pet goat she had when she was a young girl growing up in Six Mile Brook; and

Whereas *My Goat Gertrude* was illustrated by Dayle Dodwell and chronicles Gertrude's prodigious eating and peacemaking abilities; and

Whereas Starr has dedicated the book to her grandmother, Mary Cunningham, and is donating a portion of the proceeds to Special Olympics Nova Scotia in honour of her sister, Stacey, who is a Special Olympian;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Starr Dobson on this masterful tale, thank her for raising money for Special Olympics and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: With your permission, may I do an introduction? I would like to draw the attention to the east gallery and we have Roger and Joan Boutilier, from the wonderful Town of Wolfville, here visiting today. I know that they are not here to be honoured or acknowledged from the floor, it goes without saying that I'm honoured they are here with us in the House today to watch as we do our work on behalf of Nova Scotians. They're very dear friends of mine and they're also on the executive, Roger being the president of my constituency association. I wish people in the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2130

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

Whereas Camp Brigadoon officially opened October 1, 2011 at its location at Aylesford Lake, Kings County, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Camp Brigadoon is a year round, non-profit recreational facility that provides the space for existing camp programs and provides learning opportunities for children and youth living with chronic illness; and

Whereas Camp Brigadoon seeks to assist in the betterment of the lives of children, youth and families living with chronic illness through research, teaching and learning;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the people of Camp Brigadoon for their diligence in creating a facility that provides children with chronic illness an experience of a lifetime.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2131

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

Whereas the Lions Club movement was founded in 1917 by Melvin Jones who asked the simple question, "Why do people put their talent to work improving their communities?"; and

Whereas a chapter of the Lions Club was opened in Shubenacadie after the destruction of the Second World War came to an end; and

Whereas the Shubenacadie Lions Club turns 65 this month of November but is not retiring;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the members of the Shubenacadie Lions Club on their 65th Anniversary and thank them for putting their talents to work improving their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2132

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

Whereas seven-year-old Madison Himmelman took life-saving action by calling 911 to help her grandfather David Suttle after he suffered a diabetic seizure and subsequent head injury at his home in East Green Harbour on July 4, 2011; and

Whereas Madison Himmelman remained calm throughout the incident, staying on the line with 911 dispatchers until first responders from the Lockeport Fire Department arrived on the scene, who noted that Madison did everything right; and

Whereas Madison Himmelman has been recognized by the RCMP for her life-saving call to 911 that is credited with saving her grandfather's life;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly applaud Madison Himmelman for her life-saving actions and bravery in the face of an emergency medical situation involving her grandfather David Suttle.

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. 2133

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

Whereas Barb Cruickshanks of Sackville lost her mother to cancer in 1977 and her father in 1980; and

Whereas Barb has raised money for cancer research by participating in fundraising events such as riding a ferris wheel for 100 hours and the Run for the Cure; and

Whereas Barb Cruickshanks has been fundraising for cancer research for 27 years;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Barb Cruickshanks of Sackville on her efforts in fundraising for cancer research for 27 years and wish her 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 Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2134

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

Whereas Kyle Crews, a Grade 10 student at Pictou Academy, was chosen to be a medal bearer at the Rick Hansen Relay event in Pictou County in September; and

Whereas Kyle Crews lives with epilepsy and has overcome a number of issues in his life and was chosen by his teachers to be involved in the Rick Hansen Relay due to his determination; and

Whereas Kyle Crews' job as a medal bearer was to raise awareness of brain and spinal cord research and to inspire others to support the Rick Hansen Relay event;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Kyle Crews for being a medal bearer in the Rick Hansen Relay event and wish him continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 2135

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 Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia is a non-profit association that seeks to promote our food and beverage sector and shapes our hospitality environment in a creative and positive way; and

Whereas the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia represents approximately 1,550 industry suppliers and operators with more than 33,000 employees contributing significantly to the economic and cultural growth of our province; and

Whereas on November 8, 2011 the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia will host its fourth annual awards dinner to celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit and culinary contributions of industry members;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia for its outstanding commitment to developing and promoting our food and beverage sector, and thanks and congratulates all those nominated for awards at the fourth annual meeting of the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2135

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

Whereas Midge Horner, the founder of the Marigold Guild of Needle Arts, has been awarded a service pin by the Embroiderers' Association of Canada for her promotion and support of the art of embroidery; and

Whereas Midge Horner founded the Marigold Guild of Needle Arts in the early 1980's with a group of over 40 women who shared a common interest in needle arts such as cross-stitch, needlepoint and embroidery; and

Whereas Midge Horner has been consistent in her involvement with the Marigold Guild over the years, holding many positions including president, a member of the program and planning committee, organizing exhibits and hosting retreats for guild members;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates Midge Horner for being awarded a service pin by the Embroiderers' Association of Canada and for her tireless commitment to the Marigold Guild of Needle Arts and the art of embroidery.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2137

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

Whereas Corporal David Chrétien, of Eastern Passage, is an aircraft technician with 12 Wing Shearwater Armed Forces, 423 Squad, who has been practicing shooting small arms for competition since 2009 and is currently the local rifle coach for Air Force and Navy; and

Whereas representing Nova Scotia, Cpl. Chrétien traveled to Connaught Ranges and Primary Training Centre in Ottawa for the Canadian Forces Small Arms Concentration Competition held from September 4th to 7th; and

Whereas Cpl. Chrétien earned the following awards at the national event: the Brigadier General H.M. Sutherland Trophy for Top Individual in Combat Pistol, Royal Canadian Air Force; placed 4th in the Top 10 Combined Fire Aggregate Score, Combat Pistol and Service Rifle; placed first in the Match 21 Open Class Category; Top Senior Shot for Combat Pistol, Stage 1; and Top Senior Shot for Combat Pistol, Stage 1 and 2;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Corporal David Chrétien on his successes in representing 12 Wing Shearwater in Ottawa at the Canadian Forces Small Arms Concentration Competition in September 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2138

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

Whereas the Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship Program provides scholarships and grants to students pursuing careers in energy-related studies, trades or technology programs; and

Whereas recipients are chosen based on academic achievement, community involvement and extra-curricular activities, in addition to a demonstrated interest in the Nova Scotia energy sector; and

Whereas Thomas Lloyd of Liverpool Regional High School has been awarded a 2011 Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes and congratulates Thomas Lloyd on having received a 2011 Pengrove-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship.

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.

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2139

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

Whereas the Community Linguist Certificate is offered through the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute at the University of Alberta; and

Whereas certificate holders acquire specialized knowledge to develop the necessary skills documenting their language, further developing oral traditions, and/or writing literature which preserves indigenous culture; and

Whereas on July 22, 2011, after three years of study, Lorraine Marie Francis of Pictou Landing First Nation became the first Mi'kmaq to receive the Linguist Certificate through the University of Alberta;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Lorraine Marie Francis in her recent accomplishment and provide best wishes as she works to protect and enhance the Mi'kmaq language and traditions of her culture.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 2140

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

Whereas the congregation of Upper Big Tracadie dates back to 1787 and the Tracadie United Baptist Church was established in 1821 under the direction of Rev. David Nutter; and

Whereas the Tracadie United Baptist Church, serving some 50 families in the communities of Lincolnville, Upper Big Tracadie, and Rear Monastery, is the second-oldest church in the African United Baptist Association; and

Whereas on October 23rd the Tracadie United Baptist Church celebrated its 189th Anniversary with a service and community supper;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the congregation of the Tracadie United Baptist Church on their 189th Anniversary and wish them all the best for continued faithful celebration.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2141

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

Whereas Mr. Rodney Grace is a well-known and well-respected businessman in Bridgewater, having been owner of Bob's Shell for many years, and is the current president and a partner in Old Bridge Automotive Limited, also located in the town; and

Whereas Mr. Rodney Grace partnered with Mr. Glen Murray, also originally from Bridgewater, a former NHL player with the Boston Bruins, to construct the Best Western Hotel on Highway No. 10; and

Whereas this 63-room Best Western Hotel opened its doors in August 2010 and employs 55 people in the region, making it a significant employer in the area;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Mr. Rodney Grace and Mr. Glen Murray on the completion of this project and extend to them and their 55-member staff best wishes for continued success and prosperity 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 Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2142

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

Whereas Corporal Bradley Casey of Pugwash received the Medal of Military Valour for his efforts on February 18, 2010; and

Whereas Corporal Bradley Casey risked his life to treat a wounded Afghan National Army soldier while under enemy fire; and

Whereas despite being under constant fire, Corporal Bradley Casey did not waver from his task to ensure provision of exceptional medical care to a fellow soldier;

Therefore be it resolved that this House join me in commending Corporal Bradley Casey for his devotion to duty in combat and congratulate him on receiving the Medal of Military Valour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2143

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

Whereas Alexa Irvin of Kentville is one of two kayakers from the Annapolis Valley who travelled to Guadalajara, Mexico, to compete at the Pan-American Games from October 14-30, 2011; and

Whereas Alexa Irvin, who also competed for Nova Scotia at the 2009 Canada Games, went to Guadalajara based on a successful performance at the Pan-Am trials in Welland, Ontario, where she placed first in the women's K-1 500-metre event, and also earned a spot on the Canadian development team for kayak as well as a coveted Team Canada National Development card; and

Whereas Alexa Irvin, along with her teammates, captured gold in the women's K-4 500-metre in a time of 1:37:724 on October 26, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Alexa Irvin on her gold medal performance in the women's K-4 500-metre event at the Pan-American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2144

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

Whereas the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Awards are presented annually to recognize, celebrate, and inspire excellence throughout the region with participation from seven different chambers of commerce and boards of trade throughout Lunenburg and Queens; and

Whereas the New Business Award recognizes a business that has been in operation for less than two years, shows a unique business approach and vision, and is committed to establishing a reputation for superior customer service; and

Whereas the Best Western Plus Bridgewater Hotel & Convention Centre in Cookville offers a personal touch with modern, pet-friendly, non-smoking accommodations minutes from Bridgewater's town center and convenient access to some of Nova Scotia's most renowned cultural and scenic landmarks;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Best Western Plus Bridgewater for their nomination for the New Business Award from the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Awards.

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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BOUDREAU: I would like to bring the House's attention to the east gallery where we have a long-time friend of mine, Jeanne Fay, a former resident of Canso and now a resident of Lunenburg. Jeanne is with the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia and Jeanne has always been a strong advocate for people in general, especially a strong voice for women - Jeanne, thank you very much for that. I ask the House to give her a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2145

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

Whereas Krista Naugler has been Queen Lioness for the Sheet Harbour club for the past year and has been involved in organizing meetings, club activities, and fundraising events; and

Whereas Krista Naugler was awarded a certificate for her commitment to the Sheet Harbour Lioness Club at the 35th annual Lioness Charter Night celebrations; and

Whereas this award to Krista Naugler was accompanied by a donation to the Sheet Harbour Lioness Club, in her name, by Zone Chair Lion Scott MacKenzie;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Krista Naugler for her dedication to her community and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

Before I move on, I must remind all members in the Chamber that it is unparliamentary and out of order to speak directly to individual groups present in the Chamber and use the word “you” - just a reminder to all members to remember that fact.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2146

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

Whereas the St. Margaret’s Centre in Upper Tantallon has won the Bluenose Achievement Award for 2011 from Recreation Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this Bluenose Achievement was presented at a special banquet that was held at Digby Pines on October 13, 2011; and

Whereas the Bluenose Achievement Award is presented to volunteers or community organizations to recognize their outstanding achievements in recreation and leisure opportunities locally, regionally, or provincially;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank the St. Margaret's Centre and its staff on their initiative in receiving the Bluenose Achievement Award 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2147

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

Whereas on October 25, 2011, at a community celebration in Tantallon, it was announced by the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources that Five Bridge Lakes was designated as a wilderness area; and

Whereas the constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's is honoured to have Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area as part of our beautiful constituency and very pleased that this will contribute to the province's goal to legally protect 12 per cent of its land by 2015; and

Whereas wilderness areas protect not only our natural spaces but the wildlife that live within them, while also allowing families to continue to participate in outdoor activities, such as hiking, running, canoeing, and fishing, close to home;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate all people involved in making Five Bridge Lakes a wilderness area.

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. 2148

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

Whereas The Coast, Halifax's free weekly newspaper, recently announced the winners of its 2011 Best of Halifax Readers' Survey; and

Whereas the Gold Winner for Best Member of the Provincial Legislature, for the second year in a row, was Mr. Leonard Preyra, the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island; and

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I made this ruling in the last number of days. You cannot refer to a member by his name. You must refer to him as the constituency or "the honourable minister." So I'd ask that you say "the honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island."

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much. I should know better.

Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island was recognized by The Coast for his "low-key likable personality and solidly NDP values," and is widely known for his dedication both to his constituents - and sometimes to mine as well - and to changing society for the better;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island for being named Best Member of the Provincial Legislature for 2011 and wish him continued success in future years.

