



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2011

Sixty-first General Assembly

Third Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. C'est avec plaisir que j'ai déposé le Rapport d'étape 2011 - Progrès réalisés dans les services en français offerts par le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Progress Report 2011 French Language Services, provided by the Government of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Je me lève en tant que ministre des Affaires acadiennes.

Before I make my statement, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce in the gallery a couple of distinguished guests attending for the tabling of this report and this ministerial statement. I would like to draw to the attention of the House Mr. Jean Leger, Executive Director/Directeur général, Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and also Monsieur Paul d'Entremont, Directeur général, Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Francophone Health Network. I would like to ask them to rise to receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Merci, M. le Président. C'est avec plaisir que j'ai déposé le Rapport d'étape 2011 - Progrès réalisés dans les services en français offerts par le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

The successes highlighted in the report make life better for Acadian and francophone families and contribute to economic growth in our province.

Nous reconnaissons, bien sûr, qu'il y a encore du chemin à faire.

Célébrons les succès de 2010-2011 et misons sur ces accomplissements. Voici quelques exemples:

1. 27 consultations et rencontres sur l'engagement des citoyens avec la communauté acadienne et francophone.
2. La mise sur pied d'un service d'interprétation téléphonique pour offrir aux professionnels de la santé l'accès à des interprètes francophones qualifiés.
3. La collaboration avec les partenaires qui offrent des services d'éducation aux adultes pour promouvoir l'alphabétisation et les compétences essentielles dans la communauté acadienne et francophone.
4. Des lignes directrices ont été élaborées afin d'offrir un protocole uniforme pour intégrer la connaissance du français dans la planification et la gestion des ressources humaines.

Mr. Speaker, our government, like other governments before us, continues to make excellent headway in developing and providing services in French to our Acadian and francophone communities but, of course, there's still work to do. There will always be more work to do.

Je tiens à remercier tous les Néo-Écossais qui parlent français ainsi que les organismes communautaires acadiens et francophones de la province qui demandent pour des services en français, qui les utilisent et qui participent aux consultations du gouvernement.

Cela confirme que nous sommes sur la bonne voie.

Monsieur le Président, c'est avec plaisir que j'ai déposé le Rapport d'étape 2011 pour les services en français.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have just tabled the Progress Report 2011 for French Language Services. Thank you, merci beaucoup. (Applause)

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: M. le Président, j'aimerais remercier le bureau du ministre responsable des affaires acadiennes pour nous envoyer ses remarques en avance.

Je crois que tous les députés de cette assemblée, moi inclus, convenons que tous les services gouvernementaux doivent être disponibles à tous les Néo-Écossais.

Lorsque tout le monde peut accéder des services, accéder leur gouvernement et s'engager dans le croissance économique de ce provinces tout le monde en avantage.

Dans ses remarques brefs que nous avons reçus, le ministre décrit ce que son gouvernement a fait d'améliorer les services pour les acadiens et les francophones.

Bien que ce gouvernement a pris des mesures d'améliorer l'accès aux services, il reste du travail à faire. Comme le ministre dit soi-même, "il y a encore du chemin à faire".

Toutes les peuples en Nouvelles-Écosse doivent avoir le même accès aux services, et doivent avoir accès aux services qui sont d'un aussi bon qualité offert à tous les Nouvelles Écossais. Tout le monde doit avoir les mêmes opportunités, quelles que soit leur langues.

Il est essentiel d'inclure les membres des communautés acadiens et francophones quand on parle des services qui vont affecter leurs communautés.

J'aimerais féliciter ce ministre de ses consultations et l'encourage de les continuer et les élargir lorsque nous discutons comment à faire plus de services disponibles en français.

Le caucus Libéral a hâte de voir le rapport d'étape en entier et encourage ce gouvernement a continuer et élargir ses efforts en améliorant l'accès aux services et les programmes en français et pour tous les Nouvelles Écossais. Merci.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the office of the Minister of Acadian Affairs for sending the ministerial statement in advance. I think all members of the Legislature, myself included, agree that all government services should be made available to all Nova Scotians. Everyone sees a benefit when people can access services, access their government, and participate in the province's economic growth.

Even though the government has taken steps to improve access to services, there's still work to do. As the minister said, we still have a way to go. All people in Nova Scotia must have the same access to services and must have access to the same high quality of service offered to all Nova Scotians. Everyone should have the same opportunities, no matter which language they speak.

It is critical to include members of the Acadian and francophone communities when we talk about services that will directly affect those communities. I'd like to commend the minister on the consultations and encourage the minister to continue and expand the consultation as we discuss how we can make more services available in French.

The Liberal caucus looks forward to seeing the report and encourages this government to continue to expand its efforts in improving access to services in French for all Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Merci, M. Le Président et merci au ministre de fournir sa déclaration à l'avance. Au nom de Chris d'Entremont, le porte-parole PC en Affaires acadiennes, je vais répondre.

Bien que les services en langue française en Nouvelle-Écosse ont été considérablement accru jusqu'à présent, il y a beaucoup à faire.

Nous attendons une nouvelle entente avec le gouvernement fédéral - quand sera-t-elle finalisée? Et quelque chose que nous préconisons depuis maintenant un certain temps - à savoir quand des services de traduction seront disponibles à l'Assemblée législative? Merci, Monsieur le Président.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON Mr. Speaker, I request that the House revert back to the order of business, Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request to revert back to the order of business, Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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 submissions to the first contract discussion paper posted recently on the Department of Labour and Advanced Education Web site. As well, I will table the mandate and membership of the Labour Management Review Committee and the Labour Board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The papers are tabled.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2438

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 New Brunswick native Steve Murphy has been involved in broadcasting for most of his adult life, taking his first job with a local radio station while he was still in high school; and

Whereas Steve moved to Nova Scotia more than 25 years ago to work with CJCH Radio in Halifax and later with CTV Atlantic, where he remains the station's longest-serving anchor and arguably the most well-known television journalist in the Atlantic region; and

Whereas this veteran interviewer has years of experience discussing the issues most important to Atlantic Canadians with those intimately involved in the news, people like myself who have appeared countless times on air with Steve;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature congratulate Steve Murphy on his illustrious career in journalism, including 25 years with CTV Atlantic, and wish him many more years of success in front of the television cameras.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2439

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

Whereas Halifax Regional School Board Superintendent Carole Olsen challenged students at the official opening ceremony for Waverley Memorial Elementary School in May to imagine what their new school should be; and

Whereas students from Ms. Latimer's 2010-11 Grade 5 class created artwork to show us that their new school should be a place where everybody is included, where you can be as creative as you can be, and where you can reach the highest for your education; and

Whereas Ms. Olsen was inspired by the students' vision for the school and had the artwork made into a booklet;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the students at Waverley Memorial Elementary School for rising to the challenge and creatively sharing their ideas of what their school should be.

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. 2440

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

Whereas the Cumberland Public Libraries have joined the e-reading craze and are bringing the residents in that area along with them; and

Whereas readers have been able to download books to their own personal electronic readers from the province's public libraries for almost three years, and in that time the use of these devices has increased significantly; and

Whereas although borrowing or downloading books is free, the devices are not and realizing this, the Cumberland Public Libraries are lending e-readers that come pre-loaded with best-selling and new titles in a variety of genres;

Therefore be it resolved that this House join me in congratulating the Cumberland Public Libraries for providing Nova Scotians access to education and lifelong learning, thereby making life better for families in this region.

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. 2441

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

Whereas Thomas Grotrian, a famous musician, and more recently the marketing manager for the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, died earlier this year in a tragic accident at a friend's home; and

Whereas Mr. Grotrian was one of two bagpipers behind a string of record-breaking piping parades in Glasgow, Scotland, who later took the concept of the massed parades overseas to places like New York, Paris, Shanghai, and Rome; and

Whereas a memorial service will be held in Halifax tomorrow, November 24th, to celebrate Mr. Grotrian's life and his significant contribution to the Tattoo, the world's largest annual indoor show;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the tremendous accomplishments of Thomas Grotrian and send deepest sympathies to his family and friends on the loss of this great man.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I'd like to make an introduction before I table my bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery I would ask the following individuals to stand when I call their name: Carrie Fraser, Program Officer with the Department of Health and Wellness, Environmental Health Division; Gary O'Toole, who is the Director of Environmental Health for Health and Wellness; and Dwayne – and Dwayne I'm having a seniors moment so I can't remember your last name – but Dwayne who is a social worker and has been seconded to the department; in addition Mr. Steve Sutherland, a retired local body art artist.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have taken part in a bill briefing earlier this afternoon and are an important part of moving this legislation forward and I'd like members to give them a warm welcome please. (Applause)

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

Bill No. 109 - Entitled an Act to Regulate Body Art Facilities. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

Bill No. 110 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Residential Tenancies Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2442

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

Whereas Ridgecliff Middle School in Beechville won the Custodial Team of the Year Award presented October 2011; and

Whereas this award was presented by Scotia Learning Centre to Joe Higgins, Tom Merriot and Lenny Mitchell; and

Whereas this award is given to a team of custodians who are proactive in the workplace by going beyond the standard job requirements and expectations;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Joe Higgins, Tom Merriot and Lenny Mitchell on the top-notch job that they are doing keeping every square inch of Ridgecliff Middle School as clean as possible.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2443

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

Whereas on June 17, 2011 at the Chester Area Middle School, the Chester Relay for Life took place; and

Whereas this year the teams raised over \$42,000; and

Whereas together we celebrate, remember and fight back against cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank all volunteers who helped plan the 2011 Chester Relay for Life, as well as everyone who participated.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2444

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

Whereas Carlos Beals, at the age of 14 started volunteering at the Dartmouth North Community Centre, started getting good grades and challenging his mind with tougher classes, even against the advice of guidance counsellors; and

Whereas several years later 20-year-old Carlos is an excellent example of what youth can do when they put their minds to it and is now entering his third year of a four-year criminal justice program at Humber College; and

Whereas Carlos says his goal is to work for the Halifax Regional Police, and in particular in the community of Dartmouth North, where he thinks he could help bridge the gap between the community and police;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly acknowledge Carlos Beals for continuing to make positive choices and for his continued desire to give back 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2445

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

Whereas the Hydrostone District Business Association, or HDBA, was created in 2011 to promote the businesses in the historic hydrostone area of North End Halifax; and

Whereas the HDBA organized a Christmas tree lighting ceremony and celebration which filled the Hydrostone Park to overflowing with happy families and their excited children on the evening of Friday, November 18th; and

Whereas representatives from the municipal and provincial levels of government, along with the many spectators, enjoyed the festivities which included singing by students from the Shambhala School and which culminated with the lighting of the Christmas tree in the centre of Hydrostone Park;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Hydrostone District Business Association, its members and the many volunteers who helped on a very successful Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Hydrostone Park, which is certain to be followed by many more happy occasions in 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 Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 2446

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

Whereas the staff of the Legislative Library go above and beyond their duties on a daily basis; and

Whereas Information Services librarian Heather Ludlow has been working with the Nova Scotia House of Assembly Legislative Library since 2006; and

Whereas today is Heather's birthday;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the staff of the Legislative Library for their hard work and all members wish Heather a very happy birthday.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2447

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

Whereas since 2005, the United Church of Canada has rung the bells at the Covenanter Church in Grand Pré at exactly 5:55 p.m. to pay tribute to the thousands of Acadians deported in 1755; and

Whereas an inner-spiritual and inner-cultural service was held at the Covenanter Church in Grand Pré at 5:55 p.m., followed by a Walk of Solidarity to the National Historic Site, on July 28, 2011; and

Whereas inspired by this idea, the Société Nationale de l'Acadie decided to spread the tradition to Acadian communities throughout the Maritimes;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the efforts of the United Church of Canada for providing an opportunity to remember the past for the members of our Acadian communities throughout the Maritimes.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries.

RESOLUTION NO. 2448

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

Whereas Cora Beck was named Employee of the Year at the Shelburne County Business Development Corporation and Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce 2011 Business Excellence Awards on October 20, 2011; and

Whereas Cora Beck, who has been employed at Charlotte Lane Café in Shelburne for the past 15 years, excels when it comes to customer service, ensuring each customer experience is continually enhanced by her infectious smile, welcoming attitude and informed guidance; and

Whereas Cora Beck is truly an asset to her employer and her second family at Charlotte Lane Cafe, taking great pride in her work ethic and performance;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Cora Beck for being named Employee of the Year at the Shelburne County Business Development Corporation and Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce 2011 Business Excellence Awards on October 20, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2449

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

Whereas the Sackville Kinsmen have generously supported the construction of the Murdock MacKay Memorial Kinsmen Park at First Lake; and

Whereas the Sackville Kinsmen support the community through many fundraising events; and

Whereas the Kinsmen Club of Sackville reached 50 years of service to Sackville and surrounding communities and held a celebration in April of 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly thank the Kinsmen Club of Sackville for their generosity and the 50 years of service to Sackville and surrounding communities, and wish them many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2450

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

Whereas Constable Megan Apostoleris of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, formerly of West River Station, Pictou County, is a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride, who performed throughout the Maritimes this summer; and

Whereas Constable Apostoleris, with her horse named Walsh and her fellow riders in the Musical Ride, performed their world-famous show at the Hector Arena in Pictou in front of family, friends and fans; and

Whereas Constable Apostoleris and her fellow riders of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride performed two sold-out shows and donated the proceeds to the Father Gerald MacKenzie Council of the Knights of Columbus who will use the funds for local projects;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly thank Constable Apostoleris and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride for bringing their world-famous show and horses to Pictou County as part of their 2011 Atlantic tour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2451

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit organization which empowers and supports those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS as well as those at risk; and

Whereas the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia is a leading sponsor of the 2011 World AIDS Day Vigil, which pays respect to those who have been lost to HIV/AIDS while uniting our community in hope for a cure; and

Whereas on December 1, 2011, the World AIDS Day Vigil will take place at the Halifax Marriott Waterfront with attendees encouraged to bring a non-perishable food donation for Manna For Health;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia for its commitment to advocacy, education and compassionate support on World AIDS Day and throughout the year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2452

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

Whereas Sgt. Stephen Gloade of the Millbrook First Nation first joined the RCMP as a general duty officer in 1992 and has served in various detachments throughout Nova Scotia during the last 19 years; and

Whereas Sgt. Gloade has served as an Aboriginal Policy Analyst with the RCMP, served as a commander of the Indian Brook detachment for the past four years, was invested in the Order of Merit of Police Forces in 2005 due to his personal and professional dedication to the RCMP and First Nations people; and

Whereas Sgt. Stephen Gloade has recently been commissioned as an inspector with the RCMP making him the first Mi'kmaq person to be commissioned as an officer;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Sgt. Stephen Gloade on being the first Mi'kmaq to be commissioned as an RCMP officer and wish him well as he continues in his career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2453

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Eastern Passage resident, Rose Dalling, has been involved with volunteer committee work through the Lions Club for many years; and

Whereas in the Spring of 2011 Rose received the Lions Foundation of Canada life membership from the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Lions Club, at the 39th Charter Night; and

Whereas Rose volunteers on numerous committees in the club such as bar, bingo, carnival, children's Christmas party and charter night while chairing several committees including stamps, eye glasses and pins;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly commend Rose Dalling of Eastern Passage for being the recipient of the Lions Foundation of Canada life membership from the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Lions Club.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2454

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

Whereas writing is a powerful tool, holding the potential to reflect and express important personal memories and experiences; and

Whereas the opportunity for members of a community to come together to explore ideas that are important to them and to learn how to share these ideas with others is an important aspect of cultural growth; and

Whereas Carole Langille, South Shore Libraries' Writer-in-Residence, is offering writing workshops, critiques and advice at the Thomas Raddall Library, in Liverpool, to encourage the growth of our cultural community;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Carole Langille for bringing members of the community together in a setting conducive to cultural growth.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2455

