



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:	
Econ. Dev. Comm. - Anl. Rept. 2011, Ms. P. Birdsall.....	3560
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Superintendent of Pensions Rept. (Year Ending 03/31/11), Hon. M. More	3560
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 2222, Physicians Assistants Day (11/15/11) - Celebrate, Hon. Maureen MacDonald.....	3560
Vote - Affirmative.....	3561
Res. 2223, Pickrell, Don: Vol. Work - Congrats., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse (by Hon. D. Wilson).....	3561
Vote - Affirmative.....	3562
Res. 2224, Nat'l. Restorative Justice Wk. (11/13 - 11/20/11) - Recognize, Hon. R. Landry	3563
Vote - Affirmative.....	3563

Res. 2225, GreenGym: Export Agreements - Congrats., The Premier.....	3564
Vote - Affirmative.....	3564
Res. 2226, November/Movember - Mark, Hon. Maureen MacDonald.....	3564
Vote - Affirmative.....	3565
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 96, Pension Benefits Act, Hon. M. More	3566
No. 97, Day Care Act, Hon. K. Casey.....	3566
No. 98, Fish Harvester Organizations Support Act, Hon. S. Belliveau	3567
No. 99, Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth Act, Mr. L. Preyra.....	3567
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 2227, Christmas Tree Growers: Gov't. (N.S.) - Involvement, Mr. L. Glavine.....	3567
Vote - Affirmative.....	3568
Res. 2228, Porter, Jayma: Gardening Talents - Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont (by Mr. K. Bain).....	3568
Vote - Affirmative.....	3568
Res. 2229, Comeau, Raymond - Kidney Dialysis: Goreham, Holly/Frotten, Ruby - Thank, Hon. W. Gaudet	3569
Vote - Affirmative.....	3569
Res. 2230, Deveaux, Beatrice: Book Launch - Congrats., Mr. A. MacMaster.....	3569
Vote - Affirmative.....	3570
Res. 2231, Lavers, Mark/Baillie, Robert/Chapman, Peter: Fastball Coaching - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3570
Vote - Affirmative.....	3571
Res. 2232, MacDonald, Adam - Powerlifting Gold Medal, Mr. E. Orrell.....	3571
Vote - Affirmative.....	3571
Res. 2233, Creighton, Rachel/Robinson, Taylor: Golf Championship - Congrats., Mr. H. Theriault.....	3572
Vote - Affirmative.....	3572
Res. 2234, Martin, Dorothy/Wheaton, Martha: Hants Commun. Hosp. Aux. - Dedication Commend, Mr. C. Porter	3572
Vote - Affirmative.....	3573
Res. 2235, Pitman, Mark: West. Counties Reg. Library - Serv. (20 Yrs.), Mr. Z. Churchill	3573
Vote - Affirmative.....	3574

Res. 2236, Port Hood Vol. FD - Anniversary (50 th), Mr. A. MacMaster.....	3574
Vote - Affirmative.....	3574
Res. 2237, Desmond, Rev. Wayne: Cherry Brook United Baptist Church Min. - Anniv. (10 th), Hon. K. Colwell	3575
Vote - Affirmative.....	3575
Res. 2238, N.S. Highland Village Soc./MacNeil, Lucy: Gaelic Tradition - Efforts Congrats., Mr. K. Bain	3575
Vote - Affirmative.....	3576
Res. 2239, Apple Blossom Fest. Soc.: Commitment (80 Yrs.) - Congrats., Mr. L. Glavine.....	3576
Vote - Affirmative.....	3577
Res. 2240, Sail Able Event: Vols. - Thank, Mr. E. Orrell.....	3577
Vote - Affirmative.....	3577
Res. 2241, Samson, Taylor - Lt.-Gov.'s. Award, Hon. M. Samson	3578
Vote - Affirmative.....	3579
Res. 2242, Sch. Bus Safety Seminar - Victoria Co.: Organizers - Thank, Mr. K. Bain.....	3579
Vote - Affirmative.....	3580
Res. 2243, A.F. Theriault & Son: Hammerhead Production - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet	3580
Vote - Affirmative.....	3580
Res. 2244, Langley, Tristan: Academic/Athletic Accomplishments - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3580
Vote - Affirmative.....	3581
Res. 2245, NDP Gov't.: Taxes/Power /Gas - Increases End, Hon. K. Colwell	3581
Res. 2246, Popma, Chris: NSSAF Award - Congrats., Mr. C. Porter	3582
Vote - Affirmative.....	3583
Res. 2247, Wharf Rat Rally - Event Legacy Award, Mr. H. Theriault	3583
Vote - Affirmative.....	3583
Res. 2248, Fougere, Annette: St. Anne Commun. & Nursing Care Ctr. - Appt.: Congrats., Hon. M. Samson	3583
Vote - Affirmative.....	3584

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:

No. 405, ERDT - South Shore/N.S.: Economy - Damage Admit, Mr. Z. Churchill	3584
No. 406, NSP Rates - Increases: Prem. - Act, Hon. J. Baillie	3586
No. 407, Prem. - NSP: Perf. Value Audit - Force, Hon. S. McNeil	3588
No. 408, Prem. - Economic Policies: Effect - Admit, Hon. S. McNeil	3589
No. 409, Energy: Prem. - PR Spin, Mr. C. Porter	3591
No. 410, Prem.: Fundy Gypsum Jobs - Significance, Hon. S. McNeil	3592
No. 411, ERDT - Resorts: Plan - Present, Mr. E. Orrell.....	3593
No. 412, Fin. - Auto Premiums: Increase - Prevent, Ms. D. Whalen	3595
No. 413, ERDT: Job Losses - Min. Response, Mr. K. Bain	3596
No. 414, Prem.: Lobster Strategy - Develop, Hon. M. Samson	3597
No. 415, Fish. & Aquaculture: Lobster Fishermen - Meet, Mr. H. Theriault	3599
No. 416, LWD/Adv. Educ. - Const. Workers: Shortage - Details, Mr. K. Bain	3600
No. 417, TIR: Little Hbr. Rd. - Min. Update, Hon. M. Samson	3602

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 86, Fair Automobile Insurance (2011) Act, Hon. K. Colwell	3603
Hon. J. Baillie	3615
Mr. L. Glavine.....	3620
Mr. Z. Churchill	3628
Hon. Manning MacDonald	3631
Adjourned debate	3636

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):

Rural N.S. - Job Losses: NDP Gov't. - Acknowledge, Mr. Z. Churchill	3637
Mr. E. Orrell.....	3639
Mr. C. MacKinnon.....	3641

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Nov. 16th at 2:00 p.m.3643

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 2249, Thompson, Mallory: Sparta Cup Comp. - Congrats., Hon. J. Baillie	3644
Res. 2250, Springhill Mosquito Fencebusters/Coaches: Prov. Champions - Congrats., Hon. J. Baillie	3644
Res. 2251, Muise Taekwon-Do Students: Medal Standings - Leblanc Taekwon-Do Challenge: Congrats., Mr. Z. Churchill	3645
Res. 2252, Chapman, Josh: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3645
Res. 2253, Bell, Pat: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3646
Res. 2254, Baillie, Logan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3646
Res. 2255, Anthony, Cody: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3647
Res. 2256, Sylliboy, Nathan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3647
Res. 2257, Shipley, Tyler: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3648
Res. 2258, Scammell, Dylan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3648
Res. 2259, Munro, Sandy: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3649
Res. 2260, Maynard, Evan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3649
Res. 2261, MacDougall, Tim: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3650
Res. 2262, Leger, Ryan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3650
Res. 2263, Lavin, Corey: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3651
Res. 2264, Lavers, Luc: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3651
Res. 2265, Lavers, Josh: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3652
Res. 2266, Deveau, Justin: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3652
Res. 2267, Crowe, Ryan: Eastern Can. Midget Boys Fastball Championship - Winning Team Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	3653



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 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. The topic for late debate has been submitted by the honourable member for Richmond:

Therefore be it resolved that this NDP Government finally acknowledge the devastating impact job losses are having on rural Nova Scotia.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the Annual Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development. Also, from the committee I would like to thank all the people who have worked from the legislative offices: Mr. Robert Kinsman, editor for Hansard Reporting Services, and staff; Mr. James MacInnes, coordinator/director of Legislative Television Broadcast & Recording Services, and staff; Ms. Margaret Murphy, Legislative Librarian, and staff; and special thanks to Heather Ludlow, information services librarian, for her research assistance. I'd like to especially thank Jana Hodgson who has done, as always, a superb job with our committee.

I would like to present this at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Report of the Superintendent of Pensions on the Administration of the Pension Benefits Act for the Year Ending March 31, 2011.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2222

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

Whereas physician assistants work in various clinical settings across Canada and have a positive impact on our health care system; and

Whereas the physician/physician assistant care model is a collaborative, patient-centred approach to care that allows for physicians to spend more time with

patients with more complex needs, while the team is able to treat more patients in a timely manner; and

Whereas today, November 15th, is Physician Assistants' Day in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in celebrating Physician Assistants' Day and commend their role in providing better and more efficient care to patients.

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. 2223

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Seniors, 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 Don Pickrell of Sackville, a retired 27-year veteran of the Royal Canadian Navy and a community volunteer for youth and seniors, was a recipient; and

Whereas some of his many activities included instructor with the Admiral Bidwell Navy League, leader at the Sackville Boys Club, treasurer for the Sackville-Beaver Bank 50+ Club, driver for the Book-a-Ride Program which provides transportation for seniors to medical and doctor appointments in Lower Sackville, Bedford, and Halifax, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of the Sackville Seniors Advisory Council and on the Board of Directors for the Sackville Community and Cultural Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that Don Pickrell be congratulated by members of the 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 Senior 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 Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, may I have permission to do an introduction before I read my resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. LANDRY: This week is Restorative Justice Week in Canada and I am pleased to rise in this House and introduce a group of dedicated people who are helping offenders take responsibility for their actions and bring closure for victims. Mr. Speaker, restorative justice programs would not be possible without the help of the people in the gallery today.

We have with us from our Halifax-based restorative justice agency, the Community Justice Society - and I'm going to ask them to stand and then receive applause afterwards - members of the organization here today are Yvonne Atwell, Katie Campbell, Lisa Davis, Denise Russell, Michael McGinnis, Dan Wandless, Selena Guildford, Iona Stoddard, Kylene Mellor, and Matthew Thomas.

I am also pleased to welcome members of the John Howard Society Restorative Justice agency in Pictou County, and from this agency are Susan Hughes, Kate Bray, Heather Rankin, Berma Marshall and, last but not least, Tara Moore of the Department of Education.

I also see Diana MacKinnon from Correctional Services, who manages and coordinates the project; as well, Janet Briggs, staff manager; Janis Aitken, Department of Justice, the Restorative Justice Program; and Grace Campbell of the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network.

I would like to ask all of you to please rise, as I said, and receive the warm welcome of this House, and thank you personally for your commitment in being leaders in this field and assisting all Nova Scotians with the issue of justice. Thank you. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 2224

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

Whereas November 13th to November 20th is National Restorative Justice Week, and government invests more than \$2 million in restorative justice programs that help victims move forward and prevent people from reoffending; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has had a restorative justice program for youth ages 12 to 17 for over a decade, and is one of the most well-developed and well-recognized programs in the world, with a 90 per cent success rate; and

Whereas a year ago we launched two adult pilot sites in Cape Breton and Colchester called Integrated Adult Restorative Justice Pilot Program, and the program has had more than 250 referrals and is getting positive reviews from offenders, victims, police, and other community partners;

Therefore be it resolved that all members in this House recognize November 13th to November 20th as National Restorative Justice Week, and congratulate everyone involved with restorative justice in this province for the positive impact these programs have on offenders, victims, and the community at large.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2225

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas last week it was announced that during Nova Scotia's trade and investment mission to Israel and the West Bank a Nova Scotia company, GreenGym, secured two new export distribution agreements, one being the largest distributor of indoor fitness equipment in Israel; and

Whereas GreenGym also signed a memorandum of understanding for North American distribution rights for two Israel outdoor-related products; and

Whereas under jobsHere, the province's strategic plan to grow the economy through innovation, competitiveness, and learning, our trade mission demonstrated the province's commitment to help Nova Scotia companies grow their business, compete globally, and create good jobs for Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the staff at GreenGym on the company's new export distribution agreements and the memorandum of understanding signed during the trade and investment mission to Israel and the West Bank, and wish the company the greatest of success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2226

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

Whereas across the world November is frequently being replaced by Movember; and

Whereas Movember challenges men to start the month of November clean-shaven and proceed to grow a mustache to raise awareness and money for prostate cancer; and

Whereas prostate cancer is the most frequently-diagnosed cancer in Nova Scotia, with an estimated 910 men diagnosed in 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in marking November as Movember and commend Prostate Cancer Canada for promoting awareness of prostate cancer in such an amusing and relatable manner.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice on an introduction.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an introduction with your permission.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, we have with us today in the east gallery a good friend of yours and a good friend of mine, Ms. Eunice Harker of Sydney. Ms. Harker is a member of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. She was also a senior staff member with Amnesty International and a member of the Refugee Protection Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. She is currently on the board of directors of the Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County and is chair of the Howard Society, a halfway house in Sydney. I would like Ms. Harker to please rise for the applause and warm welcome of this House. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Colchester North on an introduction.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the gallery opposite as I introduce students from the Career Exploration Program at the Cobequid Education Centre in Truro, here with their teacher, Peter Keaveney, and special student Ian Ebbett. I want to thank those members for coming down to the House and for having a tour of the House. I would like you to stand and receive a warm welcome from the members of the Legislature. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to make an introduction this afternoon. In the west gallery, I would like to introduce to you my wife, Leslie, who is here with us today; my daughters, Jayma, Emily, and Erica; as well as our French exchange student who has been with us since early September and will be for a few more weeks, from Baie-Saint-Paul, Quebec, Jeanne is with us. So I would like the House to give them a warm welcome this afternoon. (Applause)

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 96 - Entitled an Act Respecting Pension Benefits. (Hon. Marilyn More)

Bill No. 97 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 120 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Day Care Act. (Hon. Karen Casey)

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

The honourable Minister of Fisheries.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if I could have your permission for an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to the east gallery. Today we have several representatives from our fishing industry organizations and I'd ask them to stand as I introduce them by name: Jeff Irvine, Lobster Council of

Canada; Eugene O'Leary, president of the Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association; Leonard LeBlanc, chairman of the Lobster Council of Canada board and the Gulf Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition; Patrick Gray - Patty represents a number of organizations and is also the chair of the Lobster Fishing Area 33 committee; and Kevin Squires and Carlton Lunn, Maritime Fishermen's Union, Local 6. I ask the House to give everybody a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

Bill No. 98 - Entitled an Act to Provide Support for Fish Harvester Organizations. (Hon. Sterling Belliveau)

Bill No. 99 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth. (Mr. Leonard Preyra)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2227

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

Whereas the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia presented an optimistic picture of their industry when they last appeared before the Standing Committee on Economic Development; and

Whereas this sector is working hard to overcome challenges like needle retention, invasive species, competition, labour, and transportation; and

Whereas Nova Scotia is producing some of the best Christmas trees in North America and with the SMART Tree Research program and a long-term strategy, has the potential to grow the best balsam fir tree in the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly encourage government to be a key player in this important rural industry valued at \$30 million and wish the Christmas tree growers every success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2228

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

Whereas Communities in Bloom is a non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, and beautification with focus on the promotion and value of green spaces and urban settings; and

Whereas 12-year-old Jayma Porter, daughter of Chuck and Leslie Porter of Windsor, was recently crowned the winner of the National Scotts Miracle-Gro Garden Contest in the Best Child-Run Edible Garden category; and

Whereas Miss Porter not only enjoys growing the edibles in her garden, she also takes great pride in donating the vegetables to the local Harvest House for those who may not otherwise be able to enjoy garden-fresh food;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jayma on her superb gardening talents and wish her all the best with future harvests.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2229

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

Whereas Raymond Comeau of Clare has been on kidney dialysis at the Yarmouth Regional Hospital for the past 10 years; and

Whereas the dialysis machine has kept Raymond going during this time and it has been these same machines that have stopped him from going places for any duration of time; and

Whereas two of Comeau's nurses from the dialysis unit at the hospital, LPN Holly Goreham and RN Ruby Frotten, first told him about the possibility of joining them on a cruise, which offered dialysis at sea;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me to thank and recognize the encouragement, efforts, and assistance Holly and Ruby have provided to Raymond and his wife Vivian.

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. 2230

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

Whereas Beatrice Deveaux and her assistant, Daniel Doucet, of Saint Joseph-du-Moine, launched their book entitled *Marguerite Gallant - A Legendary Acadian*; and

Whereas the story is the memoir of the late Marguerite Gallant of Cheticamp, a loving woman who touched the hearts of many within her community through her generosity and love of collecting odds and ends; and

Whereas Beatrice Deveaux's dream was to celebrate the life of this special Acadian;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Beatrice Deveaux on the launch of her book and acknowledge the importance of keeping the memory of Marguerite Gallant alive for years to come.