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. 2149

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

Whereas the Slow Motion Food Film Festival is a biannual event taking place November 10th to November 14th in Wolfville; and

Whereas the festival includes films about the world, with something to say about food, along with wine tasting, cooking demonstrations, a food scavenger hunt and a multi-course dinner; and

Whereas Slow Motion Food Nova Scotia was founded to counteract the disappearance of local food traditions and to encourage an interest in the food we eat, where it comes from, how it tastes, and how our food choices affect the world around us;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly wish the Slow Motion Food Nova Scotia much success with the film festival as they highlight the importance of our food.

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 Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 2150

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

Whereas it is good business for the business community to be involved in community projects and initiatives; and

Whereas Elmsdale Lumber Company, also known as ELCO, has been part of the Elmsdale landscape for many decades; and

Whereas Robin, Chris, and Mark Wilber, owners of Elmsdale Lumber Company, recently donated \$50,000 towards the East Hants Sportsplex capital campaign which is helping to fund the sportsplex's expansion;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Robin, Chris, and Mark Wilber on their donation and their commitment to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 2151

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

Whereas quick actions and perseverance of Lockeport, Nova Scotia, teenager Kayla Thompson on July 24, 2011, are credited with saving the life of her friend, Lisa Crowell, from drowning; and

Whereas the swift undercurrent had swept Lisa Crowell off the sandbar near the Sandy Point Lighthouse in Shelburne Harbour on that day and began to carry her away; and

Whereas Kayla Thompson reacted quickly to reach her friend, keeping her head above water and spending a gruelling 10 minutes battling the strong current and waves to get Lisa Crowell back to the safety of the sandbar;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly applaud Kayla Thompson for her heroic efforts, strength, perseverance in saving her friend, Lisa Crowell, from drowning on July 24, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Energy.

RESOLUTION NO. 2152

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

Whereas Flight Sergeant Joel Demetre, age 16, of Abercrombie, was awarded the Captain Sandy Sanderson Award while attending the glider pilot scholarship course at the Regional Glider School Atlantic in Debert this past summer; and

Whereas Flight Sergeant Demetre is a member of the 397 Trenton Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron and attended the Regional Gliding School in Debert, with air cadets from across Canada; and

Whereas the Captain Sandy Sanderson Award that Sergeant Demetre received is voted on by his fellow cadets as glider candidates in the glider pilot scholarship course who are deemed as putting forth the most effort and determination in successfully completing the glider pilot scholarship course;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Flight Sergeant Joel Demetre on his Captain Sandy Sanderson Award and wish him success in his future goals in the air cadet program.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2153

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

Whereas the Annual Walk for Kids Help Phone event was held at Shubie Park in Dartmouth on Sunday, May 1st, raising funds to support a phone-in resource for children in distress; and

Whereas hundreds of Nova Scotia residents took time from their weekend to collect pledges and walk in the event as a show of support for this tremendously valuable resource for kids in need of help; and

Whereas Team Emily was a team of people that walked in honour of the memory of their friend or family member, Emily McNamara, where their team goal was \$5,000 but they achieved an astounding \$17,000;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly commend all members of the Team Emily Walk for Kids Help Phone, and thank them for using their energies for the betterment of their community while honouring the memory of their dear friend, Emily McNamara.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2154

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

Whereas Laura McLean of Island East River, Pictou County, a recent graduate from the Masters Program at the New England Conservatory of Music, won the right this Spring to compete as part of Team Nova Scotia at the National Music Festival; and

Whereas Laura McLean was required to perform five selections in the voice competition including an opera and a sacred aria; and

Whereas Laura McLean placed second in voice at the 2011 National Music Festival held in Antigonish and hosted by the New Glasgow Music Festival;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Laura McLean for her accomplishments through the completion of her Masters Degree in Boston and her award in voice at the National Music 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 Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 2155

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

Whereas Alice MacDonald of Antigonish will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on November 12th; and

Whereas throughout her life Alice developed a reputation for helping friends, neighbours, and community groups in times of need and raised several foster children in addition to her four biological children; and

Whereas Alice continues to live in her own home, doing the majority of her own cooking and cleaning;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the life of Alice MacDonald by wishing her a happy 93rd birthday and many more happy years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2156

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

Whereas the Town of Amherst was a finalist in the 7,501 to 10,000 population category of the 2011 national edition of Communities in Bloom, receiving a rating of 4 Blooms; and

Whereas the Town of Amherst depicts the history of the town through large murals and large wood carvings among the Victorian buildings lining the streets; and

Whereas the industrial park has been noted not only for its world-class manufacturing of aerospace components, licence plates, and LED technology but also its stunning and exemplary attention to grooming and landscaping;

Therefore be it resolved that this House join me in congratulating the Town of Amherst, and its people, on receiving a rating of 4 Blooms from the 2011 national edition of Communities in Bloom.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2157

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

Whereas Café Central opened its location in Kentville in 2001, expanding in 2006 to include Cara Mia Gelato which serves gelato and soft-serve ice cream during the Spring and summer seasons; and

Whereas Café Central uses local suppliers, with locally roasted coffees and fresh breads, and places an emphasis on everything being made fresh to order, the way customers want it; and

Whereas Café Central owners, Linda Power and Paula Nickerson, and their staff of eight support the local community by contributing to a number of charities, including the Valley Regional Hospital Foundation's Health in Harmony campaign;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Café Central and Cara Mia Gelato on their 10th Anniversary, celebrated on October 18, 2011, and extend best wishes for continued success in Kentville.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2158

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

Whereas Mervyn Joudrey of Blockhouse first began volunteering for the Blockhouse Fire Department in 1961, before becoming a member; and

Whereas Mr. Joudrey has spent 50 years with the fire department and witnessed the changes in the operations and the training required, and the equipment used during that time; and

Whereas Mr. Joudrey, who moved from active service to honorary service in 2006, was honoured for his 50 years of service at the Blockhouse Fire Department by his fellow firefighters and dignitaries during the Fire Prevention Week banquet on October 8, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Mervyn Joudrey of Blockhouse for 50 years of volunteer service to the Blockhouse Fire Department and communities it serves.

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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2159

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

Whereas the Henley House Players performed the play *Keep Inn* at the Henley House in Sheet Harbour; and

Whereas the play was written by Janice Christie and directed by the talented Judy Smiley; and

Whereas this second annual production was very enthusiastically received by three sold-out dinner theatre audiences;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly extend well wishes for all future creative endeavours, and congratulate the Henley House Players on a job well done.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2160

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

Whereas the health and well-being of young children is a fundamental priority for the Kiwanis Club; and

Whereas the Kiwanis Well Child and Family Resource Day is an opportunity for families to explore some of the services and resources available in their community, in

addition to providing information and pre-screening sessions for various social, physical, and mental development issues; and

Whereas the Kiwanis Well Child and Family Resource Day was held in Caledonia, Queens County, on October 28, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Kiwanis Club for their service to children and attention to their health and well-being.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2161

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

Whereas the Truro Saints Rugby Team played host to an annual indoor rugby sevens tournament in the Spring of 2011, and won the Men's A Division for the first time in the 15-year history of the tournament; and

Whereas the Truro Saints Rugby Team accomplished this by working hard as a team, and training together regularly through the week and on weekends to improve their performance; and

Whereas due to the extra effort put forth by the team during the sevens tournament they were able to defeat each opponent they played, up to and including the final game of the tournament;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates the Truro Saints Rugby Team for winning the Indoor Rugby Sevens Tournament and commends them for their dedication and team work.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. (Applause)

RESOLUTION NO. 2162

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: I'm just enjoying the moment. I don't think I'll see this very often, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Whereas Eastern Front Theatre is one of Nova Scotia's leading theatre companies, dedicated to the development, production and promotion of Atlantic Canadian theatre arts and artists; and

Whereas on November 8th Eastern Front Theatre launched its 19th season with the world premiere of *The Passion of Adele Hugo*, the compelling and little-known Halifax story of the daughter of Victor Hugo, written by David Overton and directed by Scott Burke, with music by Zachary Florence; and

Whereas *The Passion of Adele Hugo* marks Eastern Front Theatre's first production in its new home at Neptune Studio Theatre, under the leadership of Artistic Producer Charlie Rhindress;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates the artistic team at Eastern Front Theatre and its superb cast including Martin Burt, Sara Farb, Bruce Godfree, Sabryn Rock and Amanda Leblanc, for its extraordinary musical production, *The Passion of Adele Hugo*.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 3:28 p.m. and we will finish at 4:58 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - N.S. POWER: PERF. AUDIT - ORDER

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Today Nova Scotia Power admitted that because of the indefinite shutdown of NewPage Port Hawkesbury, they would be saving millions of dollars, as we pointed out months ago.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Power told us repeatedly that there were no savings and that, in fact, they would have to raise rates. It has become clear that the information supplied by Nova Scotia Power cannot be relied upon. They have misled the public and they have misled the URB and the Premier has bought it, hook, line and sinker. My question for the Premier is, will he finally order a performance audit of Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, there was a routine filing today and that the Leader of the Official Opposition just misunderstands the nature of the material that was filed with the Utility and Review Board.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why we have an independent Utility and Review Board is to prevent the influence of political people in that process. If I were to intervene in the process, I am sure that the member opposite would be the first person there saying, why are you using political influence in what is supposed to be an independent process?

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons we have a government is to protect ratepayers from a monopoly in this province gouging you each time they go to the board. Nova Scotia Power has misled and manipulated the media, families and businesses, and the Premier has stood by and let it happen. Quite frankly, the Premier should be embarrassed that this is happening under his watch. He would not stand up for Nova Scotians and

against Nova Scotia Power. My question to the Premier, will the Premier stand up against Nova Scotia Power and support Nova Scotia families?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course I always stand up on behalf of Nova Scotia families. That's why we took the HST off electric costs, something that the Leader of the Official Opposition and his Party fought against.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, they took the HST off electric bills, they put in the DSM charge and I'm sure many of the people in this province refer to that as the NDP electricity tax. They've increased the HST on every other consumable and they increased 1,400 user fees in this province. So, if he's looking out for Nova Scotia families, God help them if he's going to be looking out for them.

Nova Scotia Power deceived the public and they said they would have to raise rates because of this shutdown. We tried to tell the Premier that this shutdown would result in savings for the company and finally, today, Nova Scotia Power has admitted that. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier do the right thing, stand up against Nova Scotia Power and tell the URB that he will not support this rate increase?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Official Opposition knows, the Utility and Review Board has at its disposal a wide range of advocates, a consumer advocate, a small business advocate, many experts to examine the filings of Nova Scotia Power and to come to a conclusion about what a fair reflection of the rate is.

But, among his questions, he talked about the HST. There is an HST in this province because the Liberal Party invented it.

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

PREM.: FIRST CONTRACT ARBITRATION SCHEME - STOP

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, first contract arbitration provides unnecessary risk just at a time when Nova Scotia needs to be investment-ready to take advantage of the great opportunity that the shipyard contract brings for all of us. Businesses that are interested in setting up shop in Nova Scotia today will get cold feet because they understand the dangers of an imposed arbitration on an innocent employer. The fact of the matter is, if the government proceeds with this scheme they will blow it when it comes to the great shipbuilding opportunity that all Nova Scotia has. My question to the Premier is, will he do the right thing and put a stop to this first contract arbitration scheme before he truly does blow the shipbuilding opportunity?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we worked with Irving shipyards to ensure that the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy was an effective vehicle for them to win that contract. Of course, Irving Shipbuilding is a unionized business; they won it on merit and

they won it with those collective agreements in place. I would point out that 85 per cent of Canadians, more than 80 per cent of Canadians, are already covered by first contract arbitration. There are very few jurisdictions in this country that don't already have it.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, more than 80 per cent of Canadians are going to get flu this winter; that doesn't make it a good thing. The Premier insists that first contract arbitration is only for unionized workplaces, but companies like Michelin have told him that is not so. My question to the Premier is, in light of this great shipbuilding opportunity, will he assure Michelin and other non-unionized workplaces that they won't be left out because of this first contract arbitration scheme?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in the world of questions, that's what's known as a non sequitur. Any contractor that wants to bid into the supply chain on those contracts, I'm sure Irving would welcome those bids because after all, as they go through the work they're going to be looking for the lowest cost, highest quality supplier at each point in the supply chain.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that will be of great comfort to Michelin and the other non-unionized workplaces of the province. What would be of great comfort to them as they decide how best to invest in Nova Scotia and create jobs is knowing they have a government that won't proceed with this crazy plan at this time when we need sound management practices and labour practices the most.

My question to the Premier is, will he truly provide them with that comfort that this is a good place to invest by putting a stop to this first contract arbitration scheme right now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, companies like Michelin and many other large corporate interests in our country already know that Nova Scotia is a great place to invest. They know. The one thing I hear over and over again, wherever I go and whoever I talk to about the business landscape in Nova Scotia, is this: we have some of the best and most loyal employees anywhere in the world. Consistently, companies want to come and set up here because of the people who they find as their employees.

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

**PREM. - POWER RATE INCREASES:
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION - QUESTIONS**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier stated that I was using rhetoric in my question when I was talking about power rate increases. It's not rhetoric; it's reality, and the Premier is out of touch with it. Gary Weir in Yarmouth tells us:

My wife and I are getting by on a disability pension. Food is going up, gas is going up, power rates are going up, and the only thing that doesn't go up is my disability pension. How can we afford another rate hike?

