



**House of Assembly**  
*Nova Scotia*

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2011

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2011**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Third Session**

**12:00 NOON**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Gordon Gosse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, please.

Before we start the daily routine, the subject matter for late debate has been chosen:

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier recognize the unemployment crisis in rural Nova Scotia and direct the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to devise a job strategy which includes targets and measureable outcomes.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton South.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS****PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: I am going to table the Ombudsman's Report, but before I do that I would like to make an introduction.

In my gallery, in the Speaker's Gallery, we have the Ombudsman, Mr. Dwight Bishop, and his staff, Janet MacKinnon and Ben Hirtle, accompanying him today. I would like them to receive a warm welcome from the House, please. (Applause)

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

As Speaker, I am tabling the Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for 2010-2011.

The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

MR. SIDNEY PREST: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Resources, I would like to table the Resources Committee Annual Report for 2011, and also I would like to thank the committee members who took part in the meetings during the year, and also the legislative staff.

MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the honourable member that that falls under the order of business, Presenting Reports of Committees. We would have to have a motion from the House to revert back to the order paper.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

**[PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES]**

[MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

MR. SIDNEY PREST: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Resources, I would like to table the Resources Committee Annual Report for 2011, and

also I would like to thank the committee members who took part in the meetings during the year, and also the legislative staff.]

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

## **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

The honourable Premier.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2485**

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 for more than 40 years Michelin North America has been creating good jobs for thousands of Nova Scotians and helping drive the province's economy with plants in Bridgewater, Granton in Pictou County, and Waterville; and

Whereas Michelin is a company that greatly values its employees, including George Sutherland, who served as Michelin Canada's general counsel and secretary for 33 years, playing an important role in facilitating the great relationship between Michelin and the provincial government; and

Whereas Mr. Sutherland recently retired from the workforce to enjoy his golden years at home with friends and family;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly thank George Sutherland for his years of dedicated service to Michelin and the Province of Nova Scotia and wish him all the best with his retirement.

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. 2486**

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

Whereas it has been 30 years since the emergence of the first known case of AIDS in North America - an estimated 65,000 Canadians are living with HIV and thousands of new HIV infections occur each year, having a significant impact on the lives of those who are infected, their families and our communities; and

Whereas marginalization and the stigma attached to HIV continue to create serious barriers for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support; and

Whereas reducing HIV infections and helping Nova Scotians living with HIV and AIDS have the best possible quality of life remains a priority of the government and its many community partners through Nova Scotia's Strategy on HIV/AIDS;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize November 24<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup> as HIV/AIDS Awareness Week and December 1, 2011, as World AIDS Day in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2487**

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

Whereas osteoporosis often goes unnoticed and undiagnosed until a fracture occurs; and

Whereas as many as two million Canadians have osteoporosis and 25 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men over the age of 50 are at risk of developing the disease; and

Whereas Nova Scotia can reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis by getting sufficient amounts of calcium and vitamin D and by regularly participating in weight-bearing activities like walking, dancing and tennis;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in marking Osteoporosis Month, show leadership by modeling healthy lifestyle practices, and commend the organizations that support Nova Scotians with osteoporosis.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I'd like to introduce to all members of the House some very special guests in the east gallery today, just above me here. We have visiting us from Lunenburg County, Gary and Donna Malone. I will just explain to the House, they are both very prominent citizens. Among other things, Donna is a district vice-president with the Progressive Conservative Party, which makes her a special person, at least over here, and for that reason I wanted to introduce them to the House and hope that everyone present will give them a warm welcome. Thank you. (Applause)

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

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 111 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 3 of the Acts of 1993, the Equity Tax Credit Act. (Hon. Graham Steele)**

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: And I table a recommendation from the Lieutenant Governor, recommending the bill to the House.

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: I know that one of our guests has just been introduced in the east gallery, that's Donna Malone, who is also the president of the Lunenburg County Historical Society, which operates the Fort Point Museum in LaHave. Accompanying her is her husband, Gary, who is the past president of the society and is also a director with the board. I welcome both of you here to the House, and if members could welcome them to the Legislature? (Applause)

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

**Bill No. 112 - Entitled an Act to Promote Community Spirit. (Hon. David Wilson)**

**Bill No. 113 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Income Tax Act. (Mr. Harold Theriault)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

The honourable member for Hants West.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2488**

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

Whereas on September 16, September 25, and October 15, 2011, respectively, benefits were held for Eric Surette, a Surettes Island native who was seriously injured in a trampoline accident; and

Whereas Surette is locally known as the one-man band, in which over the years he has not only used his music to entertain others but also to help others by participating in benefits; and

Whereas Surette's injuries from this accident are a broken neck and a bruised spinal cord, and he has vowed that he will overcome this to indeed walk and play the guitar again;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing Eric Surette a speedy recovery so he can get back to performing again.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2489**

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

Whereas Wilf Hoare of Berwick was inducted into the Berwick Sports Hall of Fame and will long be remembered for his success as both an athlete and a builder of sports in the Valley; and

Whereas Wilf Hoare was instrumental for his coaching skills, especially in ladies field hockey, a new sport to Nova Scotia back in the 1970s, where in their third year his team won a national title; and

Whereas Wilf continued to learn, and education played an important part in his life, as he was the first senior citizen in Canada to earn a Master's Degree in Recreation, which he received in 1985 at the age of 68;

Therefore be it resolved that this House posthumously recognize Wilf Hoare as an athlete, coach, manager, friend, and inspiration to generations of athletes of all ages.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2490**

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

Whereas Dylan Kennedy, son of Derrick and Lisa Kennedy of Little Lorraine, Cape Breton, was granted his wish recently by the Children's Wish Foundation; and

Whereas Dylan and his family travelled to Italy in May, where he and his mom attended a seven-day course offered by one of the country's finest culinary institutes; and

Whereas Dylan's love of cooking began at a very young age and this was a very happy and proud moment for him and his family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish Dylan the very best, and we feel confident that he will continue on with his culinary education and wish him the very best wherever this adventure may take him.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2491**

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

Whereas the many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Roland Boudreau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Roland Boudreau will be recognized on November 26, 2011, by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 30 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Roland Boudreau for receiving his Fire Service Long Service Award for his 30 years of service to his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2492**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Victoria-The Lakes, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the cycling advocate, Velo Cape Breton, received Doctors Nova Scotia's inaugural Golden Apple Award for 2011; and

Whereas Velo Cape Breton was established in 2004 and has been promoting cycling as a mode of transportation and recreation since its genesis; and

Whereas volunteers have contributed to an active transportation plan for Cape Breton Regional Municipality by installing bicycle facilities to promote bicycle commuting and encourage active healthy lifestyles;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to President, Andrée Crepeau; Vice-President, Vincent Nicholson, and all members of Velo Cape Breton on receiving Doctors Nova Scotia's inaugural Golden Apple Award for 2011 and wish them great success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2493**

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

Whereas all Nova Scotians will achieve better health and a sense of achievement through active participation in recreational sports and outdoor activities; and

Whereas the Lunenburg/Queens Recreation Coordinators/Directors Association has implemented the Adaptive Equipment Loan Program; and

Whereas the Adaptive Equipment Loan Program loans out specially designed equipment for individuals with physical challenges of any age to help them be active within their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Lunenburg/Queens Recreation Coordinators/Directors Association on its efforts to provide

access to recreational sports and outdoor activities to all residents of Lunenburg and Queens Counties.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2494**

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

Whereas Bedford residents Kathy MacGillivray and Brenda Gallagher have developed *Unison*, a line of anti-aging products; and

Whereas they developed this line of skin care products after Brenda returned from living in Shanghai, looking even more fabulous than usual, as a result of products she discovered there; and

Whereas Kathy and Brenda have sold limited, exclusive rights of the line to Lawtons Drugs stores;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brenda Gallagher and Kathy MacGillivray on their new business and wish them every success as they roll out their products over the next 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 Inverness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2495**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Victoria-The Lakes, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Foundation hosted a coffee party fundraiser at the Alexander Graham Bell estate, Beinn Bhreagh, on September 6<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas guests had an opportunity to see a glimpse of what life was like in the famous inventor's estate, which was constructed back in 1893; and

Whereas the successful fundraiser once again sold out and raised \$12,000 to go toward Victoria County Memorial Hospital in Baddeck;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our appreciation to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Foundation volunteers, and coordinator, Marilyn MacRitchie, for their hard work and contributions to ensure quality health care for this rural 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 North.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2496**

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

Whereas Don and Marlene Conrod of Five Islands, Colchester North, have been active volunteers with 4-H since 2002; and

Whereas Don is currently president of the provincial 4-H council, has served as chairman of the Nova Scotia 4-H Provincial Show, president of the Colchester County Council and with his wife, Marlene, have volunteered with fundraising and trophy donations; and

Whereas Don and Marlene, surprised by a visit from a Live at 5 camera crew were informed that they had been chosen as CTV News Maritimers of the Week;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate Don and Marlene for being chosen Maritimers of the Week and thank them for their many hours of volunteer work and their dedication to enhancing the lives of young 4-H members.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2497**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf the member for Cape Breton North, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Maureen Murphy, operations manager with the Cape Breton Richmond Federation of Agriculture, is working on the first of five books entitled, *With These Hands*, with the fifth book to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Farmers Exhibition in North Sydney; and

Whereas the idea behind the book is to provide farming families with the opportunity to tell their stories and also have a recipe section of tried and true recipes with fresh natural ingredients; and

Whereas this project not only celebrates our farming families and showcases the strength of our agricultural community but it also shows the diversity of the farming community and the changes it has undergone through the years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Maureen Murphy and her volunteers in the creation of *With These Hands* and thank her for telling the important farm stories of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2498**

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

Whereas Glace Bay has had a long sports history and winning is simply what we do; and

Whereas the Glace Bay Sports Heritage Society has created the first annual Calendar of Champions, highlighting teams from the Bay who captured national, regional and provincial crowns in their day, including: the 1932-33 Caledonia rugby teams; 1952 No. 11 Antonians junior baseball team; 1955-56 Glace Bay Cinderella Minors junior hockey team; 1961 Caledonia Aces senior softball team; 1962 Parkside AC senior softball team; 1965 McKay's Corner Coriano intermediate softball team; 1966 Glace Bay Section 1 Little League All-Stars baseball team; 1968 Oland's Bay Byes senior softball team; 1971 Glace Bay Junior Miners baseball team; 1971-72 Glace Bay/Sydney Metro Bees junior hockey team - we had a little help from you there, Mr. Speaker; 1987 Glace Bay Kentucky Fried Colonels Little League baseball team; 1994 Glace Bay Labatt Main Event Junior Blues fastball team; and

Whereas the calendars will be sold during the Christmas season with all proceeds going to Glace Bay charities that are in need;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Glace Bay Sports Heritage Society for showcasing our past champions while raising money for deserving not-for-profit organizations in our community and we congratulate the listed teams for their impressive victories while representing Glace Bay.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2499**

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

Whereas at the recent awards banquet, Darren Ruston, firefighter with the Oxford Fire Department, received an award that is not seen every day, and likely not to be seen again; and

Whereas Darren Ruston received the pink helmet from LION Connects, who ran an on-line contest that asked firefighters to submit their stories about how breast cancer has affected their lives in order to raise awareness; and