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. 2231

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

Whereas the North River Aces hosted the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championship held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas after losing their first two games, came back through determination, focus and skill to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Champs; and

Whereas the team's success was not only due to talented players, but to excellent coaching staff;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate their coaches, Mark Lavers, Robert Baillie and Peter Chapman, coaches of this winning team.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2232

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

Whereas Adam MacDonald of Sydney Mines returned home with a bronze medal from the 2011 World Junior and Sub-Junior Powerlifting Championships held in Moose Jaw; and

Whereas Adam, who was the youngest and smallest in the 120-kilogram category, finished third in the squat, bench press and dead lift in his first competition; and

Whereas 243 competitors from 43 countries participated in the World Junior and Sub-Junior Power Lifting Championships;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adam MacDonald and his bronze medal win and wish him well in his future competitions.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 2233

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

Whereas the regional golf championship was held on October 6th at West Pubnico Golf Club; and

Whereas the junior girls gold team from Digby Regional High School overcame cold and windy weather to win the championship; and

Whereas Rachel Creighton and Taylor Robinson shot scores of 68 and 60 over nine holes to win the junior high championship for the western region;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Rachel Creighton and Taylor Robinson for braving the cold weather to bring home the championship and wish them continued success in the sport of golf.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2234

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

Whereas the Hants Community Hospital Auxiliary is comprised of dedicated volunteers who provide support to the health facility; and

Whereas Dorothy Martin, president, and Martha Wheaton, secretary of the Hants Community Hospital Auxiliary Society, assisted with their annual Spring Bazaar on April 30, 2011; and

Whereas the organization holds two major fundraisers annually to raise the funds needed to help the auxiliary purchase much-needed medical equipment for the Windsor-based hospital

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Dorothy and Martha on their dedication and commitment to the Hants Community Hospital Auxiliary and wish them all the best with future fundraisers.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2235

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

Whereas Yarmouth resident Mark Pitman is a familiar friendly face in our community and one who is always willing to lend a helping hand; and

Whereas for 20 years Mark Pitman has been an enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer at Yarmouth's Western Counties Regional Library, having assisted at headquarters and the Yarmouth branch in several capacities and is now in charge of recycling; and

Whereas on September 20th, in recognition for his many years of volunteer service to Western Counties Regional Library, Mark received a 20-year Volunteer Appreciation certificate;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mark Pitman for 20 dedicated years of his time and energy to Western Counties Regional Library and thank him for making such a positive contribution to his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2236

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

Whereas the Port Hood District Volunteer Fire Department proudly celebrated its 50th Anniversary on October 15, 2011; and

Whereas the community of Port Hood and surrounding area gathered together to celebrate the anniversary and praise the many men and women who have dedicated themselves to the safety of their community; and

Whereas the department grew out of the self-sufficient and co-operative nature of the people of Port Hood;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the Port Hood Volunteer Fire Department for half a century of selflessly protecting the people of Port Hood.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 2237

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

Whereas in 1996, Reverend Wayne Desmond enrolled in the Acadian Divinity College and was granted his church licence to minister at St. Thomas Baptist Church as a Licentiate; and

Whereas in 1998, he accepted a call to serve as associate pastor at St. Thomas Baptist Church and in 1999 he was commissioned into the Christian Ministry by Acadian Divinity College; and

Whereas in September 2001, he accepted the call to become a full-time minister in Cherry Brook United Baptist Church, where he continues to serve today;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Rev. Wayne Desmond on his 10th Anniversary and wish him every success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2238

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

Whereas the Treasures of Youth fund was created by the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society to ensure that cultural skills based on Gaelic traditions continue to flourish with youth in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the fund was inspired by the enthusiasm of the late Michael Anthony MacLean, a well known fiddler from Washabuck Bridge, and his desire to pass those traditions on to the next generation; and

Whereas the fund has been ignited by the sales of Michael Anthony MacLean's Good Boy M.A.! CD and from a march composed by Lucy MacNeil, a member of the Barra MacNeils, entitled Michael Anthony MacLean's Birthday;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society and Lucy MacNeil for their efforts in ensuring the youth of the area are able to continue the Gaelic tradition.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2239

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

Whereas 2012 will mark the 80th Anniversary of the Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival, with planning now underway; and

Whereas starting on May 30 to June 4, 2012, the theme "Growing Together for 80 Years" typifies the unique spirit that Valley residents have kept alive now for 80 years; and

Whereas family, friends, and fun will certainly prevail in 2012's 80th Anniversary celebrations as the Apple Blossom Festival continues to recognize the many benefits of the apple industry in the Annapolis Valley;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Apple Blossom Festival committee for 80 years of outstanding commitment to the spectacle we know as apple blossom time in the Valley.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2240

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

Whereas the Northern Yacht Club Junior Sail Association provided sailing activities for those with limited mobility this summer; and

Whereas disabled sailors had the opportunity to take to the water during a special Sail Able event hosted by the Junior Sail Association, Sail Able of Nova Scotia, and the Paraplegic Association of Canada; and

Whereas accessible boats, accessible facilities, personal flotation devices, and a specialized lift to help sailors in and out of the boats made the day a complete success;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank all the volunteers involved in creating this special day for our disabled sailors.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 2241

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

Attendu que le Prix de la lieutenant-gouverneure « Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire! » est décerné aux élèves de français langue seconde de la 10^e à la 12^e année à l'échelle de la province qui ont fait parvenir des soumissions écrites;

Attendu que le prix, qui est décerné en partenariat avec Canadian Parents for French – Nova Scotia, et parrainé par l'Université Sainte-Anne, avait pour thème en 2011 l'influence des médias sociaux et de la technologie sur les jeunes Canadiens d'aujourd'hui;

Attendu que Taylor Samson, élève de 11^e année à l'école Richmond Academy a été honorée lors d'une cérémonie à la Résidence de la lieutenant-gouverneure le 24 août 2011 comme récipiendaire du Prix de la lieutenant-gouverneure « Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire!» grâce à sa soumission, qui a été choisie pour son originalité, sa créativité, son style de rédaction, l'organisation des idées, le contenu et sa facilité d'expression à l'écrit.

Par conséquent, il est résolu que tous les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent Taylor Samson pour avoir reçu le Prix de la lieutenant-gouverneure « Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire! » et lui souhaitent un succès continu dans ses études.

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire! Award is awarded to French second-language students in Grade 10 to Grade 12 from across the province who entered written submissions; and

Whereas the award, which is a partnership with Canadian Parents for French – Nova Scotia and is sponsored by Université Sainte-Anne, had for its 2011 theme the influence of social media and technology on young Canadians today; and

Whereas Taylor Samson, a Grade 11 student at Richmond Academy, was honoured at Government House on August 24, 2011, as a recipient for the Lieutenant Governor's Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire! Award, with her submission chosen based on originality, creativity, writing style, organization of ideas, content, and written language proficiency;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Taylor Samson for receiving the 2011 Lieutenant Governor's Award, Ready to Write! Prêt à écrire, and wish her continued success in her studies.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2242

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

Whereas Victoria County RCMP Sergeant Rick Beaton, and bus drivers Bruce Barrington and Heather Flynn, conducted a school bus safety seminar during School Bus Safety Awareness Week, October 17th to October 21st; and

Whereas students from Primary to Grade 3 attending Boularderie Elementary School were the beneficiaries of the life-saving seminar to prepare them in case an emergency should arise; and

Whereas it is critical that all students, parents, and bus drivers be informed in order to reduce the risk of injuries and it is crucial for the Province of Nova Scotia to support and encourage partnerships and safety programs year-round in the schools across the province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank bus drivers Bruce Barrington and Heather Flynn, and Sergeant Rick Beaton, for their valuable expertise and guidance and wish Angela Crane, principal, and the staff and students of Boularderie Elementary School a safe, productive 2011-12 school year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2243

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

Whereas on July 15th A.F. Theriault & Son Shipyard in Meteghan River celebrated the completion of the 100th production version of the Hammerhead, an unmanned surface vehicle target for Meggitt Training Systems Canada of Medicine Hat, Alberta; and

Whereas Meggitt has sold the high-speed, remote-control vehicles to seven Navies around the world to help with highly technical military training exercise; and

Whereas these Nova Scotia-made remote-control vehicles can travel at speeds up to 65 kilometres an hour through two-metre waves, making it a highly technical training tool;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate A.F. Theriault & Son and staff in reaching the completion of the 100th production version of the Hammerhead, and wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2244

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

Whereas 17-year-old Tristan Langley of Belmont, Colchester North, is attending Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina; and

Whereas Langley won a scholarship to this NCAA Division 1 school where she will be competing in cross-country running and track distance events while studying elementary education; and

Whereas Langley, who won silver in the 3,000 metre and bronze in the 1,500 metre in the senior girls division at the NSSAF track and field championships in Nova Scotia in June, has been performing a training regimen between shifts at her job as a lifeguard and her studies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tristan Langley as she begins university and wish her continued success as an accomplished athlete.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 2245

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

Whereas every day that the NDP has been in office, life for Nova Scotians has become less and less affordable while promising a better deal for today's families; and

Whereas the NDP Government has given Nova Scotians higher taxes, rising power rates, higher gas prices, and an endless stream of fee hikes; and

Whereas the NDP promised to make life better, but have only made it more difficult for all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remind the NDP Government that they cannot continue to tax Nova Scotians into submission and strongly urge the NDP to end their campaign of higher taxes, increasing power rates, and higher prices for gasoline.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2246

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

Whereas over 40,000 student athletes participate annually in school sport programs throughout the province; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Schools Athletic Federation (NSSAF) annually organizes the Celebration of School Sport to celebrate participation, fair play, and service to school sport and to reinforce the significant role interscholastic athletics play in education; and

Whereas Chris Popma, a coach at Avon View High School in Windsor, was one of the coach recipients of Celebration of School Sport 2010-11 Award for providing exceptional leadership for our young athletes;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chris on receiving this award and wish him all the best.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 2247

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

Whereas on October 27, 2011, the Annapolis Valley Events and Sport Tourism Association held their third annual awards luncheon; and

Whereas the finalists for the Event Legacy Award were the Deep Roots Music Festival, Festival of Lights and the Wharf Rat Rally; and

Whereas the Wharf Rat Rally was chosen to receive the Event Legacy Award for providing long-lasting benefits to a community in the Annapolis Valley;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend the Wharf Rat Rally on this impressive award and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 2248

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

Whereas following 30 years of experience in the health care field, d'Escousse resident Annette Fougere has accepted the position of administrator of St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre in Arichat; and

Whereas Annette spent her first 15 years in health care as a respiratory technologist, then moving into various roles in nursing that took her throughout the province; and

Whereas St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre was built in 1985 and is comprised of 24 continuing care beds, five Veterans Affairs Canada beds and an emergency outpatient department, as well as several community health programs;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Annette Fougere on becoming the new administrator of St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre in Arichat, and wish her great success in her new role.

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 2:49 p.m. and we will finish Oral Question Period at 3:49 p.m.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERDT - SOUTH SHORE/N.S.: ECONOMY - DAMAGE ADMIT

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in 2009 this government made a very misguided and damaging decision to terminate the Yarmouth ferry. This government cut the ferry service without conducting an economic impact analysis.

Mr. Speaker, we already presented this government with an economic impact analysis that clearly showed the ferry was important to the economy of southwestern Nova Scotia and produced millions of economic benefits. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, will the minister admit that their decision to cut the ferry hurt the economy of the South Shore and of Nova Scotia?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as we've mentioned numerous times in this House, the subsidy for The Cat ferry was a tough decision for this government to make and I stand by that it was a necessary decision for us to make. Thank you.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the minister that their decision to cut the Yarmouth ferry was a much tougher decision for the people of Yarmouth to take from this government.

We now have a second report that was released today, which shows that a ferry in Yarmouth is economically viable. This report, commissioned by the Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership, proves that there is a viable, sustainable business case for a ferry based in Yarmouth. Given that we have further proof of the economic impact and further proof that the ferry connecting Yarmouth with New England is an absolutely viable and necessary service, my question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development Tourism is, what steps will this government immediately take - immediately take - to ensure that there's a ferry service back in Yarmouth?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I - this government, we certainly recognize the efforts of the NSI International Ferry committee, and we also appreciate that, I think when we look at the findings and the conclusions of that organization - you know, they were very optimistic - I'm not prepared to stand my in place and say that I agree with all the conclusions of their findings. I think that what we will look at and what we considered, and I've been saying this for the last two years, is that we will look at any commitment lead by the private sector that's recommending a ferry there. We will make assessments based on the business case that's in front of us.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this government made the decision to cut funding to the ferry. They made the decision to cut it and now what they've done is left it up to the private sector and municipal units to come up with a solution. That's unacceptable and what we want is action from this government on this issue. We have lost 3,700 jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia since this government took power - 300 of those were directly related to the ferry and others, I'm sure, were indirectly related to the ferry loss.

The minister tells us strategies, plans, and fancy brochures, Mr. Speaker, and we're told the jobs are coming. So my question to the minister is, how long will the people of Yarmouth and southwestern Nova Scotia have to wait to see any jobs created by this government's so-called plans?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I can stand in my place and say very proudly that this government has made some significant investments in the southwestern region. I look at Theriault & Son - I just heard a resolution earlier this afternoon related to Theriault & Son, and I want this House to be well aware of the efforts that have come from this government. We've made an investment in the 2011 Challenge Cup, and the 2012 Challenge Cup that's going to be hosted in Yarmouth. Through Events Nova Scotia, J.S. Kenney, we've made investments around retention and creating new jobs. We will continue to do that. Another good example of the investments that we've made is in the Shelburne shipyard. If they don't think that those are jobs, you know what? They've got a real problem.

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

NSP RATES - INCREASES: PREM. - ACT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Late last Friday afternoon, Nova Scotia Power announced a further 3.2 per cent increase in power rates through the fuel adjustment mechanism - this is on top of the previously announced 5 per cent increase that Nova Scotians can expect next year.

I note that on March 10, 2006, the then Opposition Leader, our now Premier, said at that time when he was Opposition Leader, "Electrical power is a necessity. When the price of that power starts to outstrip the consumer's ability to pay it's time for the government to step in." I will table that quote for all here to see.

My point is this, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, when in Opposition, appeared to feel strongly that there is a role for government in power rate policy. My question is, why now, when he's in a position of government, does he refuse to act, does he stay on the sidelines and continues to hide behind the URB to make important decisions on things like power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no such thing. In fact, that quote that he's referring to of course was directed at the government of the day because they were refusing to recognize the importance of the removal of the HST from important necessities. Of course, we followed through on that commitment to make sure that the provincial portion of the HST no longer applies to home energy.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently when the Premier made that comment in Opposition, he didn't tell the people of Nova Scotia that he meant it only then to apply to other people's governments and not his own. That is the sad fact that we see today. The Premier also said at that time that more people will be forced to choose between food and power and it is time for government to step in with a major effort to help Nova Scotians conserve energy and save money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that many seniors and other Nova Scotians on fixed incomes have reduced their consumption and are doing all they can to save energy

and save money but still their power rates are going up now. So my question to the Premier is, what does he have to say to those families who are facing power rate increases today during his government's time in office other than that they should bite the bullet and pay more?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I never said that what I said applied only to other governments and not to ours. In fact, it did apply to ours and in fact we followed that direction, took the HST off of home energy, but we didn't stop there. What we also did is we brought in the Affordable Living Tax Credit to make sure that there's more money in the hands of low-income Nova Scotians because we realized it's difficult for them to make ends meet. Of course, we are continuing with the Heating Assistance Program.

Mr. Speaker, we are the government that changed the rules so that seniors who were previously paying income tax, even though they received the GIS, no longer have to pay that. That is something that we put into the hands of low-income Nova Scotians and seniors.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in that statement of 2006 the then-Opposition Leader, now our Premier, said that 32,000 people who signed a petition by the NDP of that time to stop power rate increases would be very disappointed to hear of more power rate increase decisions.

Mr. Speaker, we can only wonder what those 32,000 people who counted on the Opposition Party, the NDP then, think about the decisions of his government today, now that they're in office. The Premier made reference to a number of decisions that his government has made that affect power rates and so I'm going to ask the Premier, will he table in this House all the decisions - legislation, regulations, directives, Orders in Council - that his government has made that affect the price of power in Nova Scotia during the last two years? Will he table that for all Nova Scotians to see so they can decide for themselves why their power rates are going up?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party would know, the reduction for the GIS for seniors was part of the budget that was, of course, tabled in this very room and voted upon; taking the HST off of home electricity, also a budget item that was voted on; and the Affordable Living Tax Credit. All these measures we have taken in order to make particularly low-income Nova Scotians have a better ability to make ends meet - they were all tabled right here in this Chamber.

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

PREM. - NSP: PERF. VALUE AUDIT - FORCE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Nova Scotia Power has strangled the economy of this province while this Premier and the NDP Government are too afraid to do anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians, their families and their businesses are at a tipping point. The 3.2 per cent increase announced last week, on top of a 5 per cent increase announced just last month, on top of doubling of the NDP electricity tax, is a burden that threatens to push a struggling economy over the edge. Liberals have offered this government solutions. We've asked this government to force NSP to trim the fat, to look inside their operations - just like the NDP Government has asked school boards and health authorities to look inside their operations for savings - we're asking this government to force Nova Scotia Power to do the same thing. My question to the Premier is will the Premier use the authority of his office, the authority given to him by Nova Scotians, to force Nova Scotia Power to do a performance and value audit of their operation?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I already pointed out numerous times to the Leader of the Official Opposition that an audit was done just a short time ago that looked at the performance of the utility. Of course, it's always within the power of the Utility and Review Board to go back and order more of those. There are consumer advocates, small business advocates that are all there for the purposes of examining the rate cases that are put forward before the board.

What we did in this government is we took action. We put money into the hands of low-income Nova Scotians, we took the HST off of home electricity - something, not only did the Opposition vote against, they campaigned against. If they were government, the energy prices would be much higher.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier sits silently by. For every penny he has put in the hands of Nova Scotians, he's allowed it to go directly through their hands into the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power. Your government has a responsibility to protect the ratepayers. Nova Scotia Power monopoly is putting people out of work, closing businesses and making Nova Scotians choose between which human necessity they will do without in the months ahead. We've asked this Premier and his government, just as we've asked the Third Party when they were in government, to break Nova Scotia Power's monopoly and allow renewable energy producers to compete with Nova Scotia for their customers. My question to the Premier - I will ask again - will the Premier work with us to break the electricity monopoly in this province and bring competition to Nova Scotia's energy market?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I point out that the current makeup of the Utility and Review Board's regulation with respect to Nova Scotia Power and Emera is there because those Parties, when they were in power, put it there. What we have done is we have taken

the HST off home electricity and I'd like to hear the member opposite tell Nova Scotians whether or not, if he were the government, he'd put it back on.

MR. MCNEIL: The Premier's rhetoric is cold comfort to those Nova Scotians who are facing increases in their power bills. One thing the government will not acknowledge is the fact that he has put an NDP electricity tax on every power bill in this province. Mr. Speaker, he can hide behind the Utility and Review Board if he likes, the fact of the matter is the NDP have put an electricity tax on Nova Scotia Power bills. My question to the Premier is will he, at the very least, freeze his own NDP electricity tax on Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's of course nonsense. In fact, we took the HST off of home electricity. I think what he's referring to is what the Utility and Review Board requested, which was the conservation demand-side management charge. That, of course, is designed to put in place conservation measures which will bring down the cost of electricity to consumers. Apparently, the Leader of the Official Opposition is opposed to that too.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM. - ECONOMIC POLICIES: EFFECT - ADMIT

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, it seems like every day we hear about job losses in this province. The Nova Scotia economy had the worst performance out of all the provinces in the country last year and this year the news gets worse every day. The NDP hiked the HST making it tougher on both businesses and customers. Power rates and gas prices are soaring and this government has done nothing except put slogans on press releases and billboards. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier finally admit that his economic policies are closing down businesses and driving people out of the workforce?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia had the worst performance with respect to the increase in the GDP for 20 long years. It is this government that has finally brought in a plan to ensure that we turn that around and that's what we're going to do.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting what the Premier calls turning around. Workers at Bowater are coming to grips with having to shed 110 jobs, 45 people at Fundy Gypsum are out of work, Composites Atlantic had to shed 37 jobs, the Valley had to deal with the shutdown of Larsen's, workers in Dartmouth had to deal with losing Scanwood, Yarmouth is still feeling the devastating effect of the closure of the ferry.