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Midget B hockey tournament was held in March of this year in Canso, where the Westville Miners went undefeated through five games to win the championship; and

Whereas in the final game the Westville Miners and the Eastern Shore Mariners competed for the win, and with five minutes left in the third period the Miners broke the 2 to 2 tie, claiming the 2011 championship; and

Whereas the Westville Miners brought home the gold medal and dominated by taking three of the six positions on the all-star team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Westville Midget B Miners, their coaches, and volunteers for being the 2011 champions, and the people of Canso, who hosted a top-notch tournament.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 2456

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

Whereas Antigonish native Mike Tobin is the shortstop for the New Glasgow Kinsmen Midgets, Nova Scotia's team at the Baseball Canada Championships held this past August; and

Whereas Mike Tobin was named the major male player of the year at Baseball Nova Scotia's Annual General Meeting and Awards Banquet, held on October 29th; and

Whereas Mike Tobin is also an accomplished hockey and soccer player on the Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional Royals teams, whose goal is to play NCAA baseball at an American university;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mike Tobin on being awarded Baseball Nova Scotia's major male player of the year award and wish him the best in his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2457

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

Whereas team sports play an integral role in enriching the lives of youths and adults in Cumberland North; and

Whereas the Pugwash Panthers boys soccer team used the strategy of keeping the ball on the ground, making smart passes, staying physical with their opponents, and playing harder than they ever played before; and

Whereas the Pugwash Panthers won their second Division 4 Boys provincial soccer championship with a 3 to 1 win over École du Sommet of Halifax on November 5, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Pugwash Panthers boys soccer team for bringing home the gold medal in the Division 4 provincial soccer championships for the second time.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 2458

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

Whereas members of the Greater Hammonds Plains Communities Association have identified the Hammonds Plains Road as a hazard to their safety and their vehicles; and

Whereas they brought attention to this issue by holding a Rally for Lanes on June 25, 2011, a nearly 11-kilometre march along the road; and

Whereas they brought the issue further into the public's eye by gathering more than 2,400 signatures on a petition for active transportation lanes and safety improvements;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in commending members of the Greater Hammonds Plains Communities Association for their work, coming together as a community, and bringing important issues in their area to the forefront of public discussion.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2459

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

Whereas the NSSAF Western Region Cross Country Championships took place at the Municipal and Area Recreation Complex, known as MARC, in Bridgewater on October 17, 2011; and

Whereas the Kings County Academy, or KCA, Junior Girls team consisted of Meaghan Vaughan, Paige Chisholm, Gillian Cumby, Madeline Laurence, Emily MacArthur, and Morgan Lutz; and

Whereas the KCA entry won the junior girls regional banner for the second straight year, advancing to the provincial championship held in Halifax on October 24th ;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Kings County Academy Junior Girls Cross-Country Team on winning the NSSAF Western Regional Championships at the MARC in Bridgewater on October 17, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2460

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

Whereas Feltzen South resident Sheila Woodcock is the founder and president of QSE Consulting Inc., a firm that fills a niche market relating to quality, standards, and education for medical laboratories; and

Whereas the Progress Women of Excellence Awards, from the Canadian Progress Club's Halifax-Cornwallis Chapter, celebrate the achievements of women in six business sectors who have made a profound impact on the community; and

Whereas Sheila Woodcock has been selected as the winner of the Entrepreneur-Innovator Category for the 22nd Annual Awards, and was recognized during a gala dinner on November 16, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sheila Woodcock of Feltzen South on winning the Progress Women of Excellence Award in the category of Entrepreneur-Innovator, and recognize her contributions to the local 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 Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 2461

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas on May 11, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary awarded nine contributors with lifetime memberships; and

Whereas Agnes O'Connor was one of those who received a lifetime membership in the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary on that occasion; and

Whereas Agnes O'Connor's lifetime membership was awarded by the auxiliary to honour the range of her valuable contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Agnes O'Connor for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and its auxiliary, and congratulate her on receiving her lifetime membership in the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

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-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 2462

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

Whereas the Thomas Hamilton Canoe Run has been held on the Stewiacke River, between Middle Stewiacke and Birch Hill, each July since the death on active service in Afghanistan on December 13, 2008, of Thomas Hamilton, of Burnside, Colchester County, and Upper Musquodoboit; and

Whereas a dance at the Burnside Community Hall is also held in conjunction with the Canoe Run - proceeds from both events going towards the community efforts associated with that hall; and

Whereas Corporal Thomas Hamilton was a proud member of the Royal Canadian Regiment, based in CFB Gagetown, who at the time of his death was on his third tour of duty in Afghanistan, and who is remembered with love and honour by the broad circle of his family and friends;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, in concert with the people of the Stewiacke and Musquodoboit Valleys, uphold in honour the memory of Thomas Hamilton, and offer this resolution to the Burnside Community Hall as testament and witness to this truth.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2463

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

Whereas on September 1, 2011, two local sailors sailed into victory during the national championships held at the St. Margaret Sailing Club in Glen Haven; and

Whereas Alexander Burke of the Hubbards Sailing Club won second place in the laser competition; and

Whereas Danielle Dube of the St. Margarets Bay Sailing Club won third place in the women's laser competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates Alexander and Danielle and wish them all the best 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. 2464

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

Whereas the North End Community Garden began in North End Halifax at Warrington Park in 2007 as an initiative of the North End Community Health Centre, community members and local agencies with a mission which includes engaging local youth and their families in building an environment where hope blooms; and

Whereas 2011 is the second year of operation for the Hope Blooms salad dressing entrepreneurial project and this year 32 youth grew and harvested herbs in the community garden, measured and mixed the ingredients for three flavours of salad dressing and then packaged and labeled the bottles, all under the supervision of Jessie Jollimore, a dietitian at the North End Community Health Centre; and

Whereas Hope Blooms is a great success with over 2,000 bottles sold already, and with proceeds going to a scholarship fund for the young participants and \$1 per bottle going to a cause selected by the youth, which this year is a lunch program at Joseph Howe Elementary School;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate all of the young people involved in the Hope Blooms Program on their success as entrepreneurs providing a healthy and delicious project and than the adults and agencies who generously contribute their time and resources, and wish everyone involved continued success in growing seasons yet 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 Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2465

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

Whereas Just Us! Coffee Roasters located in Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, was a People's Choice winner of the Eat Atlantic Food Product of the Year contest; and

Whereas Just Us! received the greatest number of votes among the top 10 finalists at Co-ops Eat Atlantic Web site; and

Whereas Just Us! Coffee is an excellent example of the co-operative business that has found a way to combine a people-first approach with an excellent product;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Just Us! Coffee Roasters for being chosen the People's Choice winner for the Eat Atlantic Food Product of the Year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 2466

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

Whereas Lockeport businessman Chris Bird was a recipient of the Green Award at the Shelburne County Business Development Corporation and the Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce 2011 Business Excellency Award on October 20, 2011; and

Whereas Chris Bird, who founded his business Rehouse Timberframes on green an sustainable principles and practices, is dedicated to minimal environmental impact in his building projects through the reuse and recycling of materials; and

Whereas Chris Bird believes in the art of timber framing and is committed to environmentally-responsible construction that is focused on salvaged, recyclable, and local building materials that provide sustainable building options;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Shelburne businessman Chris Bird for receiving the Green Award at the Business Excellence Awards on October 20, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2467

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

Whereas Donna Belanger and James Sheen, who are volunteers at the Hector Quay, home of the Ship Hector in Pictou, chose to renew their wedding vows on the Ship Hector to commemorate their 10th wedding anniversary; and

Whereas Donna and James chose the Ship Hector for their renewal ceremony and they elected to renew their wedding vows dressed in period clothing from 1773; and

Whereas the renewal ceremony was officiated by Justice of the Peace Kevin MacPherson, who was also dressed in period clothing of 1773 and is also a Hector Quay volunteer;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Legislative Assembly congratulate Donna Belanger and James Sheen for renewing their wedding vows at the Hector Quay, home of the Ship Hector in Pictou, and wish them many years of happiness together.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2468

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

Whereas David Wilson, owner and chairman of both Ski Wentworth and Crabbe Mountain, founder and chairman of Kerr Controls, and co-chairman of Wilson Fuel, has dedicated many years to helping organizations within the community, such as the Scouting movement, where he served as Scoutmaster for 16 years, and he is also a member of the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas David Wilson has served on many boards and was involved in developing sports organizations, such as the Truro Bearcat rugby team in the 1950s and the Truro Spartans Gymnastics Club in the 1970s, and is credited with organizing the first ski instructor course in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas David Wilson has received the prestigious 2011 Humanitarian Award in Nova Scotia due to his longstanding practice of giving back to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate David Wilson for being the recipient of the 2011 Humanitarian Award and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2469

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Discovery Centre is a not-for-profit charitable organization that stimulates interest in science and technology by providing innovative and entertaining hands-on experiences for all ages; and

Whereas the Discovery Awards for Science and Technology are presented annually to honour outstanding individuals whose internationally-recognized work is being carried out right here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas on November 17, 2011, the 9th Annual Discovery Awards for Science and Technology recognized nominees in four categories, including Dalhousie University's Jason Brown, Kevin Hewitt, and Simon Sherry, and Jill Chorney of Dalhousie University and the IWK Health Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the Discovery Centre for its commitment to making science and technology accessible to all Nova Scotians and extend congratulations to Jason Brown, Kevin Hewitt, Simon Sherry, Jill Chorney, and all of the 2011 award nominees.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2470

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Eastern Passage resident Walter Miller has been involved with volunteer committee work through the Lions Club over the past two decades; and

Whereas in the Spring of 2011 Walter Miller received his 20-year Monarch Certificate of Service from the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Lions Club at the 39th Charter Night; and

Whereas the extent of Walter's volunteerism includes remaining active on committees such as bingo, dog guide walk and the carnival;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly commends Walter Miller for being awarded his 20-year Monarch Certificate of Service from the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Lions Club.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2471

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

Whereas design innovations can enable Nova Scotian products to be shipped all over the world; and

Whereas Roger Mann, lead designer at J&H Industries in Liverpool, took on the challenge of designing roof trusses to fit in cargo containers; and

Whereas Roger Mann's innovative design has enabled J&H Industries to enter the international market, sending roof trusses to Greenland;

Therefore be it resolved be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes and congratulates Roger Mann and J&H Industries for their pioneering design of roof trusses for the international market.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2472

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

Whereas the Plymouth Community Centre, Efficiency Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Power held a Christmas tree lighting ceremony on November 18th, attended by over 200 people; and

Whereas the Dr. W.A. MacLeod Elementary School choir, consisting of 35 children, performed under the direction of Dwayne Laffin; and

Whereas the third annual outdoor tree lighting ceremony further underlines the awarding by the Lieutenant Governor to the greater East River Valley community, this year's Community Spirit Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Plymouth Community Centre and applaud the children of the Dr. W.A. MacLeod School choir for an evening ceremony that helps create a stronger sense of community throughout the East River 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 Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 2473

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

Whereas the Glen Arbour Ratepayers Association, a neighbourhood of Hammonds Plains, constructed a brand new playground facility in the Fall of 2011; and

Whereas this playground is a facility of nearly \$90,000 in value; and

Whereas the playground allows residents to enjoy the outdoors in their own neighbourhood and provides a space for children and families to be physically active;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the families of Glen Arbour on their new playground facility, which will provide a good location for families to gather together and engage in active lifestyles.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2474

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

Whereas the Victorian Order of Nurses, or VON, began in Kentville in 1926 and this year celebrates 85 years; and

Whereas prenatal education, well-baby clinics and school health services are some of the programs that had their earliest origins with the VON, while more recent initiatives include home-based palliative care, adult day programs, foot-care clinics, respite care, and Meals on Wheels; and

Whereas VON Annapolis Valley delivers its programs and services through two local offices staffed by 225 health care workers and 170 dedicated community volunteers;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate the Victorian Order of Nurses on 85 years in Kentville, on identifying emerging health and social needs, and for providing innovative services that meet the needs of citizens throughout the community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 2475

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas on September 15, 2011, Sheet Harbour Consolidated School took part in the 25th Anniversary Rick Hansen Relay Tour; and

Whereas Hannah Glawson and Noah Hawes were honorary medal bearers and received souvenir medals and special event outfits for participating; and

Whereas the students were able to meet Rick Hansen personally at Cole Harbour Place, while attending the evening's closing ceremonies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hannah Glawson and Noah Hawes for participating in the 25th Anniversary Rick Hansen Relay.

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: Question Period will begin at 3:07 p.m., and we will finish at 4:37 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - OCCUPANCY INITIATIVES

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Over a year ago, CBC reported there were too many nursing home beds empty; in fact at the time it was reported that at any given time there were about 100 empty beds and that initiatives were underway to increase the occupancy rates. Last evening a report was released by CBC highlighting the fact that wait lists for long-term care facilities continue to grow. There appears to be a supply and demand disconnect that continues to widen under this NDP Government and it's the seniors in this province - whether they are waiting in hospital or in community - are the victims of government's inaction.

My question to the Premier is, given that wait lists continue to grow, could the Premier please explain why initiatives to address the number of empty beds have apparently failed?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is not the case; in fact over the last two years we have either constructed, or have under construction, more than 1,000 long-term care beds. We have worked with the long-term care facility operators to smooth the transition from what is a single entry access list through into the beds that are actually serving those communities. The Leader of the Official Opposition is right - there is often a delay between the identification of the person at the top of the list and their acceptance of a bed in a particular facility, and this has created situations where if you add up the number of days, they amount to a substantial amount of unused bed time in these long-term care facilities. The minister, as part of the Continuing Care Strategy, has been working with the operators to try and minimize that loss of bed usage.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that's what we thought was happening over a year ago and what we were looking for was some answers from the government on what initiatives they put in place the last year to reduce that delay. We all know in this House that seniors don't want to be in a nursing home; however, in the absence of any other substantive programs available, it becomes the only option available for families.

For seniors waiting in a community for a nursing home bed, the wait time has increased by 36 per cent in the last year alone. What does this government do in response? The very opposite of what they should be doing to support families and seniors - they slash respite beds.

My question to the Premier is, since the government is aware of the contents of this report and the pressure it is placing on families, could the Premier give us some indication of how many nursing home beds are empty right now?

THE PREMIER: As the Leader of the Official Opposition would know, the numbers with respect to bed vacancies, and indeed, the number of people who are in a community on any one day, or in a particular hospital on any one day, change because people are admitted or are transferred to facilities on a regular basis. But with respect to respite care, this is an important matter for communities. I would ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to provide the Leader of the Official Opposition with some information on this.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, what the Department of Health and Wellness has done is converted respite beds into long-term care beds. We had many respite beds throughout the province, some that were occupied as little as six per cent annually, sitting there, we were paying for them, they weren't being used; they're now being used and they are being used to take seniors off the waiting list so that they can have a long-term care bed.

MR. MCNEIL: The purpose of a respite bed was to give caregivers at home a break with their loved one. Everyone in the province, if they actually understand what a respite bed is, would recognize there would not be full occupancy in a respite bed, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, as they've taken a number of respite beds off the list, not only have they put more pressure on caregivers at home but wait lists for accessing long-term care is growing under the government.

We know that wait times for seniors, in a community, for nursing home beds have increased by 36 per cent. We also know that one key support being provided to these families was respite beds, which government slashed from 77 to 33. One only has to wonder whether there is a correlation between wait times and the slashing of these respite beds.

My question to the Premier is, what new home care programs has the government put in place in the last year to provide support for seniors and their families so that they can be kept off of the wait list in the first place?

THE PREMIER: When you have a circumstance where for 94 per cent of the time the bed is empty, surely even the Leader of the Official Opposition can understand that that bed is better used by actually having a senior in it and being provided with the care that they need. What the department is addressing and, really, what the most recent report underlines, is the necessity for the long-term care, continuing care model to change and we shouldn't be waiting until people get on the list for a long-term care facility, we should be providing them with support so that they can stay at home. We should be providing them with assisted living options and, in fact, that is exactly what the Department of Health and Wellness is doing.