Whereas the stories were judged by readers and Mr. Rushton was presented with a Lion Paul Conway American Classic helmet, stylized to promote breast cancer awareness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Darren Rushton on this outstanding achievement and wish him continued success in all future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2500**

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

Whereas Lorelei Murphy, coach of the Yarmouth Skating Club, has led the club to much success, including three of her four skaters winning provincial championships and being the coach with the highest medal-to-skater ratio at the provincial championships; and

Whereas on November 18, 2011, the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards banquet was held at the Yarmouth Lions Club; and

Whereas Lorelei Murphy was named 2011 Yarmouth County Coach of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lorelei Murphy on being named 2011 Yarmouth County Coach of the Year at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards banquet, recognize the effort and inspiration she provides to her skating club, and thank her for her contribution to sports in Yarmouth.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2501**

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

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

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

Whereas Rob Davies, a coach at West Hants Middle School, was one of the coach recipients of the Celebration of School Sport 2010-11 Award for providing exceptional leadership for our young athletes;

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

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2502**

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Vernon Belliveau was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Vernon Belliveau will be recognized on November 26, 2011, by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 10 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Vernon Belliveau for receiving his fire service Long Service Award for his 10 years of service 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 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2503**

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

Whereas Lyle Yorke of Parrsboro, Cumberland County, received recognition from Parrsboro Mayor Lois Smith during the November Parrsboro Town Council session; and

Whereas Mr. Yorke, owner of House of Yorke home furnishings store on Main Street in Parrsboro, has been in business for 50 years; and

Whereas Mr. Yorke says that he has made a lot of personal and financial sacrifices over the years he has been in business but continued to forge ahead through the hard times and will continue to run his business for as many more years as he can;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lyle Yorke on his 50 years in business and wish him continued success in all future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2504**

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

Whereas Valarie Sampson is a lifelong resident of South Bar, a graduate of University College of Cape Breton, past executive officer of the Home Builders' Association, past president of the Cape Breton Homebuilders' Association, with a combined 25 years experience in the home construction and real estate industry; and

Whereas Valarie Sampson, broker and owner of RE/MAX Park Place Incorporated, has created one of Cape Breton's fastest-growing real estate companies by using current marketing strategies, innovative promotion, and in-depth research in her business, while providing employment for more than 15 people; and

Whereas Valarie received the Business Woman of the Year award at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Women in Business Conference and Awards Gala in Baddeck in June 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Valarie Sampson on her award and wish her continued growth and success in her business endeavours in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.



The honourable member for Hants West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2505**

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on November 19, 2011, Mr. P.H. d'Entremont celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 90 years of age and continue to be active and share the memories of a lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mr. P.H. d'Entremont on reaching this milestone in his life and wishing him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2506**

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

Whereas each year in Nova Scotia, public libraries, the RCMP, municipal police forces, and the public schools all partner with the Adopt-A-Library Literacy Program to host the WOW! Reading Challenge; and

Whereas the competition is for elementary and junior high schools to out-read the schools with which they are competing; and

Whereas an average of 254 books per student were read at the Tatamagouche Elementary School in Colchester North during the competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Tatamagouche Elementary School for earning second-place honours in their category of elementary schools.

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.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2507**

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

Whereas Katie Harris, daughter of Jason and Tanya Harris of Louisbourg, was recently named the Female Athlete of the Year at George D. Lewis School; and

Whereas Katie played basketball, baseball, volleyball, hockey, and track and field; and

Whereas the award was a great launching board for Katie as she now begins her high school career;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Katie on receiving this award and wish her continued success in her high school years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2508**

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Ryan Graves was the first draft pick for the P.E.I. Rockets in the 2011 Quebec Major Junior Hockey League; and

Whereas on November 18, 2011, the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards Banquet was held at Yarmouth Lions Club; and

Whereas Ryan Graves was named the 2011 Yarmouth County Youth Athlete of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Graves on being named the 2011 Yarmouth County Youth Athlete of the Year at the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards Banquet, wish him success throughout his promising hockey career, and thank him for representing his hometown of Yarmouth so well.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2509**

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

Whereas Ruth Skinner of Inverness and a small group of volunteers have started a group called Citizens Caring for Animals to assist with the growing problem of abandoned animals in the county; and

Whereas Mrs. Skinner and Citizens Caring for Animals hope to increase awareness in the public that spaying and neutering their pets is the long-term solution, and donations that are made to the organization go toward feeding and caring for stray animals and trying to find them homes; and

Whereas through fundraising, volunteer work, and the help of the community, Citizens Caring for Animals are well on their way to being a charitable society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and support the effort made by Ruth Skinner and Citizens Caring for Animals in Inverness.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2510**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Cape Breton North, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas health care was the big winner when the Northside Hospital Foundation's third custom bike draw took place in July; and

Whereas Harold Marsh, as winner, picked up the keys to the 2011 custom ThunderGlide motorcycle, built by Matt Dilney, when the draw took place at Fortress Louisbourg during Cape Breton Bikefest: Thunder in the Highlands; and

Whereas the hospital foundation will use the money raised to fund major equipment purchases for the Northside hospitals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Northside Hospital Foundation, its many volunteers and sponsors, 101.9 The Giant, 103.5 The Eagle, Cape Breton Bikefest, Torque Speed Shop, and Cape Breton Trailer Sales on a successful fundraiser.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2511**

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

Whereas Carmen MacArthur, Joyce MacDonald and Emily MacKinnon of Inverness County have committed to keep Gaelic a living language; and

Whereas these three women share a home together and make an effort to speak Gaelic at home as much as possible during their regular day-to-day activities; and

Whereas each of them were exposed to the Gaelic language in different ways, but share the same desire to maintain the ways of their people;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Carmen, Joyce, and Emily, and their dedication to keeping the Gaelic language alive.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2512**

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

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

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

Whereas Courtney Garland, a student at the Hantsport School, was the female recipient of Celebration of School Sport 2010-11 Award for demonstrating respect for others and displaying a true example of good sportsmanship;

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

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 12:44 p.m. and Question Period will end at 1:44 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**PREM. - BREAST-SCREENING PROG.: QP (11/23/11) - MIN. RESPONSES**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Yesterday during Question Period a set of very straightforward questions were posed to the Minister of Health and Wellness around a topic of vital importance to women in Nova Scotia. Recent recommendations being debated nationally raised questions and the women of Nova Scotia deserve answers. If you review Hansard, the minister's response did absolutely nothing to address the confusion and, quite frankly, did a disservice to women in this province.

Given that all members of the House have had a chance to reflect on Hansard and the comments, my question to the Premier: Could the Premier please indicate whether he felt that the Health and Wellness Minister's response yesterday, to this very important issue, was appropriate?

THE PREMIER: Entirely, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove asked a straightforward question, to table a list of communities in the province who will no longer have access to a mobile screening unit because two-thirds of the units have been taken out of service, and the minister's response: "I don't think it's all that helpful . . . to have two non-medical people debate the new clinical practice guidelines . . ." - and I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

The member for Bedford-Birch Cove did not ask the minister to debate guidelines or even read a mammogram, she asked for a list of communities impacted by the service change. My question to the Premier: Why is it appropriate for the Minister of Health and Wellness - or any member of his Cabinet for that matter - to withhold this type of information when it clearly impacts Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Health and Wellness was quite clear. We have one of the strongest systems in the country and it will remain so. That was the information that was delivered by the Minister of Health and Wellness to the member who asked the question.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the member for Bedford-Birch Cove never questioned whether or not we had a quality service. What she was questioning on was the fact that two-thirds of the mobile screening units in Nova Scotia are being taken out of service and what would be the impact on women across Nova Scotia - and we have not received an answer.

We have a fantastic breast-screening program in this province, one that provides a great service to women. We have national guidelines which require clarification from the minister, which we did not receive. Our mobile screening capacity is down two-thirds and there are communities in this province that no longer have mobile breast-screening service - those are the facts.

Given that women in communities throughout this province deserve the right to know, my question to the Premier is, will the Premier - before the end of Question Period today - have officials from the Department of Health and Wellness release the list of those communities which previously had mobile breast screening, but now do not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I will do is reiterate what was said yesterday by the Minister of Health and Wellness, which is that we have a first-class system in this province providing good service to women from one end of the province to the other. That will remain the case, I want to assure the Leader of Official Opposition.

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

### **PREM. - RURAL N.S.: CRISIS - ADMIT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, over the last few days the Premier has repeatedly denied that there is a crisis in rural Nova Scotia. That is very distressing, but there is some hope because denial can be the first step on the road to recovery. (Laughter) According to Webster's Dictionary, a crisis is "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending." And I will table Webster's Dictionary for the benefit of the Premier, who doesn't know a crisis when he sees it.

Statistics Canada, the body responsible for counting the number of people working and not working, among other things, reports in their most recent report that 6,600 jobs have been lost in rural Nova Scotia in the past year - October to October - seasonally adjusted. I will table that report from Statistics Canada for the benefit of the Premier, who denies reality, perhaps denying Statistics Canada as well.

Six thousand six hundred jobs is clearly an unstable and crucial change and a decisive change in the employment and the opportunities of rural Nova Scotia. My question to the Premier is this, through you, sir: Will he now admit, in light of Webster's Dictionary and Statistics Canada that there is truly a crisis in rural Nova Scotia under his leadership, or does he continue to deny the obvious?



MR. SPEAKER: I will remind the honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that Webster's Dictionary is a prop in this House, and I will ask the Page to return it to him.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I always tell people admitting you're a Tory is the first step on the road to recovery. (Laughter)

What I will do is, I will table for the honourable member the press release with respect to the \$8.8 million investment that we made in Irving Shipbuilding's ship repair unit in Shelburne, one that was matched by an additional \$16 million by Irving themselves, one that is leading to good jobs in rural Nova Scotia. What's more, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Opposition voted against that investment.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly admit I am a Tory if that Premier will admit he's in denial about what is really going on outside of downtown Halifax, where clearly he spends too much time. The Nova Scotia Employers Roundtable - a group of over 20 employers representing thousands of employers and job-creators in our province - in their submission to the sham Labour Management Review Committee, point to high corporate taxes, the highest corporate taxes in the country and the highest sales taxes in the country as reasons why Nova Scotia, today, shows the lowest rate of productivity in all of Canada. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, I hear some denials already over there but I will table that very document for the benefit of our denying Premier and anyone else over there who is in denial along with him.

Mr. Speaker, businesses in this province that create jobs and make investments here are clearly telling the Premier that their low productivity here is because of his tax policies and his regulatory policies, so I'll give the Premier another opportunity to take that first step on the road to recovery. Will he finally admit that it is his tax policies and his regulatory policies that are holding back growth and opportunity in Nova Scotia, or does he continue to deny, even to those 7,000 employers, that everything is fine?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the irony of that long, rambling, almost question is that the simple fact of the matter is that business taxes in this province are lower than at any time in the last 10 years when the Progressive Conservatives were in power. The small business tax is down; the large corporation capital tax is being eliminated. We are making this a competitive tax jurisdiction, we are investing in good jobs for the future, throughout the province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can't get the Premier to stop denying the obvious but I'd like to at least get him to start living in the present and not the past. That would be a step forward for this Premier.

Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada's Average Weekly Earnings Report, which is seasonally adjusted for September to September 2011, the most recent available, shows that average weekly earnings are up in Newfoundland by 4.26 per cent; they are up in New Brunswick by 3.7 per cent; they are up in Prince Edward Island by 5.1 per cent; but guess what, here is reality, they are down in Nova Scotia.