Mr. Speaker, we learned today that 27 employees in Inverness, who worked between the sugar camp and the Melford gypsum quarry, have been laid off. That is really

turning around the Nova Scotia economy. When will the Premier show Nova Scotians the strategy to create jobs instead of driving them away?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that the Leader of the Official Opposition can blame the economic crisis of Europe on the Nova Scotia Government. That's hard to believe.

Mr. Speaker, what I can say is this - it was through the efforts of this government that we managed to enter into an agreement for the building of the Lower Churchill energy mega-project. It was through the efforts of this government that we were able to work with Irving in order to obtain the contract for the building of the combat vessels. It was through this government that we were able to work with businesses in this province to come up with a made-in-Nova Scotia jobsHere plan, and one that will encourage them to grow their businesses and this economy.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Lower Churchill is creating jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the jobsHere plan that this government has brought in place is creating jobs everywhere but here.

Mr. Speaker, NewPage, Bowater, Fundy Gypsum, Inverness Gypsum, Larsen and the Yarmouth ferry are just a few of the examples of job losses that have disappeared under the NDP Government. Last year Nova Scotia had the third worst performance in manufacturing in the country, the worst performance in motor vehicle sales and the worst growth of any provincial economy.

The neglect of the NDP Government has hit rural Nova Scotia particularly hard - 2,300 Cape Bretoners have left the workforce; 1,400 people have left the workforce on the North Shore; 1,800 people have left the workforce in the Valley; and 4,300 people have left the workforce in the southern region, under the NDP watch.

Mr. Speaker, an outdated Industrial Expansion Fund is not an economic strategy for the people of this province. Will the Premier finally show some leadership and tell Nova Scotians about a real plan to create jobs for Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we worked with businesses right across the province to put in place a jobsHere plan that includes a concentration on innovation, on competitiveness, because this is what the business community of Nova Scotia asked us to do. So we did not impose a plan upon them, we worked with them to develop a plan that was going to help their business. As a result, Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada. Halifax has an unemployment rate that is lower than Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ENERGY: PREM. - PR SPIN

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the NDP likes to lead Nova Scotians into believing they are on their side by telling them that they took the HST off home heating fuels, for a saving of \$28 million. However, they seem to forget to mention that they raised the HST on everything else by 2 per cent, raking in an additional \$290 million. The government brags about this \$28 million when actually they've taken a net total of \$262 million more from Nova Scotians and now the NDP policies are driving power rates up yet again.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Acting Minister of Energy, will he demand that his government stop confusing Nova Scotians with his PR spin and admit to making life less affordable for Nova Scotia families with his expensive policies?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I could use a little extra energy myself. I want to assure the member opposite that the policies in place by the Department of Energy are to the benefit of Nova Scotians and at some future date Nova Scotians will pass judgment on those policies.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, in 2008 the Premier said before this House, "Seniors, laid-off forestry workers, people living on modest incomes in small towns and villages know it is hard enough to make ends meet when the cost of energy is so much higher. They expect the government to be on their side and not in their pocket." I'll table those comments. We are two years and more now into the mandate of this government, and according to the applications before the URB, we can expect another 8.2 per cent increase in the cost of electricity next year.

My question to the Acting Minister of Energy is, does he agree with his Leader and will he stop gouging our seniors, our laid-off forestry workers, and the people living on modest incomes with their bite-the-bullet electricity plan and find efficiencies to bring power rates down?

MR. MACDONELL: The URB is the arm's-length body that ensures that Nova Scotians are well served, and yes, I agree with the Premier on everything.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, this government now has a track record of acting only in favour of its special-interest friends. It hides behind the URB to avoid public scrutiny about electricity costs so it can continue to force ahead its expensive electricity plan. My question to the Acting Minister of Energy is, will the minister commit to going to Cabinet and demanding that the Premier stop listening to his special-interest advisors who just want to do things their own way? Come out from behind the URB and find real solutions to bring power rates down where they should be.

MR. MACDONELL: This government is actually the first government in years that has put a plan in front of Nova Scotians that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and that will be to the benefit of Nova Scotians in the future. In regard to the Premier, he listens to stakeholders all across the province.

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

PREM.: FUNDY GYPSUM JOBS - SIGNIFICANCE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Finance Minister responded to questions about the closure of Fundy Gypsum. The mine's owner said the closure was permanent, but apparently the Minister of Finance knew better. The minister shrugged off the mine's closure as if it were insignificant. My question to the Premier is, do you agree with your Minister of Finance that those 45 jobs in the Valley are insignificant?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I heard those comments as well and I can assure the Leader of the Official Opposition that the Minister of Finance never, ever said they were insignificant. I think he would be in the best position to reply directly to the Leader of the Official Opposition, since it was he who was being asked a question.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: The comments to which the Leader of the Official Opposition refers were comments that I made during the Ministers' Panel at the recent UNSM conference. The Leader of the Official Opposition was at the back of the room. He knows perfectly well what I said and he knows perfectly well that he's misquoting me, but that seems to be the only thing the Liberals know how to do.

MR. MCNEIL: No, Mr. Speaker, I was quoting the minister from outside of the House yesterday, but I will quote him from the UNSM meeting at some other point during my question. The mine has been in operation since 1924. The closure of this mine is a devastating event for the town of Hantsport, quite frankly, and the people of the Valley - another loss of jobs in rural Nova Scotia and three quarters of a million dollars to the municipality of Hantsport.

My question to the Premier is, how can the government take such a hands-off approach to business closure when clearly it will have such a devastating impact on the community?

THE PREMIER: As I understand it, the business owners made it quite clear what the reason for the closure was. They said that it was tied directly to the downturn in the U.S. housing market, and in fact, there was an oversupply of wallboard on the market which made this particular quarry surplus to their needs. Our hope, and I think you see this in almost every economic forecast that comes out, is that eventually the U.S. housing market will rebound, and when it does, demand will grow for just these kinds of products. Our

hope, of course, is the operator will see that that is a worthwhile investment in a good operating plant here in the province.

MR. MCNEIL: What the Minister of Finance was responding to was a question put to him about the permanent closure, Mr. Speaker, of that mine. Not a shutdown, but a permanent closure, and he responded it as insignificant in an arrogant and uncaring way for the people of this province. But the Minister of Finance told the UNSM last week that Fundy Gypsum would be opening, and I think that's what he might be referring to. Later, when he was pushed by councillors from Hantsport, he had to admit that he hadn't spoken to the company in a couple of years.

So my question to the Premier is, how can a senior minister in your government be so out of touch with reality when it comes to the economy of the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has responsibility, of course, for a broad swath of financial outcomes in this province and he does regularly apprise himself, of course, of all of the advice that's necessary in order to make decisions. That's why we have had such a great review by the bond-rating companies of the province's performance - and that has been a very positive thing for the province and it means that the cost of borrowing continues to go down.

I would make this point though, Mr. Speaker, that at no time did the Minister of Finance ever say that he thought that this was insignificant. He, like the rest of the members here on this side of the floor, considers every job to be important.

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

ERDT - RESORTS: PLAN - PRESENT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this week with the horrible fire at White Point, we are all reminded about the importance of our landmark resorts and what they mean to the tourist industry and the economy of communities in rural Nova Scotia. Last week when my colleague, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, questioned the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism about the state of Keltic Lodge, the minister said: "... one of the things we are not going to do because it would be a flaw to go out and start willy-nilly in doing things without a system in place."

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the minister understands it's better to have a plan than to do things willy-nilly - and maybe he should talk to some of his colleagues. My question through you to the minister is, when is the minister going to show leadership on this very important issue by presenting a real plan?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because it's an important one. I've stood here in my place and I've said how important and how

significant the Nova Scotia Signature Resorts are, not only for the regions but for all of Nova Scotians. When I was down at White Point yesterday talking to the owner of White Point, we did have discussion about the signature resorts. I can tell the House and all members of the House that there is a plan that's in the works and it will be coming forward as soon as possible.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, these resorts are vital to the tourism economy that has built up around them. We have some of the most beautiful places in the world right in our backyard, but if the roads leading up to them are in deplorable condition because the government is more interested in paving its own members' roads and the facilities are falling down, people will not come back.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, will the minister admit that he is not interested in saving the signature resorts and that he has failed the people of Digby, Ingonish, and Liscomb Mills?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little confused by the question. I've already stood here in my place and I emphasized how important the signature resorts are, not only to the regions but to the people of Nova Scotia. They are an important resource for us and they're an economic driver for our regions, for the Province of Nova Scotia. Tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia is a \$1.8 billion industry. We will do anything and everything reasonable to maintain that.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, last week this aggressive minister said, "I provided the answer and it obviously is, just stay out of our way, we will get the job done."

This minister does not have a good track record on getting jobs done but rather, he is much better at losing them. We are not going to back down on this minister's foolish threat. We will stand up for the people of Nova Scotia who rely on these resorts for their livelihoods and have seen this minister do nothing by way of support.

Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, will the minister commit to getting out of his own way and taking the action plan for these resorts to the next Cabinet meeting for approval?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I stand here in my place, week after week, and even with a new member representing Cape Breton North, I still hear words of bullying and intimidation. I will stand here, and that member over there, or any member over there, will not intimidate me; they will not bully me, and I will (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

FIN. - AUTO PREMIUMS: INCREASE - PREVENT

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Nova Scotians have been facing ever-increasing costs under this NDP Government - higher taxes, higher gas prices, higher fees, higher power costs and even higher food costs. Now Nova Scotians are concerned about rising insurance costs.

Mr. Speaker, the government has made, and continues to make, changes that Nova Scotians are worried will cause premiums to rise. My question to the Minister of Finance is, will the minister commit to Nova Scotians that their auto premiums will not rise under the NDP Government?

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I answer that question, I think I need to set a little bit of context. Back in 2003 the Progressive Conservative Government, with the support of the Liberal Opposition, made changes to the Insurance Act, which we now know to have been bad for Nova Scotia consumers. Compensation for injured Nova Scotians was slashed and the rates charged were too high. This is a proven fact, and so when this government engages in auto insurance reform, as we did with the minor injury cap, we know that the profits of the industry are large enough because of their mistakes, that these improvements can be implemented with no increase in premium.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Nova Scotians are indeed worried about rising costs and that would include the rising costs of insurance premiums. The changes this minister has made in past sessions and his proposals for the future are not what the NDP Government said they would do. In fact, they told Nova Scotians that there would be retroactive changes made and the minister has broken his promise to help those people who were caught in the middle.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the broken promises, the minister has been creating an uncertain environment in the insurance industry since he took office. What will the minister tell Nova Scotians who may see their premiums rise thanks to the changes he has been imposing on Nova Scotians since he took office?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, part of our very careful, thoughtful, comprehensive review of the auto insurance system was consultation with all stakeholders and also something that the other Parties did not do was to refer actuarial work to the Utility and Review Board to ensure that we understood exactly what the cost impacts would be.

Now there is one change involving use of gender as a rating factor where the URB said it would cost too much so we did not change that particular item. I will say that the Utility and Review Board's estimate of the cost impact is such that I can say I believe the profits of the industry are still large enough that those costs can be absorbed.

I note, Mr. Speaker, on the day our reforms were announced, that view was agreed with by an industry spokesperson.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the question had actually been on retroactivity. However, I will carry on. I don't think we usually get the answers that we're looking for here in this House.

While they were in Opposition, the NDP made it clear that they wanted to impose public auto insurance on Nova Scotians. They said time and time again that they would do just that if they were elected. In fact, when asked recently, the Minister of Finance would not rule out public auto insurance if certain conditions arise again in the future. My question to the minister is, given the past NDP statements in this House and earlier election promises, is the minister currently setting the right conditions so that he can impose public auto insurance on Nova Scotians?

MR. STEELE: Mr. Speaker, during the last election we committed to an independent review of auto insurance to ensure the lowest, fairest rates. The package of reforms that we announced last week, which includes Bill No. 86, fulfills that commitment.

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

ERDT: JOB LOSSES - MIN. RESPONSE

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. This government blew it when it comes to their jobs plan. In the last year alone, 2,100 jobs have been lost in Cape Breton. In southwestern Nova Scotia we've lost 2,500 jobs. These are more than sad statistics. There are 4,600 Nova Scotians who face an uncertain future, who are worried about their bills and are losing hope.

With job prospects so bleak for so many, this government has decided to add another job killer to the mix: first contract arbitration. This is legislation that one of the region's leading law firms has said can have serious implications for employers. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, when the province is bleeding jobs, why is this minister standing silently by as his government moves ahead with a scheme that will make it harder for employers to create jobs?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, certainly this government has not been standing idly by. When I look at the jobsHere initiative, when I consider the Small Business Loan Program that we have with the credit union, when I consider the Productivity Investment Program, when I consider Lower Churchill, when I consider the convention centre - when I consider all of the investments that this government has been making to maintain and create new jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia, we are doing a good job.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the prospect of first contract arbitration is sending a chill through Nova Scotia's small business community. When job creators see the recent arbitrated case for Capital Health, they worry that they could be next. My question to the minister is, what assurances has this minister given non-unionized businesses that a big contract they cannot afford will not be imposed on them through first contract arbitration?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will send that question down to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I think members of the House might be reassured by the fact that Canadians have had 37 years of experience with first contract legislation. As I've said earlier in this House, the Labour Management Review Committee has been tasked with doing a thorough consultation and helping government to understand all aspects of that type of legislation, and we are considering their information. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, when our economy is as weak as it is, when we have a great opportunity to send a positive signal to the rest of the country that this is a place where jobs can be created, where businesses can grow, this government is sending the signal that Nova Scotia may be the wrong place to invest.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development is, in light of continued job losses and the fact that this government is intent on proceeding with this job-killing, first contract arbitration bill, will he go back to the drawing board and produce a jobs plan that actually creates jobs and provides some certainty for nervous job creators?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the jobsHere strategy was done in consultation with diverse sectors in Nova Scotia. It was supported and endorsed by the business community of Nova Scotia, by the education sector. We consulted widely. This plan is working, we will stick by our guns, we will stick by the plan, and we will watch and see jobs continue to grow in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

PREM.: LOBSTER STRATEGY - DEVELOP

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the damage being done to the economy of rural Nova Scotia by this NDP Government is not just limited to manufacturing and tourism. Lobster fishermen in southwestern Nova Scotia are facing low prices again this year. With the problems faced by workers at NewPage, Bowater, Fundy Gypsum, Georgia-Pacific, workers in the forestry sector and the entire community of Yarmouth, workers in the lobster industry are going to have to struggle to make ends meet this season. My question to the Premier is, in the past two years in office, why has the Premier not been able to come up with a viable strategy for the lobster industry?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, now apparently, low lobster prices on the international market is the responsibility of this government. Well, it's hard to believe. That aside, we have been working with the industry. I believe that having a strategy that allows the lobster industry to get their product into more valuable markets is the right thing to do. That is something that we are working on - to work with the stakeholders themselves to develop that kind of a plan.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to watch the Premier belittle the economic crisis that's being faced by industries and businesses throughout this province. I recall when he sat on this side of the House, and I don't remember back then him saying that the government had no role to play when this province was faced with an economic crisis. He called for leadership then and we're calling for leadership from him right now.

This government should know that seafood is the largest export our province has, with the lobster industry playing a major role in the economic growth of our province. This is an issue that the industry has raised with government over the last number of years and has called on government to work on a strategy to identify better markets. To their credit, the previous government did start the process of identifying new markets and showcasing Nova Scotia lobster to the world. My question again to the Premier is, why has this government for the past two years not developed a comprehensive strategy for Nova Scotia's lobster industry?

THE PREMIER: First of all, I want to be clear, I was certainly not belittling the economic circumstances of the lobster industry. I was belittling the notion that we were somehow responsible for the international price of lobster, which we're not. I want to point out that we have been engaged with the stakeholders, not just in the lobster industry but with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture through all of the various catches that are available in the province, to try to make sure they are able to maximize the value that they get out of their catch.

That work is proceeding and we hope to have in place a strategy that will support the lobster fishermen and the fishermen in the other categories.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, two years into this NDP Government and the Premier is still talking about working towards a strategy. This is now the second season where we see low lobster prices and the impact it's having, not only on fishermen, their families, and their communities, but on our province in general. The fact is that seafood is our number one export here in this province, so this is not a minor issue. This is an issue that's in the best interest of all Nova Scotians, to see this industry be successful and see them get a good price for their product. My question to the Premier is, is the Premier prepared to table in this House the lobster strategy that his government has been working on for the past two years?

THE PREMIER: When we are in a position to be able to put forward a comprehensive plan, we'll do that. I think it's important to note that we continue to undertake all of those promotional activities on behalf of the lobster fishermen and on behalf of the other catches in the seafood categories. We recognize that this is a great opportunity for us to have greater penetration into those markets, but we also recognize that because of the economic turmoil that's going on, the significant difficulties in the European economy, the demand for many of those categories has fallen, and that contributes to the very crisis that the member speaks of.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER FISHERMEN - MEET

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. With lobster selling for \$3.50 a pound, the lobster fishery in southwestern Nova Scotia will struggle to survive in this upcoming season. Over 200 fishermen met yesterday from LFA 34 with great concerns over the possible low prices for their catch this winter and for the future of this industry in this province. With these low prices, many of our younger fishermen with huge debts have great worry about how they're going to be able to hang on in this industry. I believe, and they believe, that we need to know that this government will stand behind them. So my question to the minister is, has the minister met with these fishermen to hear their concerns? What options has he considered to help them through this period of low prices?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This minister has also acted in advance of this situation, if I can hit the reset button and go back over a year. Under this minister's direction we asked for an ad hoc committee to be established through the industry's stakeholders to identify issues - issues that we're talking about today, like low prices, grading systems, possible effort controls, and all this. This committee sat, established themselves, and made some recommendations. I'm very familiar with this situation. We have been a very strong supporter of the Lobster Council of Canada, which is province-wide, and also the other three Atlantic Provinces. We're very aware of this issue, and also can point out that the other districts, including New England, are also suffering very low prices. I'm very aware of this situation. I thank you for the question.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, two years ago - the last time we were in this situation - the provincial government helped to set up the Lobster Council of Canada. Now the council is asking for the industry to pay to keep this council active, which would be to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars per season. This council was supposedly set up to help get the price of lobster higher, and here we are in the same situation two years later, with similar low prices and a lot of worried fishermen. My question is, what communications and contacts has the minister had with this council, and does he know why there has been no progress with this council for the past two years?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I beg to differ. There is a lot of preliminary work that's being done. I want to emphasize that we are dealing with four provinces, Atlantic-wide, and the present Lobster Council is going through with having meetings, especially in Nova Scotia. There is a lot of discussion going on, and I can assure you that this issue you're dealing with here about a soft market is front and centre with this Lobster Council. In fact, it was us, when we were in Opposition, who asked the Third Party that's sitting here today to form a task force. It was this member who asked that question, who asked the Premier at the time to be aggressive and go to Ottawa and talk about a lobster task force. Out of that evolved the lobster council. Thank you very much for the question.