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

PREM.: LONG-TERM BEDS STRATEGY - CANCELLATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier say a few moments ago, we built 1,100 long-term care beds, I can't help but ask who exactly he means by we because the fact of the matter is those beds were approved and funded four years ago in 2007. Yesterday, the CBC reported on the realities that Nova Scotians face today when it comes to long-term care. The fact of the matter is today there are 1,700 seniors in this province, like Shirley Dykens, whose two sisters, Nancy and Jean, are forced to care for her as she waits to get into a long-term care facility.

Mr. Speaker, like the PC caucus has been saying all along, the CBC confirmed yesterday that the NDP Government cancelled the program that was creating long-term care beds for people like Shirley. When I asked the Premier about this yesterday he said, we did no such thing, and so my question to the Premier is, why won't he just admit that he cancelled the 1,320 long-term beds strategy 200 beds short of its intended target?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's not true, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party knows it's not true. He knows that the strategy that was put in place by the previous government went out to 2016, not out to 2011, so in fact, the majority of that has been completed already. What we are doing, instead of waiting to get out to the 2016 date is looking at the kinds of supports, the kinds of programming that we could put in place in the community to help seniors be able to stay in their homes longer. We are reducing the wait list by reducing the necessity for that being the only option. That is the important piece that seniors in this province and those organizations that represent them are asking for.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the wait list to go into long-term care is going up. It is not being reduced; it is going up. The fact of the matter is that four years ago a plan was

approved and funded to build 1,320 long-term care beds for that very reason. The Premier likes to take credit for the 1,100 that were built under that plan, but he won't even admit the truth: they cancelled the remaining 200, and wait lists are going up further because of it. In fact, it has been reported by CBC that wait lists have grown 35.5 per cent up to April of 2010.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is a simple one. Since he won't admit the obvious, that they cancelled the 200 beds remaining of the 1,300, why is he turning his back on people like Shirley Dykens, Nancy Davis, Jean Reynolds, and the 1,700 others who don't qualify for Aging in Place and do qualify for and do need long-term care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we are in a position now where we have some 7,600 long-term care beds right across the province providing service to seniors through many, many communities in every part of the province. Is demand continuing to grow? Of course it is. We have an aging population and we recognize that.

The organizations that represent seniors and those who are advancing the interests of those people who need this kind of help have said that there has to be a comprehensive strategy to assist people at each stage of the aging process. We have been engaged with those organizations, designing programs, putting in place supports, and we recognize that there will be a need for additional long-term care beds over time. In fact, we're in the process of doing some construction of those now, but the simple fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that what is needed is a comprehensive strategy.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Wellness' own report indicates that there are 3,230 people in Nova Scotia who have been added to the wait list for long-term care in 2010. Some 37 per cent of those people were already in a hospital waiting for a long-term care bed; 36 per cent of that group lived in a community where there was no public home care funding, meaning that three-quarters of that group - 2,300 people - need a long-term care bed to get the care that they need. The Premier says we need a strategy, but there's no strategy.

Since three-quarters of people who are waiting do not qualify for Aging in Place or at-home care, the only option for them is a long-term care bed. My question to the Premier is this, his government knows that they cancelled those 200 final beds under the strategy, why doesn't he just admit it and tell us what their plan is to help those 2,388 people who have no plan from his government?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll just reiterate that what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party says is untrue. In 2009-10 we put in place and built some 338 long-term care beds; in 2010-11 we put in place or built another 450 beds. So far this year - just in this fiscal year - we have built another 114 beds.

I think it's important that people understand what it is that the seniors' organizations are actually asking for. So what I'm going to do is table a letter on behalf of the President of the Group of IX, Mr. Bill VanGorder, in which he says, "We're really urging the province to spend more effort helping seniors age in place and support them in staying in their own homes or family homes instead of being institutionalized." We are, in fact, doing exactly what seniors are asking us to do.

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

PREM.: RURAL N.S. - JOB CRISIS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in an answer to a reporter's question, the Premier said that there was no job crisis in rural Nova Scotia. Statistics Canada data shows that over the past year 6,600 people have lost work outside of Halifax while 9,800 have given up and exited the workforce. That is 9,800 people losing hope - that is equivalent to the entire Town of Bridgewater. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier ignoring the crisis in rural Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is the government that has brought 3,000 new jobs to Nova Scotia over the last two years since we were elected. This is the government that has made investments in Shelburne, in Yarmouth County, in Cape Breton. We have made investments right across the Province of Nova Scotia, in Amherst, in Colchester. That's where we are investing our money to help businesses in rural Nova Scotia create good jobs so that people can live there and raise their families there.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, this is the government that has lost 12,500 jobs since they've taken office in June 2009. In this year alone they lost 6,600 jobs in rural Nova Scotia, under this Premier's watch. The Premier seems to take job losses lightly. We have a clear crisis outside of Halifax and yet day after day he stands in this House blaming others instead of insisting on real action that will make a difference for those Nova Scotians. Things like completely overhauling the tax structure to make our province more competitive, in the process ensuring that all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to get back to work in the communities in which they live.

Mr. Speaker, 6,600 jobs lost outside of Halifax in the last year is more than the entire population of Greenwood and it is more than the entire population of Lunenburg. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier stop ignoring rural Nova Scotia and provide a clear economic strategy to put people back to work?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there is a clear economic strategy, it's laid out in the jobsHere program which was endorsed thoroughly by chambers of commerce, by businesspeople from one end of the province to the other. It invests in competitiveness, in innovation, in small businesses, in medium-size businesses, in the manufacturing sector right across the province from Yarmouth right through to Sydney.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that's the plan they call "jobsSomewhere else". The very organizations that the Premier talks about and boasts about supporting with his government are the very people who are standing outside complaining about first contract arbitration. He's ignoring them then and he's ignoring the fact that 12,500 people have lost their jobs under his government. The Premier has hiked the HST by 2 per cent. This Premier increased over 1,400 user fees outside the Legislature. The Premier has stood by while food, gas and power have gotten more and more expensive and this Premier has imposed the NDP electricity tax on every power bill in this province.

Instead of making our businesses more competitive, the Premier has made it harder to do business in Nova Scotia and that means that it is harder to get a good job in this province. There are 6,600 people out of work in rural Nova Scotia in the last year alone, almost 10,000 people so disenfranchised with the situation that they have left the workforce. My question to the Premier is just how many people have to lose their job and leave the workforce before you consider it a crisis?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Official Opposition is confused. He has just recited all the things that happened the last time the Liberals were in power. It is this government that took the HST off home energy, off children's clothing. It is this government that eliminated income tax for seniors on GIS. It is this government that signed the Lower Churchill agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador. It is this government that assisted with the largest, single industrial contract in history - that's a record of success.

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

COM. SERV. - FAM. POVERTY: AFFORDABILITY ISSUES - ADDRESS

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a report today indicating for the first time since 2003 progress on child poverty has stalled. In fact, the child poverty rate increased - 14,000 children in Nova Scotia living in poverty. Power rates are high and climbing, the cost of fuel is exorbitant, Nova Scotians pay the highest taxes in the country, and 12,500 jobs have disappeared since this government took office. It's getting harder for families to make ends meet and children are suffering for it.

My question is for the Minister of Community Services, will this minister stand up for children in Nova Scotia and pressure her government to address the affordability issues that are keeping families in poverty?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I'm very proud to be in a government that has supported families in poverty and low-income individuals through a \$100 million investment.

I think it's very interesting to note that the Opposition member must realize that that report only went to 2009 and does not include the last two years of \$100 million investment from the Province of Nova Scotia and this NDP Government, which has made a difference.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware that this report covers 2009, in which this government was in office for six months. Since taking office, this government has made life more expensive for families: they've hiked the HST; they added a tax on home heating; they raised 1,400 user fees; and, to add insult to injury, this government slashed the Heating Assistance Rebate Program from \$450 to \$200. So we should not be surprised that child poverty levels here in Nova Scotia are not good.

Mr. Speaker, what will the minister do to end child poverty?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: This minister and this government have been working diligently for two and a half years to move toward ending poverty for children. In fact, it's very surprising when some of the things that we have done, in terms of increasing the IA personal allowance by \$15, increasing the child tax benefit by 22 per cent, we increased foster care rates for the first time in decades, we did it two years in a row (Interruptions) we added 250 more spaces to child care subsidies, we doubled the flat rate income exemption for persons with disabilities to \$300, we refund on the provincial income tax to seniors - all those things helping families and children. There's a long list, and guess what, Mr. Speaker? When we had a vote in the Spring budget, they voted against it, each and every one of those.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the minister must be aware that the NDP electricity tax ate up that \$15 awfully quickly.

Children living in poverty cannot wait. We know that children living in poverty do not have the same educational outcomes as do kids in higher-income families; children in poverty do not enjoy the same level of health as children in higher-income families; and children in poverty simply do not have the same opportunities to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, this government is giving nickels and dimes to poor families and then turning around and penalizing them because now their income is above qualifying levels for programs. So will the minister commit today to removing the child tax credit from income assessments for people applying for government assistance programs if, in fact, they actually do care and are more concerned about poor people than what was done in the past?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: It's amazing that anybody can stand in this House and say those types of things with a \$100 million investment - we never saw it from that Party when they were in government; we never saw it from the other Party. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the same people who have done the report that the honourable member is referencing said

this about this NDP Government: “The current NDP government is to be commended for implementing initiatives targeted at families living in low-income in Nova Scotia. The creation of more subsidized childcare spaces was one of the outcomes of the Nova Scotia Poverty Reduction Strategy that was introduced in 2009.” And I can read on, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

PREM. - REGULATORY POLICY: JOB LOSSES - ADMIT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, speaking of “jobsSomewhere else”, the Premier is surely aware that McKesson, Canada’s largest pharmaceutical distributor, announced a few days ago that they are closing up shop in Nova Scotia. In fact, I have the letter that McKesson sent to all of their customers and I will quote from it and then table it for the benefit of all present.

The letter says, “Dear Customer, Changes to market conditions and regulatory requirements have forced us to re-evaluate our distribution network in Atlantic Canada . . .” The fact of the matter is that they are re-evaluating their distribution network in Atlantic Canada in that they are moving it from Nova Scotia to Moncton, New Brunswick, because of regulatory requirements. My question to the Premier is, given that the jobs are being lost here and going to New Brunswick, will he at least take responsibility for the evidence here presented that his government’s regulatory policies are driving jobs away?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party knows, Nova Scotia has the lowest unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada. It has been this government that has shepherded 3,000 more jobs into this province over the last two years. It is this government that is looking to the future with projects like Lower Churchill and with the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy; that is what we’re doing here, we are creating the right environment to foster economic growth.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, they’re creating the right environment to foster jobs and economic growth in Moncton, New Brunswick. The fact of the matter is, 45 jobs are leaving Nova Scotia and they are going to Moncton because of the regulatory environment that exists in Nova Scotia. This is not something that can be blamed on the global economic difficulties. This is something this government has done to us.

Since the Premier won’t admit that his own decisions now have cost Nova Scotia 45 jobs and given them to New Brunswick, will he at least admit that his decisions, his regulatory environment, his government, is behind the loss of these 45 jobs, which are on their way to New Brunswick?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the economic framework, the jobsHere strategy, the investments in competitiveness and innovation mean that every single day companies are making the decision to come to Nova Scotia to set up and to build their future here.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just tabled the evidence that every single day companies in Nova Scotia are considering moving to New Brunswick and this is just the latest example. I might add - this is before the most recent regulatory change, legislative change that government wants to make around first contract arbitration. The train is just starting because of the decisions of this Premier and this government. I will ask the Premier, given that this is the latest example of decisions that his government is making that is costing Nova Scotia jobs, will he at least stop the current labour agenda before more jobs are lost?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party would know that all the jurisdictions that have first contract legislation have stronger GDP growth than Nova Scotia has. They would also know that GDP growth in this province is stronger than the GDP growth in New Brunswick.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

PREM. - SOUTHWESTERN N.S.: JOB LOSSES - EXPLAIN

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, since this government decided to cancel the international ferry link from Yarmouth to New England, the entire region of southwestern Nova Scotia has been suffering. Not only has this government killed one of the largest economic drivers of southwestern Nova Scotia, their lack of a real economic strategy with targets and measurable goals has made the region suffer even more. In the last year employment in southwestern Nova Scotia dropped by 2,500 jobs. My question to the Premier is why has he allowed 2,500 jobs to be lost in southwestern Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the member opposite, in fact, the number of jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia has gone up some 3,000 over the last couple of years. There are, in fact, differences from county to county and that has been the historic nature of the job market in this province. I can tell you this, when we're investing in the Shelburne shipyards, when we're investing in A.F. Theriault & Son, when we're investing in Allendale Electronics, we're doing that on the South Shore, we're doing that in southwestern Nova Scotia in order to be able to create more jobs for those communities.

MR. CHURCHILL: I'm not sure how much evidence members of this caucus need to present before the Premier realizes that jobs are being lost in this province, not gained. The facts are there in Statistics Canada, the facts are there in your own department statistics. Get with it - jobs are going elsewhere.

The 2,500 jobs lost over the last year doesn't even account for White Point or the uncertainty with Bowater. Because of this government's neglect, there were 4,300 people who left the workforce last year in the southern region alone; 4,300 people who view the situation that the NDP has created so dire that they have left because they have no other options in this province. Will the Premier finally listen to the facts, pay attention to job losses and do something to help those people that are losing jobs every day in this province?

THE PREMIER: What Statistics Canada says is that from June 2009 to June 2011, the number of jobs in this province went up by 3,000. That's a fact. I'd be happy to give him the Statistics Canada reference if he needs it but the simple fact of the matter is for the first time in this province, there is a detailed economic plan that focuses on innovation, on competitiveness, in investments, in companies who have asked us to help them in very specific ways. We are responding to those requests, we are growing the economy, we are creating good jobs.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier is going to continue to ignore the numbers but what he can't ignore is the voices of those Nova Scotians losing jobs daily, under his watch. If he gets tired of listening to the numbers here in the House, he can come to my community in Yarmouth and talk to businesses that have closed. He can go to Cape Breton and talk to people that are out of work. He can go everywhere else in this province and talk to people that aren't working because he has done nothing to make this province more competitive or appealing to business - nothing.

Mr. Speaker, with this job crisis facing our province, why hasn't this Premier brought in one piece of legislation to deal with the fundamental issues affecting the economy of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the simple fact of the matter is this, we have created 3,000 more jobs in the first two years of our mandate and it is this government that has brought in the most competitive business tax environment in 20 years.

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

SENIORS: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - PROVISION

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister Responsible for Seniors. Yesterday when asked about times for long-term care, the Premier said, ". . . we all know we have an aging population, we all know that they are growing requirements from models of care that are going to assist people right through the aging process. That means providing the appropriate number of long-term care beds . . ."

Yesterday we learned that the demand for long-term care beds is outstripping the supply, despite adding extra capacity, according to what the Department of Health and

Wellness has said. As a result, people who need nursing home care are waiting for the care they require. In fact, for clients of the Cape Breton District Health Authority, the wait for a long-term care bed averages more than 400 days, Mr. Speaker, according to their own report.

Will the Minister Responsible for Seniors correct what the Premier said yesterday and admit that this government is not providing the appropriate number of long-term care beds for seniors who need them?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the long-term care beds are under the responsibility of the Minister of Health and Wellness so I'll pass that question along to her.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONLD: Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more important than the care of seniors in our health care system, to myself, as Minister of Health and Wellness, my department and to this government and the Premier. We have consistently opened new long-term care beds. We're halfway through the continuing care strategy. There are more beds to be built; there are more beds that we are doing planning for. It's not accurate that there's been a cancellation of long-term care beds. Beds continue to be added into the system.