So my question to the Premier is, does the Premier think that Gary Weir is using rhetoric?

THE PREMIER: I know how difficult it is for people, particularly disabled people on relatively limited income. I realize how difficult that is, to make ends meet. Perhaps the Leader of the Official Opposition would tell Mr. Weir and his family whether or not, if he were in government, he would put the HST back on electricity and back on home heating oil as they campaigned to do.

MR. MCNEIL: Here is another dose of reality for the Premier. Bill Knowlton of Bridgetown writes:

After years in business, we were forced to close the door due to power bills continuing to rise. Just when we got our power bill under control, we were given a demand meter. That drove up an additional \$150 a month on our bill.

That is the reality of what small business in this province faces thanks to the NDP Government allowing power rates to rise - of course adding to it, the NDP electricity charge. My question to the Premier is, does the Premier think that Bill Knowlton is using rhetoric?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know Mr. Knowlton, and I'm sure that if his cost structure in his business was such that power rates caused his closure, then that was a difficult business for him to be in. What I would say, though, is that the Government of Nova Scotia does not control the power rates in this province. They are set through an independent process, through the Utility and Review Board. In fact, they are put there specifically to keep politics out of power rates.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I've just offered the Premier some examples of both residents and small businesses alike who are struggling to keep the heat on in their homes or prevent their business from closing, and the Premier refuses to act. So my question to the Premier is, when will the Premier stand up for Nova Scotians and not for Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we've already moved to make sure we took the HST off power rates for individuals. The next time, though, that the Leader of the Official Opposition is talking to Mr. Knowlton or to the Weir family, he can remind them that it was the Liberals who brought in the legislation that created Emera.

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

PREM.: HST HIKE - MISLEADING

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Premier. Yesterday Statistics Canada confirmed that Nova Scotia was the worst-performing province in the country in 2010. That was the same year that the Premier increased the HST. The data released yesterday also confirmed that Nova Scotia actually avoided the recession of 2009. That was the reason the Premier told Nova Scotians he had to raise their taxes.

The Premier misled Nova Scotians. He hiked the HST and the province still experienced the worst performance in the entire country, of any province. My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier mislead Nova Scotians into accepting a 2 per cent hike in the HST?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, I object to the characterization that the Leader of the Official Opposition has just thrown out. The simple fact of the matter is the reason why we had to return the HST to 15 per cent, where the Liberals put it in the first place, was because we had to deal with a \$1.4 billion projected deficit.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, talk about rhetoric in this House - just listen to the Premier talk about the \$1.4 billion projected deficit. His government hired Deloitte, gave them the parameters to say, what would happen if we continued to spend at the enormous rate the previous Progressive Conservative Government was spending at and revenue fell through the floor? I can tell you what would happen. We would have a situation that would be difficult for government to deal with but those were not the facts. The Premier created a false scenario so he go out and raise the HST.

Last year's budget came in three-quarters of \$1 billion better than they projected. They created a scenario for one reason and that was to raise the HST. The reason they told Nova Scotians was because we would experience a recession but we found out yesterday that was not the case. So could the Premier tell Nova Scotians what plan B was, what his second choice was for increasing the HST?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out by the Economic Council and the eminent economists who looked at the Province of Nova Scotia, they said no one thing was going to be sufficient to correct the budget imbalance, the deficit-laden budgets that we were left with. So it would be necessary to increase revenues to ensure that we cut our cost structure and, thirdly, that we help business grow in the province, and we are doing all of those.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Premier has done since he has taken office is misrepresent the facts in front of Nova Scotians. He knows full well that he created a scenario where the revenue side was going through the floor and he's padded spending numbers at every chance he got during budgets. He has broken every promise

when it comes to taxes for the people of Nova Scotia. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, how can Nova Scotians believe you now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the simple fact of the matter is that this government has kept every single commitment that it has made. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, here's something that's not rhetoric. It is because the Parties on the other side having loaded the largest deficit burden into the backpacks of young people of today that we are in the miserable financial situation that we are in. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

PREM.: NDP MEMBERS - ROAD PAVING

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Premier. Last week we learned that the NDP Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the former NDP Leader and now federal MP Robert Chisholm's own road was paved by the new but not-so-shiny, expensive, NDP Government double chip-sealing machine. The Premier talked about the process being fair and the government suggesting that it's just a harmless coincidence.

My question is, just how many prominent NDPers would have had their roads paved in one summer for it to be more than a coincidence and sufficient for the Premier to stop smiling about the situation and take it seriously? How many?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that when they were in government, apparently they spent a lot of time in Cabinet meetings, if you can believe it, talking about which roads they were paving. We don't do that. What we do is we approve the budget and then we leave it to the department to determine, on the basis of engineering standards, which roads should and should not be paved.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, while the NDP spin the media about fairness and coincidence, they don't talk about the fact that the honourable member for Lunenburg West had the road in front of his house paved, fully paved, under a tender this summer. Fortunately, the honourable member actually proudly talked about the paving in a press release at the time. So at least he didn't try to hide it, and I congratulate him for that, nor can he argue that he didn't know about it or participate in it.

Mr. Speaker, is this the Premier's way of thinking, that in government he believes that it is still a fair process, or only a coincidence, to have NDP MP Robert Chisholm, an

NDP minister and an NDP MLA to get paving attention ahead of so many Nova Scotians in the great NDP paving spree of 2011?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, for the information of the member opposite, I'll table for him a letter from his former colleague, the Honourable Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, committing to the paving of that road. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Argyle has the floor.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear him say no. I didn't hear him say we don't want to pave, wait a minute, that might provide a little bit of a coincidence. (Interruptions)

Well, Mr. Speaker, bad things come in threes, the Premier's luck is getting even worse. Here he is spinning and he's smirking when - not one, not two, but three - now a fourth NDPer is having their own road paved right now, in the NDP paving spree of 2011. This week paving machines are in front of the honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour's home in Antigonish County. Here to be tabled is a photo to show you just what the NDP are up to.

To the Premier, is this a fair process and is this a coincidence?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, we pave roads that need to be paved and we don't spend time trying to figure out who lives on what road. We pave the roads that need to be paved.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in past it would have been difficult in the summer to go into Argyle or to go into Hants West, for fear of getting hit by a paving machine when those guys were in charge of paving.

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

FIN. - EDUC. CUTS: LITERACY - EFFECTS

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Finance Minister. Nova Scotians currently face high taxes, high gas prices, high power rates and low unemployment. Yet, at the same time, about four in 10 Nova Scotians are at risk of not having sufficient literacy skills required for full access to employment to meet their families' needs and to participate fully in their community.

Mr. Speaker, it was the directives of the Minister of Finance which led to the cancellation of Reading Recovery, one of the literacy building blocks that had been very successful in our public education system. Can the minister tell this House how he can

reconcile jeopardizing the literacy of young Nova Scotians through his directives to cut education?

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member opposite just really misunderstands how decisions are made in government. I'm going to refer that to my colleague, the Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, Reading Recovery was a very narrow program, only meeting the needs of some of these students in Grade 1. This government has expanded the reading program to what we call Succeeding in Reading. It starts in Primary and we identify children who are struggling, pick them up where they need to have the support and we carry them through as they encounter difficulties. So we've expanded the literacy development of our students because that is what this government believes in, getting in early, so that they don't have to wait until Grade 1 for intervention. Thank you.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my supplementary back to the Minister of Finance. It is the Minister of Finance who controls the purse strings of this province and it is investment in education that will pay dividends to our economy in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the minister to the fact that an investment in education, especially early education, pays back seven times its value in the future economy of this province. We know that an investment in education, again evidence showing that investment in education is three times more beneficial to the economy than investing in capital.

I think this is a question that is appropriate to the Finance Minister. I would like the Finance Minister to say that he will commit to investing in literacy and people who need literacy support, instead of gutting public education, which will further be a blow to our economy.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member opposite really does misunderstand how decisions are made. I'll refer that to my colleague, the Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the budget last year was built from the classroom up. We looked at the needs of the students. We are also dealing with declining enrolment. We've lost over 30,000 students out of our education system in the last 10 years. The budget was built on the needs of the students; we built that budget from the classroom up.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue to direct my questions to the Minister of Finance who wants to pass them off to the Minister of Education, but I don't believe these questions of the economy are being answered by the Minister of Education. I

believe the benefit I'm talking about is investing in literacy so that people can take their place in this economy of the future and the opportunities that are coming from Ships Start Here in building new economies, new businesses. We need to ensure that everybody plays their role.

Any directives that are going to cut education are going to impact our future economy in this province, our future prosperity. We know the kinds of cost pressures people are under and that the government's under. My question to the Minister of Finance is, will he protect literacy and learning so this province can benefit from Ships Start Here and the future benefits that are going to come from other businesses that won't come if there is not an educated, literate workforce?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm for that member and for the House that I have not issued a single directive since I became the Minister of Finance. I'd like to refer that question to the Minister of Education. (Interruptions)

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member brings up a very important point; we do need to make sure that we are investing in our students and their literacy development. We looked at starting in Primary; we're making sure our children are going to have the support they need if they're encountering difficulty, but I would also like to add that we've also invested in more resources for every single Primary and Grade 1 classroom across the province, that they have the books and the materials that they need. Every class has received extra materials.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind all the honourable members, when you are recognized by the Chair, you must direct all comments and questions through the Chair.

The honourable member for Argyle.

PREM. - NDP CAUCUS: ROAD PAVING - DETAILS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, now that it's public that four prominent NDPers got their road paved this summer, or are getting them paved right now, politics and paving have never, in recent memory, been so linked personally or so dramatically. My question to the Premier is about his leadership. Did any other member of his caucus get the roads that leads to their front door paved in 2011, yes or no, and who were they?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't know because we don't look at road paving in the manner the former government did. We pave the roads that need to be paved.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, he said I don't know. So, the Premier has had all summer, the Premier has had at least a week since the NDP political paving was exposed to light. The Premier and his ministers have undoubtedly had all kinds

of staffers scrambling on this. The NDP even had a caucus meeting today. Nobody but partisan NDPers will believe that the Premier didn't ask or that he doesn't know. In any event, wilful blindness is not leadership, especially in a government that made so much about transparency.

Paving has never been so blatantly political and personal in Nova Scotia. When will the Premier be a leader and admit that he needs to be on top of these things and stop them before they happen and that his government has gone down the wrong road by paving at least four of the NDP's own roads?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's hard to respond to that kind of rhetoric. What can you say? We put forward a transparent five year plan. It's there for everyone to see. We brought the budget into the House, we passed the budget, and they had all kinds of time to question about what roads were going to be paved in the Supply debate.

Obviously we don't do things the way they did. We just simply pave the roads that need to be paved.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Under this Premier's leadership, four of his own kind got a nice boost to their properties - quite likely a boost in value. Four NDPers, and nobody stood up and said no - not after the first time, not after the second time, not after the third time.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? The NDP really couldn't stop there. The Simpson Road, leading right to the lovely Caribou Shores Condominiums, where the Minister of Justice, the highest office in the province, lives, was also paved this summer - the summer of the NDP's own paving spree.

Five NDP politicians, Mr. Speaker, all in one summer and no one stood up and said no. Will the Premier finally admit that he is running a slipshod government where anything goes and has no respect for the hard-earned tax money that they collect from Nova Scotian families?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've already said it's kind of sad and reprehensible that this member takes this point of view. I can tell him that Highway No. 101 was also paved - that eventually leads to the house of the member for Hants West. We could rename it the Chuck Porter Expressway. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor, please.

THE PREMIER: I'm done.

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

PREM. - PROV. NOMINEE PROG.: CAP - AGENDA

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Next week the Premier travels to Ottawa. While media accounts highlight that the Premier wishes to meet with the federal Environment and Natural Resources Ministers, we hear nothing about a meeting with the Immigration Minister to discuss the serious issue of the cap on the Provincial Nominee Program.

Could the Premier please explain why the cap on the Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Program is not high on his agenda for Ottawa?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course there are many issues that we discuss when we go to Ottawa, but I can tell you this - I raised that issue directly with the Prime Minister.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear that it has been raised at all with the Prime Minister; however we have a long way to go and I think that the Premier may want to comment on how we're going to get there.

We have in our immigration strategy a target that by 2015 we will be issuing 1,000 nominee certificates, and 1,500 by 2020. Well, that won't happen unless the Premier can get the current cap on provincial nominees increased. So I'd like the Premier to say why he is hesitant in putting it front and centre in his visit to Ottawa.

THE PREMIER: Well as I said, Mr. Speaker, we are going and meeting with various ministers. Of course we have to be able to confirm the availability of those ministers, and that process is still going on. What I can say is that every opportunity I have I raise the importance of immigration to the province, as I raised it with the Prime Minister when last I saw him.