MR. THERIAULT: I would like to ask the minister of the council, where there's provincial and federal money put into this council, if that council could present the papers of the last two years of the work it has done, to this House?

Mr. Speaker, this council is asking for more money, which the industry hasn't got. They feel they are not going to have enough money to pay their boat payments this year at \$3.00 or \$3.50 per pound. Because they have not delivered in the end for the last two years, I'm sure the fishermen are not going to want to pay money into this council until they see what this council has done or can do for them. Is the minister prepared to help our young, indebted fishermen out financially if the price of lobsters does not improve this coming season?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the honourable member opposite, I want to assure the member opposite that any information you request from the Lobster Council needs to be directed to their executive. Also there is a lot of discussion going on in port clusters across Nova Scotia, in other Atlantic provinces, that is something that the lobster council, when they fulfill that, they will bring their recommendations to this minister.

On the individual cases of fishermen struggling, I suggest that each case will be dealt with individually and I'm there to assist the fishermen. Thank you for the question.

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

LWD/ADV. EDUC. - CONST. WORKERS: SHORTAGE - DETAILS

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, in May an official with the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association was quoted in The Halifax Chronicle Herald as saying, "Nova Scotia needs hundreds of carpenters, framers and bricklayers for the residential construction sector and it needs them fast."

Mr. Speaker, economic reports on the recent shipyard contract indicate that 420 new homes will be constructed every year, a total of 8,000 new homes between 2012 and

2030. It's important that this government not blow the opportunities presented by this shipbuilding contract.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, is the minister able to tell Nova Scotians today how many people short this province is in these types of workers?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the actual figures at hand but certainly for the last couple of years we've been taking a look at what we need to do to enhance opportunities for training in all the trades in Nova Scotia.

The honourable member might be aware that we're about to announce a review of our apprenticeship system. We've had broad stakeholder involvement and consultation. We're looking at all aspects of advanced training in the trades in Nova Scotia. This government is determined that we will maximize every opportunity possible to provide good jobs and great training for our Nova Scotian youth to get those jobs. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: My first supplementary is also for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. A survey conducted by the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association, which I'm pleased to table, shows that in about two years there will be 20,000 fewer people in Nova Scotia's work force.

My question to the minister, what is this minister doing today about ensuring that this province will have a stable work force beyond 2014 and why hasn't her government clearly laid out a comprehensive plan to ensure Nova Scotians will have a stable workforce, in just a few short years, so that the NDP does not blow the opportunity being provided to Nova Scotia by the shipbuilding contract?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly Mr. Pettipas and other stakeholder groups are in regular discussions with both my department and other departments. He certainly has provided some of that information to us.

I want to assure the House that this government invests millions of dollars into training programs. We are especially looking at providing more opportunities for marginalized groups of African Canadians, Acadians, women, people with disabilities, and First Nations youth. These programs are showing great progress and we are determined to make sure that we have the necessary workers with the necessary skills in good paying jobs in this province.

MR. BAIN: An estimated 27,000 people employed in the home construction sector are approaching retirement, so my final question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, will the minister explain more fully what she is doing to ensure Nova Scotians are properly trained to fill jobs in the construction sector? What is her plan?

MS. MORE: A couple of weeks ago, my department made available, for both critics and researchers from the other two Opposition Parties, two and a half hours of information, answered questions, and certainly I would be willing to set up another meeting with the honourable member to provide more detail on that specific issue. We're very proud of what we're doing in terms of supporting trades education and post-secondary education in this province, and we'll take every opportunity to brag about the progress that we're making.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

TIR: LITTLE HBR. RD. - MIN. UPDATE

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2010, I invited the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to visit roads in Richmond County. Part of that visit brought us to the Little Harbour wharf in Lower L'Ardoise where the minister had the opportunity to meet with buyers, fishermen, and local residents over concerns that heavy traffic continues to travel on a gravel road at a wharf, which is one of the largest economic generators in Richmond County.

At the time, residents were left with the impression that the minister would be taking action to address the fact that road needs to be upgraded; in fact, it needs to be paved. Unfortunately, no action was taken during this summer's construction season, so I'm wondering if the minister could update the residents, fishermen, and buyers in that area as to what his department's intentions are towards addressing the issues with the Little Harbour Road.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that opportunity on that particular day. It was informative and it's the sort of tour that ministers require, particularly when it comes to the specifics of the Little Harbour wharf road. I've talked to staff and reviewed the situation, and I'm well aware of the importance to the economy in the area - the member continues to bring that to my attention.

It is, unfortunately, one of those situations where there are only so many dollars to go around. It will be considered again in the next round when it looks at budgetary restraints and decisions, which we make in the Spring of the year. I know the member opposite will bring the matter to my attention again, and I want him to reassure the people of that particular community, and particularly the fishers in the area, that we've not forgotten about them and it's an important issue for the member opposite, for the community, and for this minister.

MR. SAMSON: I certainly look forward to an update from the minister in the very near future as to whether we can expect any action on that road during the 2012 construction season.

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

The honourable member for Yarmouth on an introduction.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the members' attention to the west gallery. There is a dear friend of mine in the audience today, Vicki O'Neil, and I would ask that Vicki stand and be recognized by the House of Assembly. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I think Thursday in Question Period, the member for Preston asked me a question about the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. He was looking for specifics around the uptake and budget, et cetera, and I would like to table that - and the member has a copy I gave him previously.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, before I call business, I just realized that there will be some members out of the House and if Bill No. 90 arises while they're out of the House, I will not be calling it in that order.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 86.

Bill No. 86 - Fair Automobile Insurance (2011) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, again, how much time do I have left?

MR. SPEAKER: Forty-one minutes.

MR. COLWELL: Forty-one minutes, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, that's hardly enough time to talk about this bill and all the consequences I'm sure that are going to be felt long term once this government shoves it through.

I was talking yesterday evening about the bill and the effects that the bill will have on Nova Scotians, and since then I've talked to some people in the industry and they indicated once the \$2,500 limit was put in place, the number of claims dropped off substantially for soft tissue injuries and indeed it did help stabilize the cost of insurance in the province.

Now, when I asked them about raising that limit to \$7,500, they were a bit concerned because they figured at \$7,500 there were going to be more people interested in pursuing the compensation for soft tissue injury and, of course, a soft tissue injury is very, very difficult to prove, either if you're trying to prove because you've had the injury, or difficult to disprove if an individual may not be telling the exact truth. Indeed, with the economic issues that this government has imposed on the better deal for today's families in Nova Scotia - with the higher GST, with income tax increasing on a regular basis - we're among the highest in the country. The fees are going up. The gasoline price is going up since they took office, up 27 per cent - from \$1 to \$1.27 - and the list goes on and on and on.

I really want to bring back up something that happened recently, since this government took office. You know, regular Nova Scotians have been hit with increasing income tax every year and it's called bracket creep. Most Nova Scotians don't realize but, indeed, as each year goes by, your income tax - if your income stays at the same level - your income tax increases in this province. That's a fact, but low and behold, the Finance Minister of the day decides, well, people in his income bracket, the Premier's income bracket, should deserve a tax break, and guess what? That's a better deal for Nova Scotians. It's a better deal for today's families. The ones that probably can afford it the most get a tax break, while somebody with a family, with probably two children, working at modest jobs, average jobs in this province, every day that they work, they have to pay more income tax while at the same time the Finance Minister and the Premier pay less than they used to. You tell me that's correct.

So as the economy gets tougher and tougher, and people have to resort to more and more things to try to ensure that their families can survive, well, this soft tissue industry may be one possible way that some people will try to take advantage of the system, although I believe that would be very few people, but even if it's a few people who take advantage of the system and put more claims through, bigger claims, guess what will happen? Insurance rates will rise, they will rise, and I'm convinced that they're going to rise whether that happens or not.

The minister assured us today that they wouldn't rise but I think those are words that he's going to regret down the road and as this fully gets implemented, we will see how expensive it's going to be for insurance. Maybe they're going down the road to making it

public insurance, that the taxpayers will be on the hook for insurance that they promised in an election a long time ago. I sure hope that isn't the case. By getting further and further away that businesses can operate in the province - and typically anything the province gets involved in, or a government gets involved in, is less efficient to operate than if it's a private industry.

Even when it goes through that process, private industry works for a profit - yet they can still do it more efficiently than government does, typically. I wouldn't want to see that be the case in the province, because then I think we would see huge increases in insurance premiums - and, indeed, more difficult for Nova Scotians to work here.

I've talked in the past about how difficult it is to run a business in this province, and the government is touting this new Ships Here program. I think it's wonderful that Irving did acquire the right to negotiate for the contract. They haven't got the contract yet. They'll negotiate for it.

I talked the other day, last evening, about how many jobs it would mean for Irving. I'd stated previously it was 1,900 at the peak in 2020. The vice-president of Irving corrected me on the radio and said it is actually 1,200 at the peak and 900 shortly thereafter, when the initial construction is done for the term of the contract, over and above what they now have. It's a long shot from the 11,000 jobs that the government said.

Lower Churchill Falls - the Premier said today how wonderful that's going to be for this province. It will be great for this province, but guess who engineered it? Danny Williams of Newfoundland and Labrador put that in place. If it wasn't for Newfoundland and Labrador, that contract would have never, ever happened.

As you go through here and you see what is going to happen with this province, you see all the pulp mills closing, you see a big list of operations here that are shutting down - gypsum mills, small businesses. As these shut down, the spinoff to the industries that were supporting them is going to be quite dramatic as well - the small little shops that have to go there and bring it back to the fact that it's going to cost them more to do business because the insurance premiums are going to go up. They have vehicles that they have to insure, and that's going to make it more expensive for business to operate in Nova Scotia.

As it gets less competitive to work here, there's going to be fewer jobs for Nova Scotians. Fewer jobs for Nova Scotians means there will be fewer tax dollars to pay for the things we require - health care, education, transportation, the roads that have to be paved, and the work that has to be done.

As you go through this, there's a question that I think of when I'm thinking about this insurance. When the Progressive Conservative Government did gas regulation - which definitely doesn't seem to be working properly, because there are higher gas prices here than anywhere else - there was a fee charged. Nobody talks about this. The present

government doesn't talk about it much, but they left the fee in place - used to set the prices for gasoline each week. I'm wondering, when the Utility and Review Board goes through this process with insurance rates, if they're going to have a hidden fee in that, again forcing premiums up for insurance. I would really bet they will, and as time goes on, that will add to the cost of insurance.

I can tell you, I'm just renewing my insurance on the vehicles I have, and the rates are very high. Luckily, so far we haven't had any major accidents. There are only two drivers in our household, and no young people who drive. When we go through the process and see what that costs - say, if the insurance rate goes up 5 per cent, 10 per cent, there's going to be a substantial increase. You add that to the cost to heat your home, power rates - power rates were talked about here today, two more increases coming. It is already up 36.2 per cent. That's \$36.20 for every \$100 you used to spend 10 years ago. If you add another 3 or 4 or 5 per cent or another 8 per cent on top of that, that's going to be even higher. It is soon going to be a 100 per cent increase in the price of electricity in this province.

That's going to make people more desperate. As people get desperate, there's a possibility that if they get in a minor accident they may have a soft tissue injury and decide: This is one way that I can help feed and look after my family; if I can get a claim in, the claim gets going and ensures that I can make sure my family is looked after.

In a situation where people are struggling and trying to move forward and do the things they have to do to look after their families, any increase in anything is really difficult. The problem with these increases - it wouldn't be too bad if there were just one or two things that are increasing, but groceries have gone up; everything that we touch has gone up. Incomes haven't gone up to match it and unfortunately, they can't. If the incomes go too high, then we're totally non-competitive in the province and we can't compete at all.

So if this bill the minister is talking about and working with - and will force through the Legislature because they have a majority - impacts the standard of living and the cost to Nova Scotians even as a small amount, it will add to the already mounting costs for people in the province. As that cost mounts it becomes more and more difficult to heat your home, feed your family, pay your mortgage, pay your property taxes, pay your other taxes and do all the things you have to do, and pay the fees - the fees have gone up on everything we touch in this province.

I talked about it yesterday - Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations - I'll state what I said yesterday. The minister, a very honest and straightforward man, indicated in the Red Chamber here during budget submissions that the fees were imposed upon them because the Department of Finance, the Minister of Finance, said you have to raise them. So why would we have faith in this minister when he turns around and says there will be no increases in insurance premiums, none, because of this, absolutely none? He's the same minister who said these are all cost-driven. But a straight-line percentage increase in fees isn't cost-driven.

If you're going to have an increase in fees because of cost, you have to calculate the cost on every fee. Some of them may have had to go up substantially; some may actually have gone down. It might have been a whole different picture for the province. The province must have a handle on what these cost - each fee to administer and work at. When I asked the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, at least the ones that he administers and his staff, they didn't have a hard cost on them. They said it was very difficult to calculate and it probably is. The point I'm making is, if we have a Minister of Finance dictating to the departments to raise fees because they need more money, how can we believe that same Finance Minister when he says insurance premiums aren't going to go up because I say so?

I can't believe him, I can't. I can tell you, the people in the communities that I represent, and the people outside the communities I talk to, aren't very confident in this government and are becoming less and less confident every day. Most people don't realize, haven't realized yet, what impact these fee increases are going to have on them. They're finding, with the fees and the HST going up and all the other things that have been imposed by this government, they haven't realized where the problems come from.

Well, the problems come from the increased taxes. As the taxes go up, people have less disposable income. Less disposable income is money after taxes. When you look at that money after taxes, you realize that is the money you really have to spend. It's not what you make, your gross that you make, it's the actual money after taxes. When you take after taxes and you take off the income tax increase that all Nova Scotians except for one group of Nova Scotians that the Finance Minister and the Premier gave a tax break to, all the rest of us and all the rest of the people - particularly those on low income - are forced to see this bracket creep give them more and more taxes every year. That reduces their income a little bit each year, 2 per cent every year. Actually, they're going to have to pay for the HST, the fees are a little bit extra.

After awhile it all accumulates. That \$200 out of the \$10,000 that you used to clear, that was the HST, not significant at all, but you add to that the income tax, probably another \$100 out of the \$10,000, maybe more, depending on your tax break. You register your vehicle, a few dollars there. You get your driver's licence - luckily it's only once every five years - a few dollars there. You buy fuel - fuel has gone up from \$1 to \$1.27 now, since this government took power; in the U.S. it is 84 cents a litre. We're going to compete with people that we have to compete with - 84 cents in the U.S., and diesel is even a better price than here.

So as you accumulate all those things and you take that \$10,000 that you cleared, and you look at what the actual number is, well, I'm telling you I'm calculating it, and once I get it finished I'm going to broadcast it and let people in this province know where their money is going. I'm going to itemize it - so much for GST, so much for income tax increase, so much for your fees, so much for your power increases, so much for your oil price increases, so much for gasoline price increases and, you know, as I go through this

thing, all of the benches over there, they're saying this was all not really true - but it is true, and when people start to realize what has caused this, what has caused it, they will not be supporting this government anymore.

I've been around a long time and I've seen a lot of first-time MLAs, and a lot of first-time MLAs are so confident in the government and the great job they're doing, right? The great job they're doing - well, I've got some sad news for you, sad news. I would say that probably the numbers on the other side there, when people realize exactly what has been downloaded on them, forced on them and imposed on them by this government, they're going to find out that when you knock on his door, indeed that guy who had your sign up last time, who says, yes, I'll take your sign again, I guarantee he will not vote for you. And guess what? They won't be back.

Well, I guess that may be better for the people of Nova Scotia. I'm sure it will be but, unfortunately, you know it's going to be quite a shock to some people. It's interesting to see how things go on, and it's going to be quite interesting to see what happens as time goes on. But as we see the effects of these incremental tax increases, we're going to see people getting very, very frustrated.

We've already had some demonstrations out here - well, around city hall - that seem to be backed by the unions. They don't seem to want to come to Province House here to talk about that, and camp out here - not that I'm inviting them here, don't get me wrong - but it's \$5,000 from a union for demonstrators, the same people who support the NDP. It makes you wonder why, but I think you're going to find out soon that some of these people who are demonstrating are going to be here on the doorstep saying we can't live in Nova Scotia anymore - we can't stay here anymore; we can't afford to live here.

So what's going to happen to the people? We've already seen a huge exodus of smart, young people in the trades, and professional people leaving this province to go to other parts of the country, other parts of the world, and we're losing the people we need here to make the economy grow. The fact is they can get a better lifestyle outside the province.

And just talking about taxes - I have some friends who are retired who looked at moving to another province. They calculated they would save \$6,000 a year on a retirement income - \$6,000 a year by leaving Nova Scotia - \$6,000 a year.

When you think about that, now that's \$6,000 of disposable income. That's \$6,000, if they had the same tax rate here, that they could spend on renovations on their home, hire a contractor, plumber, electrician, whoever, it doesn't matter, and making jobs for people here in the province but, no, if they decide to go - hopefully they don't, but I hope if they do go, that will mean that in the province they move to that indeed their economy will improve because the steady income that comes in to the individuals I'm talking about will be spent in another province.

Now, this is only one of several people I know who has retired and realized it's more expensive to live in Nova Scotia - and this was before the GST went up 2 per cent. Some of the people I know have actually moved out of the province for this very reason - and I don't know how widespread that is, but it would be interesting to find out how many people have left this province because of the devastating taxes and negative impact this government has had on the people of this province.

A better deal for Nova Scotian families. A better deal for today's families, is that the proper word? That's their election slogan - a better deal for today's families, I think it was. Anyway, as people realize the better deal - higher taxes, less disposable income to spend to do the things that they have to do, they're going to realize after awhile that it is a really good deal for somebody but it's sure not us as a family - and my family is being hurt by this government and every family in this province is being hurt by this government.

It's really good for New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and everywhere else that has a better structure, a more prosperous climate for business. Business will go in, create jobs, and make sure that people have a healthy lifestyle and continue to work and be able to look after their families in a way that you should be able to in this great country we live in.

There are so many things we can talk about when it comes to how this province is suffering under this government. This insurance, really when you look at the surface of it, it looks great, it looks really good, there is going to be more money for people that have a soft tissue injury. That's the toughest thing you can prove and the toughest thing that you can measure. So, indeed, if there are some people out there who are struggling and are desperately trying to look after their families under the economic climate that this government has created, I think you're going to see more and more claims of that type come forward. If that happens, guaranteed, insurance premiums will go up and as insurance premiums go up it's another nail that's going to be driven in the system that's going to help destroy the economy in this province.