In addition to the provision of long-term care beds, we are also adding other supports and other services into our continuing care program. We have added a Supportive Care Program for seniors, to keep them in their own homes. They are able to get up to \$500 a month to assist them with respite, with homemaker duties, with snow removal.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many things that we are doing to support seniors in their homes, as well as go into a nursing home environment if that's what they require.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in her own accountability report, and I will table that, the Minister of Seniors identifies a goal of the Strategy for Positive Aging as being, "to enable seniors to live in safe and supportive living environments, free from danger, fear and exploitation."

Yesterday we heard sisters Nancy Davis and Jean Reynolds say that caring for their sister Shirley while she waits for placement in a long-term care facility has destroyed the quality of life for all three of them and has left them very fearful.

Will the minister admit that this government is failing to meet this goal and that thousands of seniors feel fearful and unsupported because this government is not providing the appropriate number of long-term care beds?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, with respect to seniors, they are very important to us. This is a government that has been doing planning and strategy

surrounding many elements of keeping seniors home longer. In terms of the long-term care beds, once again I will ask my colleague the Minister of Health and Wellness to answer that portion.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, indeed, being a caregiver for an elderly parent or a sibling is a very stressful situation. All of the research points to that. If you know caregivers, if you've been one yourself, you know this. That's why this government has introduced three programs to assist seniors to be in their own homes and get support. We've introduced a Caregiver Benefit, we've introduced the Supportive Care Program, and we've introduced the Personal Alert system for seniors who are in danger of falling because they have already fallen.

I would highly recommend that people who are caring for an elderly parent or relative or friend, contact the Continuing Care division and get information about the variety of programs that are available to support them.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I'm disappointed that the Minister of Seniors isn't confident enough in the report that she has released and the information that was supplied to her from her department to answer her own question.

As I mentioned, clients of the Cape Breton District Health Authority wait for long-term care beds for more than 400 days. That's over 13 months, Mr. Speaker. By any standard that is unacceptable. What is the Minister of Health and Wellness doing to shorten the wait lists in Cape Breton and ease the burden on hundreds of Cape Breton families?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the wait times in Cape Breton are indeed longer than elsewhere, but members of the House should also realize that we have more long-term care beds in Cape Breton per the population of seniors than any other DHA, with the exception of Colchester. For seniors in Cape Breton, they are as eligible for all of the range of programs that we have to support them as any other part of the province. So I would indeed urge people to be in contact with the district health authority, with the care co-ordinators, and get information.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people who are waiting for long-term care who are not receiving any other services and they could very well be eligible for those services and they should avail themselves of those services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:
ANNA. VALLEY METHADONE PROG. - WAIT LIST**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On October 12th, the minister announced a properly regulated methadone

program for the Annapolis Valley. While the news was initially welcomed, its success was short lived. The program now, only six weeks old, has a wait list and those on the list can only receive an assessment - no treatment. My question to the minister is, is this not indicative of a problem much larger than the minister was willing to admit?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the program that is being introduced into the Annapolis Valley will not only set a very high standard for methadone treatment programs in Nova Scotia, but it will be a program that will set an extraordinarily high standard for these programs across the country.

The Annapolis Valley District Health Authority, who are implementing this program, are working through what is required, very carefully, because they care about the quality of the service that they're offering people. They're in the process of using the resources we've provided them to get additional staff in place. They need also to find family physicians to participate in this program and they're also working to identify additional clinic sites.

So the program is unfolding, indeed, absolutely as it should, Mr. Speaker. Anybody who would have thought that there would be instant results, within hours of having an announcement of additional resources, is very naive about how long it takes to put personnel in place to address these serious, serious issues.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the minister well knows, we are now closing in on one year since this issue came to the forefront. People who need methadone in the Valley are now once again forced to wait. As of today we have had 53 people attempting to seek help - 22 are receiving treatment while 31 people are left in limbo. Any new cases will receive an assessment only with the holdup being an issue of insufficient staff resources. Who knows how long it will take to ensure adequate staff resources and how many we will lose as they slip back into the vicious cycle.

My question to the minister is, what will happen to those individuals currently on the wait list who are willing to seek treatment now?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there are existing programs in the Valley with respect to detoxification. There are ongoing support and counselling programs for people. I listened with interest this morning to the interview with the Director of Addiction Services and he indicated that people who are on the wait list are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the addiction counselling professionals in the Valley who will support them through the process until they have the range of clinics and personnel in place.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, families of those on the wait lists are looking for support. This is an issue that this government was reluctant to address from the beginning, is now making an effort to address but, once again, we find ourselves stalled in the process.

Madam Minister, I spoke to Stephen George just a few minutes ago and he will have to wait three weeks to whenever, is what he was told, plus the Web site says he could get detox in one to three days – it took him 30 days.

So my question to the minister is, how long will those on the wait list for methadone in the Valley have to wait?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we have provided the resources to the district health authority and they are developing this program. They need to recruit personnel. They need to put a number of things in place before the program is fully subscribed.

They have already begun to bring people into that program. They have done that in a way where they have determined the people who require the services most to begin the program, which is a kind of triaging process that is common in our health care system. I have very high confidence in the health care providers in the Annapolis Valley to be able to have a methadone treatment program that other parts of the province will learn from - and indeed, other provinces in Canada will look to because it is being developed with such high standards.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

COM. SERV.: ABUSE ACCUSATIONS - APPEAL PROCESS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. We strongly agree with the Auditor General that protection of persons in care deals with a vulnerable sector of society and these individuals should have every opportunity to be protected from abuse. However, in the report last week, tabled by the Auditor General, it was revealed there was a lack of an appeal process for a person who has been accused of such abuse. Would the minister agree that an appeal process is a basic requirement to due process for people who have been founded of allegations of abuse?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member says, the Protection for Persons in Care Act has been a wonderful Act in order to be able to protect those individuals who are in facilities throughout the Province of Nova Scotia. Certainly one of the recommendations from the Auditor General was speaking about an appeal Act, and we're working through that process now. It's coming down to terminology, whether we're speaking about an actual appeal versus a review.

We have taken the advice of the Auditor General and we are looking at that now and going forward with his recommendations in some manner. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on Page 50 of the report it states that management at both the Departments of Community Services and Health and Wellness

told the Auditor General that they do not believe an appeal process is necessary for this program. On what evidence does the minister's department base its gut feeling when they say they do not believe an appeal process is necessary?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, what we're looking at is in terms of an appeal process versus a review process. We are looking at that presently. The Auditor General commended our department on having a good system and the process now for the protection for persons in care is very good with how it's set up with our staff and how quickly they go in and review the complaint. Therefore, as I said earlier, we as a department - Community Services - are looking at what that would be made of in terms of developing a review process versus an appeal process. It's more set on what the terminology is and understanding of what that terminology would be. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on Page 55 of that report, the minister's department said that it planned to research this topic and discuss available options. My question would be, if the department does not believe an appeals process is necessary, what outcomes does the minister expect from the research? Or is this just a tactic to avoid the Auditor General's clear recommendation?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member will see that, over the past history since this government has been formed, when the Auditor General has come forth with a recommendation in Community Services we have certainly followed his recommendations. That's what we'll be doing again this time. We'll be looking at a review process and what that means. That takes some discussion and understanding of how we're going to formulate that, and exactly how we'll implement that. That's exactly what we'll be doing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:
PRESCRIPTION DRUG WORKING COMM. - STATUS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I asked for an update from the Minister of Health and Wellness on progress around the implementation of recommendations of the prescription drug working committee. The minister spoke of an advertising campaign which, while a good first step, its effectiveness remains to be seen. Also ignored were four recommendations that can be implemented within current financial resources.

My question to the minister is, can the minister please provide the status on the implementation of those recommendations the committee indicated could be done within existing resources?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, first of all I would say that the working group provided, I think, very useful suggestions and recommendations to the department, and department staff is now working through those recommendations with respect to timely implementation.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, professionals who treat and support individuals with challenging addictions will tell you that they need an array of services and interventions to ensure individuals make a complete recovery. I hear frequently from families, with young people, who say my son, or my daughter, seeks support for withdrawal. Some start a methadone program; others are told to seek counselling. Then they go back to their old habits, only to repeat this process again and again and again. It's wasteful fiscally, but most importantly it is not healthy, and it takes its toll on those who are addicted, and their families.

My question to the minister is, has there been any direction given by the minister around requesting feedback from the working committee around whether we, as a province, have a full array of services available when it comes to treatment?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the recommendations of the working committee, I have met with members of my staff, we have reviewed the recommendations, and they have been tasked with the responsibility for developing a plan to implement recommendations and various options for the minister. I look forward to seeing recommendations from that working committee implemented.

There are certain things that we have been able to do, such as the provision of resources to the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority for a methadone program, which we've already discussed. We've done some of the public education that I had spoken of before, Mr. Speaker. We also have made some adjustments in the Prescription Monitoring Program that will enhance the information that's available through the prescription drug monitoring. So there are a number of initiatives underway and we will continue to improve services for people with addictions, with a view to doing a number of things - we need to do prevention; we need to do treatment; and we need to do enforcement as well. And, as the speaker knows, law enforcement and those issues fall outside the purview of the Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, many experts in the field speak of the need of a residential treatment facility for young people, to ensure that recovery is complete and that we minimize as much as possible the chances for relapse, an area in which the minister can make a difference. Could the minister please indicate whether there has been any discussion around ensuring that young Nova Scotians have access to a residential treatment program?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: In addition to the work of the working group, the member may recall that I also referred the recommendations from the working group to

the group that is working on a mental health and addiction strategy. Mr. Speaker, when that strategy is completed, I will look to see what they are recommending with respect to treatment services and what the best practices are.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: BREAST SCREENING - DETAILS

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, in recent months there have been some conflicting statements on the necessity for breast cancer screening and in an attempt to sort out some of these conflicting statements, guidelines presented earlier this week by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care simply added to the confusion. Take for example women aged 40 to 49 who have no elevated risk of breast cancer, the guideline states that these women should not have routine mammograms. The guidelines further advise against the need for self-exams at any age.

Now, as the Minister of Health and Wellness is no doubt aware, Nova Scotia is one of the provinces that encourages regular breast screening for women aged 40 to 49. So given this fact, could the minister please indicate to this House whether the government intends to eliminate routine breast screening in women aged 40 to 49 as per the task force recommendation?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the issue of breast screening is a very important issue to all members of this House. I was very pleased as Minister of Health and Wellness when one of the first things we were able to do was to invest in new digital mammography equipment for the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program all across the province, bringing Nova Scotia up to a very high standard.

In the Province of Nova Scotia it is generally the family physician who works directly with patients and makes recommendations with respect to breast screening. Mr. Speaker, we do not, we have not, and we will not turn women away who are between the ages of 40 and 49 who wish to have breast screening done, who have had the conversations with their physicians and feel that is the best course of health care in their situation. But I believe that in Nova Scotia it is generally the practice for most family physicians to make referral for women for breast screening when they're 50 years of age and older. So these new guidelines essentially aren't going to have a big impact in terms of the standard practice in Nova Scotia, which is very excellent.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, that was pretty clear as mud. Women are left wondering whether the guidelines aimed at addressing the number one cancer killer for women in Nova Scotia have changed or not, but these aren't the only breast screening changes happening in Nova Scotia. According to the most recent annual report of the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program, two mobile vans - admittedly vans operating without state-of-the-art digital technology - will be taken out of service.

Now, while one cannot find fault in the rationale, we do know that the new guidelines are recommending screening for an older age cohort who may find it more difficult to travel to a fixed site. Given that the annual report indicates a reduction of over 4,600 kilometres in areas being covered and information was supposed to be made available about this during the first half of this year, could the minister please table before the end of business today the list of those communities which previously had mobile breast screening service but now do not?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we have once again, I want to say, an excellent, high-standard program for breast screening in Nova Scotia. We will continue to have a very high standard in our breast screening process and I don't think it's all that helpful to the women in the province to have two non-medical people debate the new clinical practice guidelines and what their implications are for women.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the job of the Opposition is to hold the government to account. I don't think I need a medical degree to ask questions about what we are doing about breast screening here in this province. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I can understand the need to make mobile breast screening more cost effective, I can understand duplication of service, and I can understand the arguments around state-of-the-art technology. However, wait times for screening at fixed sites across the province are atrocious. At the Halifax Shopping Centre fixed site, nine out of 10 patients wait 189 days; at the Dartmouth General, 108 days; at Valley Regional, 113 days; and at Aberdeen, 126 days.

Given that the new recommendations around guidelines recommend increase screening for women aged 70-74 - an age cohort that can find it difficult to travel distance - could the minister please indicate whether there are any plans to purchase an additional digital mobile unit?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker first of all I want to say, and remind the honourable member, that I'm not a member who gets my medical advice from medical doctors who have lost their medical licence like that member has with the Lyme disease doctor she brought in. The breast cancer program in Nova Scotia is a very strong program. It will continue to be a very strong program for people all across this province. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Apparently I hit a nerve, Mr. Speaker. (Interruptions)

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

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we have a strong breast cancer screening program here in Nova Scotia. In fact, not very long ago when I was speaking with the Dean of the Medical School, he congratulated the Department of Health and Wellness on the fact that we were meeting the bench marks that are recommended for women, particularly women with risk factors. We were exceeding those guide lines.

We have a strong program. We have great staff in that program and women are very well served. I would encourage women to speak with their GPs and to follow-up with the advice that their GPs give them with respect to breast screening.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV.:
HOUSING AUTHORITIES/COM. SERV. WORKERS - PARITY

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, NSGEU Local 26 - Cobequid Housing Authority is made of 36 members employed in the Truro and Amherst offices. They currently manage 893 senior units; 258 family units; provide management services to Colliston House in Truro, an 18-unit disabled accessible building; support workers provide emergency services to tenants in the Truro H.A. Johnson Manor; and manage 600 family units, rural and native housing, across the province. Each member takes great pride in those they serve and the work that they conduct each day.

But Mr. Speaker, as of November 10th a 14 day countdown has begun and the possibility of a strike is nearing, so my question to the minister. Local 26 is asking for wage parity with their co-workers at Community Services. Does the minister and her government believe that they deserve this?

MS. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: I do realize, as the Minister of Community Services, that when there are contract negotiations taking place, there is often a lot of emotion surrounding that and there is also a lot of misinformation that gets out there. That's why we don't get involved on the floor talking about those types of negotiations. That's why it needs to sit in with the collective bargaining process. We've seen over and over how that type of process has been very successful, and we're sure we'll that again.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, last April NSGEU Local 47 - Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority walked off the job as they were not called back to the table by the minister's own department to negotiating a fair and collective agreement. Knowing that this could happen again in the next coming days for Local 26 is simply irresponsible and it hurts everyone involved, including the seniors, families, and children that these members serve.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister prepared to sit back and see the valued employees take to the picket lines and those seniors and families suffer because of her government's lack of response?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, firstly, certainly there will not be any issues surrounding the families and the seniors and we will be taking care of their needs. They are a prime concern for us and we know that. We are looking forward to the negotiation process, the collective bargaining process that has been there for years and years, to come to a resolution on this particular issue.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, this is a process of give and take. However, the government has not proposed to offer anything for the Local 26 members' classifications or even suggested doing a review of jobs and classifications as per the review process used in the civil service. At a time when we're debating Bill No. 102 - which ironically carries the title "an Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour Disruptions" - this minister continues to sit silent and see these members treated as second-class employees.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister step in? Now, or when these members take to the strike lines in the coming days?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, all employees who work for the Government of Nova Scotia and for the Department of Community Services are very important, and we value what they provide us, what they bring to us.