I would also point out that this is the government which, in fact, was the only one to reach the capacity in the immigration program at 500.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the immigration strategy may be starting to mature, and I'm glad to hear we've hit 500, but the province with a similar population is Manitoba and they now have a cap of 5,000. I think we need to think big and get to that 1,000 or that 1,500 - the 1,500 by 2020 - and we've going to have to get moving on it.

Again, this is tied into the future and the economic prosperity of this province. We're going to need those immigrants in order to help us move forward with the jobs that we're going to be generating, the jobs that the government is boasting about. We know we need to use everybody here and we need to bring in more people.

I'm asking, will the Premier put this on the agenda for his visit to Ottawa? I believe it is one of the most pressing issues facing us.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, for the most part, the points that the member made are exactly the points that I made to the Prime Minister when I last spoke to him about the question of immigration. The limits, including the caps in Manitoba, were put in place at the same time. We have tried to prevail upon the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and others to understand the inequity that is inherent in the current system. We have asked him to understand the need that the Province of Nova Scotia has, especially with an aging demographic, with declining numbers in our workforce, to have a larger share of the number of immigrants who are coming in.

In addition to the Nominee Program, we are working with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada in Ottawa to look at the other streams that are available of people who are coming to Canada, to see if we can get a larger share of the other streams that are also coming into this country. So if the federal government sticks with the caps that they've put in place, then we may be able to increase the net immigration in the province by taking immigrants from other streams in the federal immigration program.

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

PREM.: FIRST CONTRACT ARBITRATION - CONSULTANTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. In 2002, when discussing the opening of a new business creating real jobs in Cape Breton, the Premier's friend Rick Clarke said: Here you have a new operation, and they are at loggerheads about what needs to be done. First contract arbitration would prevent that.

It is no coincidence that the Premier's views mirror so closely those of his friend and his leading economic advisor, Rick Clarke of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour. Rick Clarke may want first contract arbitration, but no one else does. No one is asking for it; certainly no one voted for it. My question to the Premier is, along with Rick Clarke, who else is he listening to when he comes up with schemes like first contract arbitration?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this question or a form of this question has been asked over and over again. As I pointed out, 85 per cent of Canadians are already covered by first contract. It's a standard piece of labour legislation across the country. It was brought in by Progressive Conservatives, it was brought in by Liberals, and it was brought in by New Democrats. It was brought in in various provinces in the country simply because it was good legislation. It was brought in federally, I understand by the Liberals. I'm not sure exactly what the objection of the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is, but perhaps he'll better articulate it.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, a moment ago I compared this to the flu. I was trying to be funny, but when I asked my first question the Premier said 80 per cent were covered, and now it's 85 per cent. Maybe it is just as contagious as the flu if it has already gone up by 5 per cent just in the last few minutes.

The Labour Management Review Committee was set up in a way that excluded non-unionized workplaces. It is those very non-unionized workplaces that have expressed their concerns about this legislation with the Premier privately and also publicly on the infamous "study day" that was held by the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour. I'm hopeful that the Premier will take the concerns of these people who actually create the jobs in our province seriously. My question to him is, will he take their concerns seriously and put the brakes on this crazy scheme? Will he stop listening to his friends like Rick Clarke and do what's right to protect jobs in this province and put a stop to first contract arbitration?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the manner in which the government brings forward its legislation is based on what is best for all of the people of our province. I know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party also knows that first contract arbitration, in every jurisdiction across this country that has already brought it into place, doesn't apply to non-union workplaces. If that legislation comes forward here, it won't apply here either.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in this House last week the Minister of Labour told us all that the Labour Management Review Committee was meeting just this very week to analyze all of the input that it has had from its various consultations. My question to the Premier is a relatively simple one, will he commit today to making the report of the Labour Management Review Committee, and any of the recommendations and correspondence received, public in this House so that all Nova Scotians can read and understand the advice he's getting on this important and misguided idea of first contract arbitration?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, when the LMRC comes back to government with their analysis, I will be happy to share their correspondence with the minister but I do note that not having heard any of this, he talks about it as being somehow misguided and yet the vast majority of jurisdictions in this country already have first contract and I've said better than 80 per cent, more like 85 per cent, of the people of Canada are already covered by first contract.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

TIR: WINTER MAINTENANCE BUDGET REVIEW - SECRECY

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal caucus revealed the secret plans of the NDP to cut \$2 million from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's winter maintenance budget. While the NDP Government told Nova Scotians cuts were coming to Health and Education, the \$2 million cut to

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal was kept quiet. We now know a committee of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal staff is sitting in the Johnston Building in downtown Halifax proposing changes to winter maintenance on Nova Scotia's rural roads.

My question to the minister is will the minister indicate why this review to the winter maintenance budget was kept from Nova Scotians?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that meeting will take place unless the curtains are properly drawn and the lights are turned down and make sure the room isn't tapped because somebody may be out there trying to find a conspiracy theory.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment, if I may, and point out to Nova Scotians that over the past number of years I've been in depots and sheds all across this province. I've met with plow operators. I've met with men and women who operate this equipment. We have over 400 pieces of equipment. Those 400 pieces of equipment are responsible for a lot of roads. I heard the Leader of the Opposition yesterday make some comments about dangerous roads that have not received proper snow removal treatment. The men and women who operate this equipment take great pride.

The \$52 million is a big part of our budget. You know, if the Health and Wellness Minister is working with her staff, if the Health and Wellness Minister is out there trying to work with the DHAs to try to help us get back to balance, if the Education Minister and all the other ministers in this row and the ministers in the back row do the same, as the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal I'm obliged to do the same. Nothing is secret. It has been an ongoing review for a number of years. Please be aware of the fact that supervisors' overtime is being cut back. That doesn't seem to get a headline. Supervisors' overtime is being cut back. Salt management is being looked at, and plow routes are being reviewed.

We have plow routes in this province, Mr. Speaker, that are over 70 kilometres long and others are 25 kilometres long. My question when I looked at that was - let's have some consistency here. I mean I was the one, as the minister said, let's look to consistency for when this thing - and I know you want me to wrap up.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. ESTABROOKS: But the opportunity, of course, comes once in awhile to get on my feet and keep my cool and I'm trying my best. (Applause)

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to government decisions that could affect the health and safety of Nova Scotians and on their roads, I have to say to the minister that I make absolutely no apologies for bringing those concerns to the floor of this House.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are asking what's going on with this government. The Minister of Finance stood up earlier saying he has given no directives, as Minister of Finance, to Education or to Health to make cuts, yet now the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal tells us that he feels someone, we're not sure who, has told him that he should be making cuts as well. Nova Scotians deserve to know what cuts will be made and what impacts that will have on their roads. It is very clear that had we not raised this in the House yesterday, this information would not have been made available to Nova Scotians.

So my question again, how can the minister stand in his place and suggest that cutting \$2 million from the winter maintenance budget, whether it be reduced plowing or reduced salting to rural roads in Nova Scotia, is not going to have an impact on the safety of Nova Scotians?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, that's an irresponsible comment by a member of this House. It seems to me that the implication is that I would, under some of these circumstances, compromise the safety of the motoring public by making these sorts of decisions. I'm absolutely not going to answer that question. It doesn't deserve an answer because of the tone in which it was delivered.

MR. SAMSON: I would highly recommend that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal go back and look at some of the comments he asked in Opposition from 1998 to 2009 and see what kind of tone he was using in this House.

This is a government that is saying cuts to health care won't affect patients, cuts to education won't affect students, and now cuts to transportation won't affect road safety. Nova Scotians are telling us the exact opposite. At the end of the day, it's Nova Scotians who will make decisions as to what the impacts of this government's decisions are, not the people here in this House. My question is, being that this review has been done in secret, will the minister at least commit today to table in this House all documentation and correspondence so that Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the next can know what reduction in services they can expect from his department this winter?

MR. ESTABROOKS: One report is not available for these sorts of things. If you would like to talk about Cape Forchu and what is happening there, if the member for Cape Breton would like to talk about some improvements they can have, we can have staff available to do it. But if you expect me to come forward with a report that is going to be of that scale, that takes too much time from my staff - I'd like to point out to the member opposite, however, if I may, any time members of the House and I - I've had some members of the House who have brought their concerns to my attention - could we sit with staff and get a clear explanation? I compliment them in doing it in that manner; some members of that caucus, incidentally, of which the member is speaking.

It concerns me that Nova Scotians are going to be under the - how do we put it? - false impression - is that appropriate, is this parliamentary language? - that we will have unsafe roads because we don't have enough plows, enough salt, enough money. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

COM. SERV.: BTO PROG. - QUALIFYING INCOME

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Community Services announced changes to a program which increased income thresholds to support more families. I wouldn't get too excited, because I think there's some embarrassment about to come. Unfortunately, the Minister of Health and Wellness falls short when it comes to assessing income guidelines for her department's own Boarding, Transportation and Ostomy Program, better known as the BTO Program. In order to qualify for the program, you must not only be struggling with all the challenges associated with battling cancer, your family income also cannot be greater than \$15,720. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, why does she continue to ignore the fact that the qualifying income of \$15,720 for the BTO Program is unacceptably low?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I've had this debate in the past with the former Health Critic of the Opposition. We have many, many programs in our department that have income-tested thresholds. I have asked my department, and I continue to ask my department, to keep me apprised of reviews that are done routinely as we prepare for coming budget deliberations. The program that is in place with the thresholds exists for this year and we constantly review those as we look toward budget preparation for the following year.

MR. GLAVINE: Families who have a loved one battling cancer, just like every other family in this province, are finding it tough to make ends meet. Gas prices since the last time this program saw an income adjustment have risen 100 per cent. Power rates in this province have increased 36 per cent in the last 10 years. The last time the income threshold for this program increased was 17 years ago under a Liberal Government. The BTO Program, quite simply, helps cancer patients with transportation costs to Sydney or Halifax for treatment, helps with boarding costs when assessing treatment, and helps with ostomy supplies. My question to the minister is, will cancer patients who are struggling with everyday costs ever be made a priority by this government?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, people who suffer from cancer certainly are a priority for this government. That's why we invested \$3 million with the Cancer Society's Lodge That Gives, for their capital campaign - the first ones to come to the table with money for the expansion of services so that when people come from around rural Nova Scotia to get treatment here in the Capital District, they are able to have their lodging covered and they don't have to worry about where they're going to stay and how

much that costs - and that makes a huge difference in their lives. Additionally, we have invested millions of dollars in radiation treatment expansion so that we will be able to meet the radiation wait times guarantees.

So we have invested millions at a time when it is very difficult to find additional money in the area of cancer treatment and cancer care, and it will continue to be a priority.

MR. GLAVINE: The member for Pictou East spoke passionately about the need to increase the income threshold over two years ago - no change. At that time the member spoke of 15 years of no change, and it has now been 17 years. The NDP increased the HST by 2 per cent for every one of those families, gas prices have increased, and it has become more expensive for power, which is often the source of heat for families, yet this government has failed to act. Why has the Minister of Health and Wellness continued to ignore the good advice of her own government colleagues when it comes to acknowledging that cancer patients seeking life-saving treatment also experience financial hardships?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Also, in addition to the millions that we've invested in the Canadian Cancer Society's Lodge That Gives capital campaign, the radiation, treatment, we have put many, many, many new cancer drugs on the Nova Scotia drug formulary so people with cancer will have access to pharmaceuticals without incurring any costs, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of people who struggle day to day with the high cost of living, this government has invested heavily in terms of affordable tax credits - and I want to remind the honourable member of what the last Liberal Government did in terms of people living with low incomes. That was the government that removed the inflation protection for families living on social assistance in this province, and it has taken many, many, many years for our government to address the damage that they did to low-income families.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC. - STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO: CALCULATION - DETAILS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday in this House the minister was either unwilling or unable to respond to my question about student/teacher ratio. She suggested "that's calculated by how much money is provided to the school boards." Well, I trust the minister has now been briefed and has a better understanding of what we both agree is, and again I quote the minister, "confusing to people."

So my question to the minister is, will she help members of this House and all Nova Scotians understand the student/teacher ratio and how it's calculated?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I must say that I did make an error yesterday in the ratio that I gave. I would like to say that the number of full-time equivalent teachers that we now know of, as of October, is 9,664. The projected total enrolment - and these are our figures from September - is 124,987 students. I did tell the House yesterday that the ratio was 1 to 13, and the error that I would like to correct today is the teacher ratio is 12.9 to 1. I'd like to table this.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, it gets worse every time she does the math. My question to the minister is, if she is now standing behind a 12.9, would she please help this House understand the question which was, how is it calculated?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it's based on the number of students that we have for projected enrolment. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in a response to the question about sharing information, the minister agreed that as soon as she had the data she would table it in the House. I thank her for that. I understand that information is available in the schools. The minister stated that the student/teacher ratio, "does not necessarily mean one teacher per classroom." My question to the minister is, in order to discontinue the confusion that has been caused, will she please share and agree that when she tables this information she extrapolates the exact number of teachers who are in our classroom, registering a class and providing direct instruction, not principals, guidance counsellors, vice-principals, consultants, you name it?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the department is working on providing that information. We don't have all the information on our class numbers coming into the department, but as soon as that is available, I will definitely be tabling that.