The economy is already suffering, if you look at businesses closing down. If business doesn't make money, business can't survive and that's what is happening in this province. Every little fee, every little thing that you have to pay for and do that's over and above, the things that really, really hurt. We have seen the government close the ferry in Yarmouth, they shut it down, bang, closed it down with no plan at all about what's going to happen. You see businesses closing because of that, closing. It makes you wonder how that has not had a negative effect on the province, well it has. It has had a negative effect on the province, no plan to move forward.

The minister said today tourism is going great, \$1.8 billion, but that's down and it's going to be down further and it's going to keep going down because people aren't even going to travel in the province, those who now travel maybe to Yarmouth or to Sydney or wherever they may want to go, from Halifax or into Halifax from another area to have a

vacation, they're not going to have the money to do that. When they don't have the money to do that it means the tourism operators, in whatever area of the province it is, are going to hurt. We have some incredible places in this province that you can visit, you don't have to leave the province to have a wonderful vacation, but indeed, that's going to hurt that industry too.

As you see all of those industries suffer more and more and more, more and more people get laid off, less and less companies operating and making money, it's very clear what's going to happen over time and this is going to take some time. By the time that any effect of the shipbuilding contract comes in place - and I'm still very skeptical about the numbers that have been quoted, I don't think that they're quite accurate where they're going to be and we won't have the 11,000 jobs that are supposed to be there. I'll be very surprised if we come anywhere near that, even with all the possible spinoffs that could be there and I've talked about that on a previous day. But that's not going to be enough to help, that is at least - before those ships get built - anywhere from three, to four, maybe five years away before this starts, four or five years.

As I said before there could be two or three elections between then with provincial or federal elections. The federal elections are the ones that are one of the scariest ones because they could decide, well, we're trying to balance the books, we're already cutting every place we can, and they may decide, well, we're going to do the program but we're going to do half as many ships and we're going to do them over a longer period of time and, indeed, you can build the ships but you're not going to have as much money to do it with, so therefore you're going to have fewer people employed and fewer spinoff jobs, everything that goes with it.

You look in rural Nova Scotia, I hear my colleagues talk, those who are from rural Nova Scotia, and see the devastation that's happening to employment in those areas. I can tell you I represent a community that has very high unemployment, even though we are within HRM. It is very devastating to see a family come in and talk to you about - they can't pay their property taxes and their home is going up for sale. This is a regular occurrence in my office now, a regular occurrence.

Other people are coming in and saying, I can't pay my heat bill, I can't heat my home. When you explain to them that the taxes have increased so much and the insurance will go up with this bill - which will cost them more again - will that mean they will be driving vehicles with no insurance? Well, the government will probably say you have to have proof of insurance when you register a vehicle. Sure you do, no problem, so you get proof of insurance today, register your vehicle and cancel it the next day, and away you go. You drive until you get a road stop or something happens or you get in an accident and you get away with it. Who is going to suffer? You know who is going to suffer? The people who you get in the accident with are going to suffer. That's what Nova Scotians could be facing. Hopefully they won't but it's a reality and a possibility.

There are people in this province now who drive without insurance, I guarantee you. I talked to the RCMP in my area. They regularly pick up people with no insurance. I don't think it's just in my area, I think it's the whole province.

I know many people who don't have insurance on their homes, they simply cannot afford it. What does that tell you? It tells you that they are being taxed to death. People are telling me that they can't afford to live here anymore. Anyone who thinks this isn't real hasn't really been paying attention to their constituents and listening to what they are telling you, because this is what is happening in this province.

It has to stop. We have to stop imposing all these taxes and fees and everything else on people. I also talked the other day about if the interest rate rises, internationally goes up, and to service a debt in this province, the province will probably go bankrupt. What will happen then? All the civil servants out there, who have these good jobs with government - and that's great - may not have jobs anymore. Then what happens to the economy? The economy really drops.

So as we go through and we really think about what the impact of this bill could be, maybe a small increase in insurance the first couple of years, larger the next year, a little larger the next year because injuries are going through and they are being paid and the claims are going to be paid and the insurance companies are going to have to come forward and say, if we're going to survive in this business we have to ensure that our fees are high enough that we can look after these claims and also make a small profit, whatever the profit is, and continue on and go there.

The Minister of Finance says, well, the profit in the industry can absorb any of these new increases. He doesn't know that, no way that he knows that. He doesn't know how many claims there are going to be; he doesn't know if the claims are going to go up by 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 100 per cent or 500 per cent. Who knows? It will be interesting to see as this works through the system.

As you add each small incremental thing, it makes it more difficult for families to survive in this province. Therefore, the deal, this better deal for today's families, I remember that in an election slogan - funny thing that they don't have it on those road signs with the Premier's name and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's name on it. They'll say it must cost \$1,000 apiece to put up, but at the same time they don't have money for the Yarmouth ferry.

I saw them on one of those signs; I think on a road that they're fixing some potholes on, and two of them up, one on each end of the road. So it makes you wonder where the money is being spent and if it is being spent wisely. One question I'm going to ask eventually here, I'm going to find out how much each one of these signs cost to buy, to make, and how much it costs to install each one. That's going to be an interesting conversation. I would bet, after buying signs - these are big signs and they are in colour . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the member that the bill is about fair insurance pricing and not about signs on the side of the road, if I could ask the member to debate on the bill. Thank you.

The honourable member for Preston has the floor.

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker, but it's all related. You know as the cost of everything goes up, and the more that people have to pay, the less money they have to pay for their insurance.

If insurance goes up, and indeed it will - I'm confident that it will under this new plan, because it was getting very expensive before it was changed to reflect a more reasonable way to do this to ensure the cost didn't go up for everyone, so people could afford to drive in this province. I'm talking about the incremental cost that this is going to add to the people in Nova Scotia, and the problem is going to be for people in this province to ensure they can maintain the vehicles and drive their vehicles to work every day.

We have seen that sales for new vehicles have dropped dramatically. Well, they've dropped dramatically because of the HST. If the insurance goes up because of this, it'll drop some more. That hurts the automotive industry. It means that as vehicles get older, typically when they get really old, some of them aren't safe to be on the road, even though we have a safety inspection system that usually catches most of them. But it's getting to the point now with the two-year safety inspection - which is not a bad idea, but with a two-year safety inspection people will drive it right to the end of the two years. The car is junk by the time they're done, and they have to buy another car to replace it. That's a significant cost for many Nova Scotians.

As you go through this whole process, everything is interconnected. When you talk about this bill and you talk about insurance on vehicles, you're talking about major costs for people in this province. There will be people who will try to use the system to look after their families. They will put claims in to make sure they get that money that may pay down the mortgage on their house or pay what they're back due on, or maybe they'll pay the property taxes on their home. That means that the municipalities aren't going to sell their homes.

All these things are interconnected and intertwined. When you talk about insurance and you talk about this change in insurance, it's going to be very interesting to see how negatively it affects all Nova Scotians. Almost everyone in the province drives today; you pretty well have to in this province. We're set up that you have to travel for pretty well everything you do - going to church, work, the grocery store, even if you're going to pick up the children or take them to hockey or baseball or whatever they're involved in. We need vehicles in this province.

As we see more and more costs associated with that, it makes it very difficult for Nova Scotians to survive. You add those costs onto the other costs that we've been talking about - the cost in the HST increase, the fuel cost increase, the furnace fuel increase - everything that goes with that, you add a possible increase - I say it's more than possible - a most likely increase on insurance premiums on your vehicles, then you're going to have a dilemma. What do you do? What do you pay for?

You're going to have to make some tough choices, because with the way everything is increasing in cost in this province, there is a point where people will finally say, I can't take it anymore, I can't stand it anymore, and what am I going to do? They're going to make some tough choices. They're going to let the mortgage company take their home? We've seen that happen in the U.S. over and over again. Are they going to have a breakdown and cause themselves or their families some problems? We've seen some of that already in the communities, which hopefully doesn't happen to anyone. When the pressure comes on and people are under a great deal of pressure, strange things happen.

I would just ask the Minister of Finance, as he goes through all this and he looks at all these things, to consider these words. I know he possibly doesn't understand what a family that has a couple of children is like, both people working, trying to pay for daycare, trying to get back and forth to work, maintain their home, and make sure the children have the clothing and food they need and the opportunities that every other child in this province is entitled to.

Each time you add an incremental cost to that family that can't be replaced, you have a problem. You take a senior citizen on a fixed income, probably a survivor, one survivor out of a couple who used to have a reasonably good income, all of a sudden it's one person in the family has the income.

I see a lot of senior citizens trying to stay in their homes, doing a wonderful job trying to do it, but struggling every day and, again, most senior citizens have vehicles. If the insurance rate goes up, it's one more thing that is going to be too expensive for them to do and that means they're going to have to give their transportation up - the one thing that's so important to them, their independence - and have to rely on someone else to drive them around, pick them up and move them around. That's reality.

So it makes you wonder how people can possibly think that a bill like this isn't going to affect them and affect them negatively. When you look at it and see how it is going to really hurt the people in the province, it could be catastrophic to a lot of people. You know, we have 1,000 people a week in this province - and that's through the Senior Citizens' Secretariat, the number they've quoted - 1,000 people a week in this province turning 65.

That shows you how many people are going to be retired. That's 52,000 people a year in this province who are turning 65. So we're turning very quickly into a retirement

province and those people who are retiring - at whatever age you retire, if it's 55 or 80, it doesn't matter - when people retire that income is typically fixed. I see more and more people, when I go to the local building supply store, more and more people working part-time so they can make ends meet - part-time - who are retired and they're not that old, probably someone 65, or 67, maybe even 50-some, who have retired at 55, working to make ends meet.

It's difficult to make ends meet in this province. We've got to do something to ensure that people can afford to live here. It's a wonderful place to live. People are incredible here, who live in this province, and it's a wonderful place, but the opportunities are slipping away on us. I talked before about running a business here and a business is facing more auto insurance in Nova Scotia than they are in New Brunswick. Even if it's a few hundred dollars a year, it's going to be very difficult for that business to compete with a company from outside the province - very difficult. It's difficult enough now. The government doesn't seem to grasp that. They don't seem to understand it.

They always have all these plans they're working on, all these other things, but they don't seem to be generating very many jobs, not very many jobs. That's a negative impact on jobs in this province, a negative impact. There are fewer people working and with fewer people working, there are fewer tax dollars, fewer tax dollars, an aging population, people who will be using the health care system more and more and more as time goes on, you're going to see a crisis in this province, a crisis. I hope it never comes but the way this government is going, by the way they're imposing more and more costs on everyday families in Nova Scotia, the better deal for Nova Scotia families, that they have told us so well, it's going to be nearly impossible for people to survive in this province.

I don't know who is going to be hit the hardest first - I guess the people with the lowest income. There were a lot of programs there for people with low income and a person said to me the other day, there was someone they had talked to and they said, this person has a low income and they deserve grants and everything they can get but it's not fair because here my husband and I work. We have children in university and we're struggling. We are struggling. They were probably struggling as badly as the person they were talking to, only because there's a crisis that they have at the present time, and can't get any of these programs that the government has because their income is just a little bit over the limit and because of that - and they were talking about some of the energy programs that the government has, and some of them are very good programs I might admit and I commend the government for them, but very good programs in the long term could help people - and indeed they can't get those programs.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing, I'm very concerned about this bill. I'm very concerned about the impact this bill is going to have on families in Nova Scotia today and how negative it could be and how devastating it could be for the families in this province. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, I just decided I would add my voice to the debate on this bill after seeing, with some amusement, the remarks made by the minister responsible last night. He is an individual who claims to know a lot about many things, but his view of insurance law history and experience in this province for the last decade is rose coloured to say the least - orange coloured might be a better way to describe it.

In Opposition, he and his Party were very much opposed to any solution to the problem of skyrocketing insurance rates, the fact that too many Nova Scotians couldn't afford their auto insurance anymore, and that fact that, in many cases, people were being denied coverage because of the disruption that had occurred in the insurance market. Their answer at that time was to create a public auto insurance market - in other words, to take over the industry in government. I know that the minister will say that that was then and this is now, that there was a crisis and now's there's not, which is exactly my point.

What's funny is that now in government, Madam Speaker, after two thorough reviews, after many consultations, after two bills that have come before this House dealing with auto insurance, all the government proposes to do to this system that they pretend to be so violently opposed to is to tweak it. In fact, that is all that this bill does - tweak the existing structure for auto insurance in our province. It builds on a foundation that the NDP in Opposition were so opposed to. Now that they have a chance to put in force their own views, whether it's to take over the industry or to reverse what was done or to make some major change, they fall silent and just propose a few tweaks.

I think it is relevant, particularly since the minister wanted to take us on a walk down memory lane, to just review how we did get to this point. Because there are members in this House - and certainly all Nova Scotia drivers will remember that the last major reform of auto insurance in 2003 was implemented at a time when there were too many Nova Scotians who were on fixed incomes. Whether they were seniors, or on a pension, or of modest means they literally were being priced out of the insurance market, which is a great hardship because, of course, auto insurance is a mandatory product. People were leaving their cars at home. People were pushing strollers to the grocery store because they couldn't afford to insure their car to drive it to get their groceries. The members opposite, and many others, were making the point that a great unfairness had developed in the auto insurance market, that it had become a market that too few Nova Scotians could afford to participate in even though they had to as a matter of law. It was a hardship if you need to drive back and forth to work or to school or to run errands and so on.

By 2003, for the first time in the history of our province, public opinion polls were showing that auto insurance premiums had become a bigger issue in our province than health care or education or jobs. It was indeed a market that had fallen apart. The NDP's

answer was for the government to take it over, but the government of the day - working with, I guess, both Parties on this side of the House now - did put together a plan that restored the market to stability and encouraged competition to be renewed, which is a great way to drive rates down and something that I hope the government listens to when they consider their electricity policies. It allowed for thousands of Nova Scotians, particularly those who the insurance companies had refused to insure, to buy insurance at reasonable rates and to re-enter the insurance market, and allowed seniors and others on fixed incomes to purchase insurance at reasonable rates and go on with their daily lives.

All of that became possible again, and Nova Scotia earned the great tribute of being the province in the following years that had the fastest falling premiums for auto insurance of any province in Canada. That is an accomplishment. That actually did make life easier and more affordable for Nova Scotians. Perhaps that is why the NDP remain opposed to it because the other actions that they take in other areas have had the effect of increasing costs on Nova Scotians, not to drive them down.

Here is one area where the government - by virtue of the bills it passes, the policies it sets - can actually put a few dollars back into the pockets of hard-working Nova Scotians and that is through the auto insurance premiums that they pay. That is what was done then and the system has worked wonders for Nova Scotians ever since. In fact, I can't help but point out that it is a system that has been copied by many other provinces in Canada that have also had to deal with the problem of sky-rocketing auto insurance rates.

No one today is talking about sky-rocketing auto insurance rates because, in fact, they have gone down. In 2003, the government of the time took firm action and actually legislated premiums down by 20 per cent, as some members may remember - an instant relief provided to Nova Scotia drivers. What has happened to premiums, since they were forced down by 20 per cent? They have continued their downward trend and there are more providers and more competition and lower rates and more people that can afford to drive and buy auto insurance as a result.

I should point out that all the way through, the NDP have opposed those things that made life easier for Nova Scotia drivers. Now they are in office. Now they've been in office for two years. The minister says they are still opposed to the reforms to the insurance market that allowed all of these good things to happen. It begs the question, if they are so opposed to the reforms that have allowed the insurance market to thrive and provide for a better coverage and lower premiums, why, as the minister responsible today, is he not doing what it is within his power to do and actually reverse it? Why not change it if you are opposed to it?

I guess, perhaps, it's awfully easy for a member like the minister responsible when he's on this side of the House to be opposed to things, then, when he finds himself on the government side of the House, he changes his views because we've now had two bills on insurance that could have reversed what he says he's opposed to. Yet, in both cases, he has

failed to do so. Instead, he has proposed minor changes. The bill last year, which increased the size of the cap on non-financial losses on minor injuries, is one that we supported because after eight years it was time to review the amount of the cap. That is not a major reform to auto insurance. That is a minor tweak that takes into account the basic principle that costs have gone up.

Now, we have this bill before us, which proposes to make some more minor tweaks to the insurance system, building on the same foundation that was done before. I just want to point out that after two-plus years in office, after a major consultation, after a major review, after the introduction of two bills into this House, the NDP has done nothing but make minor changes to a system that is working and I think the time has come for them to just admit that, by virtue of their actions, they are showing that the system is working. Of course, any system can be improved. To oppose something but then fail to take action on it when you're in government, that is another matter altogether.

Let me just review briefly some of the changes that are in the bill. For example, the Section A coverage, the liability coverage, the personal liability coverage - the government proposes to leave the limit exactly where it has been all along. That is a good thing. We can be supportive of that but that is hardly a significant change or improvement. In fact, it's no change at all. Thankfully that's the case because that section of coverage is meant to protect a driver who is sued after an accident. Fortunately in Nova Scotia, claims that are made under this section have been relatively modest, compared to the United States and some other jurisdictions and the amount of coverage, the limit of coverage that that section requires by law, is sufficient for most Nova Scotians to protect themselves from that legal jeopardy that they may find themselves in after an automobile accident.

Mr. Speaker, experience in other places has been that the size of legal awards, under this particular Section A coverage, are proportional to the deepness of the pockets of the person being sued. Fortunately the government sees the wisdom of the system the way it is when it comes to Section A coverage, because to jack it up would have the effect not only of increasing premiums to Nova Scotians but lead to higher rewards because there would be a higher pool of money that each individual driver has been required to purchase for that coverage.

The Section B coverage, Mr. Speaker, the mandatory coverage for medical costs, for lost wages, for all of the financial loss and hardship and medical pain that an accident victim can go through, the government is proposing to raise those mandatory limits.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? That is a good thing. It's hardly radical, it has been decades since those limits were increased and costs have gone up. I think most reasonable Nova Scotians would agree that the limits of coverage should reflect today's costs of insurance in those areas, these Section B areas as they are known, but this is not exactly a major reform, to recognize that costs of medical care, lost wages and other financial losses

that an accident victim suffers ought to keep pace with the times. The best we could describe it is a tweak to the system.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out, however, that with an increase in coverage does come an increase in costs. This is where I do take issue with the minister's approach. He stands up in this House and tells us all, with a straight face, and tells all Nova Scotians that we're going to increase their coverages, we're going to increase their insurance and it won't cost them a cent. Well, I sure hope that's true but it doesn't meet the test of common sense.