Once again, often around these situations there is information that the honourable member does not have and that I wouldn't have because it's around the collective bargaining table, where it should be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

AGRIC.: LAND REVIEW COMM. - RECOMMENDATIONS

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, on April 26, 2011, I asked the Minister of Agriculture about the status of the Land Review Committee's report. At the time, the minister told us that the report had gone to an interdepartmental committee and that recommendations would be coming out later in the Spring. My question to the Minister of Agriculture is, where are the recommendations?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Yes, a good question. The land review report is basically done. I'll let the member know that. I was briefed on it two weeks ago, I'll say - somewhere in that range. Although I have some very good information I felt there was one thing for sure that I would like to see in place before we release the report. It was around the statements of provincial interest and particularly for the preservation of farm land, which I find is a statement that's a little vague. I'd like to see that tightened up.

I told my staff - both at Agriculture and at Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations - that I'd like to see that statement rewritten and strengthened. I don't really want to go forward and release the report and then say, oh, by the way, we're going to do something else - you know, strengthen the statement of provincial interest. I'd like to have that done at the time that the report is released, but I'm hoping that can be soon. I mean before the end of December.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that response. The minister also informed us at the time that his department was putting the nuts and bolts to the NDP's lacklustre Homegrown Success agricultural plan. The minister stated that his department was putting together a five-year program for the 10-year plan - more than a little confusing for Nova Scotians and farmers who seek clarity from the NDP Government on agricultural policy. My question to the minister is, when will this new, five-year program be completed and available to the public?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I actually hope that will be soon. I could say "soon, soon, very soon," but I might be misleading the member and I don't want to do that. I don't have a date on that. I think that five-year nuts and bolts are just about complete, but I can verify that and get back to the member.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the Land Review Committee put in considerable time and effort to complete this report, with little or no compensation. The document has been with the minister now for some time. Now an interdepartmental committee seems to be dragging its feet. My final question to the minister is, when will people finally see the recommendations from government on this report?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated to the member in an earlier question, I would really like to see that out before the end of December and I want to make it clear - the interdepartmental committee has not been dragging its feet. They did really good work. Actually, I was quite surprised and pleased by the work they did in the sense that the recommendations in the review are quite sensible and realistic and I think, by and large, quite doable.

Certainly I think I would agree with the member that this has dragged on way too long and my target would be by the end of December, at the outside, to have that out.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: BUS. DEV. - TARGETS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, for weeks now our entire caucus has been questioning the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism about his approach to economic development. We have pointed out there is not one target in his plan, not one measurable outcome for success. This strategy is not working and the minister does

know better. If he were forced to give this a grade during his time at Henson College, he would have no choice but to give it an F. It's Business 101 - if you don't have targets, if you don't have numbers or outcomes, if you don't have anything you could measure, well, you don't have business, and you certainly have no business being in business development.

My question to the minister is, why has the minister forgotten the basics of business development, and why does the government have no real targets or measurable outcomes?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I would caution any member in this House not to be caught up in targets. Targets had not done well for previous governments, as it has already been proven. We have - and I, as minister - not only have faith in the jobsHere strategy, the jobsHere plan, but also have faith and confidence in the good staff that we have who are implementing that plan. I will further add, we have faith in the Irving shipyard, we have faith in all of the corporate citizens of Nova Scotia, that we will employ as many people as humanly possible.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the components of a business plan are irrelevant until you get to the numbers and the financial data and you see where all the components and the aspects of a business case come together. The targets are obviously important, without them we don't have anything but a marketing plan, so I'm very concerned that the minister would stand here and say the targets don't matter. Of course they matter - we're talking about public dollars, we're using taxpayers' dollars for these programs.

Of course we need numbers; we need targets; we need outcomes; we need a finish line. So it's very frightening that the minister would suggest that we don't have targets or numbers. When we press the minister, he talks about one-off developments, but doesn't talk about the overall targets that he has put together, if he has put any together - and, obviously, it doesn't sound like he has.

When my colleague for Colchester North pressed the minister on why the Aboriginal community had been left out of his strategy, the minister wandered off the subject; when my colleague for Preston asked why there were no targets for African Nova Scotian communities, the minister didn't answer; and when the Leader of the Official Opposition demanded to know why women were left out and why their wages decreased by 5.7 per cent, again, no answer.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister, why are all these groups, communities who traditionally have had to fight unemployment and low wages - why are these groups not represented in his strategy?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I could stand here at great length and talk about those particular groups that member has mentioned. I would caution the member to be very careful when talking about the Black community of Nova Scotia (Interruption) when talking about the First Nations community of the Mi'kmaq community. Our plan - for the

first time we have a plan and it's called the Workforce Strategy plan, and for the first time we've got a plan that is all-inclusive. I know the members opposite don't like to hear this because it is a reflection on what they didn't do.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, two answers and two cautions from that minister. I don't understand. I'm on the Official Opposition side, we asked these questions. We're struggling for jobs in this province; people are hurting. We are entitled to ask the minister this question and, rather than lecturing me in his answers, he should give real numbers.

Where are the numbers? It's quite simple, the NDP job strategy is not working because Nova Scotians are not working. In the past year 6,600 people lost work outside of Halifax, and 9,800 in rural communities exited the workforce. This is unacceptable to Nova Scotians and it should be unacceptable to this minister, yet he seems happy to spend all of his time on billboards and glossy logos, and lecturing me in this House about what I should and shouldn't be saying.

My question is, when will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism face the reality that there's a crisis in Nova Scotia and get on to the work of establishing hard economic targets and measurable outcomes to grow this economy and get people jobs in this province?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, if that member opposite feels like he's being lectured, it's because he deserves one. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, please. The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has the floor.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise in my place and I can tell you, if the Opposition Parties are so intent on getting a number, one number that I do have for them, that is a fact, is that under this government we created 3,000 jobs.

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

ERDT - RURAL N.S.: JOB CRISIS - ADMIT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, please. The honourable member for Cape Breton North has the floor. Order, please. Order, please. It's a stormy night, so let's have some decorum in here this evening, please. Can I please have the floor for the honourable member for Cape Breton North?

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, there have been 5,400 fewer full-time jobs in Nova Scotia since the NDP took office; in the same time frame 8,400 people have given up and left the workforce. In the last year employment everywhere in Nova Scotia went down, except for Halifax. Cape Breton is down 2,100 jobs; the North Shore is down 1,400 jobs; the Annapolis Valley is down 600 jobs; and southern Nova Scotia is down 2,500 jobs - for a total loss of 6,600 jobs.

Will the minister admit there is a job crisis in rural Nova Scotia and that sweeping it under the rug and pretending it doesn't exist is no way to solve this problem?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, those numbers are misleading. What those numbers are - they represent summer employment, they represent a whole lot of things. The bottom line is that we came into power at a time when things in Nova Scotia were dormant. What we've done is, since we've been in power the fact is we've created 3,000 jobs. That is a fact and, you know, we will continue, we have the strategy. The strategy is working. We are going to stand by that strategy and we will let it wind its way through and continue to create good jobs, good job opportunities for Nova Scotians in every region of the province.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday when the Premier was asked by reporters about his thoughts about the crisis in rural Nova Scotia, he said: "I disagree that there is a crisis."

Mr. Speaker, this government is out of touch with reality if they believe that the vast number of layoffs and closures at businesses like Bowater, NewPage, Minas Basin, Fundy Gypsum, Composites Atlantic, New Minas Co-op, Hart in Windsor and Port Hawkesbury, and Martin Printing in Windsor, Margolians in Truro, White Point Lodge, Signature Styles Call Centre (Interruptions) and countless other small businesses that don't make the headlines, is not a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is does the minister agree with the Premier that the loss of 6,600 jobs in rural Nova Scotia in a year is not a crisis, and if it isn't, what would he call it?

MR. PARIS: Do you know what? The question is, do I agree with the Premier - absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ORRELL: That's a double standard, Mr. Speaker.

Rural Nova Scotia has been hit hard by the NDP. Just yesterday, we learned that seniors in Cape Breton are waiting 400 days for long-term care beds. Cape Breton, the region with the highest unemployment rate in the province, at 16 per cent for the first 10 months of 2011, is in a crisis; North Shore, Annapolis Valley, southern Nova Scotia, all

have double-digit unemployment rates and they're in a crisis. But this government continues to say that our economy is good.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues tell me that when the NDP member for Halifax Chebucto was in Opposition and allowed to speak, he said that if things are going so well in our community, why aren't all the areas of the province seeing the benefits?

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, does the minister agree with his colleague that if things are going so well in our economy, then why aren't all areas of the province seeing the benefits?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I do agree with, and I heard the good member of our caucus say that there are some things in the global economy that are out of our control, there are some things that happen by accident that are out of our control, such as a fire. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is we are working with Nova Scotians to support and to create new jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia through the PIP, through the Small Loans Guarantee Program with the credit unions, through the Green Technology Fund, we are doing our job and we will continue to work with those employers, with the student population, with Nova Scotians, to create and support good sustainable jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

ERDT - COL. NORTH: JOB CREATION - NUMBERS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

Time and time again, this caucus has demanded that the NDP Government acknowledge that their failed policies are causing harm to rural Nova Scotia. Even when pouring millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars into the NDP ridings of Pictou County, that region is still suffering with 1,400 job losses.

Earlier in Question Period today, the Premier talked about new jobs and he mentioned Colchester County. I was interested in that, so my question to the minister is simple - I hope he will understand it and I hope he will respond - how many new jobs have been created in Colchester North since this government took office?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I do know this - it was certainly less than 3,000, because what we've done since we've been in government is we've created 3,000 jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, what I will do, despite the way the question was worded, I will attempt to get some concrete numbers for that member. Obviously, it is 4:30 p.m., so that's not going to happen today, but I will make sure that I put that on the agenda for the first thing tomorrow morning.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, this caucus has pushed the NDP to help make Nova Scotia more competitive. It's essential that our businesses are able to compete so we can grow jobs and get Nova Scotians back to work, but this government continues to hike the HST, hike the user fees, and put a tax on gas, power, and food. All of these continue to drive up the cost to average Nova Scotians.

My question to the minister is, what economic policies, that he brags about, have done anything for business in Colchester North?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, that's an easy question because for the first time in years - what did we do? We reduced the small-business tax credit. We didn't only do it once, we did it twice since we've been in government - twice, for the first time in how long?

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do those things that are in the best interests of Nova Scotians. I hate to burst a bubble here, but you know what? It's not the Opposition Party that is forcing us to do anything, the force that we get is from within because we want to do right by Nova Scotians and, by golly, that's what we're doing.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I do look forward to the numbers that the minister will be able to provide for new jobs that have been created in Colchester North. That was the question, that's what I expect to get answered - new jobs in Colchester North in the last year.

Mr. Speaker, my final question. It's clear, anyone who is paying attention knows there is a crisis in rural Nova Scotia. People are crossing the border to shop in New Brunswick, and you know when people cross the border to shop in New Brunswick that is less money for our businesses here in Nova Scotia. What does that do for small businesses? It causes them to close.

Mr. Speaker, the folks in Colchester North are good people. They pay their taxes, and they want to work. So my question to the minister is, how many more local businesses in Colchester North have to close? How many more people in Colchester North have to lose their jobs before this minister will acknowledge that he and his government have done nothing for Colchester North job creation?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I will acknowledge is that this government - not any other previous government - for the first time has a plan, and we are sticking by that plan. The plan is working and, for the first time, we've built on that plan. What we've done is we've done the right thing by Nova Scotians. Do you know what? That's proven time

and time again, whenever I go out and I talk to the chambers of commerce or the boards of trade, and I see it on the street when people tell me, you are doing a good job, keep it up, we like what you are doing and keep up the good work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

ERDT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - EFFECTS

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the lack of attention that this government is paying to rural Nova Scotia is costing community jobs. The beautiful Annapolis Valley, a great place to live, however, it has not been immune to job losses.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to give the minister the numbers - he knows the numbers, and he knows they are negative. I would just like for him to go from Windsor to Digby, take a look at the main streets, take a look at the downtown, see the businesses that have the curtains drawn, paper over the windows, and you'll see where jobs are disappearing one, two, three, four, five at a time.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why is it that the only thing that we seem to be able to measure out of the minister's economic development strategy is job losses?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you. And you know what? I want to apologize to the House because I was late coming into Question Period today. Do you know why I was late? Do you know where I was last night? I was at a Digby Board of Trade meeting, and guess what? Guess who the guest speaker was? It was me. (Interruptions)

They were having difficulties selling tickets, but guess what happened? They got me to be the guest speaker and they oversold. They oversold, Mr Speaker. Do you know, as a result of last night, do you know where I was this morning? Do you know where I was this morning? I was at the Municipality of Digby and I was in their Chambers. I was there. I had a meeting with the mayor,

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'd say he was trying to find one job.

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

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

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 2389.

Res. No. 2389, re NDP: Taxes/Fees - Increases Condemn - notice given Nov. 21/11
– (Mr. G. MacLellan)

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to make a few remarks around Resolution No. 2389. The operative clause reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly condemn the NDP for raising taxes and fees and standing by silently while power, gas, and food prices have risen by unacceptable rates and for their inaction on the 12,500 jobs which have been lost under their watch.”

Mr. Speaker, as you have just witnessed, ruled over, guided over the Question Period, there were a lot of questions around job losses across this province. Regardless of what corner of our province you go into, people are worried - if they haven't already lost their job, they're worried about the possibility of losing it or whether they're going to be able to keep their job. What they're looking for from government, and what we've been asking for in this House is some concrete steps by this government that would reassure families across this province that the economic fortunes of their communities, and, quite frankly, their own personal economic fortunes, would improve by a government that would act.

Time and time again, we've talked about the things that have been affecting the livelihoods of businesses, as well as individual families, whether it is the increase of the HST by 2 per cent - we have the highest consumption tax in the country that has been brought in by this government - this government has done nothing to enhance job creation, it has done nothing to encourage the men and women who have been creating jobs across our province to continue to try to grow their businesses.

In this House we've talked about the issue of gas prices. Oftentimes, members of government have talked about the price of gas is set elsewhere, it's out of the control of government. There is one thing that is under the control of government and that is the amount of taxes we collect on a litre of gas. We have one of the highest motive fuel tax in the entire country, and time and time again you've heard me talk about the regulation in the Province of Nova Scotia. It is my belief that we should be scrapping gas regulation in this

province, and the sooner we do it the better off Nova Scotians will be and the better off Nova Scotian consumers and businesses will be. (Applause)

Imagine today, Mr. Speaker, if the margins were changed here in Nova Scotia for businesses and there was a small change in the margins that would be collected on the wholesale end as well as the retail end. It's interesting to imagine that a business in this province needs to go to the Utility and Review Board to find out whether or not they can sell a product at a profitable rate. It's simply crazy.

Gas regulation has created a bureaucracy that has added to the price of gasoline; it has added to a situation that has inflated the price of gas in this province. It has made living in this province more expensive for Nova Scotia families, and it has made living in this province more expensive to do business for the men and women who are creating the jobs from one end of this province to the other. It is my hope that the government will finally listen. The sooner they get rid of gas regulation, the better off we will all be.

What is interesting and what is discouraging when we look at the things that are being affected and are affecting our communities across this province, power rates is one of the issues that comes up time and time again. Whether we're talking about people who come into our constituency offices who are looking for some help, either to pay their power bill or meet the basic necessities of life, one of the things they continually point to is how out of control their power bill is, and the cost of power just keeps rising year after year. Quite frankly, in some cases it almost feels like month after month the power bill is going up.

It's not bad enough that the utility is going to the URB to increase the rates of power - we have a government that is adding on their own electricity tax. It is referred to as the NDP electricity tax by some people. We would agree with those people that it was the government who put that on there, and has made life less affordable for Nova Scotians.

We would encourage them and we've asked them to give Nova Scotians a break - if they are unwilling to remove it, to at least freeze it, not to increase it or double it this year, to allow Nova Scotians some break.