I'll give the Premier one more chance to get on that road to recovery and stop denying the obvious stuff, denying Statistics Canada - I have that report right here, which I will table - does the Premier deny that average weekly earnings are on the way down in Nova Scotia and that Statistics Canada is right, or does he continue to live in this fantasy world of downtown Halifax, where everything is always rosy?

**THE PREMIER:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party doesn't like to talk about the past because of course he wears, just like Jacob Marley, the chains that he forged in a past life, today.

Mr. Speaker, this is what Statistics Canada has said - and I'll table this in a second. Statistics Canada also reported that retail sales in Nova Scotia rose 2.4 per cent during the first nine months of 2011, a higher sales increase than any Canadian province. Nationally, Canada experienced a 1 per cent rise during that period. This is what it says, cars and gas are driving Nova Scotia's provincial story. Sales are up in virtually every sector, including furniture, electronics, clothing and sporting goods. That is what is happening in Nova Scotia.

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

### **PREM.: EMPLOYMENT DATA - SOURCE**

**HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is fond of discussing job numbers between June of 2009 and June of 2011. The calendar today says November 24, 2011. By ignoring the last five months, the Premier is denying the reality which thousands of Nova Scotians are living with today. My question to the Premier is, when your own Department of Finance has job numbers from October 2011, why do you continue to refer to June 2011?

**THE PREMIER:** Mr. Speaker, the reason I refer to them is that they demonstrate, very clearly, the broad base of jobs that are being created in this province by the investments that are being made by this government.

**MR. MCNEIL:** Mr. Speaker, it clearly demonstrates that the Premier is living in the past and it clearly demonstrates that even though we know that the Premier can write cheques, we're trying to figure out whether he's getting any results with the cheques he is writing across this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier cannot base his decision on statistics that are more than five months old. The Premier knows that Statistics Canada clearly states that there are 6,600 job losses outside of Halifax in the last year. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier instruct his Minister of Finance to table the job losses outside of Halifax between October 2010 and October 2011 that his Department of Finance has?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I would be happy to do for the member opposite is table the list of investments that have been made in jobs in rural Nova Scotia - which that member, and every member of the Opposition, voted against.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'll say again, no one is questioning the Premier's ability to write cheques, but is he getting any results for those cheques?

By ignoring the last five months, the Premier is ignoring the fact that 6,600 Nova Scotians are without work. These are real Nova Scotians without jobs, real families having trouble making ends meet. They are trying to decide whether to buy groceries or keep the lights on. They are trying to decide whether to stay in Nova Scotia or to leave this province because the NDP Government has abandoned them.

Mr. Speaker, my question: Statistics Canada says there are 6,600 jobs. We say there are 6,600 job losses. The Department of Finance of Nova Scotia says there are 6,600 job losses in Nova Scotia. Can we all be wrong? When will the Premier stop denying the fact that Nova Scotians are losing work under his watch?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, for the record, I keep saying this, but the truth is that that's not at all what the Web site numbers say. If he wants to talk about reality, the reality in this province is that this is the government that took the HST off home energy and took it off children's clothing. This is the government that eliminated income tax for seniors who are on GIS. This is the government that created the lowest tax environment for business in 20 years. This is the government that signed the Lower Churchill agreement. This is the government that assisted Irving to win the national shipbuilding procurement strategy. This is the government with a record of success. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

#### **ERDT - JOB TARGETS: QP (11/23/11) - MIN. COMMENT**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism stated the following yesterday: "I would caution any member in this House not to be caught up in targets." It's not surprising this minister cautions against getting caught up in targets. When you lost 12,500 jobs while in office, you clearly do not want the Opposition measuring your success. I may have a jaded view of the minister's rationale, so I think it's a fair question to ask him. Will the minister please explain thoroughly and rationally why he cautions against getting caught up in job targets?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, results are not measured by targets. Do you know how you make measurements? It's measured in results and outcomes. When you place targets on things - when it comes to jobs, what I did say yesterday is that we're going to create as many jobs as possible. By creating targets you actually put a ceiling on the number of jobs that you're going to commit. (Interruptions)

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, 12,500 jobs lost as minister, 6,600 in rural Nova Scotia alone in one year; hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars spent. I think I know why the minister cautions against using targets - it makes it easier to measure this minister's lack of success. They're the results that we're talking about. If you want results, these are the results.

Curiously, when running for office in 2009, the NDP campaign material provided job targets, and in 2011 they said they hit their job targets. They relied on job targets to get elected. They relied on job targets when they thought they had met those targets, and now they tell us, let's not dwell on job targets. My question to the minister is, what has changed?

MR. PARIS: You know, Mr. Speaker, there has been significant change. First and foremost, we've been elected as the Government of Nova Scotia. Since we've elected government, we've increased jobs in Nova Scotia - 3,000 new jobs.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear that when we disagree with the minister and the government on job creation and their job record, they clearly distort the facts in terms of what's being created in this province, clearly, and we'll see (Interruption) that's right. The Premier can be sure that you are the majority government, you do make these decisions and you're responsible for these job creation decisions, so we'll see what the people of Nova Scotia, who don't have jobs, we will see what they have to say. The Premier can come to Glace Bay anytime and talk about job creation there. We'll certainly welcome him there; the Deputy Premier can bring him down for sure.

THE PREMIER: The federal Liberals did such a great job there.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the people of Nova Scotia want to talk about the federal Liberals right now when they are leaving the province for Alberta. That's great advice, I'm sure that they'll be comforted by the Premier's remarks on that.

Their record is one of failure, it's plain and simple. They've lost 12,500 jobs; 15,000 people have left the workforce; 6,600 less jobs in rural Nova Scotia and the minister smiles and he celebrates his record. This minister cautions against using targets. It is because, by our calculations, he clearly missed any targets that have been set and now you don't even have targets, the minister should be happy to know.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister. He said he'd create 2,200 jobs a year - and I'll table the NDP brochure from the previous election campaign - 2,200 jobs a year.

By any measure, including their own, they haven't even come close to the targets that they set in that brochure. Why does this minister continue to celebrate the failures of this government?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will say one thing starting off. I know for a fact - if you want facts and you want numbers - under a Liberal Government the unemployment rate in Cape Breton reached a high of guess what, Mr. Speaker - 26.6 per cent.

What we've done in Cape Breton - talk about supporting employment and creating jobs - is that we've investing in Eyking Brothers in Cape Breton. Maybe that member is suggesting that maybe we shouldn't have done that. We've invested in Indian Brook. Maybe that member over there is suggesting to us that maybe we shouldn't have made that investment. I could stand up here and go on and on and on but I think I made my point.

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

### **PREM.: LONG-TERM CARE - WAIT LISTS**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said, "We are reducing the wait list by reducing the necessity for that being the only option." Now, Mr. Speaker, normally Nova Scotians believe that the word "reduce" is to make something smaller in number. In 2009 the wait list was around 1,500 people. Now data from the Department of Health and Wellness shows that in April 2010, almost 1,800 people were waiting for long-term care. I'll table that document.

Mr. Speaker, I know that denial is the Premier's default answer in this place, but is he denying today that 1,800 people is not more than 1,500 people?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, since we've been elected, we have under construction 1,000 long-term care beds. Do you know how many were built in the last three years of the Progressive Conservative Government? Twenty two - that's the only comparison you really need.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, seniors want to stay in their homes as long as possible and we know that's not always possible. Sometimes they need more care than loved ones can provide. After contributing to this province all their lives, seniors deserve appropriate care in an appropriate setting and I am sure that the Premier won't deny that.

We learned yesterday that some people in Cape Breton are waiting more than 13 months for care they need and deserve. The Premier told a group in Middleton in February 2008 that the NDP strategy is a simple, cost-effective plan that aims to make the biggest impact for the least amount of money. He said, "It would cost \$6 million in this budget, \$12 million for the full year."

Mr. Speaker, in the first full year of this government, it increased spending for long-term care programs by almost \$69 million, and it still has left the wait list for long-term care beds to continue to climb. I will table that document as well.

My question through you to the Premier is, will the Premier admit that the NDP Urgent Need, Creative Solutions plan has failed seniors, and will he commit today to finding a real solution to help seniors whose quality of life has diminished because of this NDP Government's policies?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about a diminished quality of life, I remember standing here in this House on many occasions and beseeching the Minister of Health to stop taking every cent that people had worked their lives for in order to pay for long-term care. That is the record of the former Progressive Conservative Government.

In the last three years of their government, they created 22 long-term care beds. We have either constructed or have under construction 1,000 beds to address the needs of people from one end of the province to the other.

MR. MACLEOD: It would be really nice if the Premier knew how to practice what he preaches. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's line is always, "That's simply not true," but the facts don't lie. The reality is that there are more seniors on the wait list than when the NDP took power. The wait list grew as high as 1,800 in the Spring of 2010 - 278 more seniors than were on the list when they took power.

Yesterday the Premier said, "We are reducing the wait list by reducing the necessity for that being the only option." While the Premier denies that the list is growing, people like Shirley Dykens and her sisters are suffering.

My question to the Premier is simple. Will the Premier finally admit that the wait list is longer now than in 2009, or will he continue to deny reality and proceed with misleading our vulnerable seniors and their exhausted families?

THE PREMIER: What I will admit to is building a world-class system for long-term care in this province that is throughout the continuing care piece, from assisted living to stay-at-home options to some of the best long-term care facilities anywhere in North America. That is what we are building in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

#### **TIR - WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGS.: NDP GOV'T. - TRANSPARENCY**

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. On November 3, 2011, the Government of New Brunswick announced that they were making \$4 million worth of cuts to their winter

maintenance budget. In Nova Scotia we had to learn through hearsay that the NDP Government was planning cuts to winter road maintenance.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, my first question to the minister is, why did the NDP Government not make public their intention to reduce winter maintenance programs, as was done in New Brunswick?

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Heaven forbid that I need the Province of New Brunswick to give us an example of how to follow things when it comes to making budget commitments, but that's another topic for another time. I'd like to point out to the member opposite that last year's estimated budget was \$52 million for snow removal. This year's budget is exactly the same for snow removal and ice control: \$52 million.

I'd like to point out, and I know of course that the member opposite is aware of, some of the difficulties we are facing in various areas around the province. I can point to the example of the member for Cumberland South or I can point to the example of the member for Richmond - a member of your caucus - who has brought up particular concerns that he has or that they have. Those particular concerns involving, for example, the base down near Apple River, or in the case of Forchu for the member for Richmond. The way to locally handle the issue is to make sure they bring their concerns to me as the minister and then we will deal with the issue. Thank you for the question.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, in a press conference, the New Brunswick Government went into details regarding their cuts. While the news was obviously unwelcome, at least the people in that province knew exactly what was being cut and where. The New Brunswick Government released a catalogue of what aspects are changing in winter road maintenance and what is being cut in that province. Again to the minister, will the minister table a list of the cuts the NDP Government is making to winter road maintenance in our province?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question and I'd like to clarify a couple of points that were brought forward. The concern of course is that decisions are being made across the corner here on Granville Street, in the minister's office. That's not the case. We are consulting with the local area managers and I have a great deal of faith in those local area managers or the local OSs across the province. Those particular people, lady and gentlemen, all across this province have had input in terms of some of the tough decisions we've been making. We are continuing to provide the quality service to Nova Scotians, we're continuing to operate with the same budget numbers, we're making sure the roads are safe.