I would like to say that we will do our very best to provide the information of the teachers in the classroom. As the honourable member knows, principals sometimes are in the classroom, guidance counsellors are in the classroom. It's going to be very difficult to make that direct correlation, but I will be providing the House with the exact numbers of students and teachers and as soon as that is done at the department, I will be bringing it to the House. Thank you.

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

COM. SERV. - SHELTERS: POWER RATES - EFFECTS

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, when women and children flee violent situations many turn to shelters and transitional housing to provide a warm, safe refuge. Sadly, those organizations, on which so many women and children rely, have serious concerns of their own. Shelters and supportive housing organizations are not immune to increasing power rates. These organizations are at risk of becoming yet another victim of

this government's inaction on exorbitant power rates. These agencies are worried that the vital services they provide to families leaving abusive situations will be threatened as a result. When will the Minister of Community Services stand up to Nova Scotia Power and stand up for these organizations who provide shelter and support to those who need it most?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to stand here in this House and say that it is our government, for the first time in over 10 years, that invested \$500,000 in transition houses, because both sitting on the other side never listened to what they had to say. We're the ones who listened and we're the ones who gave them money for the first time in decades.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, since 1983 Alice Housing has provided safe, affordable housing for women and children leaving abusive situations. As power rates increase, it becomes more difficult for Alice Housing to operate. Each year power costs eat up a larger portion of their operating costs. For example, Alice Housing will be installing security cameras in the coming months to make the facility safer for their clients. These cameras need electricity to work and these costs will come out of Alice Housing's budget. What is the minister going to tell the women and children of Alice Housing when they can no longer access services because these high power rates have crippled the organization they've come to rely on?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, first, I think it's very discouraging and disappointing that there is always so much fear-mongering. When you're talking about vulnerable individuals in the first place, who are dealing with issues in their life, they need support from the people of Nova Scotia, they need support from the province, they need support from the government and the Opposition - not them standing there trying to scare people off that suddenly their doors are going to close tomorrow.

We take time to sit and to consult with these organizations. We've made investments in those areas. We've invested over \$100 million in two and a half years, towards helping individuals in Nova Scotia. Not one of them on the other side of this House can stand up and say that.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the minister is a little confused because we don't control the money; they do. So we can't sit down and give the money to these organizations, but I can tell you that we are consulting with them. That's how we found out that this was a problem. They are coming to us because the government isn't listening.

Mr. Speaker, rising power rates are affecting the operations of organizations that offer critical services. They will have a direct impact on the services that organizations like Alice Housing can provide and, in turn, on the families who access their services. Will this government commit to addressing skyrocketing power rates and assure Alice Housing and

other supportive-housing organizations, that they will not have to turn families away because service-providers cannot pay their power bills?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a very caring government and we have proved that through the monies we have invested, through the processes that we have provided in terms of consultation. When that Party had an opportunity to be in government - there are a couple of things we should remind them of. Number one, as my honourable colleague said, they de-indexed any dollars for inflation for people on IA, which include a lot of these women and family members and children who access that type of service through transition houses. Actions speak a thousand words and we see what their action was in the past.

My other question is, if they are so concerned about these organizations, why didn't they take their trust fund and donate it to them, rather than putting it into some political think tank? That doesn't help them out.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**JUSTICE - ELECTRONIC BRACELET MONITORING PROG.:
CANCELLATION - EXPLAIN**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. One of the challenges for law enforcement in this province is keeping tabs on people released on bail who don't respect curfews. Why did the minister cancel the electronic bracelet monitoring program that helped police make sure that criminals respected their curfews?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. It's a very simple answer to that - it wasn't being used to its full capacity. In this government, unlike the Opposition, the Progressive Conservative Government when they were in power, they believed in taking good taxpayers' dollars and just throwing them out the door or burning them. This government believes it is spending money wisely and reinvesting it within the system. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a recent federal Justice Department study revealed that men released on bail for assaulting their partners returned to assault them again. It also revealed that men with violent criminal histories are twice as likely to violate bail conditions and go back to harass or assault their wives or their partners. Why is the Minister of Justice satisfied that women in Nova Scotia are less safe than when this program was in effect?

MR. LANDRY: Once again, the Progressive Conservatives come by with their ideas that they are going to create fear in saying that people aren't safe. They are safer. That's one of the reasons why this government took a leadership role in introducing the

domestic court process that's going to happen in Cape Breton. That's a good dollar that goes in there and helps a program there.

On the issue of men's violence against women, we are completely focused on that issue and we're setting up programs to address that very point within our overall crime prevention. We are committed, this minister is committed - any violence against any person, and in particular men's violence against women.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this minister said on October 15, 2009, that he actually liked these bracelets. If we want the convicted to obey curfews, we need to have them know that police can monitor them. If we talk about value for money, when will the minister restore this program to save police time and money, to focus on our safety instead of wasting their days driving around to see if criminals are at home respecting their house arrest?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. One of the great things about police work is being able to check up and monitor people, especially people that have criminal behaviour. In consultation with this decision, we consulted with the police community and they have more than the capacity to address this issue. It makes good policing to be out there monitoring people and having a human resource do it, and at the same time investing our dollars wisely.

I do understand why we have the financial problems we do. The Progressive Conservatives believe in taking money, lighting a match, burning it, and throwing it out the window.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

JUSTICE: INCARCERATION - SUPERVISION

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, crime and violence and unsafe streets continue to be a concern for all Nova Scotians who want to ensure that we have a well-functioning justice system and correctional system here in this province. The Minister of Justice has said time and time again, based on his previous background in law enforcement, that if you do the crime, you do the time. Our criminal justice system is based on the fact that if you are convicted of a crime, you will be incarcerated and you will lose personal freedoms and be under constant supervision during your incarceration.

My question to the Minister of Justice is, does he believe that that is the way a well-functioning criminal justice system should work in Nova Scotia?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not really clear on the member's question, but if I understand it correctly, I firmly believe in the quality of employees that we have here to provide good quality service to our clients who are faced with being

residents in our correctional facilities. They do an excellent job and we have a good system there. I know when I first came into office, we were burdened with a number of problems and inefficiencies and poor management from the previous administration. We've addressed most of those, as you see through the present chain of events that have occurred.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, certainly I'm well aware of some of the issues that existed with the previous administration, which I brought to the floor of this House on numerous occasions. I'm pleased to hear the Minister of Justice's response, that if you do the crime, you do the time and that if you are incarcerated - I think he's complimented all the changes that have taken place.

Based on that, I'm wondering if the Minister of Justice and Attorney General might explain to the House of Assembly and to all Nova Scotians how it was that a well-known inmate at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility was found to have a cell phone and charger in his cell in September of this year?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that question. I know that I've said in this House before that when the criminal element has all day and all night to think of ways in which to breach the system, they'll find ways to do that.

In this case, there was an unlawful piece of equipment that came into the institution, but what's key here is the quality of the staff and how efficient they were to identify that and to correct it. I compliment the staff, unlike the Liberal Party over there who continually wants to criticize the correctional worker. We have the best workers. They do a great job, and I compliment them on identifying that and taking it away from that person.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the week before the news came out that a well-known criminal who already stands accused of very serious crimes - violent crimes - who has already escaped custody here in Nova Scotia, was sitting in a cell with a cell phone and charger. Just the week before that, an inmate who had made phone calls trying to set up a hit against somebody else outside was charged because of the work of correctional workers and the supervision they do.

Yet how do you supervise someone who's sitting in a cell with a cellphone and a charger and the question becomes how is it possible that that type of equipment, the size of that equipment, was ever brought into the facility undetected? In light of the fact that the minister himself has moved his director of corrections to the Burnside facility, can he explain how this breach of security has again taken place under his watch and not the Progressive Conservative Party's watch?

MR. LANDRY: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question. You can spin this whichever way you want but I like to look at it, once again, that the employee there did their job. They identified that there was unlawful equipment

within the institution, they did it in a timely manner, and that's the good news story there – good work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

NAT. RES.: OFF-HWY VEHICLE ADVISORY COMM. - DISBANDMENT

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. On October 4th, we learned the NDP Government had decided to disband the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Off-highway Vehicles. While the issue of off-highway vehicle safety may have fallen off the radar for the NDP, it's still on the minds of many Nova Scotians. So will the minister tell us why the NDP disbanded the Off-highway Vehicle Ministerial Advisory Committee?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly all Nova Scotians want to know that our trails and byways, even our highways are safe in this province, and certainly the role of the ministerial advisory committee is to provide advice to government and to the minister, in particular. We've transformed a little bit, I guess; we're still consulting with that group, but also taking in the advice and consideration of many other groups as we move forward.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the department previously, and now the minister just today, has referenced the new forum that they will gather information on trails in the province and yet another committee is expected perhaps to manage infrastructure funds from riders' fees. So will the minister explain how this new forum will operate and what measures are in place to make sure that the funds spent on infrastructure actually get the trail infrastructure for off-highway vehicles?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I guess we're just trying to make it more inclusive, that there's more input from Nova Scotians. Certainly the advice and input of the ministerial advisory committee was important and we thank them and appreciate the work that they've done but really, there's more than those users who use our trails. There are hikers, there's birders, you know, off-highway vehicle users certainly, people on bicycles, a whole variety of folks who use our trails in this province. So we've set up a trails forum to get input from everyone and just to have the best management co-ordination of our trails that we possibly can.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't even bother to answer the question. I ride a bike on the trails but I don't pay a licensing fee for my bicycle to do that and off-highway vehicle owners would like to know that the fees that they actually pay are going to go to the infrastructure that they use and now they don't have that guarantee from the province. In fact, the minister basically in his answer just said, well, I'm not going to guarantee that's even going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, you know, that committee worked tirelessly to provide advice to the government but, you know, it seems that like so many citizen advisory committees, when they disagree with the NDP or they give advice that the government doesn't like, they disband them. They get rid of them and this seems to be just yet another one. The committee recommended to the department that a study be commissioned on injuries resulting from off-highway vehicles and how they occur. I think whether you ride off-highway vehicles or not, you've got to agree that that's an important thing to understand, so that we can make this very safe.

Mr. Speaker, we've yet to see that study commissioned. When will the minister order that study?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, again, I think we're working with all Nova Scotians, we're being more inclusive in the groups and the organizations that we interact with, you know, certainly ATVANS is one of those, the Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia is another one, and trails groups. We're willing to work and share with all the groups to get the best possible trails we can in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

TIR: ROAD SAFETY - DEPT. ACTIONS

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Road safety is a big concern for all motorists, and with the cuts to the brush-cutting budgets this year, the department is picking and choosing areas where brush-cutting and maintenance are taking place along our roads. The number of dead animals on our roads has also seemed to increase. Many times motorists don't see these animals stepping on our roads until the last minute, because of the high brush along our roads, and they don't see them coming out of the woods. My first question to the minister is, what is the department doing to address safety on our roads?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: I thank the member for Clare for that question. Of course he, along with many other members on both sides of the House, is concerned, particularly when it comes to brush-cutting. It remains a concern, and it is a concern that I know members opposite continually bring to my attention.

Of course we are aware of the fact that this is, particularly in rural areas, where there is some real consequence, particularly at intersections - that the signs are clearly identified and the opportunity to make sure that safety in these areas remains a priority for the department. I encourage members opposite and members on this side of the House to continue to bring those particular roads or intersections to my attention, and I'll forward it to the proper authorities. Thank you.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, the high grass and brush along the sides of our roads put extra pressure on our drivers. On top of paying close attention to their driving, they have to pay special attention to watching the sides of the road in case a wild animal runs in front of them. If brush-cutting continues to be scaled back, more wild animals are going to get run over and the number of accidents on our roads will likely increase. My question to the minister is, can the minister tell us if the number of accidents on our roads has increased this year because of high brush along the sides of our roads?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I don't have those statistics - that would be a question I would ask - but I can use a prominent example of a member of the House who sits on the opposite side, who is concerned about Route 217. On Route 217 there was a commitment made that there would be brush-cutting done on that particular road. When I was approached as the minister this morning, the staff - I went to staff and said that if the commitment was made for brush-cutting on Route 217, the commitment will be kept. After all, that's how we get things done when a member opposite or a member on this side of the House looks at an important issue, whether it is brush-cutting, whether what part of the province - bring it to my attention, and I will respond.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, the local Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal district offices' budgets in Yarmouth and in Clare were cut by more than 50 per cent this year. Last year they both received \$191,000 in RIM funding to help with the maintenance of our roads, and this year they each received only \$80,000. My final question to the minister is, in order to help with the brush-cutting on our roads, is the department planning to increase our district office budgets next year?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question. That is one of the ongoing budgetary pressures which I've brought forward on a number of occasions. When those discussions begin around the Treasury Board table, as one of the members of Treasury Board but also as the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, we'll make sure that we get the best bang for our buck for local roads in RIM money. I can assure you of that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ENERGY - N.S. POWER: NEWPAGE - RATES

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. In August, Nova Scotia Power filed its updated fuel forecast based on NewPage remaining off the system for 2012. Yesterday Nova Scotia Power filed its annual adjusted rates that show that without NewPage, rates for the Generation Replacement and Load Following class of ratepayers, which consist of Northern Pulp, Bowater Mersey, and Minas Basin Pulp and Power, would go down.