We've also asked them to do a performance-value audit of Nova Scotia Power. The Premier often says that that has happened. It hasn't happened in recent time - quite the contrary. It is important that we, as a community, that we, as ratepayers in this province, get an opportunity to see whether or not this company has made all of the hard decisions internally that every other family has had to make around their own budgets, and every other small business has had to make around their budgets.

It is important that we are reassured, as a community, that this company is doing the same thing. I go back and I'll repeat what happened at the URB hearing when I spoke to the president of Nova Scotia Power. They talked about the fact that their twelve executives -

and they were quite proud of the fact that they had reduced it from twelve to eight, but when we started drilling down on what difference that made to the compensation package, there was very little. What we have here is fewer executives dividing up the same piece of pie - that's not a tough decision, that's called being lucky, if you're one of the eight.

Every other business owner has had to make decisions where they've said, do you know what? I need to remove some costs out of the equation here. In some cases, in order to stay afloat it means they've had to make some tough decisions around employment. But if they have to lay someone off, they are doing so meaning they are going to shed the compensation package that is related to that employment. It doesn't mean they are going to do it and put more money into their own pockets. That's not a tough decision; that's a pretty easy decision for the eight who are lucky enough to stay behind.

What we need to know is why should the ratepayers of Nova Scotia pay for that? If you are going to shed those positions, you should also be shedding the executive compensation that goes with them and not asking the ratepayers to continue to bear that expense on their power bills.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure as we move forward over the rest of this session we'll continue to bring up the issue of power rates. Power has climbed over 36 per cent in this province in the last decade - 36 per cent since 2002. That's an unbelievable burden for many Nova Scotians. In particular, it is a very difficult burden on business - how do they plan for the future when you start having some of your costs inside of your operation escalating at that rate?

We've heard about the Lower Churchill plan coming forward. I've heard the government at one point say it was going to be reducing energy costs. It will never reduce energy costs. It will provide, perhaps, a more stable energy environment, which we're encouraged about, but what it really will provide us is a transmission line through our province. Then, what we should be doing is opening up the energy market to renewable energy producers to allow them to sell directly to their customers so that we begin to make a competitive market inside of this province.

Mr. Speaker, if you go back and look over the last two and a half years under this government, there isn't a single Nova Scotian you could find who would suggest to you they're better off - unless you're a labour union leader. We have very difficult challenges in every community. You've heard some stories, I'm sure. You drive through the Strait going home, you know the challenges being faced by those communities; the member for Inverness had some in the gallery yesterday who were worried about their pensions; and if you go down to Bowater, they're worried about employment, or are pitting neighbour against neighbour, voting to tear apart a union - and the only piece of legislation brought in here that the government believes is going to deal with government is going to be first contract arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, first contract arbitration will not create a single job, will not create hope inside of Nova Scotians, will not allow any Nova Scotian business person to feel more secure, will not allow another job to surface here, and it will not allow those people who have given up hope to feel any more hopeful about their prospects here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I look forward to hearing the remarks of other members of this House on this resolution. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand here today to speak to the resolution. I appreciated the rather quiet tone of the Leader of the Official Opposition, although I must say I found the tone of the resolution itself rather alarmist and certainly emotional, and not very helpful.

You know, the resolution refers to rising prices, or increased prices, and it may be a reasonable question to ask: Why are prices increasing? And certainly it must have something to do, Mr. Speaker, with the volatile economic world that we live in.

Energy costs are increasing and they're increasing probably for many reasons. Extraction costs - as resources become scarcer, our rising energy resources are more difficult to find. We're importing fossil fuels and increasing demand throughout the world for the energy that does exist is having an effect on prices, I'm sure.

There are growing expectations throughout the world, and maybe justly so, that are probably changing the way that commodities and services are priced. Workers in Africa, in Asia and throughout the world are having different demands than perhaps they had before. As I think everybody, certainly on the Opposition side, knows very well, we live in an economic world that's driven by many market forces. Sometimes those forces are based on speculation and may, in fact, raise prices in ways that aren't very comfortable for many of us.

When I think about this resolution, I have to look back to two and a half years ago when we took office. We were facing, as we began to take a serious look at the books, a pattern of escalating expenditures which hadn't really given much thought to the future. We discovered that income was flat. There wasn't much sign that there had been, or would be, increased revenue and that had, again, something to do with forces in the world economy and declining income from offshore resources.

We could see that we had a debt approaching \$13 billion and we could see, too, that if we let things go on as they had been, we would have, within a four-year period, been approaching a deficit of \$1.4 billion. We thought that that wasn't a sustainable way to move forward. And, yes, in the process of sorting out some of those things, we did increase

the HST, but we decided to do that after undertaking, through the Finance Minister's work, the most extensive consultation on financial matters with Nova Scotians that this province has ever seen.

We determined, through that consultation, that one of our options was to increase income and we also determined that that could be done - with the grudging acceptance, I suppose, of Nova Scotian - through a 2 per cent increase in the HST. But when we did that, we also realized that the HST would have an impact particularly on those Nova Scotians who are the hardest pressed among us. So we removed the HST from home heat for everyone - this was a campaign promise, in fact - and certainly that had an important impact on low-income Nova Scotians. We protected the most vulnerable members of our province through instituting a Poverty Tax Credit and an Affordability Tax Credit. We've stopped charging income tax for senior Nova Scotians who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

We did increase fees as well. We increased fees because it was necessary for this province to pay its bills and we need to find ways to balance our revenue and our expenditures. When we did that we understood, again, that every time you increase prices it has an impact, but I would challenge every member of this House - and certainly members of both Opposition Parties - to think about if we were not to do that. If we had not increased the HST, what other taxes would they increase or what services would they stop delivering? There is a relationship between the taxes and fees that we expect Nova Scotians to pay and the services that we're able to deliver.

I do want to mention as well - and this is not new news to anyone - a way of trying to help low-income Nova Scotians deal with the impact of changed taxes. You'll recall we did remove the HST from children's clothing, from children's footwear, from diapers, and from feminine hygiene products.

Gas prices were mentioned in the resolution and the Leader of the Official Opposition also talked about gas prices; in fact, he talked about the regulation of gas prices. We've decided to maintain gas regulation. We've done that because we wanted to protect consumers from wild price swings that we have been seeing in the past and we expect we would continue to see if we made that change. As well, we wanted to protect particularly rural retailers so that Nova Scotians would have options to buy gasoline. I can tell you that I hear about that issue almost every day.

At this time and for several years now there is no place to buy gasoline in the whole area of Kings North, which I think of as the northeastern part of the riding. There used to be gas stations in Canning; there are none. What I hear about every day are people who wish that would be back. It's possible that if gas price regulation had been introduced a little sooner, there might still be some gas prices available. In Lakeville there is a set of gas pumps that still exist - another small community in Kings North - and probably without regulation, those pumps would also disappear, which would, again, limit the ability of rural

Nova Scotians to purchase gasoline. I expect that could be replicated all across our province.

The point of this, of course, is finding some balance. We need to find a way to generate additional revenue, and we're committed not only to doing that but to reducing expenditures as well. We've done that with school boards; we've heard a lot of talk about that in past months. We're doing that with district health authorities. We've asked every department to curb its spending and to find ways to become more efficient and more creative. We've been able for the last two years to staunch March madness and, in fact, at the end of last year we were able to realize a surplus. For the first time in a long time - in fact, only seven times in the last 50 years were we able to pay down our debt by adding \$37.8 million to that. When the resolution talks, as it did, about doing nothing, I think not. We've been working in every part of government and in each and every corner of Nova Scotia to make life better.

The members opposite have been throwing out a lot of numbers regarding jobs. Maybe they're picking them out of the air or maybe they're having trouble with their arithmetic, but certainly, the numbers make no sense. According to the seasonally-adjusted figures from Statistics Canada, there were 450,100 jobs in Nova Scotia in June 2009. In October 2011 there were 449,400 jobs. According to the numbers from Statistics Canada, Nova Scotia actually saw - as it has been pointed out several times in this House this afternoon - 3,000 more jobs in June 2011 than there existed in June 2009.

The resolution uses phrases like "standing by silently" and words like "inaction". Obviously, with the numbers they're using, they're using some rhetoric, or maybe they're just not paying attention. I don't have time to go through all of the things that we've been doing with our jobsHere program. I could talk for many more minutes about this - I could probably talk for hours - but I'd just like to say Mr. Speaker, that we live in a volatile economic world.

Too many people, of course, still do find it difficult to make ends meet and all Nova Scotians are hungering for a better future. We, on this side, understand that hunger needs to be channelled toward hope, needs to open doors for everyone, needs to engage each and every Nova Scotian in building a better future that will make a better life for everyone. That's why we're committed to getting our province back to balance. That's why we've designed jobsHere, and that's why we're investing in those who have for too long been left behind. Nova Scotians can count on us to continue working with them to make life better. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise in my place today to speak of the impact the NDP policies have had on Nova Scotia: raising taxes by 2 per cent on the HST; raising user fees, over 1,400 in total, Mr. Speaker. It costs more today to get a driver's licence, to get a

fishing licence, to do almost everything that you have to get a licence for. They've been standing by while their bite-the-bullet electricity plan pushes power rates sky high and they've been using the URB to say that this is going to happen and most recently their misguided approach to labour laws. All of those things combined to make Nova Scotia uncompetitive in the job market.

They are all job-killing policies. The effects of these policies are being felt from one end of the province to the other, from Yarmouth to Sydney and everywhere else in between, except for Halifax. Not that we think Halifax should suffer, Mr. Speaker - it is, after all, the capital of our province and it should be a vibrant part of our province. But they do have the shipyards, the navy, the universities, and the bulk of the population.

But we in rural Nova Scotia have businesses that struggle to stay competitive, they struggle to stay open, and they struggle to keep their employees. I have spoken with these businesses, Mr. Speaker, and they are really having a tough time, especially with all the tourism rates dropping and the job rates dropping. But through all this, the government is stubbornly sticking to its plan; it's so-called plan. They refuse to acknowledge that high taxes, high power rates and job killing labour laws are having a negative impact. Just last week, Nova Scotia's cost of living was identified as far outpacing the Canadian average.

They say they have been leaders, so let's just recap, Mr. Speaker. We're leading in all the wrong things, leading the country in high taxes, leading the country in high power rates and now leading the country in the cost of living. Nova Scotia's Consumer Price Index is a full percentage point above the Canadian average and it's been for the past year according to Statistics Canada and the data that was released.

I don't feel that that's being leaders, Mr. Speaker. It's getting harder and harder for Nova Scotia families to make it work and let me give you an example. A neighbour of mine, who's a fine gentleman, fine family man, moved back from Ontario because he figured this is the place to raise his family. Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, he figured was the best place with low crime rates and a good place to live. He worked off and on over the last couple of years but could not get a good, well-paying job that lasted any longer than seasonal work and he found it tough to get by.

With these increased taxes, increased fees, things just keep getting harder so he goes out West, two to three months at a time. The money is good but living away has impacts on his family life. It's a struggle. His wife is left behind and she is left with the burden of running a household - repairs, upkeep, lawn mowing, snow shovelling, taking the kids to sporting events, taking them to school activities. He is missing out on all this, Mr. Speaker, the best years of his children's lives, their school concerts, their hockey games, he'd rather be home but this is just not possible.

Wages have not kept up with the rising costs. They had zero per cent growth in the last year. Increasing costs are especially difficult for many Nova Scotians who have lost

their jobs altogether. Cape Breton has seen staggering job losses and I think the blame belongs at the feet of this NDP Government. This government is promising jobs here but all Cape Bretoners are asking is “jobs where”? Now with the introduction of first contract arbitration, things can get worse for employers and employees in Cape Breton.

Jobs aren't on Cape Breton Island, Mr. Speaker, and jobs aren't in Nova Scotia's South Shore either because the bite-the-bullet electricity plan and higher power rates it brings are threatening jobs there, too. The NDP just aren't on the side of families. Again, I say ask the people in their constituencies who have to leave and find work. Instead, they are on the side of the expensive electricity plan.

As I pointed out earlier today, there are 5,400 fewer full-time jobs in Nova Scotia since the NDP took office. In the same time frame, 8,400 people have given up or left the work force. In the last year, employment everywhere in Nova Scotia went down except for Halifax. In Cape Breton, 2,100 jobs lost; in the North Shore, 1,400 jobs lost; the Annapolis Valley, 600 jobs lost; southern Nova Scotia, 2,500 jobs lost.

The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism refuses to admit that there is a crisis in rural Nova Scotia. He stood here today and refused to admit there is a crisis in Nova Scotia but he sold out at the Chamber of Commerce in Digby. He must be doing a great job in Digby. Are the people of Digby doing great down there? Job creation must be doing fine. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Cape Breton North has the floor.

MR. ORRELL: Yesterday, just outside the Chamber, the Premier said: I disagree that there is a crisis. Who do we believe, Mr. Speaker, the people of Nova Scotia, the business owners or the NDP Government? I know who I believe, I believe the people in my constituency who I talk to who say there is a crisis. I believe the people who have to leave and go out West, who tell me there's a crisis. Sweeping it under the rug and pretending it doesn't exist won't make it go away.

The government is out of touch with reality and it's out of touch with the people of Nova Scotia. I don't know why they won't listen to the people they represent. There's been a long list of businesses that have to lay off employees or even close. I read a few of them today, businesses like Bowater, NewPage, New Minas Basin, Composites Atlantic, Ed Martin, Margolians, that's just to name a few. There are countless other small businesses that don't make the headlines that have also felt the damaging impact of the policies of the NDP Government. Bit by bit, the policies and directions of the NDP Government are killing the economy. They are killing our jobs. Instead of trying to fix problems that Nova Scotia doesn't have, the NDP should focus on the declining standard of living occurring under their watch instead of fiddling around with the misguided labour legislation that hinders job growth.

We all know what a job means to a family, Mr. Speaker. It puts food on the table and with that rising cost of transport and gas, those costs are going up. It puts our kids through school and education is going to be much-needed for the upcoming future of this province, to make life easier for all Nova Scotians. Hopefully it puts a little extra money in our pockets, money for repairs and a few extras and maybe some hard-working families can take the odd vacation.

As I've said before, the NDP are making having jobs in rural Nova Scotia tougher and tougher. Businesses have made it clear that high energy costs and fuel costs are one of the biggest problems. If the members opposite don't believe me, or the business owners, or the employees facing layoffs, they should consult with them. Maybe they'll listen to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. According to the CFIB, confidence among business owners in Nova Scotia has reached a two-year low last month; 70 per cent of the respondents said fuel and energy costs are causing trouble for their businesses. On top of that, we're the highest taxed jurisdiction in the country. If the NDP doesn't think that plays a role in job losses, they're only kidding themselves.

The NDP's higher HST has resulted in higher costs for families and employers. As illustrated earlier, the NDP's job destruction path doesn't leave any corner unturned. It starts at one end of Nova Scotia and carries all the way to the other. Because of the NDP, Nova Scotians from Cape Breton to Yarmouth, and everywhere in between, are struggling more and more, to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, they have a responsibility to make things better for Nova Scotians - to create jobs and not destroy them - but they have failed. With those comments, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to stand in my place to speak to the resolution. It is indeed, all about the current economic climate that we are experiencing in Nova Scotia. In talking to the business community, I think what they're laying out, is in fact, the cumulative effect of policies of this government, plus the economic times in which we live but, you know, the HST hike is, in fact, taking its toll now.

We already hear that the current retail climate, as we approach business - maybe the storm today will get people looking at things a little differently, but people are very, very cautious because they do have less money in their pockets. Of course, the big three are the 2 per cent HST increase, the power rates that have gone up and will go up again in January, and we could give Nova Scotians a little bit of a break on gasoline - regulation, obviously, prevents that from really taking place.