In fact, many of the members opposite are aware of the challenges that were faced in the last 24 hours; I have never, will never be critical of someone's job I cannot do. When it comes to snow removal, I can just basically back my truck up without running over the

local difficulties I have in my communities. I bring that to all members' attention. We're going to continue to provide safe roads, we're going to continue to make sure the budget is appropriately spent and Nova Scotians hopefully will support that.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, winter is upon us. The weather in Nova Scotia, as everyone knows, is unpredictable and people are worried about where cuts are being made to winter road maintenance and what exactly is being cut. Road safety should be a priority for government and must make this information available to Nova Scotians. My final question to the minister is, will the minister publicize the cuts to winter road maintenance so all Nova Scotians will be aware of these cutbacks?

MR. ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite. Let's be clear - I want members to be aware of the fact that the local people across the province that are operating in our depots, those folks have had a great deal of input in terms of what they have recommended to me as the minister. As the member for Cumberland South has found, when the appropriate calls were made by his constituency assistant, I believe, to the local depot, information was received. As the member for Richmond and particularly the difficulty in Forchu was brought forward, the information was received.

The local information can be received from the local people on the ground as they continue to make road safety across this province, 365 days a year, as safe as possible. Thank you for the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

#### **ERDT - GOV'T. BUS. CLIMATE: OUT-MIGRATION - CAUSES**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. According to Statistics Canada, in this past year under this NDP Government from 2010-11, Nova Scotia has lost the most people that we have ever lost in two decades. That's over 19,000 people have left our province. The people of our province can either vote in a provincial election or they can vote with their feet. In this case, I believe they are telling this government that they are fed up with their broken promises and failed economic strategy. Will the minister admit that his high-cost, job-killing business climate has failed Nova Scotians who are now leaving in record numbers under this government?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, first I will admit I haven't seen those numbers and I'd certainly like to have a look at them so if the member could send those numbers over, it would be very much appreciated.

I've stood in my place time and time again and we are actually creating jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia. We were with Irving Shipbuilding from day one when they put forward their bid and we will continue to work with Irving as we do with all employers and



potential employers to the Province of Nova Scotia. The fact is that we've attracted 3,000 new jobs to the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, approximately 33 per cent of Nova Scotians leaving for other provinces are in their twenties, and I will table something here that comes from the Minister of Finance's own department that says that. So we raise them, we educate them and then, unfortunately, we watch them leave for other provinces to find work. Yesterday the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism said that the force that we get is from within because we want to do right by Nova Scotians.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if only this were Star Wars. The unfortunate thing is the minister is too caught up in his own force within to realize that there is a crisis in rural Nova Scotia and people are being forced to leave. What benchmarks has the minister set to measure his success, or by their absence is he admitting defeat?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite, and I stand here in my place, and I've already said that when we set targets, we are actually confining ourselves. What we want to do is create as many jobs as possible. Setting targets, actually, is a restriction and what we've said is we're going to create as many jobs as possible, and that's exactly what we are doing and what we will continue to do.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said that the plan that they have is working. The statistics show that it is not. This is not Star Wars but the minister's view of this matter reminds me of an old CBC show starring Louis Del Grande, Seeing Things. Yesterday the minister said that the 6,600 jobs lost in rural Nova Scotia is inaccurate, which was quoted from Statistics Canada and is referred to on the Department of Finance's Web site. He said that those numbers were misleading. After having a night to reflect, does the minister believe that the Department of Finance's Web site is misleading or are his comments to Nova Scotians misleading?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I do know and what I do believe is that between ERDT and NSBI that we've supported and invested in well over 2,000 jobs. What I do know is through the PIP program, under the jobsHere strategy, we've got almost 200 investments going on. Those aren't just by coincidence. Those things don't just happen. We've got a strategy, it's called jobsHere, and it is working and it will continue to work. What we've done with that strategy is over the last two-and-a-half years we've broadened that strategy to be more inclusive, something that has never, ever been done in the past.

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

#### **COM. SERV. - ESIA: APPEAL BD. - AG RECOMMENDATION**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, on August 8<sup>th</sup> the regulations under Employment Support and Income Assistance pertaining to exceptional needs were

amended. The release from DCS clearly stated that the changes to ESIA regulations were consistent with the Auditor General's recommendations, and I'll table that release.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments introduced by the Minister of Community Services repealed access to treatments and procedures that sick, disabled people living in poverty - and their families - count on to alleviate pain and suffering. The amendments also remove the appeal board's ability to grant special needs not listed on the MSI formulary, the very special needs that could mean relief from suffering. Can the Minister of Community Services tell the members of this House, which specific Auditor General recommendations called for the removal of the appeal board's authority to grant a essential services to alleviate pain and suffering that are not listed on the MSI formulary?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to do is - what I can do is provide truth and facts. The truth and the facts are that the changes in that regulation did not affect any of the special needs that people with disabilities in this province always received. The changes were clarifications of language, along with the fact that they were items that were never in the policy in the first place. I have said that before.

I think it's so unfortunate that the individuals in this province who suffer from disabilities have to hear that kind of misinformation to create fear-mongering. They are already dealing with disabilities, and how awful a thing to get up and say that it's affecting all the people in this province with a disability when it is absolutely not. Shame.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I wrote a letter to the Auditor General asking him specifically which of his recommendations to the Department of Community Services called for the removal of the appeal board's authority to grant special services. I asked him whether he made any recommendation abolishing the provision to cover the alleviation of pain and suffering. The Auditor General's response was that he has not found any recommendations of this nature, and I will table his letter.

So if it was not in response to the Auditor General's recommendation, why did this minister cancel funding for services that alleviate pain and suffering for sick and disabled people living in poverty? Why did she remove the authority of the appeal board to grant people access to exceptional special needs?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, once again I'd like to provide this House with facts. The fact is that the change to that regulation was a change in language, for clarification. We were having issues with respect to appeals on items that were deemed special needs under that appeal process, such as marijuana grow-ops, and we saw a trend toward that. We had appeal board members saying it was very confusing to understand what special needs meant. It's very simple. We clarified it.

I will ask the member opposite to please stop creating fear in people in this province by saying they're not getting their special needs. We have actually increased our special

needs budget, and people who have requested the needs that are in the policy have received them. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the minister has contradicted herself. She says that things are now not covered that were covered before, but they were never covered - so which is it? We want to know, are things now not being covered that people have been getting under the special needs policy? Or is she just making things up on the fly?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear. I haven't been confusing, as they are doing on that side, to try to make people think there is something there when it's not really there. What I have said is that the special needs that people have always applied for, that were within our policy - within our policy, I will repeat - still receive those.

The item she speaks of is 25 cases over a 10-year period of individuals who went to appeal for items such as marijuana or massage that were not already in our policy. So there has been no change there whatsoever.

As I am being very clear, it's unfortunate it's coming from a Party that actually at one point, when they were in government, were (Interruptions) They don't like hearing the truth. The fact is that at one point they were trying to take away services for people who were keeping their disabled family members at home, so don't come to us saying we're not doing anything when they are the ones who tried to do that. We are very clear that we're helping people with disabilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

#### **AGRIC. - MEAT INSPECTION: AG'S REPT. - COMMENTS**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture. Last week in a news conference the Auditor General said that the Department of Agriculture's failures increased public health risks associated with meat and meat products produced in Nova Scotia. In a radio interview late last week the minister said the Auditor General was not accurate. Yesterday at a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee the Auditor General said that there aren't any mistakes on this case, he said his office has a pretty rigorous method within the audit process to make sure that things are factual. He said his report's conclusions were factual and would be effective in mitigating risks in these processes. My question to the minister is, who is right, the minister or the Auditor General?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try as best I can to be clear on this. I thought I addressed it the other day when the member asked the question. We don't really have a significant issue with the Auditor General's Report. The issue of dispute - if the member wants to go there - is that when I was asked about the audit process, in the

media, I said that there has never been an issue that could be traced back to any of the facilities that we inspect.

The Auditor General's comments to that were that the Department of Agriculture wouldn't know that because nobody reports any foodborne illnesses to the department. That's the point at which I said the Auditor General is wrong, his comments in the media. To that, the Auditor General was wrong because people do report to the Department of Agriculture, we have staff who investigate any of those foodborne complaints and we have the statistics to back it up.

I don't know if that clarifies it, but it was around the Auditor General's comments, not necessarily anything that was in the report.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, when asked about the Auditor General's observations regarding the unacceptable length of time between inspections at meat processing facilities, the minister told CBC he had to disagree with him. Even their own records indicate that someone would be there, at least try to be there, three times.

The minister then went on to say that there must be a misinterpretation of the data because they would be there at least three times a year but they may not be there once in a month. Yesterday at the Public Accounts meeting, the Deputy Auditor General said he did not make a mistake, he said there was no mention of three-times-a-year inspections when the office was completing their audit. He said he was told by the department that an inspector should be at a facility at least once a month while the plant is in operation and that's what he based his report on. Again, I have to ask the question, who is right, the minister or the Auditor General?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I heard the interview on the radio this morning and I heard the Auditor General say it may be a difference of interpretation between him and me.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, finally in yesterday's Public Accounts Committee meeting, the Auditor General said in spite of any comments in the media since the report, the department has accepted the report and the recommendations and has indicated they intend to take actions on it. My final question to the minister then is this, if the people of his own department have agreed with the Auditor General and accepted the recommendations made in his report, is the minister saying that he is right and both the Auditor General and senior members of his department are wrong or does he change what he says depending on who he's talking to?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I think I've addressed this issue more than once with the member who's asking it so if there's going to be a change, maybe it should be a change in the member who asked the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**SNSMR - GAS REGULATION: EXPERIMENT - END**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the URB released a decision which will see Nova Scotians pay higher prices for gas. Handing off a decision to increase gas margins was a wrong approach to this issue. Quite simply, gas regulation needs to be scrapped. If gas retailers need to increase prices to keep up with costs, they should be able to do so, and if they need to lower prices to compete then they should be able to do so freely as well. My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is, will the minister end this failed gas regulation experiment which simply ensures that Nova Scotians will always pay higher prices for gas at the pumps?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, well, look, one thing we do know is that Nova Scotians are always going to pay for gas; the issue is around how much they pay. If the member opposite and the Party opposite, from where the question comes, thinks that removing regulation and letting big oil set the price of gasoline is better for Nova Scotians, we disagree.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, gas prices have gone up over 25 cents per litre since this NDP Government has taken office; the NDP has increased taxes and user fees; and they have done nothing while the cost of food and energy continues to rise - and now we know that drivers are going to pay more at the pumps, thanks to this gas regulation. If the NDP will not scrap gas regulation, they must get rid of the tax on tax, something the Premier himself called an "immoral" tax.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, if he will not end the gas regulation failure, will he insist that the tax on tax be removed so that drivers can at least get a break at the pumps?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, the member may not be aware, but it was the Liberals that put the tax on tax in gasoline.