Based on Nova Scotia's power consumption, Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Energy is, does the minister support Nova Scotia Power's position to proceed without NewPage?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I guess all Nova Scotians are certainly concerned about the cost of electricity, it's our most vulnerable citizens right up to our largest industrial users. I guess it's good to see an example of rates going down. That's going to help those mills stay in business. So there are three of these large mills, that will help them. It's a good thing but it only applies on a certain portion of their electricity bill but I guess any rate reduction is good.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, according to the annual adjusted rates filed yesterday by Nova Scotia Power, if NewPage is to come back on line in 2012, the load following rate would be significantly underestimated and would result in a cost spike for ratepayers affected by the fuel adjustment mechanism, such as seniors and low-income residents, small business and large industrials, all of which are struggling with the spiralling power rates due to this government's calculated need to ram through its bite-the-bullet electricity plan. The load following ratepayers are not impacted by the fuel adjustment mechanism and would not have to bear these costs, even though they were the ones who obtained the savings.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, will the minister commit today to finding immediate solutions to lower power rates for all classes and stop hiding behind the URB?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly, we're all hopeful that the NewPage mill will be able to come back into production and there's a process in place, through the monitor, that people are working very hard to ensure there will be good-paying jobs in the Strait of Canso area. We'll hope for the best in that regard.

The real reason, of course, that our power rates are so high, is that over the last number of years coal has continued to rise in price. It's up about 75 per cent in the past six years alone. Really, previous governments have done very little to diversify the mix in this province. This government has a plan to work on renewables and will help, over time, to bring the rates of electricity down.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear the answer is no and that this government does not understand the complexity of what's happening with power rates. At the load retention hearing, we saw rate class representatives pitted against each other, fighting tooth and nail to avoid any additional increases for their own special rate classes.

There's no money in the pockets of Nova Scotians for this government to take and to give to their special-interest friends. This government's next multi-million ad campaign could be "the highest power rates start here," "the lowest GDP growth starts here,"

“highest taxes start here,” and “lost jobs start here.” We can’t afford to lose any more businesses, any more jobs and any more families to Alberta because of this government’s failure to stand up for the people of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, will this minister admit that his political ideologies got in the way of common sense and commit to immediately rewrite the bite-the-bullet electricity plan?

MR. PARKER: Speaking of failure, we’ve had failure from previous governments to do nothing about power rates. We’ve had years and years of increasing rates on fossil fuels. It’s time to get away from fossil fuels and get on to renewables. This government has a plan through wind power and tidal power and natural gas and biomass to reduce the rates as we move forward. It will be good, stable, clean energy sources and stable energy prices.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

COM. SERV.: HEBRON RESIDENTIAL CTR. - CLOSURE

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. The Hebron Residential Centre in Yarmouth will be closing within the next few weeks and the minister’s office has said that the space in Hebron was being underutilized. It’s unclear whether the facility was being underutilized because of lack of demand or because the department was not referring youth to the facility. Can the minister tell the members of this House of Assembly what evidence she has to prove that the need for the facility was down?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you for the question. We know that when there are any changes to be made, that it can be a stressful time, but change does need to be made. In this circumstance, we only had one youth at that facility and we were able to find a placement that was a better placement for that youth and that’s what it’s all about. It’s about our children, it’s about our youth and that’s why we made that decision.

MR. CHURCHILL: Of course, youth are the concern here and the way I understand how that process works is that the department refers youth to that facility. So if the department isn’t referring youth to that facility, perhaps that’s why there was only one client there. That’s why I asked the previous question.

People in Yarmouth are concerned with what’s going to happen to the youth in light of this facility going away. So my question to the minister is, what other comparable geographically accessible options is your department providing for youth who otherwise would have benefited from that facility in Yarmouth?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: As I said previously, our main concern is with respect to youth and we have one of the best child welfare programs in all of Canada in terms of

how we provide services for our youth. In any service there always can be improvements and we're always looking at that. So what we do is we look at where the best placement is for that youth and we're strategizing in the whole area of youth homelessness and the needs for youth and there will be more to come in that area, that is supporting youth.

It was a good decision. I've been in that facility and I can tell you I would never want my son or daughter to be in that facility - it needed to have upgrades and so forth, and to have one poor youth there was really unfair and not a good use of support for that young individual.

MR. CHURCHILL: Perhaps the minister could provide a list to this House on the facilities that are available, that are close by our area that youth can go to - that would be very much appreciated.

This is also an issue with jobs, the individuals working at the Hebron Residential Centre are hard-working, caring people and those are good-paying jobs in our community, there are around 10 of them, so people are concerned about their jobs. In light of this decision, what assurance can this minister give us that Yarmouth won't be dealt another economic blow, with more jobs leaving the area?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: We do understand the stresses of when changes have to be made and employment decisions have to be made. Our staff and our government have worked very closely and we are working closely with the employees there to be able to offer them other positions that come available if they have eligibility for those positions - and to provide training and provide as much support as possible.

As I said, we know it's a difficult decision, but on the other hand how could we have 12 employees running a facility of that size for one youth - and it was not a good place for the youth to be. We've made a hard decision, but we made a good decision because now that facility will actually be used by YACRO, and that organization supports people with disabilities. So we're moving on to do things better.

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

EMO - SOUTH SHORE: HAZMAT SERVICES - PROVISION

MR. KEITH BAIN: My question is to the Minister of the Emergency Management Office. Hazardous material Hazmat teams are crucial to public safety and integral components of protecting all Nova Scotians. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, will he tell this House who supplies Hazmat services when an incident occurs on the South Shore?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: I thank the member for that question. I don't have that information available at this time, but we'll get the information to him shortly.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, there isn't a dedicated Hazmat team in the South Shore. The area is being served by HRM or Kentville, and Kentville will only respond to accidents that occur on Highway No. 103. Local fire departments believe a well-trained Hazmat team is needed. So my question to the minister is, will the minister commit today to provide funding for this important piece of public safety infrastructure and for sufficient training?

MR. LANDRY: I thank the member for the question. What I will commit to is that we'll examine the issue that he brings forward before this House, put it to the department, do an analysis on that, and we'll get back to him.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that. On June 22nd a tragic accident occurred in Shelburne County, an accident that resulted in loss of life and a gasoline- and diesel fuel-fed fire. Unfortunately there was no Hazmat team in Shelburne to respond.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence in this kind of emergency situation. My question to the minister, will the minister do the right thing and ensure that the people of the South Shore receive timely hazardous material service, the kind that is available to other areas in the province?

MR. LANDRY: Thank you to the member. I want to say that the safety and security of all citizens of Nova Scotia is of primary importance. If there's an area where there are deficiencies or gaps in the system and they need to be examined or improved on, we're always committed to trying to look at ways to do things smarter and better and more efficiently.

If there's a gap in the system, we're going to examine it, but I want to reassure this House that each Nova Scotian's safety and the safety of the communities they live in is of the utmost importance.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: PRESCRIPTION DRUG OVERDOSE
(N.S.) GROUP - MEETING CONFIRM**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On June 30, 2011 the Prescription Drug Overdoses in Nova Scotia Working Group presented its recommendation to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The last line of the report presented to the minister states, "The working group awaits guidance from the Minister of Health and Wellness on next steps."

Other than the development of a regulated methadone treatment in the Valley, could the minister please indicate whether she has met with the working group for the purposes of providing direction on next steps?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. The working group did, indeed, conclude their work. They provided me with a report. Staff in the department, under my direction, have taken that report and are working on an implementation plan. I meet with the staff in the department on a regular basis.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have initiated a number of actions out of that report already, which included the implementation of a shared care model for methadone treatment in the Annapolis Valley. I had the opportunity to tour in the Valley and meet with people with the DHA who provide addiction services, as well as the Mud Creek clinic in Wolfville. Members may have seen the public education campaign that we have running right now, on television stations, around the dangers of mixing prescription drugs and alcohol. We have a number of initiatives underway to deal with this very serious matter.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise on a point of order. This afternoon the Minister of Community Services made remarks about the possibility of donating our trust fund. If the government wanted the Liberal Party to donate its trust fund to charities then it should have written the bill in such a way that allowed it.

In fact, we had a legal opinion and they knew that the provision prohibiting donation for a political benefit - any time, guys - would not have allowed it. The minister should have known that because all the articles said, at the time, if the Minister of Community Services wanted us to donate that money, then she should have made sure that it was written in such a way that would have allowed it.

MR. SPEAKER: I advise the honourable member that is not a point of order; it is a difference between two members.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period today the Premier, in one of his answers when he was defending his decision to increase the HST, said he had to do it because of the deficit-laden budgets that he inherited.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I have with me the message from the minister for the Public Accounts for the year ended 2009. In the first sentence of that message it says, "The Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 2009 reported a surplus of \$19.7 million." (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That is not a point of order. It's a speech. It's not a point of order. Thank you. Table it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Motions Other Than Government Motions.

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 2045.

Res. No. 2045, re NDP Gov't. - Tax Hikes/Fee Increases: Effects - Remind - notice given Nov. 7/11 - (Mr. G. MacLellan)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I will read part of Resolution No. 2045 so that those who are watching today can have a sense of what the resolution was about and where we'll be going with our arguments today. The resolution that was put forth by the member for Glace Bay:

“Whereas Nova Scotians from across the province struggle every day to keep up with the rising costs of living in this province; and

Whereas the NDP Government has only made life more difficult for Nova Scotians while allowing power rates to increase at alarming rates; and

Whereas the NDP Government has been actively making life more expensive for Nova Scotians by hiking taxes and fees;”

So that's the substance today of Resolution No. 2045. So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is becoming apparent to all of us, the elected members in this House, as we do duty in our constituency offices, I know in rural Nova Scotia without exception we are hearing from Nova Scotians who are having a very, very difficult time making ends meet. This is the Fall and we're only two months in, when it actually started back in August. I have people coming to my office wondering about help for their children returning to school because, of course, if you are on Community Services, you are able to get some assistance when children return to school but I had families who were looking at fees that they would have when they would return to school. The cost of getting children ready was one that low-income families and the working poor, as we often refer to them, have a very difficult time and so this really reflects the cost of living.

I was also quite amazed in late August, early September, people coming into our office wondering when the heat rebate forms would be available to Nova Scotians, many forgetting, of course, that it was going to be sent out to them directly. However, if they were for the first time requiring some assistance, then they could come back to my office and pick up a form. So I took a little time to check with the local Lions Clubs of Kingston, Aylesford and Berwick who are very, very engaged and have somebody associated with social welfare issues.

Over the past year or so they have had a constant requirement as to whether it's to assist with glasses, whether it's again an electricity bill, or wondering if they gave out food vouchers. So those are, I believe, very significant ways in which they are having difficulty coping with that cost of living. Also, not just those who are tenants but actually also the owners of apartments and rental houses and units wondering again outside of the context of Community Services, again whether there's some provision and help when rent is in arrears.

We know that the general cost of living is made up of a number of components and I think in our province we have to put power rates at the top of that list. When we hear, as the member for Digby-Annapolis, I don't think he brought it up in the House but just this very week, he had three of his constituents, and we all know there are all kinds of reasons and extenuating circumstances as to why, but he had three constituents whose power was cut off just this week. It is one of the areas where I make many calls to Nova Scotia Power and we are fortunate to have someone who we can chat with and try to work out a recovery plan. The recovery plan, of course, is to help them get back on track. Maybe they've never been on a budget plan or costs occur that were unforeseen and now it's a choice between food, power, getting their child to the IWK for an appointment. Low-income Nova Scotians really feel the hurt when there's something extraordinary that does come along.

I think it's an area where government should not feel that they can't go hard on the power company. I know they have to work with them on a number of issues, but I think we're seeing more and more signs that the monopoly of Emera - Nova Scotia Power is not giving Nova Scotians the best break on power rates and why we're hearing of more and more Nova Scotians that are hurting as a result.

I think it's an area that we're talking about, we're driving hard to try to get stabilization. We know there are a lot of factors involved, but I think it's time for Nova Scotia Power to take a look at how it looks after itself with regard to the return to investors. In light of the present climate, they should really have a strong review and be more conscious of the hurt that Nova Scotians are now experiencing.

When it comes to another area, low-income Nova Scotians who require going some distance to work, putting the required gas in the car is an area where the province can make some difference. We all know that's a global pricing system but when we talk about regulation, regulation is now costing us more, under the URB, than it did when Service

Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was providing the service. We should take a second look so that we can - if it's 1 cent per litre, then Nova Scotians should have it in their pockets and not going to the URB to provide that weekly change and adjustment on gas.

One of the major areas that Nova Scotians are now very familiar with is the tax structure of our gasoline where we do have the provision of hitting Nova Scotians with a tax on a tax. It's one that I'm finding more and more people actually do talk about in general conversation, do talk about in e-mails, wondering if it is something that can change. I certainly assure them that it is an area that can change and that we're working on their behalf to try and change.