The minister says he's relying on the word of the insurance companies who have told him that they are making enough money and, as a result, they probably won't increase their premiums. Well, we're going to hold the minister to that point. We're going to hold the minister to the point that he believes that the premiums won't go up because of the increase in coverage. I know when the minister gets up to speak he can address this point and we'll be listening very carefully. Mr. Speaker, I am sure . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. Thank you.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was having trouble hearing you over the commotion here.

Mr. Speaker, there are, of course, other provisions to the bill, this moving down through some of the clauses. The provision to allow accident victims to recover their costs from their own insurer and allow their insurer to then proceed to recover from the other driver's insurance is a good provision. It will make it easier and quicker for Nova Scotia drivers to get insurance payouts that are due to them after an accident, so we support that.

Mr. Speaker, the provision to allow for a fund for volunteer fire departments to recover their costs quicker is also a good provision, and we support that. I do notice that it gets a lot quieter on the government side when I point out areas of agreement between our Party and theirs, so I hope they are listening to hear that there are some good things about this bill and this is another.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we do know, and I recognize that this was pointed out in the bill briefing, that volunteer fire departments are covered now and have the right to make a claim when they have out-of-pocket costs from responding to an accident. Having said that, that does place a hardship on our volunteer fire departments, to proceed with a claim, in some cases have to seek legal help in proceeding with a claim, and so a modest fund that allows for that to happen is a positive step, and we support it.

One other provision that has us all scratching our heads, of course, Mr. Speaker, is the idea that the government plans to proceed to introduce a two-tier system of insurance when it comes to optional tort, to allow drivers to pay more for insurance and be removed from the cap on non-financial losses, the cap on minor injuries.

Mr. Speaker, we're all wondering what problem exactly this is meant to solve. It will clearly be a more expensive option for Nova Scotian drivers. No one that we know of has been asking for it; no one that we know of is demanding it. The experience in the few other places where it has been brought in has shown that nobody actually buys it in the end because it is so much more expensive than the system that we have now, and it's complicated to administer when you have two drivers involved in an accident and one is capped and the other is not capped.

It's going to cause great confusion in the market, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it will lead to great concern from the insurance brokers and others in our province who are responsible for advising drivers on their insurance options, providing them with their professional advice and actually selling people automobile insurance policies, because when one buys a policy, they are particularly interested in, obviously, the cost of that policy. The experience in other places has been that they buy the lowest-cost policy that provides them with adequate coverage, including coverage up to the cap for minor injuries.

Of course, when one ends up in an accident and they wish to make a larger claim for pain and suffering, who are they going to blame, Mr. Speaker? They are going to blame the poor insurance broker who just did his job, who explained the options as best he could, who in good faith sold a policy to a person who was primarily interested in the premium, who now is going to wish that he had bought this higher coverage, the very few people that that applies to. It puts our professional insurance brokers at risk, and needlessly, because it's a product that so few people are interested in that it's not worth doing. So, again, we all wonder why the government is proceeding with optional tort when there clearly is so little demand for it in a market that has already done a good job of bringing many Nova Scotians back into the regular insurance market, at affordable premiums.

So, Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons - that the mandatory coverages are keeping up with the times, that there are good provisions for volunteer fire departments and a few other things, but mostly because all this is, after all the sound and fury, after the NDP finds themselves in the position to actually put into action what they said they believed in, but they have balked at that and made some minor tweaks to the foundation that was built by both Parties on this side all those years ago, for all those reasons, of course, we're going to support a bill that just adds a little bit more to what is already a good system. All we ask in return is that perhaps the minister can admit that given a chance to change something that he pretended to be opposed to, that he's not doing that, he's just building on a system that's already working and already in place.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, as modest as they are in the face of a relatively modest bill, I will take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to speak to Bill No. 86, the Fair Automobile Insurance (2011) Act. While we could probably talk a lot about the title itself, there are a number of provisions and changes within the bill that do, in fact, need to be addressed, but at the end of the day we do hope that fair automobile insurance remains the order of the day in Nova Scotia.

I just did a very quick and tidy with a couple of the insurance companies in my riding and, you know, they haven't drilled down on the details of the bill, but essentially their message is very loud and clear, and that is consumers are presently happy with the rates that customers are currently paying and are not wanting to see that change for the foreseeable future. We know that this particular bill has not been updated for a considerable period of time, so inside the bill there are some minor changes that, in fact, can make the overall amendments here very positive.

This bill then is considered by at least a small sampling that I had an opportunity to speak with, to actually be moving in a good direction.

Both insurance providers in my area that I spoke with said that it will come down to the implementation of this bill. There are a fair number of changes - some considered just updating language, others a little bit more extensive, but again, it's how it will be implemented. I know the minister today in one of his responses during Question Period spoke about an industry expert who said there would be no impact on insurance rates.

When I read what he had to say, he actually put up a precautionary flag and actually said that in the short term there should not be any dramatic increases, however, in the long term how the URB rules, how this plays out with actual cases - we know that every day there are accidents in the Province of Nova Scotia. There are automobile accidents that we all know about, and how claims will be made will impact on how much you and I are going to have to pay for our insurance.

Experts with IBC, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, do raise that kind of concern, that precautionary element, that there could be increases. As I said as my opening premise, Nova Scotians do not want to see any changes in the current insurance structure that they have in the province.

The big question is out there in front of us now and will remain through 2012 and 2013. These changes will go forward under a majority government. We know that it will go before the Law Amendments Committee, and that will be a time to hear in pretty substantive detail from the insurance industry as to what concerns they do have, what they

see as extremely positive, and where they would offer expertise about some possible changes that could be added to this particular bill.

In this case also, government is really counting on the URB to hold premiums down. There's tremendous faith being placed here, and I guess as I take a look at a couple of areas where the URB impacts our life - gas regulation, weekly; power rates, it seems like every year - I don't have as strong a faith in the function of the URB as government perhaps does. We can talk all we want about a consumer advocate being there, but it seems that every time a request for an increase goes before the URB, sure enough, the increase comes about and a rationalization is offered. We see very few cases where the URB even reduces the amount that is asked for.

This is going to be an interesting opportunity for Nova Scotians to watch and see how the URB interprets these changes and hopefully offers to Nova Scotians the mechanism whereby premiums will not be increasing.

We all know that those of us who campaigned in 2003 bring to the House a lot of history around auto insurance. In fact in that election of 2003 auto insurance became the election item. It was on the minds of Nova Scotians because their premiums had reached a crisis point and as the RCMP were telling us, more and more Nova Scotians were actually going without auto insurance as premiums took off.

At that time, of course, the NDP of that day said the answer in Nova Scotia, unequivocally, was public auto insurance. There was no other course of action we could take, should take, need to take, but public auto insurance. We know that Nova Scotians were not sold on that proposal; they were not sold on that bill of goods at all. They looked to other provinces where public auto insurance was the primary means of insuring your automobile.

We did make changes at the time, and as some of my colleagues talked about yesterday, what we put forward we felt was very fair, very balanced and we left the Legislature in trust in government and in good faith that the Progressive Conservative Government of the day would implement exactly the direction that came forward and we supported, in a minority government situation, in order to deal with the crisis in that year - Bill No. 1, I think, was memorable to many of us who came to the Legislature that year and it was, in fact, a good part of the answer to dealing with the auto insurance crisis.

Once we left here and regulations had to be put in place around the bill, we know that there were changes made and they were again done by Cabinet, not by the consent of the House. That's always one of the fears around any bill that moves from the floor of the Legislature to possibilities of fine-tuning, other tweaking that may take place by Cabinet.

In that particular context it really set down the basis for much fairer pricing for automobile insurance and, in fact, the last seven or eight years have given us that history to

show that the major premise that was made in this House worked for auto insurance and for the public of Nova Scotia.

I guess we need to talk a little bit about the implementation here because it's going to be coming about. The reforms will come about in two phases. The first one is effective April 1, 2012, and the second phase will follow on April 1, 2013. The Phase I changes - this is the first time that we've seen changes and as many of my colleagues and members of the Third Party have pointed out, it is the first change to come about in many years.

I will refer to a few of these. Some of them were referenced in the media but not all of them. I will point out for the public what some of those are. Essentially it's medical, rehabilitation expenses, funeral expenses, and death benefits which will all double; while loss of income, principal unpaid housekeeper, will see substantial increases.

The increase in the accident benefits in Section B, the medical and rehabilitation expenses will move from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Current mandatory benefit for a funeral expense as a result of an accident in our province is \$1,000, and the new mandatory benefit will move to \$2,500.

AN HON. MEMBER: We should take the tax off that.

MR. GLAVINE: Well, we've talked a lot in this House about getting the tax off funerals and that would help a lot, that's right.

Death benefits to the head of the household, \$10,000 will be raised to \$25,000; spouse of head of household, again from \$10,000 to \$25,000; and a dependent will move from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the member that we should not be reading line by line from the bill, we should be speaking to the title. Thank you.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I know that while that may be the rule of the day I must say, from people who tell me very often in the House, they don't have much background . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the member that I've made a call on that. I would ask the member now to proceed to debating the title of the bill.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to proceed there. I'm just providing an explanation that sometimes Nova Scotians don't have background on a bill and, in fact, any time when debate is picked up, many people watching, in fact, do like to have some background, some context and so forth, around the bill. That's just one of those areas, perhaps, where the House needs tremendous reform. I think that would be a fair statement.

The increase in benefits will be somewhat in line with those available in other provinces so I think government does need to be commended for bringing those in line with what is taking place in other provinces.

IBC says that increasing Section B benefits will undoubtedly add costs to the auto insurance system. I think, in checking with a couple of the local providers in my area, this was their greatest concern, that as they see people, people who one time would come into their office and pay the full amount of their insurance, then they went to every two months, bi-monthly they would pay off their insurance over the course of a year. Many now go to automatic deductions every month.

Part of what one of the providers was telling me was that more and more people, seniors on fixed incomes, who always like to pay that bill immediately when they received it, are now finding it pretty tough to do that. Again it does reflect on the fact that our cost of living in the province is at an extreme level, and more and more Nova Scotians are finding it very difficult to make ends meet. I think that's one of the real concerns - that over the next while auto insurance premiums could go up.

Another part of the bill is - which will prohibit premium increases if no claim is made. That's always one of those areas where people debate at length, will I simply pay the fender-bender cost or will I put it through my insurance. That's always one of those areas that you hear many people talking about. So the bill is really going to say if a person pays a claim for a minor accident out of their own pocket, insurers will be prohibited from increasing premiums. So that is, in fact, a good measure that people will not have to pay extra premiums when they get their insurance renewed.

Also the department said that perhaps this would encourage consumers to report accidents. I think that reporting accidents, even some of the accidents that occur in parking lots and shopping malls, frequency of accidents can provide information. If it's a driveway that is somewhat hidden and there are multiple accidents that occur, having those reported, and having that kind of information available, is where we have made improvements and can cut down on accidents and cut down on claims. We know that is one of the means of holding auto insurance premiums in check because accidents, under coverage, have to be paid for.

I like the concept and the idea that more accidents could be reported and those kinds of patterns and trends that occur can give very, very good information. I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is always interested in ways in which even small improvements can be made around the areas of safety on our highways. If we get accidents on ramps that have a significant number to them, again, insurance information can provide that kind of data and a response made.

IBC argues that an at-fault collision, whether the claim is paid by the insurer or the insured, is used in setting rates because of its ability to predict the probability of a future

loss. That is good information that the insurance company can provide based on that collection of data that they have over a period of time and can establish, and hopefully prevent future increases. Removing this means that insurance companies would lose a key rating factor and, again, the insurance bureau pointed that out in their reaction.

One of the areas with very strong interest, in my area, was the assisting of volunteer fire departments with an annual levy. We are finding in the rural part of Nova Scotia that I represent, which has four major fire departments - Kingston, Aylesford, Berwick and Waterville - they're responding to more and more accidents. We are finding that the ambulance system - the ambulance system is the first responder - very often they are transferring patients, attending an accident, and the fire departments do a tremendous amount of training to be first responders. I think this comes at a very good time as some of our rural departments are finding that fundraising is not quite as strong as it traditionally was in our communities, so having this levy put on every premium, every person that goes out to get insurance, is going to be extremely helpful.

We know also that geographically, many of our fire departments are situated much closer to some of our major highways, the 100-Series Highways, than where the base would be for the ambulance service. In fact, very often, fire departments are often the first on the scene, even though 911 has made the contact that a serious accident has occurred and the ambulance needs to be on site, it is very often I know in our area of Kings County, that the fire departments are very, very close to Highway No. 101. It is not the ambulance base that is often responding.

This, without doubt, 50 cents per vehicle, administered through the Superintendent of Insurance, similar to the \$19 per vehicle public health levy. This will go a long way, a good measure, when departments have to upgrade their equipment and also training has to be paid for and our rural departments have some people that, in fact, are highly qualified in terms of being first responders. I know, again, in rural areas, the paramedics are often sought out to become members of the volunteer fire departments because they not only bring that expertise when they are off duty and available to go to an accident site, but they're also able to provide some of that ongoing training.

This is one of the areas where we sometimes see the fire departments in action but I know very well that there is a training night every week for a number of months of the year. Having our fire departments with those kinds of skills is, in fact, a great advantage to being able to handle the emergencies that do come our way.

One of the reasons that this legislation has come forward is the fact that we went a considerable number of years without any updating. Having the legislation and regulations reviewed every seven years is a positive measure. We know we won't slide, we won't fall behind. Whether or not it's the benefits that need to be paid out, that we won't get too far behind what is reasonable and what is pretty standard across the country.

The phase two changes direct compensation for property damage. Consumers will be able to receive compensation for a collision from their own insurer. We know that sometimes going through the other person's insurance and dealing with reports that have to be made and everything substantiated around accidents, this may in fact and I think the fact that it is in practice in some other provinces and jurisdictions, probably means that it is, in fact, able to facilitate and shorten the time period as to when claims can be paid out.

To go to your own insurer, it's somebody that very often you have placed that trust in, to provide a professional service. Many people have, in fact, the same insurance company through a lifetime - whether it's their home, their auto, travel, all of these areas. Sometimes there is a provider, especially in our small communities, that provide the service year after year.

I have no problem with this, in fact, think again, it is a positive move. But, once again, I am reminded by my colleague that there is a cost to be paid every time we do work to facilitate and make things more expedient and efficient. Perhaps that is why now some of these delays do get piled on a desk and they don't get reviewed and examined for a considerable period of time.

So once again, this is the concern that Nova Scotians have started to raise when we look at this bill, which overall, as I said from the outset, is moving in a good direction. Insurers will be able to provide more accurate rates since they will know exactly what vehicle they will be paying for before an accident happens. Again, this is sometimes a difficult area when we're dealing with somebody who could be from another part of the province, an insurance company and a provider that we have no knowledge of, have never had contact with before, and we have to rely on them to look after the claim after an accident. It shouldn't result in any premium changes on average. Less expensive cars may see premiums decrease, while more expensive cars may see premiums increase.

So whether that increase will be levelled out right across the system and the tens of thousands of vehicles share the pain a little bit here would be one of the natural worries that we will have to see in the coming weeks and months, whether or not we're going to be told that, yes, the increase is not substantial, but we do have to make those kinds of provisions and there will be an increase.

The minor injury protocols are similar to those in place in Alberta. Minor injuries include strains, sprains, and certain types of whiplash associated with disorder. I would have to say that during my first year here in the House, soft tissue injury - the concept of what was a strain, what was a sprain and a whiplash - became the order of many, many conversations in this House, trying to reach some kind of a definition that would suit the industry - one that the medical profession could live with, and the insurance companies and the ordinary citizen, of what really constituted a minor injury. As we know - because there were some great stories and examples that were told here in the House - there were some

minor injuries that seemed to be minor but provided many medical complications that resulted in long-term medical treatment and long-term rehabilitation for people.

So the minor injury treatment, then, would allow a person who is injured the ability to seek diagnosis and treatment from a medical doctor, a physiotherapist, or a chiropractor without prior approval from the insurance company. It allows people to get that examination after you've been in what, again, could seemingly be a minor accident - a hit from behind at a stop sign - and you can get moving on treatment without having to worry about who will be paying and how much of it will be covered, which is a concern to citizens of our province.

Fees will be set for forms, items related to diagnosis, and treatment to ensure costs are contained and again, as I started, the basic premise that I was referencing and talking about here was that - will this mean further costs? Again, there is going to be a fee structure set for the forms and the items relating to diagnosis and treatment. Hopefully, this will not mean that we will pay more for our premiums.

IBC concludes that the success of the protocols will hinge on the inclusion of a few critical supporting components that include engaging health providers and, when possible, the regulatory colleges and insurers ensuring the design implementation to gather support and ongoing adherence to the protocols.

Compensation controls on health provider fees, to prevent an inappropriately large proportion of increased resources from being captured by provider compensation rates; an ongoing and aggressive monitoring of the protocols and their performance pertaining to improving health outcomes and controlling costs. So this is what IBC is reading into some of the details of Bill No. 86, because, again, if those costs are not controlled, then we know that they will be recovered and those costs will be recovered from us, the person buying the insurance. Again, there's vicarious liability and primacy for rented vehicles. These provisions already occur in Ontario and Alberta and currently liability for rental companies is unlimited and is looking to cap liability at \$1,000,000. Insurance held by the renter of the vehicle will respond first, followed by the rental company's insurance; possible downward price-pressure on rental rates in Nova Scotia, which would be a good outcome of this piece of legislation.

One of the areas that I was hoping the minister, in his preamble, in his preface to talking about the bill and bringing it to second reading, that the optional full-tort product for minor injuries would get some further addressing and explanation. It does set up a two-tier system in the province when we have people who can afford to buy the extra insurance, only probably those people will be opting for the extra that relates to pain and suffering awards.

Currently, the awards have been increased and that has been a positive that the NDP government has brought to Nova Scotians, increasing it to \$7,500, a provision that was

welcome, although we know that sometimes minor injuries that require long-term, ongoing treatments, people would like to be able to access more than that amount and an insurance benefit could be paying for the extra coverage.

We know that today people on fixed incomes in our province, whether it's seniors, those on income assistance, people who work for minimum wage, those people are very unlikely to be able to provide this extra coverage. Where this will finally arrive, in terms of what this will cost Nova Scotians, remains to be seen because this has been submitted to the URB for pricing and we don't know if the price will be quite prohibitive for even more Nova Scotians than are currently being suggested who would pick up this extra insurance. This would allow consumers the choice to pay a higher premium to avoid being subject to the \$7,500 limit on pain and suffering awards for minor injuries.