MR. COLWELL: Well, things change, you know - two years in government and an immoral tax, and the Premier was there in Opposition, and now they're not removing it.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP makes more and more out of the pockets of Nova Scotians. The NDP has taken more in taxes and fees, and the NDP has ensured that Nova Scotians will always pay more under gas regulation. This is seriously hurting our Nova Scotia economy. Why does the minister refuse to end gas regulation and take off tax on tax on gasoline and give Nova Scotians a break and give our economy a lift?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, the increases or decreases in the price of gasoline is related to the world market, it's not caused by this government or, in fact, by the

previous government. One of the concerns in the formula (Interruptions) one of the issues that was of concern in our formula, that I think is perhaps different from New Brunswick's formula, was that we wanted a margin in there for small retail stations because we were losing them in rural Nova Scotia; we wanted that infrastructure maintained. So if you get rid of regulation, then you're going to indicate the demise of small rural gas stations which is not in the benefit of Nova Scotians across this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE - LFA 34 SPLIT SEASON VOTE:  
LICENCE HOLDERS - HEAR**

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Recently there was a vote organized by the LFA 34 District Management Committee in southwestern Nova Scotia to decide whether licence holders would be in favour of a split lobster fishing licence. Mr. Speaker, 371 voted in favour for a split season; 304 voted against a split season. What is more concerning is that 312 licence holders did not vote on this very important matter for our lobster fishing industry.

So my first question to the minister is, what is the minister doing to make certain that all licence holders in LFA 34 will have a chance to make their voices heard on this decision?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I'm paying attention to this particular issue. As we speak, I know that there are ongoing discussions with the management board in the federal DFO - literally as we speak - and I appreciate all the work that the different port cluster reps have done. They have held consecutive meetings in their port clusters over the last several days. They have engaged the fishing industry in this discussion, and there are ongoing negotiations. I can assure you that our department is paying attention and we're following the reactions that may come out in the next few hours.

MR. GAUDET: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his response. While the federal government is ultimately responsible and will make that final decision, it's important for the provincial Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to make sure that all voices are heard on this matter.

Again to the minister, will the minister contact his federal counterpart and ensure that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans consults with all concerned stakeholders before a final decision is made on this matter?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again I want to thank the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important question. As you know, we are literally only days away from the

opening of the lobster season this Monday and there are important decisions that have to be made.

I assure the member opposite that our department is paying attention and there are literally meetings going on this afternoon. There is a presentation being presented by the management board and we're following this with great interest. Thank you for the question.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important matter to the lobster fishing industry in western Nova Scotia and could change the economy in our region. It's important to take time and make sure that whatever decision is made is the correct decision.

One-third of the licence holders did not vote on this important decision, and approximately one-third voted against this decision, so it's not clear how many are actually opposed to or in favour of this matter, since approximately one-third did not vote.

My final question to the minister is, will the minister make sure that time will be taken to inform all 987 licence holders in LFA 34, to achieve an accurate outcome and decision on whether or not to split the lobster fishing season?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, I can assure you that I'm very sensitive to this issue. I actually spent three terms on this particular advisory board, District 34, and this is a very interesting time where they deal with a very important issue that affects the lobster industry.

I can assure you that the DFO will take their advice and their presentation under consideration. They have a format that they look for a consensus through the industry, and I can assure you that our people, our delegation, will be making sure that the appropriate consensus is followed. We look forward to that decision made by the federal government. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**PREM. - LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES: VIEWPOINT - CHANGE EXPLAIN**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. In the May 22, 2008, edition of the Hants Journal, the Premier asked why beds are vacant for periods of time at Dykeland Lodge in Windsor. In that article he also wondered why the hospital beds are filled with nursing home patients.

My question to the Premier is, at a time when over 1,600 Nova Scotians need care in long-term care facilities, why is it that Dykeland Lodge at the end of October had 229 days in which at least one bed was open, and many more days with several vacant beds? Why has the Premier changed his viewpoint between May 2008 and October 2011?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is, I haven't changed my viewpoint. In fact, the Minister of Health and Wellness is working with a number of facilities around the province. We pointed out yesterday that one of the things that happened was you had facilities that, for example, in respite beds had vacancy rates that were 95 per cent and 96 per cent, or 94 per cent and 95 per cent. That meant that those beds were essentially being paid for but not filled, over that period of time. There are also difficulties, as I pointed out, with the single-entry access lists and the manner in which the negotiation between the department and the delivery agency comes to a determination of when a patient should be transferred in.

The good news, though, is it means there is considerable room for improvement in that, which will mean that many of those people who are on the list will get service in those facilities. Importantly, what we try to do now is we try to make sure that people receive the service in their home communities, and that is part of what leads to some of the delays. It's an understandable delay but it's one I believe that we can deal with more efficiently.

MR. PORTER: In that same article in 2008 the Premier was critical of a bed remaining vacant for 45 days. After a death in April of this year at Dykeland, there was a vacancy for more than a month. It's funny that in 2008 the Premier was so critical of a bed remaining vacant for 45 days but today stats from nursing homes clearly show this government is allowing them to remain vacant for extended periods of time. The facts show that this government is failing Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier, will the Premier deny that these statistics are simply not true or will he lay out a strategy to get people into these beds?

THE PREMIER: No, Mr. Speaker, I accept that there are delays in assigning those beds to people who are on the list. One of the things that is frustrating is finding a way to expedite the transfer of people off those lists and into the beds in the facilities where they want to be. That is really one of things we find most difficult is that we go to somebody on the list, they have a certain amount of time to consider whether or not they want to go to the facility. Maybe after a day or two days they turn it down, someone else is offered it, they may consider it for a day or two and then turn it down.

So what happens in every one of those cases is those beds remain open because the families are being given the choice of whether or not they're going to the facilities. We know there are areas where in fact there can be improvements and where we can make it a smoother transition and, Mr. Speaker, we're doing everything we can to do that.

MR. PORTER: Yesterday the Premier once again told members of this House that he did not cut 200 beds from the continuing care strategy, that it was simply not true. Mr. Speaker, it's a standard answer to any question in this House. My final question for the Premier is, rather than continue to deny the fact that the only new action that this government has taken was cutting beds, will the Premier end this game by tabling the information detailing the specific actions taken to address the long-term care issue?



THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I could table the list of new facilities that have been opened since we were the government. I've already told him it's 1,000 beds that we have built over that period of time. That commitment to the long-term care sector came about as the result of the commitment of this Party to the seniors of this province. I want seniors in the province to know that we remain committed to ensuring that they get the services that they deserve. That they are given the ability to stay in their own home as long as possible, that's why we took income tax off of seniors who were receiving GIS because I said that that was simply an unfair tax. Throughout the next number of years, I intend to do everything I can to support seniors in this province.

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Premier knows that every senior in this province is paying the 2 per cent increase in HST that he brought in, I'm sure he knows it.

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 102.

### **Bill No. 102 - Trade Union Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West, who has 17 minutes left from yesterday.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to get back up and have a chance to continue to discuss Bill No. 102 and why this Party feels it is not the right time to be bringing such a bill forward. I talked about a lot of the different businesses, I think I quoted from one particular letter, I know that there are many, whereby the business community is not asking for this legislation to come forward, nor do they want it. They have expressed some concerns, but government doesn't appear to be listening. I'm sure,

when this bill gets over to the Law Amendments Committee, that they will be there and they will be bringing their concerns and making them heard.

The other day I talked about my relationship and my experience with unions and having sat, many years, as part of a union. I believe in that process. It's fair, it's transparent, it's open and it gives businesses and employees a chance to sit down and take the time that they need to work through some of those very important issues, and there are a lot of them that come forward. The last thing, right now, that anyone wants, who is even contemplating this, is to be told what they're going to do.

Madam Speaker, welcome to the Chair, I'll try to keep that right today. I think I got it right the other day, throughout, and I'll continue to work on that as I continue my comments this afternoon. Madam Speaker, I know you will keep me in check if I fall off the right address.

As I was saying, the union process is an okay process. It's a process that is democratic, it's fair, there is a negotiation that takes place, and that's alright. But for so long we've had these unions in place and in the last 10 or 12 years, at least the last decade, there have been harmonious relationships, for the most part, that I have understood. Everyone comes to the table with the intention of fair bargaining and the process should be open. There should be no issues, but we know that there are always going to be issues because when you get down to the more finite details, which are always the benefits, the hourly wage, the holidays, and the seniority and things like that - how could you ever think for a moment that you could just implement that and rush it and it would be done? It just doesn't happen, it doesn't work that way and it shouldn't work that way.

We are going to hear from the business community. We've had multiple letters from the business community, the CFIB, the restaurant people, the people who employ maybe smaller organizations in numbers of employees, who don't want unions or at least they have expressed that they don't. At the same time, if that were to happen and they made application and a union came in, that would be one thing. They would sit down and they would want to work through what they would deem as a fair bargaining process, they wouldn't want to be told.

We've heard one of the other members of this caucus speak about businesses in other provinces where this legislation exists and what has happened to those businesses. They've been stressed; some have sold out or changed, employees may lose jobs. It's already tough enough economic times that we know this legislation is not required. We know that there are businesses out there right now that have had to lay people off totally based on the tough, economic times. If you implement something like this, you run the risk of more employment being lost in this province and we are in no position to lose jobs. We've seen it happen in other provinces and we'll see it in this province as well.

You don't need to take my word for it, Madam Speaker, you can ask those people and you're going to hear from those people through the Law Amendments Committee process. They are going to tell you the risks that are associated, it's not just a member standing on a floor, but we do represent those people in our communities. It is important that we speak on behalf of those people and those businesses because those business owners have families, those families will be affected. They are already affected enough with things like high taxes, highest cost for power rates; it just keeps going up and up. They need somewhere to see a little relief, somewhere it may come, hopefully sooner rather than later, but at this time it's the wrong time. We don't feel, as members of this Party and as other Parties have spoke on this bill as well in Opposition, we don't feel that this is the right time and the right legislation to bring forward.

Maybe at some point down the road it could be something that was considered if it was consulted. They say that there were consultations done, not inclusive; the consultations were not inclusive at all. They need to be more inclusive if you want buy in. Now I see the honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education over there who told our member who went to these committee meetings, tried to sit in, maybe offer some good input - no, you can't stay. Well how is that democratic and how is that consultative? It's not. He wasn't there politically; he was there on behalf of his constituents; he was there on behalf of all Nova Scotians; he was there on behalf of the small business owners.

AN HON. MEMBER: There wasn't enough lunch.

MR. PORTER: There wasn't enough lunch, no. Well, that's one of the things we heard, but I'm sure there were other reasons.

It was because it was a closed-door meeting, Madam Speaker. They didn't want the input; they had the decisions made. They went in and they wanted to try to sell this to certain people. They wanted to tell them why this was good, but that minister has yet to stand up and really give - you know, maybe she'll do it, maybe there are businesses in her community that are going to be affected by this. I wonder what they think? Have they contacted her? I'm sure that they have, or that they will.

What about those businesses at risk? What about those business owners who have families at risk? Why bring it forward? Not one person - nobody has asked for this. Is this to put a bigger drive on for unions? Again, this is nothing against the union, as I said, Madam Speaker, I worked for unions for years and was part of it, paid my dues, worked on the other side, negotiated contracts. It's a great experience to go through. They're there when they need to be there; they're there to help you get things done. Sometimes they're required. No employer is opposed to that, it's a fair negotiation. They want to do that negotiation. If they have to do that, and they have to deal with unionized employees, that's something that is free and democratic in this province and in this country. It's allowed to happen; that's okay.