I believe one of the areas we could give a small measure of help to in Nova Scotia that so far has not been addressed by government, is the fact that we have one of the lowest levels of income-tax structure where we start paying taxes on our income. At roughly \$8,500 earned, we start to pay taxes. We know that, except for one other province, the structure has a much higher baseline as to when they start to pay their first amount of tax. It's again an area where small measures, I believe, can be taken, should be taken, to assist those who are struggling with the general costs of living.

I don't think it came as any surprise that 28,000 Nova Scotians visit food banks and, again, it's reflective of the high cost of food in this province, where such a significant amount is actually trucked into the province. That's generally a big part of costs, if we start to take a look at the food basket in Ontario or in Quebec or other parts of the country, we know that too much of our food is travelling 3,000 or 4,000 kilometres and this adds considerably to the cost. When we have 28,000 people going to food banks, we do need to remember that there are others at home; some of those going to the food banks are single, but very often it's families and it represents a significant number of our population.

The area that we have seen an increase in, if we look at the last few years, is unemployment. When people don't have a regular job and an opportunity to make a living, it automatically means that there are things in the family that they have to go without. When we look at Cape Breton currently, it's very close to 15 per cent; western Nova Scotia, 10 to 11 per cent; and the Valley, 8 to 9 per cent without a job. Those are pretty significant numbers and, again, it's one of those ways in which we can change that area. Those who suffer from the cost of living can, in fact, have a little better well-being and a little more opportunity in our province and reduce the burden that many Nova Scotians face. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today in my place to take part in this debate, a debate that I'm certainly glad the Opposition brought forward. I can stand in my place and know that some of the things this government is doing to ensure and help families make ends meet is so important, everything that we do

at the decision-making tables. I'd like to begin by talking about some of the things we have done since forming government. Those include helping over 75,000 Nova Scotia seniors and others who live on low and modest incomes make ends meet. It's interesting though, the Opposition doesn't mention any of those and the question I have for them would be, does the Opposition disagree with some of the things that we are putting into place, some of the things that we've done for low-income seniors and low-income Nova Scotians?

Mr. Speaker, things like in the past two years, government created the Affordable Living Tax Credit. These are very positive moves to ensure that Nova Scotians, families with young children, families on lower incomes and seniors on low incomes, provide more money in their pockets; things like the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit, that's more money in the pockets of people who have low incomes. Now, the Opposition, you don't hear anything from them talking about that.

We removed the provincial portion of the HST from home energy, something that both Opposition Parties voted against. In fact, the Progressive Conservative Party, when they were in power, took it off and then a year later put it back. So where do they stand on those things, things like ensuring that it costs no provincial tax on clothing and footwear, diapers, feminine hygiene products - things that certainly do matter to the people of this province? We also increased the seniors property tax credit from \$400 to \$600. Every little bit counts for the people of this province.

You know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, I hear the Opposition talking, heckling over there on that side. The Liberal Party - I'd love to talk about the Liberal Party for a while. The Liberal Party, when they ran for an election - they ran for election in the 2009 campaign. I would love to know how much their promises were in their platform. They had promises, over \$300 million. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville has the floor.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. They had no plan on how to pay for it. That was the interesting part, that they could stand in their place and call for all these things, yet they call for things and then they say, oh, you can't spend government money that way - but you keep calling for other things. It just doesn't make any sense to me.

Last year the government committed to refund the provincial income tax to 18,000 seniors who are on their Guaranteed Income Supplement. I think that's a good thing to talk about. Let's talk about people on income assistance. They saw an increase by \$15 per month last year, July 1st - a \$5.65 million investment that will help 31,000 low-income families. For the first time in 10 years the Nova Scotia Child Benefit increased, by 22 per cent - they didn't have any ideas in that regard, Mr. Speaker - a \$4.8 million investment that will help tens of thousands of families in the province.

Let's talk about the foster care rates that were increased by more than 10 per cent. That's the first time in a long time that families in this province who care deeply for children in need bring to this province - and that's why we increased the foster care benefit. Cuts to personal income tax for every Nova Scotian taxpayer total over \$11 million. Increase to income assistance personal allowances by \$15 per month. We also introduced fair legislation for drugs.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on about some of the great things that this government has done that I'm very proud to stand in my place to support and ensure that we continue to do so.

Now I know I talked a little bit earlier about the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit. You know, we ensured that those investments in families were indexed, which is so important, and kept pace with inflation. So again, an additional \$1.6 million investment that is helping over 240,000 families in this province, but yet I don't hear anything from the Opposition, as I said. (Interruptions)

We'll talk about power rates. Let's talk about power rates. Let's talk about what we did for power rates. We took the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST off home energy, which those two Parties voted against, which the Progressive Conservatives put in place when they were in government, and then rolled it back for Nova Scotia families. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville has the floor.

MR. WHYNOTT: That's right, Mr. Speaker, and the other thing that's so important to remember is that we have a plan that will ensure that we get off coal and stabilize rates by creating a \$1.5 billion investment in green energy that will create 5,000 to 7,500 jobs. Is the Opposition against that? It sounds like it, absolutely.

When the Tories were in power, when the Progressive Conservatives were in power, the Tories' decision to stick with fossil fuels led to rate increases of 33 per cent over 10 years. But yet all of a sudden, now they're talking about power rates? It's very interesting. What we know is that to do nothing is not an option, but that's just what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is advocating, to do absolutely nothing.

The Liberal Party, their Leader says one thing and then their Energy Critic says another thing. I hear him on the radio talking about one thing that his Leader says the day before, which is totally the opposite. We always hear about the Liberal Party, them being a bunch of flip-floppers. I would say that would be the case, in this case.

We know that when the Progressive Conservative Party was in power, we know that each year rates went up in energy costs. We know that in 2002 it went up by 3.1 per

cent. We know in 2005 it went up by 6.1 per cent. We know in 2006 it went up by 8.6 per cent and that was the year they cut the Keep the Heat program, I believe. In 2007 it went up by 4.8 per cent. The record stands for itself. What we did was we ensured that last year we removed the provincial portion of the HST off the back of Nova Scotia families.

These are all things that - we never hear what the Opposition talks about when it comes to what they would do. What would the Liberal Party do? Let's talk about what the Liberal Party did when they were in government, let's talk about that. Let's talk a little bit about that. The Liberal Party (Interruption) You know what? I was in the education system when teachers were laid off, that's right, I was - rollbacks for teachers' wages, laid off thousands of nurses, exactly. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville has the floor.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, you're doing a great job in the Chair. I really appreciate that.

One of the things that we've done over the last year is move in the right way. Let's talk about ensuring their young people are getting a good-quality post-secondary education system here in the province. We have such a high quality standard for education in this province with our post-secondary institutions. We are taking the right steps to fix the weakest student assistance program in the country, the worst system in the country that was created by those guys over there.

Post-secondary education is such a key role in the way that we do things over here on this side of the House. It's the most effective way to support students and their families. This past year we invested \$42.5 million to help put the first steps in ensuring that we fix the weakest student assistance system in the country. One of the things that we've done to ensure that Nova Scotia's tuition is below the national average is investing \$30 million in student bursaries to replace the expired Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Trust.

I think one of the things that was said in the House - I believe it was today or yesterday - is that investment is the largest investment since the beginning of the actual student aid program in this province. That's a big investment for students, Mr. Speaker, that's a big investment and I understand the honourable member for Yarmouth, in fact, pushed for a student debt cap and that's what we have now because that's what we believe in on this side of the House.

This new provincially funded commitment will provide a tuition reduction of \$1,283 for Nova Scotia students studying in this province. As I said, we created the first debt cap - that that Party is against - in the province's history providing Nova Scotia's students with a reduction of 36 per cent in total debt under the new \$28,560 maximum debt cap. We offered up to \$612 per year in additional grants for those students, through an

increase in loan-to-grant ratio; doubled the in-study earning exemption on student loans, from \$50 per week to \$100 per week; increased the amount allowed for the purchase of books by 50 per cent from \$1,000 to \$1,500; protected students by capping tuition increases at 3 per cent and we continue the successful Graduate Retention Rebate, which provides a tax credit of up to \$15,000 for university students and \$7,500 for community college students that stay in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking the right steps forward. Not only do we encourage and continue to invest in the people, in the families and the students of this province but we are laying a foundation for the road ahead. We have such an important thing that has happened over the past couple of months with the Ships Start Here federal government shipbuilding procurement process. We have the subsea cable coming over from Newfoundland and Labrador that will ensure good, clean energy in this province, reducing what we have in this province, which is an over abundance of coal-fired plants. We are going to be a leader in this country with renewable energy.

This Party leads the way for a future in this province and I can tell you that those two Parties over there have no idea what they're doing. They chirp, they chirp, they chirp. They have no idea and I can ensure that this Party will be on this side of the House for many years to come.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you Mr. Speaker. This is an important topic for me. The honourable member on the other side talks about getting off coal and improving green energy. Of course, we're all for improving green energy but we know by your own submissions, by Nova Scotia Power's own submissions, we need coal for the next 20 years.

Will you tell the people of Cape Breton that those 300 jobs that are going to be created by burning coal in Cape Breton will not come there? We can have all the energy in the world; without those jobs, my friend, there's no more burning energy. It's important because I've been elected only recently and I can speak with some authority on the issue that people of Nova Scotia, the people of Cape Breton, the ordinary constituents of Cape Breton North, the people that you're talking about giving all these tax credits to, they've said the same thing over and over. They've had enough and enough is enough. They can't take it anymore and we can't be stretched any further.

Speaking of the subsea cable, the federal government is committed to that subsea cable to bring energy from Newfoundland and Labrador and we do need green energy but getting off the coal is virtually impossible at the present time. We know we're going to need coal, so why should we bring coal in from other areas of the world and not bring it, burn it, in Nova Scotia from Nova Scotia. The taxes we created from 300 jobs would go well to use in this province, money that we could use for other programs that are being cut in this province.

This is a government with no real economic plan and they've shown that time and time again. Life gets a little bit harder under this NDP government for all of us - our students, our seniors, our everyday families. The government for the families, my friend, is not working. In Cape Breton alone, where I come from, we've lost 2,400 jobs since this time last year. That's 2,400 Nova Scotians who've lost their jobs thanks to the NDP's reckless economic policies and that's just in our own region, Mr. Speaker.

Even for those who have jobs, life becomes harder. This is a government that hits the "easy" button at every opportunity. Instead of making tough choices they cop out, increasing taxes and user fees - 1,400 user fees, to be exact.

Believe you me, it's not easy for the ordinary Nova Scotians who have to deal with and pay for these taxes and fees each and every day. They don't have an "easy" button. Thanks to the NDP, ordinary Nova Scotians who are already struggling to make ends meet have to pay more. Thanks to the NDP, it costs more to get married, to go fishing, to drive a car, to play bingo - even elevator fees are going up.

It costs more to give blood. Some South Shore District Health Authority patients getting blood work now have to pay a \$10 blood collection fee, and all because of the NDP's inability to manage the province's finances. As our Liberal colleague stated, over 20,000 Nova Scotians are currently relying on food banks. These are people who need the government the most. What has the NDP done for them? They've raised taxes on everything, increased fees across the board, and hiked power rates, and they've introduced policies that result in the loss of our jobs.

Now we may ask ourselves, just what is the NDP actually costing ordinary Nova Scotians? The answer: \$654 per year. The NDP is costing each and every Nova Scotian \$6,400 more a year in taxes, gasoline prices, and electricity costs. That's \$654 not being spent at the grocery store, not being spent on school supplies for our children, and not being spent on everyday essentials that we need to get by. Mr. Speaker, that's not just politicians like yourself making this case.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The ramble on this side of the room is getting kind of high. If you have conversations you'd like to carry on, please feel free to take them outside the Chamber.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North has the floor.

MR. ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in June, Amelia DeMarco, a senior policy analyst for CFIB, said, "It's been a tough year for the province's business community. Tax hikes, minimum wage increases and talk of energy rate hikes means business owners are struggling at the same time as their customers are feeling the pinch."

Well, where do the jobs in Nova Scotia come from? Many of them do come from that very small business community. Small businesses in our province are going to be our future. If we can keep going, the 10, 15, and 20 job industries will be the ones that survive in our society. If they are having harder times creating jobs, well, it only makes sense that the ordinary Nova Scotians are having a harder time finding jobs. So what do they do? They go out West.

It's not just the CFIB. We have all sorts of groups coming forward to oppose this government's economic policies. Remember Bill No. 100? We had hundreds of businesspeople from across this province coming forward to say, "Slow down a minute. If you don't do this, we won't be able to survive. We won't be able to continue employing people."

They bowled ahead anyway, because that's their style, Mr. Speaker. They take and take from Nova Scotians and give little back, unless you are one of their special interest friends. And how much do they take? Well, the total increases in taxes and extra revenue is around \$0.5 billion. That is mostly from the HST hike. They are taking \$0.5 billion more, and to do what? To close small businesses across the province, to cancel walk-in clinics, and to cancel a ferry - a ferry that had a big impact on the tourist industry in southwestern Nova Scotia and all of Nova Scotia. This is a government that has proven they are incapable of setting priorities. They pass the buck at every opportunity and they're passing it to everyday, ordinary Nova Scotians.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to stand in my place to speak about issues that are important to my constituents and people across Nova Scotia. It's especially an honour to get up to speak about this resolution because it points out some very stark realities that taxpayers are faced with in this province, the fact that costs for them, for families and for individuals, especially those who are in an economically challenged areas, has actually gone up quite a bit. It's more expensive to live now in Nova Scotia since this government took office.