As I said earlier, yes, it was good to see this improvement from what existed just a couple of years ago. This bill now will provide Nova Scotians with an opportunity for extra. As far as I can see, Nova Scotia would be the first province to implement this extra coverage as part of legislation. I'm sure there are all kinds of extra coverages that people can go to their insurance provider and obtain, but this is going to be developed through legislation and it looks like Nova Scotia is the first province.

Now one of the areas that I think the Insurance Bureau of Canada and those who are watching how insurance changes and legislation develop are going to be looking at very, very closely as to whether or not the implementation will ensure that there isn't some cross-subsidization of premiums and that there are no unintended consequences. That simply means that we could have the general population who are picking up the basic auto insurance coverage, we hope there is no additional burden placed on them to possibly subsidize a larger number of people who, in fact, may buy the extra premium that is being offered as one of the ways of being able to deal with compensation that goes well beyond the \$7,500.

We know that once we're having to pay for medical treatment, \$7,500 does not go too far, so this could be one of the ways in which more people would, in fact, pick up insurance coverage, by a number of people having to support it.

During the working of this bill through the legislative process, it will be interesting to see what the Insurance Bureau of Canada brings to the Law Amendments Committee as they, I'm sure, are going to get some reaction from people who have been in the business, in the industry for many years and know that sometimes what appears as a minor change, like a minor injury, can, in fact, lead to some unforeseen costs and a minor injury leading to unforeseen medical consequences.

So I look forward, Madam Speaker, to seeing this bill move through to the Law Amendments Committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As always, it's an honour to stand in my place and discuss an important bill like this that affects a lot of Nova Scotians and a lot of small businesses in our province.

I think, as my colleagues in our caucus have stated before, there are some very good, progressive moves in this bill that have probably been a long time in coming, that we are happy to see - increased benefits to consumers is obviously a good thing. That's something we all want to see happen - our consumers receive more for the dollars they put into paying for services. The periodic reviews, the support for fire departments - those are other positive moves in here.

No one has stood up here and said that this is a bad bill by any stretch of the imagination, but at a time when costs for nearly everything in this province are going up under this government, we have an increased cost for power. I'm sure each and every one of us has experienced that in our home constituencies, when members of our constituencies come into our office and discuss the problems they are having with their power rates. I just had that happen a few more times this week. People's power was shut off because they couldn't afford the bills. At a time when taxes are going up in this province because this government chose to increase the consumer tax at a time when food prices are going up, at a time when utility fees are going up, at a time when municipal taxes may be going up, because this government decided to download costs onto municipalities and break with the memorandum of understanding that they had with the municipal units.

At a time when life in general is becoming more expensive in Nova Scotia because of this government, I think what consumers need is to have an honest discussion about what the increased costs to their auto insurance will be. We don't know if their costs are going to go up. We've had the Minister of Finance stand up and say that he believes the increased cost to insurance companies may be absorbed by their current profit margins, but we don't know that. The devil is in the details with this and I think that the taxpayers and consumers have an absolute right to know. Is this piece of legislation going to make my life more expensive? Is it going to make my insurance less affordable for me? Am I going to be able to afford to have a car to begin with?

I'm sure there are many folks in our ridings back home that ask themselves that question every day - can I afford my car payments? Can I afford my insurance payments? This piece of legislation may put a bit of uncertainty into their lives. Right now, we don't know the answers to that. I want to be very clear, this caucus and myself support our insurance industry. Last summer, I had a constituent of mine come into my office, his house burned down. He came in and he said, you're my MLA, I need your help. I said, well, what can I help you with? He said I need help getting my passport sooner so I can still go on my trip with my girlfriend. The reason he was able to do that was because of the great

service that his insurance broker and the insurance company gave him to cover all of his assets.

So we do support our insurance industry, I want to be very clear about that. In fact, I think it's very important to especially be supportive of our small insurance brokers, those folks, entrepreneurs that are in each and every one of our communities providing this essential service to the public. It's important that we support those.

I think back at a time when this government decided to give, I think it was \$3 million to TD, one of the largest banks in the country, to actually compete directly with those small insurance brokers. There are small shops all over rural Nova Scotia and even here in metro that are trying to make ends meet, trying to employ people, trying to make a living out of being an insurance broker and here we have this government, instead of supporting those small-business owners that need help more than anybody else in this province because Nova Scotia is so uncompetitive and because they do pay such high taxes. Instead of looking at ways, legislation, regulations, finding how we can help those small businesses, this government decided, well, we'll give millions of dollars to one of the largest banks in the country to compete directly with those small-business owners. (Interruption)

Yes, Madam Speaker, I will consider an introduction. I'll get back on that topic later.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you to the member for Yarmouth, as well, for his indulgence in allowing this interruption. I simply wanted to introduce three eagle-eyed observers of the democratic process who have come from Halifax Atlantic to watch, and I hope, to enjoy this evening's proceedings. They are Bruce Gates, Sandra Whitehead and Joy Woolfrey - if everybody would please welcome them to this evening's proceedings. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: I welcome all guests to today's proceedings, I hope you enjoy today.

The honourable member for Yarmouth has the floor.

MR. CHURCHILL: I would like to welcome any other observers that are in the gallery today, I hope they have fun - the few that are left at this supper hour.

Back to the previous point I was making about this government's lack of support for small business and the fact that it's willing to provide millions and millions of dollars to one of the largest corporations in the country to actually compete against small businesses in the province. You talk to small-business owners in rural communities, here in metro, and

that is something that affected their confidence. They're saying, why are these big companies that don't need any money getting all these dollars to actually compete against us, the small folks who are just trying to make ends meet with this business, trying to provide for our families? That rationale hasn't been provided here in the House; that rationale hasn't been provided at any time by this government.

In supporting our vital insurance industry here in Nova Scotia, I think that one thing we need to do here is to be clear on whether this government is going to pursue its previous commitment to public auto insurance. Today in Question Period, when asked, the Minister of Finance did not unequivocally rule out public auto insurance in this province. That is a failed government policy. If you talk to consumers in the provinces that have received public auto insurance, for a time their rates may have dropped slightly, but the service they received was terrible. You'll find that there were a lot of consumers who had to go to court to actually get funding from the government-run public auto insurance to cover their claims.

That's not the type of insurance industry we want here in this province, Madam Speaker. That's why I hope that at some point we see from this government a very clear commitment that we will not pursue public auto insurance here. That way those small-business owners who have already been hurt by this government will at least be assured that they won't do that, won't take away the biggest books of their business and make that part of some sort of public corporation. Small insurance brokers, if they lose those parts - those auto insurance policies - may not be able to provide the service to the other sectors that they're insuring, whether it be marine, corporate insurance, or life insurance, because it's those auto insurance policies that allow them to build their books up and provide better coverage and benefits to their clients.

I hope that at some point, instead of shirking the question and moving around it politically, we'll have an honest answer from this Minister of Finance. I hope that he'll get up, or the Premier will get up - who I know studies insurance - and commit to our business owners, commit to the public that we won't pursue this already-failed policy of public auto insurance. Once we have a clear answer from the minister on that we can move on and not discuss it anymore, because we all remember in the past when this Party, that was in Opposition, vehemently supported a public auto insurance policy. Again, I'll mention that that's a policy that has failed all over the country and has not provided a proper amount of service to paying customers or taxpayers.

Back to the bill at hand: although there are some good things in this bill, there are some questions. Like I said before, Madam Speaker, there are questions that aren't answered for the consumers and for taxpayers. Are their premiums going to go up? What happens under these changes if a victim of a car accident is now forced to go through their insurance broker and company? Will that impact their premiums if it's not going through the person who hit them? That's a question that's not answered. Even the representatives

from the industry have said that the devil's in the details and they're not entirely sure how this is all going to work out.

These are questions that I think our caucus and members of the public would like to have answered as we go through the process of approving this bill and voting on it, and I'm sure a lot of these questions will come in to the Law Amendments Committee. But more importantly, I think, for consumers and for the businesses that are affected by this, we do need those commitments from this government that they're not going to pursue failed insurance policies. Other jurisdictions have already learned from their mistakes. I think the public deserves a commitment from this government on that; small insurance brokers deserve a commitment from this government on that; and even the larger insurance companies deserve this, because this is an important industry.

We are talking about entrepreneurs who are out there working in everyone's community whose confidence has been shaken numerous times by this government. I think what this government at least owes them is to provide them with a bit of confidence that you won't move forward with that policy, and that hasn't happened yet. We had the Minister of Finance stand up and not answer that question today and at a time when prices are going up all over the province for everything, for power rates, taxes, food costs, gas prices are going up, at a time when life is becoming more expensive for Nova Scotians under this government, these are assurances that I think are needed. These are assurances I think that are needed. As we move forward with this bill in particular, I hope that a lot of these questions that have been brought up by this caucus, and that will be brought up by the public, and I'm sure members of the industry, will be answered. I hope they will be anyway.

With that, Madam Chairman, I'll take my seat and pass the floor along to one of my colleagues.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Chairman, I'm standing to say a few words about Bill No. 86, the Fair Automobile Insurance (2011) Act, which was introduced by the minister this week. At the outset I would like to say that this is not the first time that this bill has been around, or been talked about at least, and it has been kicked around this province now for, well, at least the 10 to 12 years that I can recall, in various forms. No matter what happens to this bill - well, we know what's going to happen to the bill, it may be altered somewhat but the bill will be going through.

As we all know, there's a majority government opposite here and the Minister of Finance wouldn't take rejection very easily if somehow his bill didn't go through because the Minister of Finance has gone through quite a transformation from Opposition to government. He used to rail up against just about everything that was going on in this House when he was in Opposition, and he has been reinvented. Yes, you know, he's over

there now and has, in his mind, all the answers for Nova Scotians and one does not dare challenge the Minister of Finance on what he purports to know about how Nova Scotians should deal with, and react to, legislation that comes before this House.

I think the bill itself deserves much discussion. I'm sure that the minister is not pleased that we are speaking at length on this bill but the reason we are speaking at length on the bill is that I believe that Nova Scotians should have every opportunity to make their feelings known on this bill while it's still in second reading and indeed when it goes across the hall there to the Law Amendments Committee. I can recall the last time this bill was over in the other Chamber there, there was much discussion about this bill and sometimes that can become the room of sober second thought, when people have a chance to come before the Legislature and talk about a particular bill and talk about their concerns about a particular bill.

I'm concerned about the fact that the minister puts much faith in the URB when it deals with this bill or any other bill. The minister has said it before, and it has been said many times in this House, that the URB will be the vehicle, I guess, to hold premiums down - or in this case to hold premiums down - but in other things that have gone before the URB we've seen the URB make a business decision in almost every case, not a decision, not putting a human face for consumers in Nova Scotia on a decision, but rather making a business case decision on the many issues that it deals with.

A good example of that, Madam Speaker, is power rates in this province, you know, the URB has been dealing with Nova Scotia Power. Nova Scotia Power has been having its way with consumers in this province on a regular basis, far too regular, and we've asked the government, in that particular case, to intervene. We've asked the Premier and we've asked the government ministers to use their good offices to intercede with URB and refuse to allow any increases in power rates, rather to ask Nova Scotia Power to have an audit and to go internal to find the savings they need to operate.

In the case of the Fair Automobile Insurance (2011) Bill, what's to say that the URB is not going to make a business case decision and anytime that consumers in this province would receive more benefits, with the same rates or even less rates? I've never seen that in this province and I hope that I'm proven wrong in this, that indeed, we'll be able to increase benefits and hold premiums to where they are. Don't hold your breath on that because as sure as this bill will become law, the rates will start to inch up after a bit, as soon as somebody makes a case before the URB, a business case to do that.

I can say to you, Madam Speaker, there are many good things in this bill and I think there's much room for thought here. I can recall the current NDP Government when they were in Opposition over here, railing away at the government on various issues. I can recall many, many times the current Minister of Health and Wellness telling the government, why should we trust you now? Why should we believe you now?

Well you know what? I'm turning that around today and saying, why should we trust the Minister of Finance, when he states that there could be increased benefits at no additional costs? I have a feeling about that, that the minister is putting his best face forward to get this bill through and then after that is over, the bill is law and again the URB will be making business decisions and again business will have its way with consumers.

However, let me say to you, Madam Speaker, that government doesn't run business very well. It has been stated that there is an ulterior motive here with the Minister of Finance, that someday soon we're going to see public automobile insurance run by government in this province. That would be the worst thing that could happen to consumers in Nova Scotia because we all know what happens there, you have the government running something and when they need money they just jack it up, jack the taxes up or jack the fees up, as has been done by this government. When they came to office, they said they weren't going to increase taxes. The first thing they did was increase taxes, the Minister of Finance.

Although they railed away in Opposition about the horrors of increasing taxes and what it was doing to the people and what it will do to the people of Nova Scotia. In fact the ink wasn't dry on their mandate and they increased taxes (Interruption) And user fees, of course, the member for Victoria-The Lakes just reminded me of that as well.

Again, I say that this government has a majority and it may be a little bit of inconvenience now for the Minister of Finance to have to listen to all the other members in Opposition talking about the bill. He has not been a person who would take too kindly to any kind of suggestion that he doesn't know everything. This bill is his creation and because of that, it must be good and it must be good for Nova Scotians. He doesn't take to criticism very well, that has been proven in the past in here. When there is criticism, he gets somewhat upset.

See, some of us who have been around here a long time and some would say, some of us were here too long, the fact of the matter is that for some strange reason we keep getting re-elected to this place - the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal knows what I'm talking about - and we come back here and we try to do what we can for our constituents but we also have a broader message that we bring to the House and that is to serve the people of Nova Scotia.

Again, I believe that this whole notion that we're going to give increased benefits to consumers in Nova Scotia at no additional cost, I'll believe that when I see it. The notion that someday, if a bill comes to this House that is going to put automobile insurance in the hands of the government, the public sector, to run automobile insurance in this province, heaven help the consumers in this province because what we have now at least is a situation where we have various insurance companies in this province competing for business, which is a good thing.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that in my riding, or in Cape Breton and in all the ridings, including the two NDP ridings down there, we have insurance companies such as MacLeod Lorway, MacCoy Insurance, Bluenose Insurance and various other small ones, who are actually doing a great job. One of them is my own insurer and my car insurance rates haven't gone up in the past two or three years and I get great service. My insurer is, and I'll put a plug in for MacLeod Lorway, that's my insurance agent and they do a great job. Not only that, they employ a lot of people in our area. All three of these companies I just mentioned, plus some of the others employ a lot of people in my area of this province and do a lot of community service. Particularly a gentleman I know, a very good friend of mine, Stewart MacLeod, the president of MacLeod Lorway, who has been a supporter of many, many ventures in our community over the years.

I would hate to think that he's built his business up to the point where now he has to worry about a Minister of Finance who has visions of perhaps public ownership of the insurance business in this province in the near future. We can only guess what would happen to the consumers if that was allowed to happen in Nova Scotia. I hope I'm wrong, I hope that my fears are ill-founded and that we won't see something coming by way of public insurance but I wouldn't count on it. All the signs are pointing there.

As I've stated, the Minister of Finance has an agenda and unfortunately for most of the rest of us, we're not all as smart as he thinks he is when it comes to this stuff. But I do know this, when he was in Opposition he was very quick to point out the evils of the previous government raising taxes and raising user fees and all of those things which he so gleefully embraces today as the Minister of Finance. Because it's his agenda, then it must be the right agenda, in his mind.

I will say that, again, there are many good things in this bill that deserve our support. I would hate to see what's not in this bill right now come to pass. It appears to me and the people we've been talking to, that we're headed down the road with this government - if this government is still here - for public auto insurance in this province and then you'll see the same kind of situation that's going on with power rates in this province, with the URB making decisions based on nothing more than empirical evidence put before them, a case by Nova Scotia Power to increase its rates because they have an insatiable appetite for revenue. They just can't get enough revenue.

Where do they get it? (Interruption) There's no competition, my colleague is right, but where do they get it? They get it from the consumer. If public auto insurance in this province needs more revenue, they're going to get it from the consumer and it's going to be the government that's going to allow it to happen. Just as the government today is allowing it to happen with power rates.

Imagine, two rate increases in one year. The Premier states that he can't do anything about it. His hands are tied, he can't interfere with the URB - that's simply not true. The precedent has been set. We all remember the celebrated case about Chester, when

the previous Tory Premier in this province, Dr. Hamm, said I'm not accepting that URB ruling down there and he overturned it. Let's not have the Premier say that he can't get involved in decisions made by the URB. That's simply not true and he knows it. He is the man responsible to the people of Nova Scotia, not the URB. (Applause) I will say that the same situation with power rates could accrue if this government is allowed to go down the road towards public automobile insurance.

The Committee on Law Amendments of this House is going to play a very important role in determining where this bill goes. If the government is listening, they will listen to the many presentations that are going to come before this committee. Let me say that profit should not be a dirty word either in Nova Scotia. These insurance companies that I mentioned earlier, are keeping rates reasonable, and I say in the terms of auto insurance, my own automobile insurance hasn't gone up in three or four years. So it isn't broken, if the present companies are delivering good service, why should we even consider tinkering around with them in the future? Why should we consider making changes that will have the effect of perhaps these automobile insurance companies, who have other interests as well, having to worry about whether or not they're going to employ the large number of people they employ in the future, or whether or not the government is going to suggest that we can set up a bureaucracy to do the same thing? Let's hope that we're far away from that.

I'm just saying in my place tonight, on this date, that I have concerns about the Minister of Finance's agenda in this because he has talked about that while in Opposition. He has talked about government, that big business is bad, insurance companies are bad, private sector is bad; I've heard it all from the Minister of Finance when he was over here in Opposition. I've heard it all. I listened to it for 10 years but when he gets over there now (Interruption) Well, eight years, he hastens to remind me of that.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Seems like 20 years.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: It seems like 20, right.

Madam Speaker, I say before I will adjourn debate today, in a couple minutes, that the companies that I talk about are the same companies that deal with people that the Deputy Premier deals with, and he knows and respects those companies like MacLeod Lorway and Bluenose Insurance and MacCoy Insurance, and all the other providers in our area who employ many people at good paying jobs. I would hate to think that the people such as the community people I've talked to who support many interests in our community, people like Stuart MacLeod, would have to sit and worry whether his business is going to be around in a few years because it's not all about Stuart MacLeod or any of the other people, Ritchie MacCoy or any of those people. It's not about them; it's about the people who work for them; it's about the service they provide in our community, and the service they provide is an excellent service in our community and should be protected.

So I would hope, Madam Speaker, one thing I would leave that Minister of Finance is that there are many good things in this bill we can support. Public ownership down the road is not one of them. Thank you very much and I will adjourn debate.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that we do now rise to meet from the hours of 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. and I will hand it over to the House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party to give Opposition business.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Just don't call me late for dinner, that's really all I care about at this point.