It's interesting that the member for Kings North talked about, regulation could have saved gas stations in his riding and, in particular, in Canning. Well, it was post-regulation that we saw the demise of those gas stations because I remember the former member for Kings North having to deal with that very issue occurring after his government brought regulation in. So, on every account, gas regulation is indeed a failed policy and one that, again, we could have a look at and change, and I think we would see again, benefits with every few cents, on every litre, that would go into the pockets of Nova Scotians.

This week in The Globe and Mail there was an article about how, if we learned anything from Steve Jobs, it's to look at innovation. When we talk about innovation, in Canada, we've done some unique things, like starting a national park system, universal socialized health care, having monetary policy guided by the inflation rate that occurs in the country, and dealing with bracket creep. Yes, in Canada we were one of the first nations to do this; however, not all provinces, and Nova Scotia is one of the provinces that do not index the brackets of income tax. Again, this is what puts money in the pockets of Nova Scotians and allows them to circulate more money directly through the economy. I think it's a series of small measures that could be taken to instill greater confidence, great business opportunity throughout Nova Scotia.

I'm not a big follower of the Fraser Institute, but in today's business section of The ChronicleHerald, there's an article relating to the low scores in economic freedom for Nova Scotia. There was one line there that I did like and it was pointed out by our Finance Critic and that is, the best job training is a job. We know that as young Nova Scotians now exit our universities and our community colleges, getting that first job is a major challenge. I think we do have to look at other ways in which we incent small businesses to take bright, young, well-trained Nova Scotians into the workforce, with those direct incenting for hiring one, two, three people in our small and medium-sized businesses.

Giving students some tax relief at the end of their education is really perhaps not the best way. In fact, as we know, many struggle with the first job and many are in situations of deep under-employment. If we could get more of these people in the workforce by perhaps taking some of that back-ended funding to a university education and incent businesses to take these very capable young people, I think it would help our employment situation. I think those are all of the kinds of things that we now have to review and take a look at because the member for Kings North rightly said that we do have to find ways of generating more revenue in this province. I think that could be one of those ways that would pay considerable dividends.

I'm certainly not convinced that the cuts to our system and a high-taxation regime are actually paying off and paying dividends as far as good government policy goes. I think there's nothing wrong with a government changing mid-course and looking at ways in which we can incent businesses to deal with the current climate. We know that others are under great stress, their margins have dropped; they've had to drop one, two, three employees. A really good company in the Annapolis Valley, Minas Pulp and Power, laid

off 13 employees - well-paying jobs, trained employees. In a small community like Hantsport and surrounding area, those are very, very significant.

We can take that run down through the Valley from Windsor to Digby and there are many examples. Then we duplicate that, if you wish, across Nova Scotia from Sydney to Yarmouth and from Bridgewater to Amherst and it is the small businesses that are losing those one, two, three, four, five jobs, that are giving the accumulation of the 12,500. This is very real, what is taking place, and I know the face of it is a number of small businesses that have decided that they no longer have a profit margin and especially those who are older business people. Those who may not have a succession plan are seeing very little optimism and as a result, they've decided to close their doors. As I take a look at where we are in the province, I think small, incremental changes in financial and economic policy can, in fact, get us moving forward.

I think it was very dismissive of the Minister of Finance not to do substantive consulting in the first months, in the first year, with CFIB. CFIB has made some very strong policy recommendations, ones that are tested and proven in other jurisdictions. Government dismissed them in the early going. I'm not sure if major consultations do take place now, but I think that's one body that government needs to consult with on a regular basis and move quicker in one other area, and that is small business taxation.

Government did cut by 0.5 per cent, will cut another 0.5 per cent this January, but I think in the present climate getting that down to a 1 per cent target will make a big difference. Every job that we can create is important in our present situation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 2245.

Res. 2245, re NDP Gov't.: Taxes/Power/Gas - Increases End - notice given Nov. 15/11 - (Hon. K. Colwell)

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: The operative clause in this particular resolution, Resolution No. 2245, reads:

“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.”

I trust that I will be allowed to speak on this particular resolution, even though I am not an economist. (Interruption) Thank you, member.

What we are doing here in Nova Scotia, unfortunately, is we are chipping away at the buying power of Nova Scotians. I will table this article once I am done with it, but it's an article from *The ChronicleHerald*, Saturday, November 19th. It says, "Clothing prices take a jump. Women's wear, shoes up 11.2 per cent; food, fuel costing more, too." As the Leader of the Opposition noted earlier this week - or maybe it was last week when we began asking questions about different populations in Nova Scotia - the last two years of NDP rule have not been particularly kind to women in Nova Scotia.

This particular article says "The price of footwear and apparel in Nova Scotia rose nearly 10 per cent last month compared to the same month the year before. . . . The 9.7 per cent jump in clothing and shoe costs was driven primarily by an 11.2 per cent increase in the cost of women's clothing."

It goes on to quote Johanna Galipeau, owner of Sweet Pea Boutique in Halifax, who says she "tries to keep the clothing mark-up on everything from dresses, sweaters, and jackets low. 'But it can be hard when our water bill keeps going up astronomically and other costs like our lease and electricity bill also increase.'" The article goes on to point out that "The rise in utilities prices for water, fuel and electricity are up 13 per cent year-over-year, which mirrors the increase in clothing costs and boosts overall inflation."

You have to ask yourself, why is that? This Party believes it's because of the policies the Nova Scotia Government is pursuing. Gasoline prices rose 16.9 per cent and the price of food purchased from stores increased 5.5 per cent, with notable price increases for meat, bread and vegetables. I will pass that over to a Page to photocopy and if I could get the original back, I would appreciate it.

It seems to me that what we are doing these days, what the Nova Scotia Government is doing, is chipping away at the buying power of Nova Scotians and it makes it difficult, for example, if you're a single mom, to be able to put a nutritious meal on the table each night if you make minimum wage, if you don't have a good-paying job, but even if you do, your buying power is being chipped away at. I would note that women already pay more for things like haircuts and dry cleaning, so it does seem particularly concerning that the increases are in women's clothing, there's not a corresponding one for men's clothing.

One of the other things that makes life more difficult for Nova Scotia families under this NDP Government, is the increases in power rates. I'm going to point out that from 2002 to 2010, the compounded rate increase in Nova Scotia is 36.2 per cent. Now, I do know that this government was not in power for a good chunk of that time, so not all of it can be laid at their door, but the 2009 increase was 9.4 per cent, so that makes life tougher for Nova Scotians. Then we look at gas prices and what has happened with gas prices over

the last while. They've increased by over 25 cents per litre since the NDP has taken office. It would be interesting to notice what diesel prices have increased, I've noticed a huge jump for that over the last while. We have seen a big jump in the cost of filling up our cars.

When we look at what is happening here in Nova Scotia, in terms of economic growth, well, we were the worst-performing province in the country in 2010 and there's no sugar coating of that fact, it is what it is. According to Statistics Canada, the Nova Scotian economy grew at a rate of 1.9 per cent. The only jurisdiction that had a lower-performing economy was the Northwest Territories at 1.1 per cent.

The Department of Finance projected our growth for 2010 at 2.1 per cent, 1.9 per cent for 2011, and 1.9 per cent for 2012, but Statistics Canada has now corrected that growth for 2010 to only 1.9 per cent and the vast majority of private economists and banks are adjusting the projections for future growth downward. Oddly enough, our Finance Minister here in Nova Scotia has refused to do any adjustments prior to the middle of next month. Perhaps that's because we'll be out of the House then and they won't have to deal with that, any uncomfortable questions.

You have to really wonder about the policies that are being pursued here in Nova Scotia when this kind of thing is happening. If we look at jobs and, again, the Official Opposition Leader was talking about the effect of the economy on women in Nova Scotia last week and when we look at the number of jobs lost, it's pretty significant. On a month over month basis, from September to October, in this province, our labour force dropped 3,300 positions, employment went down 3,900, full time was down 8,500, unemployment was up. The unemployment rate was at 8.6 per cent and that's up from 8.4 per cent.

If we start looking across the province and see what the changes are, they are significant. I know the members opposite are probably sick and tired of hearing about the job losses, but I'm sure that the people who are living the job losses are sick and tired of those losses. If we look at Cape Breton, for example, their unemployment rate is 15.4 per cent. Now that's an awful lot of people out of work, that's a very high rate. If we look at the year over year, unadjusted, three-month moving average, their labour force decreased by 2,300. On the North Shore, the unemployment rate is 9.1 per cent and that's up from 8.9 per cent. You say well, geez, that's only 0.2 per cent but the fact is that it's going the wrong way, it's going in the wrong direction, this is not what we want to see. Their labour force decreased by 1,400.

In the Valley, their labour force dropped by 1,800. Their unemployment rate is at 7.8 per cent, not a great rate. In the south, the labour force dropped 4,300 jobs and their unemployment rate is 8.4 per cent.

Let me just tell you that if you take a trip to Yarmouth, you know that things are not good. Yarmouth, much of what is going on in Yarmouth can be laid directly at the door of the decision of this government to cancel the ferry from Yarmouth to Bar Harbor. There

was no need of it, I understand the reason for changing to a different boat but to just yank that particular thing out, that crucial link out of Yarmouth and to not actually come back with a plan but to say hey, you're on your own, let us know when you have a business plan. We have presented lots and lots of research indicating that this government needs to move on a ferry for Yarmouth, there is no reason for it and this government needs to move, needs to change its tune and it needs to stop making Nova Scotians pay for their failed policies.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The allotted time has expired.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, with this Resolution No. 2245, we have, I think this evening, a particularly challenging text to deal with, before us, challenging from the point of trying to find a place where this text can be positively and constructively engaged. The resolution expresses itself with a great deal of negativity, several different times, in various ways, on the question of taxation and then it moves from that into a general kind of condemnatory, negative statement about the government as a whole. It is difficult and challenging to find a way to constructively engage a discourse or a text, a resolution, that is as wrapped up as this one seems to me to be in an overall fog of negativity.

Nevertheless, I want to say that in this fog of negation, which this resolution is wrapped in, nevertheless, there are, and this is the line of reasoning I'd like to pursue, that there are in this resolution two things that I do agree with. The first is, I do agree with the contention that is suggested in the tone and the kind of underlying thrust of the resolution that, in fact, things are, in many important respects, not as good as they were two and a half, three or three and a half years ago.

Things certainly are not as good as they were two, two and a half, three, three and a half years ago in Spain or in Portugal or in Greece or in Ireland. Things are certainly not as good as they were two and a half, three and a half years ago at Lehman Brothers or at Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. Things are not as good as they were two and a half, three, three and a half years ago in the American sub-prime housing-mortgage market. They're certainly not as good as they were three, three and a half years ago at the Central European Bank and they are not, in some important respects, as good as they were three, three and a half years ago, in several critical sectors of the economy of our province. That is because we are in the midst of the single most dramatic and marked contraction in the economy that has taken place since the conclusion of the Great Depression.

The terrific shortcoming of this resolution, not only of this resolution, but of the whole line of reasoning that the resolution is based on, which is the line of reasoning on these important questions that the Party that the resolution comes from has been pursuing here repeatedly, the enormous shortcoming of this line of reasoning and of this resolution is that it utterly fails to register or to take account of in any serious, thorough-going way, this,

which is the major, singular dimension of the context in which the Nova Scotia economy is operating in November 2011. (Applause)

When I consider the extent to which this is the case, I am, daily, grateful that the Party, which is disseminating this line of reasoning, and which has authored this resolution, is not in fact, at this important economic conjunction for our province - is not, in fact, in power. This failure, in my judgment, to adequately take account of this, the major defining matter about the context of our situation, in combination with this overall fog of negativity about taxation as a whole, it suggests to me that (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley has the floor.

MR. BURRILL: It suggests to me that we're at this critical moment, this Party in power.

Their primary approach to the serious present difficulties would be simply to cut taxation, which means, of course, to cut hence public spending thereby stifling the very demand, the absence of which is the thin edge of the recessionary wedge to start with. That is to say, in the situation in which we find ourselves, what is required is not less taxation. What is required in Nova Scotia is intelligent taxation. When I say intelligent taxation, I'm not speaking about a theoretical matter or about an abstraction, I'm thinking about quite specific things.

For example, I'm thinking about the addition in 2010 of a new income tax bracket for those with incomes in excess of \$150,000 by means of which the government was put in a position, financially, where it was able to cease provincial taxation on all seniors receiving the supplement thereby stimulating economic demand. (Applause) When speaking about intelligent taxation, about the unique, made-in-Nova Scotia manner in which relative to the 2 per cent increase in the HST in which the low-income offset for that was designed and implemented, what we call the Affordable Living Tax Credit, by means of which, at that time, there was a net transfer of income to those households with an income under \$34,000 thereby again stimulating demand, which is what you need to do in a recessionary situation. None of this comes into view at all through the fog of negativity that we have in this resolution.

Secondly, I wish to state my agreement with the introductory clause of the third "whereas" of this resolution, which reads as follows: "Whereas the NDP promised to make life better. . ." This clause brings into view the question of course, better than what? The answer I propose to this is as follows: better than the type of government that has been suggested this week in the contributions of the Opposition Parties to the debate on first contract arbitration. What type of government have we in this debate, have we had brought forward and suggested?

Well, first, the Opposition has suggested repeatedly that this legislation is uncountenanceable because chambers of commerce do not like it. Well, the government of a province is more than a pen in the hand of the chamber of commerce. That's what the Government of Nova Scotia was for many years and this resolution and this clause is right. We promised to do better. Secondly, the Opposition has repeatedly asserted that there is no pressing urgent need for this first contract arbitration legislation and, therefore, since there is no emergency, no urgent pressing need, the matter ought to be abandoned. But when governments, like companies, aren't constantly innovating and looking to find improvements, what happens is they stagnate, they become stale, dead, dull, victims of inertia.

That's what the government was in Nova Scotia for many years. This resolution is right. We have promised to undertake to doing better. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I don't make promises I can't keep. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Hants West has the floor.

MR. PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to rise tonight and for a minute there, you know, I thought it was Sunday, I thought I was in church, and about 10 minutes is the time the United Church minister needs to speak because I'm a faithful member of the United Church of Canada, so it's going to be hard to stand here and be critical but I do want to say it's good to see that that member is able to get up and finally be given a chance to speak in this House because we don't get a chance to hear from the back bench very often and I think that's good today. He's more than capable of carrying that conversation and we appreciate that. (Applause) I think that's good to hear from those people out there. It's good to see that member taking part in what's going on here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he had me there for a while and then he talked about the word intelligent and I got lost, but not because I didn't understand what he was saying. I think when you're on the government side, you always want to make it appear as though you're doing all the right things. I think, you know, that probably, government believes that they're trying to do the very best they can, I'll give them that, and I think every government before us thinks that they probably tried to do everything that they can too, but as we know, governments come and governments go. This government will go, too, and along with them will go the 2 per cent tax that they've increased. Those are the things that people, when you talk about these issues and what matters, is the pocketbook issues, the health care

issues. I call them the purse-string issues and the heartstring issues. Those are two things that mean the very most to the people of this province.

Education, that's right, health care, the finances of this province, although being poorly managed at the present time - the numbers are this one day and they're that the next. We can hardly wait to see what will come out of the Public Accounts next, Mr. Speaker, but let's talk about the issues of today and why we're here in this resolution, Resolution No. 2245.

Mr. Speaker, it's not about the words perhaps that are used - the honourable member's point - in the resolution. It's to the facts that are being represented and portrayed here. The fact is that there are people, and I would be shocked to hear that member stand up and say that he has not got people coming into his offices because I'm sure he does, who are having difficult times paying their power bills, having difficult times putting food on the table because of tough times, but what is the government doing about it?