But, Madam Speaker, instead of just being told this is the cost and having to maybe make some decisions that are not favourable when it comes to employment, they want the option, they want to be able to sit down and they want to negotiate - this bill will do nothing to allow that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back to the debate.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, as we move on and, you know, I see a lot of members on that side of the House sitting there wondering and thinking, well, now we're going to put this through anyway, they've got a majority. That's exactly right. It's going to pass, but we have the freedom to debate it, and that's fine. I look across at the member for Sackville-Cobequid, a good member, I know he has all kinds of businesses in his very constituency. He has smaller businesses that might employ 15 or 20 people. What about the McDonald's out in Sackville as an example? Are they unionized employees? Not yet, he would say, not yet, but maybe the potential could come. They might - just as an example. What happens then?

Well, generally speaking, we've got a lot of younger people, students, university students and young adults just out of school, who work there. They want to be able to continue to work there and they may be persuaded that a union is the right thing to do. Well, okay, if they do that, they get into that negotiation and, bang, it's done. All of a sudden maybe they can't make the payroll. They're paying minimum wage now. Well, generally speaking, I don't know any union that settles for minimum wage as a rule and, you know, the better wages you can make, the better off we are. There's no question about that. I don't think anybody disagrees, but it does put that business owner in a bind.

Mr. Speaker, he or she, as business owners, have to say, well we have 20 employees, maybe we need to cut to 15 to make the payroll - we've just lost five more jobs. Do we want to do that? I don't think we want to do that. Maybe that's not what this is about, but that's certainly where it has gone - that's the perception of the business community out there, the restaurants, the bars, all these other places, like I mentioned, McDonald's. There are all kinds of businesses in this province that are not unionized, but this opens the door for opportunity to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, we have to go back to the consultative process and we have to listen very closely at what they're telling us. Now, having a couple of meetings with certain stakeholders, that's not consultation. We've got to go out to the wider community. What's the rush? Take our time. There's no need to rush this along. We've got all the time in the world to do this.

If this is something that we really want to do, then why don't we set this aside, let it go over to the Law Amendments Committee, hear from the people, park this thing, take it back out, look for the input? If this is such a good bill and everybody wants it, if it's not going to hurt anything, then let it sit. Let's go back out, talk right across the province, put it

out on your Web sites and say, okay, here you go, let's send people e-mails, let's have meetings around the province. We've taken the time to do others, what's wrong with that? Let's let them have their say - let every business owner have the opportunity and time to say that this is the right thing to do, or ask questions and be clarified if that's all it is. And that's fine, too.

Well, Mr. Speaker, based on the fact that we don't believe that this is the right way to go, I will state the following in closing, I move: "That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word 'that' and substituting the following therefor:

Bill 102, An Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour Disruptions and Protect the Economy by Amending Chapter 475 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Trade Union Act, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence."

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for an amendment to the motion for second reading, resulting in a six-month hoist of Bill No. 102, the Trade Union Act. We will now begin debate on the hoist amendment.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move the previous question.

MR. SPEAKER: No.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to begin my remarks on the hoist motion by congratulating the member for Hants West on doing the right thing. I do believe that he has built a good case for what is wrong in total with Bill No. 102, but he has also introduced a good case about why, in the face of this majority NDP Government, at least allowing six months for consideration is also the right thing to do in this circumstance.

Our Party has been very clear in our opposition to Bill No. 102 from the beginning, that it is the wrong bill at the wrong time and for the wrong reasons. Having said that, we pledged to all of those thousands of people in the province who have spoken up in businesses large and small about why this is a bad bill that we would use all the tools at our disposal to try and turn the government away from such a bad idea. Knowing practically that the NDP and their majority seem intent on plowing ahead despite all the evidence that this is a bad idea, we now come to the hoist.

I am aware that for many parliamentarians, for many people who study our system, for many members here and in Legislatures and Parliaments across the country and around

the world, a hoist is sometimes seen as a tactical manoeuvre by an Opposition Party to try and hold up or stall or delay the inevitable. That is one good reason why this hoist makes sense today, but it also makes sense on its own. I just want to be clear to all members and to you, Mr. Speaker, why hoisting Bill No. 102 is both a virtuous and a correct move at this point in time.

The reason that it makes sense, the reason it is the right thing to do, the reason I am hopeful that members on all sides of the House will see the benefit of the hoist motion as made by the member for Hants West, is rooted right back to a year ago with Bill No. 100, with the original changes to the Trade Union Act, with the original creation of the Labour Management Review Committee, and how that committee has been twisted and contorted and turned into a sham ever since.

In the beginning, we were all told that the Labour Management Review Committee would look at the labour laws of the province, particularly the Trade Union Act, and recommend to government reasons for change. Of course, what we have discovered is quite the opposite. The Labour Management Review Committee was called to meet and was told and instructed by the government, by the NDP, what issues it wanted them to deal with. The very first one that the NDP and the minister responsible instructed that committee on was first contract arbitration.

In other words, it did not come up from the people themselves or even from the participants in the committee themselves, as we were told it would. It was imposed by the NDP as Item No. 1. This is also offensive because the NDP deliberately excluded all of the non-unionized employers of the province from participation on the Labour Management Review Committee. They left them off even though 85 per cent of the businesses, the employers of Nova Scotia, and the workforce are non-unionized. They left them out deliberately. As a result, we had only a limited Labour Management Review Committee.

Ironically, the defence the government had at the time, the reason they were comfortable leaving them out, was because they gave us, on this side of the House, and all Nova Scotians, the assurance that the Labour Management Review Committee would only deal with issues related to unionized workplaces. That is what the government said at the time.

No one bought it then, Mr. Speaker; it was cold comfort to all those employers who opposed Bill No. 100 in the first place and it is cold comfort now. They had these concerns then and they received these assurances from the government that their concerns were unfounded.

Well, Mr. Speaker, their concerns then have become the cold, hard reality of today because the very first issue that this sham committee, this non-representative committee was told to deal with was first contract arbitration. First contract, Mr. Speaker, by definition - dealing with workplaces that do not already have a collective agreement in

place, that do not already have a contract in place. That is the first thing they told the committee to deal with, completely the opposite of the assurances that were given to all of those employers at the time, who were so concerned about what this government was going to do, what this government's agenda was, what this government's plan was.

Their fears have been proven correct because the committee was given, as a topic for discussion, first contract arbitration. Clearly, unionized workplaces already have contracts in place; they already have collective agreements in place. The government can play cute and say, but you have to certify a union first before you collectively bargain. Everybody with any common sense knows, Mr. Speaker, that the aim of first contract arbitration is to wipe away one of the biggest impediments to union formation, make it easier for non-unionized workplaces to actually certify a union.

They know that every one of them is at risk because it becomes easier for paid organizers to show up and say all you need to do is sign a card, vote yes and I guarantee you'll get a contract and I guarantee that you will like it. They will promise the moon, knowing they will have no responsibility, even through negotiation with what that contract actually is, because there is an imposed arbitrator for that first contract at the end of the day. That is the sham of the Labour Management Review Committee.

Now the statements of the government a year ago have been laid bare for the sham that those statements themselves were, Mr. Speaker. So why hoist? Because the statements made to the government, by the government at the time, to the employers of Nova Scotia have been shown for the sham that they are.

Mr. Speaker, I've already begun to describe what a sham the Labour Management Review Committee itself is, that it was told what it was going to review, that it was non-representative of most of the employers in our province. But worse than that, when the Labour Management Review Committee did want to go and engage in a consultation, they called the now infamous study day, the study day called on short notice, on a work day, for a few employers to come together and review with the committee.

The problem of course, Mr. Speaker, was they weren't asked on that study day, would you like to have first contract arbitration or not? Do you think this is a good idea or not? No, they were told we are going to have first contract arbitration, here are the various methods of first contract arbitration; please comment on which method of first contract arbitration is preferable, compared to the other methods. That was the question, a loaded question, the government's direction already pre-determined, making a mockery and a sham of the study day and of the Labour Management Review Committee.

Worse than that, Mr. Speaker, there were some participants - for example, the member for Inverness - who showed up in good faith to participate in this discussion and were kicked out of the room by the minister responsible. I know it's funny, Mr. Speaker, but it's sad, too. The reason given was that they hadn't ordered enough lunches for the

member for Inverness to stay for the study day. Now, I know the member for Inverness. He's a skinny guy. He could have gone without his lunch that day. I will point out that when it became obvious what a sham the committee was it's probably best that they didn't feed him, because he would have lost his lunch over the twisted process that the government had set up.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, who was there to greet all of the participants in this study day? Who was there to describe the question of which form of first contract arbitration would you like? Who was there to give the introductory comments to set the stage for the discussion? Mr. Rick Clarke, the co-chair of the Premier's economic advisory council, the CEO of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour - someone who has been a known advocate for first contract arbitration for at least 10 years, someone who already made up his mind a long time ago. That is who the NDP picked to lead the study day on which form of first contract arbitration we're going to have.

That is another example of what a sham this first contract arbitration consultation was, what a sham the Labour Management Review Committee is, and what a shame. What a shame to have that sham, because there are actually plenty of good reasons to have a body in our province where discussions about labour issues and employment issues and employer issues and employee issues can be formed, and people can come together and discuss in good faith what needs to be done. What a shame that instead of actually finding a way to allow these discussions to happen, to allow differences to be worked out, to allow new, progressive consensus-based legislation to come forward, the government chose not to do that but to create this sham exercise by kicking the legs out from the Labour Management Review Committee, by not waiting for it to recommend to government but rather by directing its work in such a specific way.

Rather than by picking someone to lead the exercise who's open-minded about the issues before it, by picking someone who long ago already made up his mind; rather than by including non-unionized employers in the first place and rather than by scanning the vast body of legislation and regulations that govern the way workplaces are and trying to find ways to make it work more progressively, the government destroyed the credibility of the Labour Management Review Committee and the one single, solitary, brief study day, where there wasn't enough lunch for people who disagree with the government.

For all those reasons it only makes sense - in the interest of fairness it only makes sense - that this bill now be hoisted six months so the government can reconsider its sham exercise and bring forward a more realistic, a more thoughtful, a more fair, a more consultative, and a more balanced approach to the way that it makes laws, particularly in this area. This, I believe, is why the hoist motion was designed all those years ago - not merely as a parliamentary trick or tool to be used as a delaying tactic in the face of the inevitable, but also because it sometimes makes sense. If it ever made sense, surely it makes sense when we have a government that is so bull-headed that it's plowing through



with a bill like this without proper consultation, without a proper committee to examine the pros and cons.

Beyond that one need only look at the calendar to realize that the NDP had made up their mind on first contract arbitration long before that study day was ever held, long before the Labour Management Review Committee was ever called together. Those of us on all sides of the House who know what goes into drafting legislation know that the ink was dry on that bill long before the study day was called. It was just a matter of when they were going to pull it out.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, we know that the NDP has a history on both sides, but including back as far as their days in Opposition, of bringing bills to this House, calling for first contract arbitration, they already knew. How ironic that all the other promises they made to Nova Scotians before the election, whether it was that they would balance the budget in the first year or that they wouldn't raise their taxes or that they would keep the capital commitments of the previous government, they've broken all of them, broken, broken, but the one thing that they've been consistent on is their urgent desire for first contract arbitration.

That is why a sham committee was appointed; that is why non-unionized employers who might disagree, were left off the committee; that is why a study day was picked in the middle of a work day when employers were not able to attend; that is why a study day was picked with not enough lunches ordered for the member for Inverness; that is why the ink was already dry on the bill before the study day was even called; that is why they chose Rick Clarke, whose mind was made up long ago to lead the study day because they knew what they were going to do, a sham process that has led to a bad bill at a bad time. Which is just reason number 82 about why hoisting the bill six months makes sense in the interest of fairness, in the interest of allowing and more thoughtful and reasoned process to come forward.