We've had a tax hike on the consumer tax, a tax that this Premier and this Party said they would not do, Mr. Speaker, during the previous general election. We will not, we commit to the people of Nova Scotia, increase your consumer taxes. We won't do that, we won't do that. That was a promise that was given to the people of Nova Scotia and that was a promise that was nearly immediately broken by this government, and the Premier stands up in this House and says, well, we've kept all of our commitments to Nova Scotians. I have the pamphlets that said you wouldn't increase taxes, and you did. Every single person in the province is feeling that. I get that in my office and I'm sure many of the members opposite get it in theirs.

Gas prices have increased over 25 per cent since the NDP has taken power in this province (Interruption) 25 cents, sorry, it has increased by 25 cents. Gas prices have gone up. Power rates, beginning in 2002 to 2010, the compounded rate increases have been about 36 per cent. These are significant increases that affect everybody and make it more expensive to live here and make us a less competitive province to run a business in. That's the fact of the matter. When it's more expensive to live here, when it's more expensive to do business here, it makes us less competitive here. That's a truth, and that's what has happened.

This government does boast about being good stewards of the economy. We hear that every day. They paint a rosy picture for Nova Scotians but, I'm sorry, the picture isn't that rosy in a lot of our communities across the province. Yes, Halifax is doing well. Halifax is doing well. It should do well; it's a vibrant capital city, the largest city in eastern Canada. God help us if it's not doing well and I think between 2008 and 2010, jobs have actually increased in Halifax by approximately 10,000, if I'm not mistaken. But what this government doesn't recognize is that in a lot of the areas outside of Halifax, rural Nova Scotia, jobs have actually decreased by approximately 10,000. We've experienced that in Yarmouth. We've experienced that in Glace Bay. We've experienced it in the South Shore. We've experienced it in the Valley. We've experienced it in Cape Breton.

It is excellent and important to have a vibrant capital city, one that generates business, that has a diverse economic base, but what we can't allow to happen in our province is to have that capital city drain the life out of rural Nova Scotia because it doesn't have to be the case. What we should have is a capital city that feeds rural Nova Scotia, an economic generator here in Halifax that is actually providing economic support and business to other areas of the province, but right now that's not what we have happening. We have a decreasing population in rural Nova Scotia and the nature of jobs is changing. We are obviously shifting from resource-based economics to one that's more based in knowledge industries but we need to figure out how we can still utilize those important resource-based industries so that our rural areas are doing well and so that rural areas can actually benefit from knowledge-based industries as well.

I really do think that if we've seen one thing from this government, it has been the fact that there has been no economic vision. My colleague, the member for Cape Breton North, said that and I don't think there has been one. We've had the "jobsWhere" program, "jobsWhere", you know. If you look through that program, what you'll see is a restating of a lot of programs that the previous government actually committed to, a lot of PC programs that are still in there, rehashing of its "jobsWhere" program, as no one knows where those jobs are.

So on one hand you rehash all these former Progressive Conservative programs into this so-called jobsHere Program. I'm telling you, this is the first time I've ever heard an NDP Party tout tax credits, it's the first time. Mr. Speaker, that's a conservative policy, tax credits. I know there used to be a group in that caucus whose focus, whose only goal,

was to support those members of our society from the lower income thresholds, and I know they're still there. I'm going to be very clear, those people who need help the most in this province, financially, do not benefit from tax credits. They do not benefit from tax credits. That's a fact, because you need to pay a certain level of taxes before you actually benefit from a tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, where is the vision for this province in terms of making life affordable for Nova Scotians, increasing productivity, making sure we're more competitive, where is it? We haven't seen it. The only vision we've had presented by this government is to cut, to cut, to cut, to cut. From the Nova Scotians I've talked to - we want to grow this province; we don't want to cut it back. We want to grow our services; we don't want to cut them back. We want to increase funding to education; we don't want to cut it back. We want a better health care system; we don't want to cut it back.

We want economic development. The only thing that this government has done for economic development, besides the "jobsWherever" program, is using the IEF, a political slush fund that this government and members of their Cabinet hated in Opposition. A political slush fund, it was referred to by them, we got that term from the Minister of Finance, "political slush fund", that's what they used for economic development. But I'm sorry, providing money to businesses that do need support, that are supporting a community, needs to happen. But as our Leader said, bailing out companies isn't economic development. It's not bringing in new industry. It's not supporting small business. It's not promoting innovation and research. It's not promoting creativity in the marketplace. You're just supporting what's there, that's not economic development.

AN HON. MEMBER: So you don't want to support them?

MR. CHURCHILL: We do want to support them, I'll be very clear. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth has the floor.

MR. CHURCHILL: No one in this caucus has said not to provide financial support to important businesses in this province. No one has said that so the government can pretend that we have, we haven't. But what we are saying is that's not economic development, that's not development. Development is creating new jobs. Development is investing in industries that are new, that are knowledge-based. It's not just sustaining the old - sustaining the old is important - but also growing our economy to new levels and we haven't seen that sort of vision presented by this government and that's true.

Well, all these costs have been increasing for Nova Scotians: increase in gas prices, we've all heard about that; increase to power rates; food costs going up; taxes going up; user fees, 1,400 user fees. All these costs are going up and this government stands up and applauds when a member of their caucus mentions a tax credit. I'm sorry, tax credits aren't cutting it for Nova Scotians and it certainly shouldn't cut it for a New Democratic Party, a

Party that has always promoted program funding for those who need help the most, not tax credits to help them have a couple extra hundred bucks a year.

Program funding, that's what the NDP has always advocated for but we're not seeing that. Let's look at some of the decisions this government has made that have actually negatively impacted confidence here and negatively impacted jobs. One that comes to mind is the Yarmouth ferry, surprise, surprise. A decision that this government made to cut the Yarmouth ferry had an immediate impact on the economy of Yarmouth - 300 jobs lost as of a direct result of that decision, 300.

What's happening now, Mr. Speaker? Our hotels are on the verge of collapsing. We've lost one. We are at a point where we're almost losing a second. We're almost losing a second, the only two hotels that we had. If we lose those hotels, we lose the ability to have conferences in Yarmouth. We lose the ability to even host hockey tournaments or baseball tournaments. Yarmouth has a proud sporting tradition, a lot of championship teams, and has always been a proud host to teams from all across the province and beyond. If we lose our accommodations infrastructure, that ability is gone. That one decision has had untold negative consequences in our area and beyond.

I've talked to tourism operators from all over this province - from Baddeck, from the Cape Breton lodge, from Shelburne, from Queens County. All of them have said that they had a negative impact on their business because of that. White Point Beach Lodge lost 50 per cent of their American business - 50 per cent of their American business - because of that one decision, that one silly decision, because this government didn't decide to actually pay attention to the numbers and figure out what was going on before they decided to make that decision. Those are the facts. That's true.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, costs are going up in this province. People are paying more for gas, people are paying more for power, people are paying more in user fees, and people are paying more in taxes. Meanwhile, their services are being cut back - the services that Nova Scotians depend on, like education and health. Services that actually promote economic productivity and growth in this province are being cut back. How is that a better deal, I'll ask, for today's families? In reality, it's not.

What I'll do in closing is urge this government to actually provide some sort of economic vision for this province, to move on some of the ideas that this caucus has put forward to lower the cost of living for Nova Scotians, and hopefully we'll get back on track. If we don't, unfortunately, we all know there's going to be more individuals and families in our communities who come to our office weekly and monthly and say, you're my MLA. I'm having a hard time this month. I can't make my power bill.

I've had a lot of people come in in the last year and about half who were that close to having their power shut off. Working with charitable organizations in my area, we were able to save them - charitable organizations that do an excellent job, like the Salvation

Army, the Tabitha Centre, the fuel bank in Yarmouth, and the food bank. These are the groups that are actually providing support for those individuals who need help the most in our province. It's not this government. The tax credits just aren't cutting it.

My question to the government is, when that happens, when these individuals come to your office and say sir or ma'am, I can't pay my bills this month, what are the members of this government going to say? Well, there's a tax credit you might be able to get next April?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for debate has ended. (Applause)

The honourable Acting Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Opposition's business for today. I certainly thank you for the opportunity to raise our concerns, and we'll now call upon the Government House Leader to provide the hours and order of business for tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet at the hour of 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. tomorrow. After the daily routine we may call Bill Nos. 84 and 85.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that we now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House is now adjourned until 12:00 noon tomorrow.

[The House rose at 5:59 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2163**

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

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

Whereas Jackie Arsenault's voice is well known to many residents of Sackville as the dispatcher with Satellite Taxi; and

Whereas Jackie has worked for Satellite Taxi since it opened; and

Whereas Jackie is retiring from Satellite Taxi after 37 years of service and will be honoured with a retirement party at the Sackville Kinsmen Center in August 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jackie Arsenault of Sackville and wish her a healthy and happy retirement.

RESOLUTION NO. 2164

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Jim Keddy of Berwick has been instrumental in building hockey while actively serving as team manager, advertiser, and fundraiser, as well as transporting young players to hockey games; and

Whereas Jim and his wife, Libby, both organized suppers, BBQs, walkathons, raffles, 50/50 draws, and many other fundraising events; and

Whereas Jim Keddy, in his job as postmaster, helped many young fellows through many hockey seasons and was always there for the players regardless of their needs;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize Jim Keddy of Berwick for his efforts on behalf of Berwick and area hockey and for his numerous fundraising efforts for the WKM Hospital and local volunteer fire department.

RESOLUTION NO. 2165

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Robert Clark of Berwick excelled in track and field and earned top marks in both provincial and Canadian competitions; and

Whereas Robert Clark earned trophies at the Highland Games for his prowess in basketball, volleyball, and track and field; and

Whereas Robert Clark also competed for a berth on the Canadian Olympic track and field team;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly acknowledge the accomplishments of Robert Clark as one of the finest athletes of his generation from his hometown of Berwick, Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 2166

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Forest Ridge Academy student Alex Shand was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Alex Shand partnered with fellow students Sydney Smith, Emma Nickerson and Joseph Atkinson on the team, Forest Ridge Smartie Pants, to take the top prize in Grade 5 competition; and

Whereas the Forest Ridge Smartie Pants were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Forest Ridge Academy student Alex Shand for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2167

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Hillcrest Academy student Deanna Holmes was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Deanna Holmes partnered with fellow students Samara Pemberton, Liam Haliburton and Thomas King on the team, Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots, to take the top prize in Grade 6 competition; and

Whereas the Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Hillcrest Academy student Deanna Holmes for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2168

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Forest Ridge Academy student Emma Nickerson was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Emma Nickerson partnered with fellow students Sydney Smith, Alex Shand and Joseph Atkinson on the team, Forest Ridge Smartie Pants, to take the top prize in Grade 5 competition; and

Whereas the Forest Ridge Smartie Pants were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Forest Ridge Academy student Emma Nickerson for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2169

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Forest Ridge Academy student Joseph Atkinson was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Joseph Atkinson partnered with fellow students Sydney Smith, Emma Nickerson and Alex Shand on the team, Forest Ridge Smartie Pants, to take the top prize in Grade 5 competition; and

Whereas the Forest Ridge Smartie Pants were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Forest Ridge Academy student Joseph Atkinson for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2170

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Hillcrest Academy student Liam Haliburton was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Liam Haliburton partnered with fellow students Samara Pemberton, Thomas King and Deanna Holmes on the team, Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots, to take the top prize in Grade 6 competition; and

Whereas the Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Hillcrest Academy student Liam Haliburton for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2171

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Hillcrest Academy student Samara Pemberton was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Samara Pemberton partnered with fellow students Liam Haliburton, Thomas King and Deanna Holmes on the team Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots, to take the top prize in Grade 6 competition; and

Whereas the Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Hillcrest Academy student Samara Pemberton for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2172

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Forest Ridge Academy student Sydney Smith was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Sydney Smith partnered with fellow students Emma Nickerson, Alex Shand and Joseph Atkinson on the team, Forest Ridge Smartie Pants, to take the top prize in Grade 5 competition; and

Whereas the Forest Ridge Smartie Pants were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Forest Ridge Academy student Sydney Smith for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.

RESOLUTION NO. 2173

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Hillcrest Academy student Thomas King was a gold medal winner at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011; and

Whereas Thomas King partnered with fellow students Samara Pemberton, Liam Haliburton and Deanna Holmes on the team, Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots, to take the top prize in Grade 6 competition; and

Whereas the Hillcrest Academy Roaches Robots were among the 27 teams from Grades 4 to 6 who advanced to the regional Science Olympics by topping district competition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Hillcrest Academy student Thomas King for winning a gold medal at the Tri-County Regional School Board's regional Science Olympics on June 9, 2011.