Now, they're standing up and they're boasting about all of these wonderful jobs that they've created. Although, if you do the math, if you take away, or you could go minus 12,000 and you add 3,000, that's still minus 9,000 - made up numbers. The Minister of Finance has made-up numbers where he used to it. He would be used to those comments of made-up numbers because one day it's this and one day it's that. So there you go.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, that's easy, but what we need to remember, it doesn't matter what we banter about in this House back and forth - and the Minister of Finance, I hope he gets up and he can speak to this. I'm sure he will at some point but he never seems to answer the question. Perhaps the honourable member who just spoke, the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, should move to the front bench and maybe we would get some questions answered in this House during Question Period because he's certainly capable of doing just that, but then perhaps he would be told, no, don't answer that, talk around that because it doesn't matter because nobody's paying attention. But Nova Scotians are paying attention. They're paying attention to those issues of jobs, of high taxes, of high power rates.

We know all about high power rates and what's being done not to control them. We have this little monopoly that goes on called Nova Scotia Power, and people say, oh, it's got nothing to do with government, it's arm's-length. That's not true. Here we have a private company, a private entity, who is applying for increases in their rates, and they're being granted those increases through a government body. Something just doesn't add up there.

When the government is asked to step in and do something about that, they have the ability to do that if they want to do that, but they choose not to do that. They choose to allow that to go on. That's not right, and people are realizing that. When they come into our offices, people are looking for us as MLAs to help them find a solution to their problem,

and a majority of the time their problem is financial. It's hardship, it's food on the table, it's education, it's health care, there's wait times. We heard a lot today, how many wait times, the wait times of people that are waiting to get into seniors' care.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my constituency the lady whose name was brought forward today in this House, who did an interview last night on CBC. It was carried this morning. Shirley Dykens is waiting and has been waiting for so long to get in now. What's discouraging when we think about this is that family is looking after her, and I know that they love their sister as much as any of us would love our own. They want to be able to look after her, but there are stressor things being put on that; financial stressors are there, mental stressors, physical, they're all there, and nobody seems to be doing much about that.

We're cutting the number of nursing home beds by 200 or more - doing the math, that's more than 200, actually. Why? To save money. There are places you just can't cut. Health care you can't cut; education you can't cut. You need to manage it better, but we fail in the managing over there - we're doing this and we're doing that. I brought this up and have been hollering about this issue for nearly six years now in this House, about these district health authorities and too many of them. It's been going on, but nobody wants to cut administration. They'd rather build that and let that go. That's right, Minister of Finance, you'd rather build that up and just let that go.

You've got to start finding efficiencies in government, and this government refuses to go out and find those efficiencies. If they were finding those efficiencies - but they don't care about a dollar here and a dollar there. They refuse to nickel-and-dime it. But I will tell you something, Mr. Speaker, right now Nova Scotians want you to nickel-and-dime it, because they're nickel-and-diming it to survive. They expect government to do what they're doing, but that doesn't happen. Good decisions are not being made on behalf of Nova Scotians. It doesn't matter where you look. We're seeing money spent where it could be better spent; we're seeing money spent where it shouldn't be spent.

We're not seeing efficiencies found, and the district health authorities are but one example. We see money being spent on dialysis. Everybody knows; I'm sure they're paying attention to the media. We are looking for expansions of dialysis around this province. We know that studies have been done that say it's important, there are so many people, it's amazing how many people are sick with dialysis, how unfortunate. Where do we spend that money? In the HRM, the Capital district. Not everybody lives in the Capital district. The stressors are on those people, the expense, the travel to Halifax, to Windsor, to the South Shore, to other areas around the province. Everyone knows that it is not cheap to do that.

It costs a lot of money to run a home today. I talked to people last night who've never even had a furnace. They called - what are we going to do? Do we call the Tenancies Board? It's 10 o'clock at night, and it's minus 4, minus 5 degrees. Filled up the oil tank, cost them \$500 or \$600, only to find out that the furnace down in the basement was

dismantled because they're renting. They'd been there for a few months and didn't bother to check it - they didn't feel they had to, that it was part of the agreement. What are you doing about those hardships? What does government do then? They call a representative who can go and talk to government, and what are they told? There is nothing that we can do for you. Call the Tenancies Board - there's a way to get the money back, and all that the person renting says is, well, we need our money too.

Where's the money coming from? Where are the efficiencies? We're not willing to go and find those efficiencies at all. Instead, we decide to throw an extra 2 per cent on a tax for those people. We allow power rates to rise way out of control, and we don't want to get involved.

Now, there were meetings this past summer, late summer and into the early part of the Fall, with regard to Nova Scotia Power. Who was at those meetings? The stakeholders come together, they have a discussion about this and they have a discussion about that and they try to figure it out. Nova Scotia Power talks about revenue requirement - what a famous word that is, revenue requirements. Everything that they want to do, they expect the taxpayer and the ratepayer - who are one and the same as far as I'm concerned - to pay for it, and they'll tell you that.

People say why did you go to those meetings, Mr. Speaker? We were the only political Party at those meetings. Do you know why we went to those meetings? To tell Nova Scotia Power that it was wrong, the way that they were going.

The idea behind executive bonuses, do you know why those got taken out, Mr. Speaker? Because our Party was at that table and telling those stakeholders the importance - consumer advocacy groups, anyone that you can imagine, consultants for companies and big business, Nova Scotia Power executives and representatives needed to be told. Time and time again those words were said, you can't expect Nova Scotians to put rates up to pay for your executive bonuses. They were taken out. That was a success; one small success for a short period of time. Will it continue? We'll be back there fighting for those people again. There's no question that that needs to continue, it needs to happen. That's one example.

Where is the government going to find efficiencies? They are probably not; every government thinks that they are doing the right job, Mr. Speaker, but as I said, governments come and governments go but the people remain, unless they are leaving to go to Alberta to find a job and support their families.

I know the government doesn't want to admit that that happens. I heard a comment earlier, that has been happening for years, and do you know what? They're right, that has been going on for years and years (Interruption) for 400 years. I don't know if it has been quite that long, but it has been going on a long time, Mr. Speaker.

A lot of those people come back. There are a lot of those people waiting to come back because they see a glimmer of hope with the shipyard project. I think that's a wonderful thing. I hope they will come back. I hope they'll raise their families in Nova Scotia because this is their home. From someone who has travelled across this province and went to Alberta to work in 1980-81 - I know that seems quite a while ago and it was - came back. Why? Because this is my home.

Those people all want to come home, Mr. Speaker, so we hope that they will come home. We hope for good things in this province but we need government to change what they're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Hants West for his comments on this very important topic, affordability and making ends meet and paying for the things we need in this province. I certainly would also like to join the member for Hants West in recognizing the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. I kind of felt like I was doing some Adam Smith economics during my time at Dal, so I missed you on a couple of words, they were lost on me, but in any event, I thought it was very well done and your points are well taken. We probably disagree on a few of those but in all seriousness, it was very well delivered and I certainly appreciate your passion in what you just said. It is really truly great to see you on your feet and we look forward to more of that, so you're a good man for sure.

This certainly is something for me and for all of us, of course, I think affordability and paying the bills is the reason why a lot of us are here. If you check the order paper and if you check the order paper of any session of any stretch in time over the 252 years, I think you won't find anything that's more important than affordability and issues that affect the people who put us here.

We all have constituents who have the luxury of being able to easily pay the bills and make those ends meet and they can worry about greater things than clothes, food, shelter and heat but we also have constituents on the other side of that equation who struggle every day. No member in this House is immune to that and it is certainly, regardless of what we say in the House and how we exchange ideas and how we heckle sometimes, not lost on any of the 52 people here, that that's what this is all about, so I think it is an important topic.

The government side campaigned on these things but I'll tell you, I campaigned on those things, too. That's what I said when I was on the doorsteps, the same things - this is what it's about, this is why we're here. Everyone tries to effect change and in their own way as much as they can. It's about that balance of the equation and how people pay their bills. You know, for us, we are the lucky ones and it's true. It's no secret of where we're at

financially and how we do and we are the lucky part of society in that we don't have to worry about those things.

It doesn't matter, whatever happens with me, I know that for my family and for my eight-month old daughter, she'll never go without anything because I've got access to debt. My accounts are always in the overdraft but I always have a Visa and I always have a MasterCard and I'm sure that's the way that most people are. The people from North Sydney have got a lot of dough so they don't really worry about those things but, you know, for the rest of us it's a big problem.

People do face tremendous pressures in their everyday lives and although we may not be particularly in that situation, we're the champions for them, they're the people. Everyone has seen it, you see desperate people in your respective constituency offices all the time. Sometimes we're the last chance, they've followed whatever process, whatever system they're under and now it comes down to us. If we don't help them, they don't get any help. That's a big responsibility.

There are very specific touch points that I see in this province that affect families that I think we do have to talk about. The politics are always there and what the solutions are from the government side versus what the suggestions are from the Opposition side. Of course they vary, they vary greatly sometimes, but at the end of the day we all know relatively what the problems are. I can tell you from my time, a year and a half of representing Glace Bay, the biggest issue, without question, and it's getting increasingly larger, is that of power rates.

For the first time - 36 per cent increase in a decade - and for the first time you are seeing that this has a tremendous impact on the middle class. It becomes an issue of, people can either afford these power rates and afford to pay their power bill or they can't. It's that simple. Some can and some can't and there seems to be no in between. When the member for Kings North spoke on the previous resolution, he used a couple of words, he said it was a bit alarmist and we've been accused many times, sometimes jokingly, sometimes obviously not, of fear-mongering. I can honestly say, from the bottom of my heart, there is alarm. People are afraid when it comes to power bills. If you can't pay your bills, if you can't pay for power, where are you at in terms of the basic needs of life? These aren't luxuries. These are very basic needs.

I just want to read a few quick quotes and I will table them, related to power and power rates and the URB. "The UARB cannot deny that this rate increase is an unreasonable burden for Nova Scotians . . . They must consider the consumer's ability to pay. In considering this rate increase request, the board must ask how it will impact every family in Nova Scotia, particularly seniors, and low- and modest-income earners." The final quote, "Nova Scotia Power has a near-monopoly and for that reason, has a responsibility to Nova Scotians to provide an affordable, reliable product. If they're not doing that, the shareholders should shoulder the burden, not consumers."

They're pretty powerful statements on the state of power rates and how people pay their bills in this province. Those quotes are from 2005 and they're from the Deputy Premier, who I have a tremendous amount of respect for but the Deputy Premier said those very - they're relevant, they make sense today in the current situation that many people face.

If you can't pay your power bill, what are you going to do? I believe that many of the members on the government side now, when they were on the Opposition side and those who weren't elected during those times that are on the government side, they believe that and they've seen that. They are the questions we're asking and I don't think they're unreasonable questions or unreasonable comments from the Deputy Premier, who is a great representative for New Waterford but those quotes are real and they should be relevant now.

I'll just tell you a few quick ones and these are ones off the top of my head. In a year and a half, you get many examples. I've got a senior who had called me because he was in the credit bureau. When I talk about losing the middle class and the effect this has had on middle class society, the people who have jobs, the people who are working in an economy, the people who have worked and now are retired or on pensions, they should be able to afford basic needs in life. That, as far as I'm concerned, is the definition of the middle class. What you can afford and what you can't.

We have a senior, who had a relatively decent pension, can't afford his power bill so what he did, he took a 29 per cent interest card from Canadian Tire, did \$5,000 in cash advances over the winter and used that to pay his bill. When he told me about this, he said I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do, I'm 71 years old, these guys are hounding me, I live by myself. What am I supposed to do?

I said, you know, it's a tough situation. Here's how the sort of the law perceives it and what the process is and he said, listen, my house is worth \$10,000, my car isn't worth \$500. I live alone, I've got two kids out West, what are they going to do to me, what are they going to take from me? They're not going to haul me away so I figured I can do this and there's nothing. I would rather fill the fridge, use cash advances to pay for my power and my oil and that's what he did.

They're the kinds of situations people face. Another lady, working full-time, just couldn't afford to pay the bills and couldn't afford - she lived in Glace Bay, worked at a contact centre in Sydney - to pay the gas. With the power rates and the gas, she just said look, I'm going to go. She took two training courses at Maritime Environmental and now she's out West. Those are just two small examples of people who have been affected by power rates and by fuel rates, so these things affect us every day.

I just want to close with a few things. We certainly get - and it seems like it has been heated lately - worked up in this House because we do have our differences and we have

our differences of opinion, of course. The government side protects their positions and we think we can do it better and that's the job of the Opposition.

All that I try to portray in the heckling, and even in conversations, is that you are the government side and you've been given a majority government by the people of Nova Scotia, in 2009. What that means is that this is your decision. You've got capable people. You've got smart Cabinet members. You've got smart members all across the way. I won't name them because I'm running short of time, Minister of Finance (Interruption) and forget it, Pictou East.

The reality is that this is your mandate and the decisions you make are yours - yours to hold and yours to be responsible for, so whether it's jobs, if it's Nova Scotia Power, if it's health care, if it's education, they are yours and you own them and it will be up to the people of Nova Scotia to ultimately decide whether or not you won or lost and whether or not you succeeded. So that's their decision, they'll make that and from that point on we'll keep to press these issues and I'd like to recognize the Deputy Premier, he is a good man, so with that, thank you for your time and I'll take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Opposition House Leader.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the snowstorm is affecting my colleague, the member for Glace Bay. Anyway, that finishes the Opposition business for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the wise intervention from the member for Glace Bay, he is wise beyond his years.

That will end the business for today, Mr. Speaker, but tomorrow, after the daily routine, we'll be calling Public Bills for Second Reading - Bill Nos. 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 109 and 110.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I move that we do now rise, to sit tomorrow from the hour of noon to 6:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 12:00 noon.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

I might add that everyone should drive carefully on the way home, it's still pretty nasty out there so be very careful when you are leaving.

We are now adjourned until 12:00 noon tomorrow.

[The House rose at 5:58 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2476**

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 November 22 is Lebanese Independence Day, which marks the establishment of Lebanon as an independent state; and

Whereas the independent Lebanese state was founded in 1943; and

Whereas the cedar tree depicted on the Lebanese flag is a symbol of the everlasting strength of the Lebanese people, a strength we see in Nova Scotia's thriving Lebanese community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish Nova Scotia's Lebanese community a joyous Independence Day and thank them for their many contributions to our province.

RESOLUTION NO. 2477

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine members with lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Betty Ann Corkum received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Betty Ann Corkum's lifetime membership was awarded by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her valuable contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Betty Ann Corkum for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving the honour of a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2478

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine members with lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Betty Kavanaugh received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Betty Kavanaugh's lifetime membership was awarded by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her valuable contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Betty Kavanaugh for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving the honour of a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2479

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine members with lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Elizabeth Connolly received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Elizabeth Connolly's lifetime membership was awarded by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her valuable contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Elizabeth Connolly for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving the honour of a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2480

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary awarded nine colleagues lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Evelyn Grant was presented with a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Evelyn Grant's lifetime membership was awarded to her by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her valuable service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Evelyn Grant for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and Auxiliary and congratulate her on her receipt of a well deserved lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2481

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine colleagues lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Goldie Simpson received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Goldie Simpson's lifetime membership was awarded by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her much valued contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Goldie Simpson for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving her lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2482

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine colleagues lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Jean Fisher received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Jean Fisher's lifetime membership was awarded to her by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her much valued contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Jean Fisher for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving her lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2483

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital awarded nine colleagues lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Jill Hillyard received a lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; and

Whereas Jill Hillyard's lifetime membership was awarded to her by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary to recognized her valuable contributions to the hospital and auxiliary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Jill Hillyard for her valuable contribution to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving her lifetime membership to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

RESOLUTION NO. 2484

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

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

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary awarded nine colleagues lifetime memberships; and

Whereas on May 11th, 2011, Kaye Williams was acknowledged with one of the nine lifetime memberships; and

Whereas Kaye Williams' lifetime membership was awarded to her by the Guysborough Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in honour of her important contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Kaye Williams for her valuable contributions to the Guysborough Memorial Hospital and Auxiliary and congratulate her on receiving her lifetime membership.