Here we are, the Labour Management Review Committee having been told what to do, having done the government's bidding, having reported back with their very, very detailed report, a whole two paragraphs long, reporting back to the government that they met on November 7<sup>th</sup>, a whole day, to conclude a process of stakeholder consultation - which we now know was a complete farce - to consider the issue of first contract arbitration. I'm reading from the actual letter and I will table it in a moment.

But do you know what, Mr. Speaker, here is how this two paragraph letter concludes on this very important issue, two paragraphs, “. . . the Labour Management Review Committee. . .” even though it was a complete sham, even though it has been completely twisted by the government, even then “. . . the Labour Management Review Committee has been unable to reach a consensus on whether first contract arbitration should be available under the *Nova Scotia Trade Union Act*.” I will table that for the benefit of everyone in the House, I know it has been tabled previously, Mr. Speaker, but what a

farce. The committee itself was a farce, Bill No. 100 was a farce, they knew what they wanted to do all along, they had their study day, they bullied all of the participants into coming to the conclusion they wanted, even then the committee was unable to reach a consensus and yet the government is bullying ahead anyway with legislation now in this session here today.

If we need more reasons to support the hoist for six months to allow for more thoughtful consideration, if you insist on tolerating this ridiculous process that the Labour Management Review Committee was forced to go through, you can at least rely on the report of their own minister of the government that the committee was unable to reach a consensus. As a fundamental, bottom line, rock solid reason why proceeding now is a bad idea and allowing six months for a proper consultation, for the reconsideration of the government to proceed, is the right thing to do. That is the greatest argument, I think, that anyone could make in favour of the hoist motion, is even after all the twists and turns, that the committee was unable to reach a consensus. So let's pause, let's hit the pause button, let's slow down, let's allow reason to prevail.

Mr. Speaker, when I say that the committee was unable to reach a consensus, quoting from the minister's own letter, that doesn't mean that there were some minor points of disagreement between those who participated in the study day or made submissions to the Labour Management Review Committee.

I note that the minister responsible, in introducing the bill, said that she wanted to provide a balanced approach to first contracts. If employers in this province and those representing the unions truly were looking for balance, surely the consensus would have been in their grasp, surely we would only be looking at minor areas of disagreement - or perhaps some unions want it and some don't, some employers want it and some don't, and so this will bring order and balance. But the fact of the matter is when the minister reports that they were unable to reach consensus, what we all know is that in fact there is one group that is strongly in favour, and then there is another group that is strongly, strongly opposed. Not only were they unable to reach a consensus, they're at diametrically opposite opposing views.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again, if we need more reasons to hoist this bill six months hence and allow reason and thought to prevail, it's because we have such a divergence of views about first contract arbitration in our province. Because we have such a sharp divergence of views, and we are supposed to have a government that represents all Nova Scotians, not just some Nova Scotians, then surely we have to ask ourselves, what is the rush? When two groups - one violently in favour and the other violently opposed, what is the rush? Why would we bully ahead and proceed when we have a group of employers, 7,000 in total, who are so completely against, and another group friendly to the government who are completely in favour? What is the rush?

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is there's no need to rush. There is no need to proceed with this legislation in this session. There is no need to push it forward in the face of all of the opposition and all of the reasonable concerns that have been brought forward. The government will not listen to reason and think through what they're doing, so it has been left to the member for Hants West and the PC caucus to bring forward this hoist motion for the very, very good reason that if there's ever a bill with that much opposition, with feelings that are so strong on both sides, if there's ever a reason to take a bill like that and hold onto it for six months and allow a better consultation process to happen, it is now - it is now.

So, Mr. Speaker, whether members in this House agree with first contract arbitration or not, I would argue that is not the question before us with the hoist motion. The question before us is simply, are you in favour of taking the time to get it right or are you determined to push it through at all costs? That is the yes or no question that members of this Legislature will be voting on when they vote on the hoist motion.

You don't have to actually stand in your place and say I love first contract arbitration, or I don't like first contract arbitration. There is a way to make legislation in a good way and there is a way to do it wrong. The government, in this case, is on the wrong track. So all members need to think about when it comes time to talk about or to vote on the hoist motion is whether they're in favour of the right way to make legislation, where Nova Scotians have truly been consulted, where real committees with all sides represented are able to come to a consensus, or at least given the chance to come to consensus or not - that is the question that members need to answer for themselves when they vote on the hoist motion.

Mr. Speaker, I'll give you a few more reasons, as I think I have some more time. You know, it's interesting - every bill should be put through a test before it comes to this House. One of the tests which I think I've explored in some way is whether it has gone through the proper process of consultation and stakeholder analysis and discussion, and consensus building and so on, or not. This one fails that test, but the Interpretation Act actually gives the House of Assembly more tests about whether a bill should come forward or not.

For example, Mr. Speaker, it's a generally held and established practice in this House, in other Houses in other provinces of Canada, in the federal Parliament, and other Parliaments around the world, that there ought to be a meaningful and practical purpose for bringing forward a bill, that we don't just make up bills for the sake of them. They have to actually serve a meaningful and practical purpose.

Section 9(5) of the Interpretation Act actually gives some guidance to the government and, indeed, to all members present, about what a meaningful and practical purpose for a bill ought to look like. For example, Section 9(5)(a) says there ought to be a

necessity for the enactment of the bill, there ought to be a reason. The bill has to show that there is some necessary reason for bringing the bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, if you either agree with that reading of the bill, or not, you could at least agree, in common sense, that a bill ought to have a purpose or a necessity when it comes forward. In this case we've already explored in this House, but it is worth at least highlighting, that there's no need for this bill, that there is no urgent necessity that this bill addresses. The fact of the matter is Nova Scotia has one of the best rates, if not the best rate, of successful conclusion of collective agreements in the country.

Beyond the collective agreements, it has one of the most balanced, most fair labour-relation climates in all of Canada. It's one of the things, when it comes to job creation, that we have going for us. We know, Mr. Speaker, that from 1997 to today, for 14 years, there has been exactly three complaints of bargaining in bad faith made to the Labour Board - three in 14 years.

There is no problem here, Mr. Speaker. There is no necessity because in the thousands of negotiations that have gone on between 1997 and 2011, all but three were concluded successfully between the parties, without an arbitrator and without any need to appeal to the Labour Board because of bad faith bargaining. In those three cases, all were dealt with by removing the bad faith, offensive proposal that one or the other party had made and sending the two parties back to the bargaining table.

In terms of the necessity of this legislation, there is none. Section 9(5)(b) actually requires that the Legislature take into account the circumstances existing at the time of enactment of the bill. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the circumstances here. The circumstances are that in 2010 in Nova Scotia, there were no work stoppages - none - between employer and employee at all, either because of a strike, of which there were none, or a lockout, of which there were none.

The circumstances that we find ourselves in today in our province are that we have a system that works. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that beyond the fact that there were absolutely no work stoppages, that we actually do have a system for dealing with disputes between employers and employees that works, and in the case of a newly-certified union, can work for them on their first contract.

Obviously the first step, Mr. Speaker, is that the two sides bargain in good faith. As two knowledgeable parties, knowledgeable of the business and the industry and the economic climate they are in, knowledgeable about going wage rates for like employees and so on, knowledgeable of the cost of living, knowledgeable of all the factors that need to be taken into account, negotiate in good faith and come to a price point on wages or on benefits or on pensions that everyone can live with. That is how the incredibly vast majority of agreements, even first contracts, are settled in our province.

The system is working, that is the circumstance that we find ourselves in today. But there is a whole host of solutions when bargaining in good faith doesn't get the two sides to the finish line in a contract negotiation, and the government knows this. There are conciliators available. The parties can apply for a conciliation and a conciliator is appointed and the conciliator works to bring the two sides together. In those circumstances where the parties weren't able to negotiate successfully in good faith to a concluded agreement, conciliators are there and bring them the rest of the way.

That's not even the end of the story there, because in those incredibly few circumstances where that isn't enough, we have mediators who are able to take the process further from where a conciliator has left off and employ greater efforts to bring the two sides together. All of this was within the power of the two sides to call for themselves and all of this was within the power of the minister responsible to call for.

If that weren't enough, beyond a mediator when there's still isn't a concluded agreement, even a first agreement, the minister and the Labour Board have the ability to appoint an arbitrator. It's up to the two sides whether the arbitrator is binding or not, and there is a whole list of types of arbitration, from interest arbitration to final offer selection arbitration, and on and on it goes.

Because of all of those methods of concluding agreements, including first contracts, Nova Scotia has one of the best, if not the best, labour relations environments in all of Canada. That is why we had zero work stoppages in 2010. That is why in 14 years we had exactly three complaints of bad faith bargaining that went to the Labour Board, and even then, all of them were dealt with and contracts were eventually reached. This is the circumstance that we find ourselves in today, and the bill does nothing to improve upon that circumstance because the circumstance is already working.

The Interpretation Act in Section 9(5)(c) also suggests that a bill that comes before this House should have some mischief identified that it seeks to remedy. I know that's legalese, but I think it's apparent on its face what it means: there ought to be some mischief that needs to be remedied. For all the reasons I've just enumerated over the last few minutes, it's pretty clear that there's no mischief here that needs to be remedied. There's no hardship that a Nova Scotian is facing that we ought to provide relief from. There's no damage or loss that someone needs to have a method of recovery from. We have a successful, balanced approach to labour management negotiations in our province. It's one of the things to which we cling to hopefully attract some investment and create some jobs around the province. There is no mischief that needs to be remedied.

Now we're on Section 9(5)(d) - (a)(b)(c)(d) - and this bill addresses neither (a) nor (b) nor (c) nor (d). No, the Interpretation Act also suggests that before a bill comes in, the government ought to consider the state of the existing law. The existing law around contract negotiations, around the rights of employees to associate collectively in a union, is not in dispute here. We all agree on that. This bill does not address that, pro or con, because

we already have that right. All of us do. Perhaps MLAs have that right and should consider it. Perhaps people who oppose the government should consider collective - we're guaranteed in the Canadian Bill of Rights and our Charter of Rights and Freedoms the right to free association, including the right to associate by forming a bargaining unit for the purpose of seeking a contract, first contract or otherwise.

That is the state of the existing law. Whether you're on the employee side or the employer side, we have a whole body of contract law that sets out how free people and free companies, limited or otherwise, and free employees, unionized or otherwise, can come together in the marketplace and set the price of their wages or their products. That's the state of the existing law. When two parties come together wanting to set the price of something including wages, benefits and pensions, that they are free to do so. All that we ask is that they bargain in good faith. We have plenty of legislated and statutory protection for good faith bargaining in this province already. That is the state of the existing law.

So what's the problem there? Mr. Speaker, that's the question that we're asking over here on this side of the House; that's the question I hope members over there on the government side start to ask themselves, because the state of the existing law, which we're required to look at when a bill comes in, is fine.

Mr. Speaker, I'll keep going a little more quickly through this. The government is also required to consider the consequences of a misinterpretation of existing law. Occasionally the government brings in a bill that clarifies something that already exists in law because it has a risk of misinterpretation. No one in any consultation, real or sham or otherwise, when it comes to this body of law, has come forward and said I don't understand or this is being misinterpreted, or this needs to change because it's archaic - the system is working.