Madam Speaker, tomorrow is Opposition Day. After the daily routine and Question Period we'll be calling Bill No. 92, Power Rate Reduction Review Act, and Bill No. 69, Transparency in Power Rates Act. So I now move that you rise and we'll meet tomorrow between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow, November 16th, between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have reached the moment of interruption. I now call under Rule 5(5) the resolution as read earlier today and put forward by the honourable member for Richmond which reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that this NDP Government finally acknowledge the devastating impact job losses are having on rural Nova Scotia.”

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RURAL N.S. - JOB LOSSES: NDP GOVERNMENT - ACKNOWLEDGE

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Madam Speaker, this is an increasingly important topic for this House of Assembly to discuss – the state of our economies in rural Nova Scotia. As I mentioned last week in late debate, Halifax is doing well. We've had an increase, I believe, over the last number of years of about 10,000 jobs. That does not mean that rural Nova Scotia is in the same state. In fact, we've lost approximately 10,000 jobs in rural Nova Scotia and while it is important to have a vibrant, successful, economically-diverse capital city, we need to ensure that the economies in our rural communities, in Yarmouth and Cape Breton, in the Valley and the South Shore, Colchester, even up in Guysborough, are doing well as well; right now, they are not.

This government stands up and tries to create a rosy picture that they are good stewards of our economy, Madam Speaker, but they are not. The facts are very clear about that. In fact the successes we've had here in Halifax have had very little to do with this government - they have been because our entrepreneurs, our business class here in Halifax, are good at what they do. They are good at creating business, they are good at creating jobs, and they are good at making money. Our capital city is doing well.

If you look at rural Nova Scotia, there is a different picture presented, Madam Speaker. Let's look at some of the numbers. I believe the Premier today stood up in the House and talked about the great unemployment rate we have here in the province - from September to October our unemployment rate has gone up again under this government.

Let's look at what is happening in some regions of the province. The unemployment rate is up in Cape Breton; it's up in the North Shore; and in the southern region alone, since this government took office, we've lost approximately 3,700 jobs. There are decisions that this government has made that have contributed to that, and we have yet to have somebody on that side of the House acknowledge that, apologize for it, and act to rectify it.

Today there was another report, an economic impact report, released about the Yarmouth ferry. I know it's annoying for us as members to get up here and talk about this to the government, because it is something that they are wearing on their face. There was a decision made in 2009 to cut that ferry service, an economic driver for Yarmouth, for southwestern Nova Scotia, and for tourism operators across this province.

In another report, the second such report that has come out saying that this ferry had a major economic impact on the province - it has come out again and the government still doesn't recognize that the decision they made had such a devastating impact on the lives of many people in southwestern Nova Scotia and beyond, and it still refuses to act in such a way to rectify that decision that they made.

Regarding the ferry, all we're asking this government to do is play a leadership role, act immediately to put a plan together to restore that ferry service because it's necessary. If we don't get it back, we will lose our hotels in Yarmouth - that will happen. It has almost happened already; we have lost some. If we lose more, as I've said before, we won't be able to be a destination for anything - people will not be able to come to Yarmouth and stay there.

This is the case in other areas along the South Shore, in Queens, in Shelburne, and even all the way up to Baddeck in Cape Breton. I think the root cause of this decline in rural Nova Scotia - of course there are global factors at play here, rural economies all over the country, and I think in North America, are facing similar declines but there has been no vision presented by this government to support rural areas; there has been none.

I think that despite these global trends that are happening, there are things we can do in a small province like Nova Scotia to provide some confidence and some support to our rural economies. I think they can succeed, I'm optimistic about that, but we need our government to be a partner in that. Any major change that happens in our rural communities, I think, is going to be spearheaded by our entrepreneurs, by our business leaders, by the innovators and those creative folks in our community who will come up with solutions, but we need to have a partner in our government to make sure that happens; to date, that hasn't happened.

We have the "jobsWhere" program - no one knows where these jobs are. In fact when the minister was asked in the House what the targets were, how many jobs this program would create, he didn't know. You can't have a strategic plan for economic development and for job creation in the province without targets and without a way to assess whether it is working or not - that can't happen.

JobsHere, or "jobsWhere", is only a rehashing of many of the failed programs that the previous government had in place, given a different name and a different brand. There are very few new things in that plan. I don't know what particularly is in that plan that is going to support rural Nova Scotia. In Cape Breton we've had in the last little bit 2,300 people who have left the workforce; in the North Shore 1,400 people who have left the workforce; in the Valley, 1,800 people have left the workforce; and in the southern region 4,300 people who have left the workforce - and that's last year. That's last year.

So to have a Premier and Cabinet stand up in this House and say we do have a plan for rural Nova Scotia and it's working, that's completely inaccurate - it's not working.

People are leaving, I think because there have been decisions made by this government that fundamentally have shaken the confidence of a lot of our employers and business owners in rural Nova Scotia. If you do not have a confident business class, if you do not have a confident population, you will not succeed. Our economies will not grow. Confidence is the key here. Hope is the key, and right now, what hope has been given to our rural communities? It hasn't been in the form of a plan from this government. It hasn't been in the form of any sort of strategy. It hasn't even been on individual decisions. There has been nothing presented by these folks that would give our businesspeople, our employers, cause to rejoice and be hopeful in rural Nova Scotia.

We hear about the ship contract. That's a great thing; it's a very positive thing for the province, especially for Halifax. The Ships Start Here program, although it did not impact the decision that was made around that ship contract, was a plan that all parties supported in this House, and we're happy that that contract came here. But what I hear back home in my rural area is, are we going to benefit from this? Are we going to have jobs in Yarmouth? Are we going to have jobs in the Valley? Are we going to have some impact in Cape Breton?

Right now we don't know. The only thing we've heard is that, I think, there are approximately 1,500 jobs that will potentially be created here in Halifax - 1,500. I just mentioned a number far greater than that of people that are leaving our regions. Those 1,500 jobs are not the answer to the economic challenges that we have in this province. They're not. It will help in Halifax - real estate will go up, things will probably be a bit more expensive here, and there will be a few more people who have jobs. But how is that program, the ships contract, going to impact rural Nova Scotia? Right now there has not been a plan presented by this government to show how that's going to happen, and right now the public doesn't know, so it does not increase the confidence in our folks in rural Nova Scotia.

This government has refused to act on some of the major things that would increase that confidence in areas all across the province. Review our outdated tax system - we're being taxed more than any other province. We can start with that. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise in my place today to address the impact of NDP policies in rural Nova Scotia. Let's just say we do have some concerns since the present government has taken office, in particular the impact they've had on jobs in rural Nova Scotia. There has been considerable job loss in rural Nova Scotia - jobs that may not seem like a lot to people who don't live in the area, but jobs like forestry, fishing, mining, and pulp and paper mills. They mean a lot to the rural areas of Nova Scotia. People who live in the urban areas of Halifax and areas like that probably don't understand that those jobs have a great impact on family life.

We all know what a job means to a family. It puts food on our table, it puts our kids through school, and it puts a little bit of extra money in our pocket - money that we can use to put in an account for our kids or to take a family vacation. It allows us to drive a car and to take part in recreation to improve our individual and family lifestyles. Maintaining a job is one of the most basic sources of pride and dignity for all of us. Unfortunately, thanks to the NDP, maintaining this job in rural Nova Scotia is getting tougher and tougher. Further cuts to health care and the education system will further add to this problem, and they don't have to take my word for it. The latest labour market brief tells us this.

These numbers speak for themselves. We're looking at approximately 80 jobs in New Waterford at a call centre that have just been slashed and eliminated; NewPage has had problems with their job market - they're closed; southwestern Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, the North Shore, the Valley, and southern Nova Scotia all have seen huge job losses. With the release of the most recent labour market briefing, only Halifax has seen any job growth in Nova Scotia. The rest of Nova Scotia is suffering with decreased job growth. Rural Nova Scotia continues to suffer.

This is a government that has truly left rural Nova Scotia behind. Approximately 2,400 jobs in Cape Breton and 2,500 jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia have been eliminated. Their actions prove that they are content to allow rural Nova Scotia to fail. People, especially people in Cape Breton, are leaving Nova Scotia to work away, to work in the oil fields or larger areas where they can use their technical skills or their educational skills to find work.

We don't have to look far to see what I'm talking about. Let's start with our "bite the bullet" plan. We're not against renewable energy sources but, on such a great rate, there were targets that would have increased with the economic growth of the province but they have increased the targets, which has hurt rural Nova Scotia.

They have an energy plan that is driving businesses out of rural Nova Scotia. Don't believe me, look throughout rural Nova Scotia. Ask the folks in NewPage Port Hawkesbury; they'll tell you. Ask the folks at Bowater Mersey. Ask the folks who worked in the New Waterford call centres. Ask the folks who worked on the Yarmouth ferry.

Businesses have made it clear that high energy and fuel costs are a big problem, so big that we now know that more than one in five businesses in Nova Scotia plan to lay workers off. What will happen to these workers? After time, with no jobs, and no jobs in sight, they will leave rural Nova Scotia. Those are very large numbers and you can bet many of these affected will be the residents of rural Nova Scotia. If you don't believe me or the folks at NewPage, or the other business owners and employees of rural Nova Scotia facing layoffs, maybe they'll listen to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. According to the CFIB business barometer, confidence among business owners in Nova Scotia has reached a two-year low last month. If that's not bad enough, 70 per cent of respondents said fuel and energy costs are causing trouble for their businesses.

It's not just power rates, Madam Speaker; taxes have gone up; gas prices have gone up; user fees on everything have gone up. We are now the highest-taxed jurisdiction in the country and we have the NDP Government to thank for this. If they don't think it plays a big role in job losses around Nova Scotia, they're kidding themselves.

The HST has resulted in higher costs for families and employers alike. Families have to choose between food, power, heat, et cetera. Some people have to leave to find work because they don't have the work here. I know it has played a major role in my own area. A lot of my friends and neighbours have to leave the area for work, which leaves their family at home with no father, no mother, for short periods of time, which has a huge impact on family life. Just last month, Statistics Canada reported that Cape Breton lost 2,400 jobs alone. Cape Breton is not alone though, southwestern Nova Scotia is the same, secondary to places like Yarmouth. The ferry being eliminated has had a huge effect on tourism numbers and working people in Yarmouth and southwestern Nova Scotia.

The NDP's job-destroying path starts at one end of Nova Scotia and carries all the way to the other. If the Yarmouth ferry was operating, people would come across the Yarmouth ferry, stay in Yarmouth and travel through that area of the province to get to the major cities and get through to Cape Breton. But those people who are leaving that area and having to drive around, they won't drive back down to southwestern Nova Scotia. It's a three-hour drive, and for people who are on vacation that three hours in the car, for what you're going to get when you get there, people shut down, small businesses closed, the tourism areas have been depleted; they're just not going to do that.

So we know they left Yarmouth behind; we know the true effect of the NDP's decision to cancel the Yarmouth ferry, more job losses in rural Nova Scotia. I'm not just talking about the ferry operators. I'm talking about the people who work there as well. We've seen hotels close, businesses shut down and tourism numbers have dropped significantly. People who would normally take the ferry to Nova Scotia now have to bypass that area and all this costs jobs, all of it. Because of the NDP, Nova Scotians from Cape Breton to Yarmouth and everywhere in between are struggling to make ends meet.

They have a responsibility to make things better for Nova Scotians, to create jobs, not to destroy them. Time is not on our side because the more time that passes, the more people that leave the workforce, the more people that leave rural Nova Scotia. The NDP have failed. Job creation in rural Nova Scotia is on a decline and these areas are suffering. We need job creation not more programs to create more bureaucracy and jobs in Halifax and urban areas. With those comments, I'll take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and I do indicate in beginning that I will watch for your signals tonight, unlike last week, when the

Opposition members got me somewhat wound up and I wasn't paying attention to the signals.

I must say that the days and days of doom and gloom that we have been hearing from the other side of this House is really something that is disturbing and it should be countered. Now the member for Yarmouth and the member for Cape Breton North, they are not the kings of doom and gloom, I think the member for Preston is actually the real king of gloom and doom in this province.

You know what we have to do is look at what we inherited. I have been in politics for 41 years. I was first elected 41 years ago, it was my first of eight elections, and I have seen four decades, Madam Speaker, of this province going downhill. Now there are actually rays of hope in this province, and I think I can speak for rural Nova Scotia because most of my life has revolved around rural Nova Scotia, and rural Nova Scotia is seeing some fundamental changes.

You know I used to look back at the fire departments. I have 13 fire departments in Pictou East and I used to see the departments being depleted of young people. In the last couple of years, I see young faces within the rural departments, I see some real change.

So what did we inherit from all these years of Progressive Conservative and Liberal Governments? I'll tell you what we inherited, we inherited over \$13 billion worth of debt and this government is the government that has paid down that debt, the first time in 26 years that two consecutive years have seen the deficit being reduced. We have had ourselves and our children and our grandchildren and it would have gone on to our great-grandchildren and beyond, if we had kept that lot over there in power.

Madam Speaker, I want to get some facts out. Looking at the labour force statistics for October 2011, the unemployment rate in Nova Scotia is 8.6 per cent. The unemployment rate in New Brunswick is 9.4 per cent. The unemployment rate in Prince Edward Island is 11.2 per cent. I will table those documents.

Let me assure you, Madam Speaker, that this government is creating the proper conditions for good jobs and economic development in every single corner of this province, for every sized business.

Now, a lot of our rural economy is based on exports, so I want to quote. Madam Speaker, we will be first in exports and to quote Export Development Canada's very recent statement, "What Nova Scotia has going for it is that it is firing on all cylinders and any time you have diversified growth, it means you aren't as vulnerable to economic shocks."

You know the two Parties across have no comprehension, I don't believe, of what is happening internationally. I don't think they follow what is happening in Greece or what is happening in Italy or what is happening in France. They don't realize that we are facing the

most desperate situation that the world has seen since the Great Depression, eight decades, this is what we are faced with but we're doing something here Nova Scotia, and we're doing something in relation to jobs - jobs from one end of this province to the other.

The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has to be commended for jobsHere. Madam Speaker, if it weren't for jobsHere, we wouldn't have invested in more than 116 businesses in every region of the province through the Productivity Investment Program - and last week I outlined a good number of those initiatives, so I won't do it tonight.

But I do want to talk about Ships Start Here. I've been in that yard twice and I was there for the announcement, and to see the tears that were in the eyes of some of the older workers there. One chap said to me, I have three sons working in here, their futures are guaranteed in this province, guaranteed in this province for 30 years - \$25 billion.

When I look at my own constituency - the member for Cape Breton North talked about the targets that we were setting in relationship to energy are having an effect on jobs - they sure as heck are having an effect on jobs. In my constituency of Pictou East, with the turbines that we have, the number of jobs that were created was several hundred. From the clearing of the land, the putting in of the roads, from the building of the towers, from the bed and breakfasts that are in the community, from the local stores, from all of the sectors within that community, they all benefited - tremendous benefits. And one day last March we actually met the objective that is still several years down the road - we had 20 per cent of our energy on one day when the wind was blowing right. We had 20 per cent of our energy being produced by renewables - that is really something.

No other government has had vision; no other government has had strategies. Not only do we have the jobsHere strategy, we have an energy strategy. We have a small-business strategy - for the first time in 20 years we've had reductions in corporate taxes in relationship to small businesses.

I just wish that I had time to talk about some of the things that are taking place in relationship to our road-building strategies - three of the biggest budgets in the history of this province in relationship to road building, and that's good for rural people. Rural people want roads; people in Pictou East want roads; and I want roads. I'm going to be doing everything while I'm in this House to try to get the rural roads improved in Nova Scotia.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time allotted for late debate has expired.

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:23 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2249**

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Mallory Thompson, a local wrestler from Oxford, represented Eastern Canada in the Sparta Cup held at the Puerto Rico Olympic Training Centre; and

Whereas Mallory started wrestling when coaches Mark and Ruth Collins moved to the area and held wrestling camps at Big Lake Nazarene Camp; and

Whereas Mallory's goal is to make the London Olympics and she is training for the games, along with her fellow wrestler Maureen Hickman and their coach Mark Collins;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mallory Thompson on representing Eastern Canada in the Sparta Cup, wish her continued success in the future, and wish her the best as she works toward her Olympic dream.

RESOLUTION NO. 2250

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas the Springhill Mosquito Fencebusters baseball team capped off a successful season with a trip to the provincial championships; and

Whereas after being defeated in only one game in the three-day tournament, the Fencebusters brought home the gold to a very excited Town of Springhill; and

Whereas MVPs for the games were J.D. Pettigrew, Kyle Moore, Jacob Melanson, Nate Stone, and Ethan Casey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Springhill Mosquito Fencebusters and their coaches on becoming provincial champions and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2251

By: Mr. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas the Leblanc Taekwon-Do Chang-Hon Challenge tournament was held on November 5 in Halifax and students from the Muise Taekwon-Do club of Yarmouth competed in areas such as sparring, patterns, distance kick, and high kick; and

Whereas Minna Stewart, Jade Crosby, Breanna Jacquard, Kahlan Caux, Gary Stewart, Conner Swain, and Raine Goodwin all won silver medals, and Dylan Stone, Alex Cunningham, and Logan Swain all won bronze medals; and

Whereas Abigail Muise, Colton Thibeau, Sophie Geis, Brittany Paulick, and Cohen Garron all received gold medals while Cameron Strange won bronze, gold, and silver medals; Joey Hipson won gold and bronze medals; and Tristan Thibodeau won bronze and silver medals;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate these students of the Muise Taekwon-Do club on these impressive achievements and thank them for their contributions to sports in Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2252

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Josh Chapman for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2253

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Pat Bell for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2254

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Logan Baillie for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2255

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cody Anthony who pitched three games back-to-back-to-back to earn the title of Eastern Midget Boys Fastball champions for his team and the title of MVP for himself.

RESOLUTION NO. 2252

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nathan Sylliboy for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2257

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tyler Shipley for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2258

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dylan Scammell for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2259

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37s 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this come-back team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton As 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sandy Munro for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2260

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Evan Maynard for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2261

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tim MacDougall for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2262

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Leger for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2263

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Corey Lavin for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2264

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Luc Lavers for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2265

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Josh Lavers for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2266

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Justin Deveau for being a member of this winning team.

RESOLUTION NO. 2267

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the North River Well Within Chiropractic Aces lost their first two games at the Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball Championships held in August in North River, Colchester North; and

Whereas to get to the championship game, North River defeated Ontario's Elmira 37's 14-3 and West Hants Thunder 13-4; and

Whereas this comeback team, through determination, focus and skill defeated Ontario's Fullarton A's 7-4 to win the title of Eastern Canadian Midget Boys Fastball champs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Crowe for being a member of this winning team.