The final test in the Interpretation Act of whether or not a bill ought to be brought to the House is the history of similar legislation in other jurisdictions. This is an interesting one, Mr. Speaker, because the government likes to say that 85 per cent of Canadians in six provinces already have first contract arbitration, but what they don't tell people is that the form of first contract arbitration that this government picked is the most severe, is the most arbitrary, is the most offensive of all of the forms. Only one province has the same, only one province has this kind of first contract arbitration and that is Manitoba where 4 per cent of Canadians live. That is the extent of the current law in this country.

The government is relying on the experience of 4 per cent, not six provinces out of 10, not 85 per cent - 4 per cent of Canadians. That is the experience the government is relying on in bringing forward first contract arbitration to Nova Scotia. In the other provinces, I just want to point out, that do have some form of first contract arbitration, there are all kinds of steps and hurdles that any party, employer, union or otherwise, needs to show, needs to demonstrate before they can have recourse to first contract arbitration. Most notably they need to show that there has been bargaining in bad faith. That's not required

here. This is the lowest possible bar that the government has set to jump to first contract arbitration. You just have to have an impasse, you just have to disagree, that is not right.

In most of the other provinces and in the Government of Canada when a first contract is being negotiated and there's an impasse and there is evidence of an impasse, and there's an example of bad faith bargaining, you go first to the minister responsible and then the minister can decide whether an arbitrator is required or whether to send the parties back to the bargaining table. That's not the case here, that's not the case with this bill.

This bill says if you have an impasse, as simple as that, 120 days in, you can have a first contract arbiter. Mr. Speaker, that's offensive for a whole other reason, which is that we know from the report that I tabled in this House the other day that the average length of negotiating time for all contracts, not just first contracts but all contracts, is 9.9 months; so let's round that to 10 months. It takes almost a year. Now presumably, for those that are experienced at negotiating contracts, whether it's their third, fourth, fifth, sixth or 12<sup>th</sup> contract, where they already have most of the items worked out and agreed upon years before, it's done quicker than that. (Interruption) No, they are much quicker, but when it's the first contract, where both the employer and the newly certified union are doing this for the first time, that can get bogged down and take a long time.

But even if we accept that they're going to successfully negotiate a contract on their first time out, it takes on average 9.9 months. Does the government give them that 9.9 months under this bill, to work out their differences through good faith bargaining, something we all believe is the right way to go? No, they give them four months, 120 days. If either side feels they are at an impasse, for whatever reason, then a first contract arbiter can be brought in. That is not right and it certainly doesn't match the test of the history of other legislators in our country.

I want to take the minutes I have remaining and just ask all the members of the House to do something that the member for Cape Breton South suggested the other day - I think we're doing a time check, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: You have approximately 19 minutes left.

MR. BAILLIE: Thank you, I'm just getting warmed up, like the member for Cape Breton South whom I'm about to quote. The member for Cape Breton South said in debate on second reading of this bill the other day, that one of the duties of members of the Legislature is to listen to their constituents. Well, I couldn't agree more and just for greater clarity, for the members on the NDP side, he means the people who voted for you and sent you to this House. Perhaps over there, they are listening to some other constituency, but I am speaking specifically of the constituents the member for Cape Breton South was talking about, which are the people who voted for each of the members present here and sent them here.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you an example. There are three members of the government side who, in various ways, represent parts of Pictou County - Pictou West, Pictou Centre and Pictou East. I'm looking to them and I'm going to ask them to do the right thing and talk to their constituents about first contract arbitration, while they consider where they are with this bill. I'm going to make it easy on them, we've moved a hoist, six months hence, to give every member, including the three members for the Pictou County area, the time to listen to their constituents.

I know in the case of my own constituents in Cumberland South, no one, either in the by-election last year or in the hundreds and hundreds of meetings I've held in groups large and small, no one ever said you know what, I'm so glad you're in the House of Assembly now because we really need first contract arbitration, not once did that come up. I don't think Cumberland South is unique in that way and so I just want to ask every member to go back to their constituents and have an honest conversation about first contract arbitration. I wanted to specifically ask that of the three members for the Pictou ridings because I'm hopeful they've already started to talk to their constituents about first contract arbitration.

I look to the Minister of Justice, the member for Pictou Centre, I look to the member for Pictou West and I look to the member for Pictou East. I hope they get up when their time comes on this hoist and tell us of any discussions that they've had with their constituents on first contract arbitration and what they were told and just as importantly, what they said back to their own constituents.

You know what's interesting about the three Pictou ridings is there is actually a very, very large employer that we're all proud of that started in Pictou County, specifically in Pictou Centre and that is the Sobeys company and ultimately Empire corporation. Sobeys started in Stellarton, store number one, in Stellarton, maintains a nation-wide chain of grocery stores and all of the distribution and other work that goes with it and we're all very proud of what has grown from that one little store, Sobeys number one in Stellarton, grown from that one store to a \$10 billion company that employs thousands of Canadians. We're also very proud that the Sobeys, despite all that growth and all that success across our great country, keep their headquarters, their corporate office in Stellarton, their executive team in Stellarton, their treasury, their finance, their marketing, their sales, their distribution, their method of running the company, all of that is done out of Stellarton, in Pictou Centre.

I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, what that company and the hundreds of people that it employs in our province thinks of this government initiative. I ask, in fact I beg the member for that area, to talk to the Sobeys before he casts his vote on this hoist and ultimately on Bill No. 102 and the members on either side of him, in Pictou East and Pictou West, because I suspect that they'll get an earful, if they already haven't. When I ask them to do this, Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking anything special, I'm asking them to do their jobs.



Now, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Cumberland County a moment ago and I just want to also ask my fellow member of the Cumberland County caucus, the member for Cumberland North, to do the same thing, to go back to his riding and talk to the people who live and work and create jobs and maintain jobs in Cumberland North and ask them how they want him to vote on this hoist and on first contract arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, that member knows full well the company PolyCello in Amherst. It is a great company, it employs a lot of people in Cumberland North and people from Cumberland South who travel to Cumberland North to work for that company. It is a non-unionized employer. It sells its products around the world. It is proud to be headquartered and located in Amherst. I ask that member - and I regret singling him out but I'm asking every member - to check with employers like PolyCello and see what they think of first contract arbitration.

I can also tell you, I guess, Mr. Speaker, from my own experience, I am doing what I am asking others to do. I made specific inquiries to the major employers in Cumberland South. Many members here know Oxford Frozen Foods, for example. They are the best processor of wild blueberries in the world. They are one of the largest landholders in our province of blueberry lands and of the northeastern United States. They bring all those blueberries here and they process them every summer. It's great to see, I invite all members to come and see how they do it. When they are not doing blueberries, they do carrots and onion rings and all kinds of things. They employ hundreds of people in my riding, in our province.

I've done my homework for my own riding, Mr. Speaker, like I'm asking every member to do. They are not excited about first contract arbitration. I'll let them speak for themselves when the time comes but I can tell you this is not what they want. Or Ropak Can-Am in Springhill, just as another example. They make ice cream containers and yogurt containers and other plastic containers that we see in our stores every day and they send them around the world. They are a major employer in Springhill, a place that can hardly afford to put a major employer at risk. They are a non-unionized workplace. They are non-unionized, by the way, because they have a great relationship between the owners of that factory and the employees. They work together, they pay a fair wage, they have fair benefits, they work together to run the company and produce a sustainable, profitable business over time. The last thing they need is first contract arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, that's what I'm asking of the members here, that they do the same thing in their own ridings. I say this particularly to the NDP members, whether they're from the Pictou ridings or from Cumberland North, or any number of others - I could go row by row and list the employers and what I know they're going to tell those members. And I hope they do their job; I hope they do their job and listen to their constituents because at the very least, after listening to their constituents, they should come back to this House and vote for the hoist motion of the member for Hants West, and send this bill six months into the future where proper consideration can be given to it.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, a year and a bit ago I was in a different job. I was running Credit Union Atlantic, and I raise it today as an example of a great company that is non-unionized, that not only employs a lot of Nova Scotians but it also finances a lot of the small- and medium-sized businesses of our province and, therefore, has its finger on the pulse of what small- and medium-sized businesses think and have to say.

Credit Union Atlantic is non-unionized, but we actually do have some credit unions that are unionized, Mr. Speaker, and I have no issue with that. That's great. Those employees and that employer credit union decided together to enter into free collective bargaining and have done so successfully. Others, like Credit Union Atlantic, are not unionized because, I believe, the employer and the employees work together to run their company, to create a dynamic, sustainable, profitable operation.

In my time there, the five and a half years I was there - and I say this modestly, but proudly - that company almost doubled in size, from \$165 million in assets under management to over \$300 million in assets under management, from six branches to nine branches, from 65 employees to 110 employees, from no profit to record profits, from no dividends to the member shareholders to record dividends to the member shareholders. I say this is modest - I know it doesn't sound very modest but I say it's modest because the employees did it. They actually participate in those profits - as they should. They still have the right to collectively associate in a union and bargain anytime they want - they just choose not to.

So why on earth, Mr. Speaker, would we ever have a government that would want to impose a contract on a wonderful company like that? That is the question that I want members, particularly on the NDP side, many of whom I know are members of their local credit union, to go and ask. That's what they need to do, and that is the single best reason to support the hoist motion and send this bill far into the future.

One final thought, Mr. Speaker, on reasons to send this bill far into the future. I've already described why it's a bad bill, and I've already described why this is the wrong time and for the wrong reasons, but if you're concerned at all about the state of our economy, the fragile nature of the business environment that we have, the fact that around the world and around our country are too many examples of economies in distress, rural and otherwise - if you give that any thought at all, then surely you know this is the wrong idea at the wrong time. And if that's not enough of a scare to give it reconsideration, Mr. Speaker, I point out that we do have one good thing coming our way in Nova Scotia and that is the shipyard contract, the Irving shipyard contract.

The question before us, Mr. Speaker - as it should be - is quickly becoming, how do we best take advantage of that contract? How do we make sure that we take the 3,000 direct jobs we know are coming and turn them into something greater? How do we make sure that when Irving grabs that work and has to decide who to contract out some of it that they can't

do themselves, they're going to subcontract work out to Nova Scotian companies and not New Brunswick companies, or some other companies?

Well, the key is that we need to know that we've done everything we can to make Nova Scotia a friendly investment place, a friendly place to create jobs, a friendly place to allow those entrepreneurs who say, do you know what? I'm going to try and start a business and employ a few people and tell the Irvings I'm here to service them. How do we encourage that? Well, it's not like this, Mr. Speaker. It's not by telling them that we're going to introduce a whole new risk as they think through whether to open that business or not.

When we on this side point out that jobs are at risk and the government says you're being scary, consider this and I hope every member considers this. In addition to the PolyCellos and the Oxford Frozen Foods and the Ropak Can Ams and on and on it goes - in addition to that, think of the opportunity to come and whether we're going to take advantage of it and encourage it and grow it or whether they are going to blow it, because that is the road they are going down now. They're going to blow it because they're following some other constituency with first contract arbitration besides their own constituents, which is why I ask them, I urge them to go and listen to their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, although there was one other thing I wanted to say here, but with those few remarks, I will take my place and I encourage every member to get up and tell us what their personal riding constituents think of this idea. Thank you.

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

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today to say a few words on the hoist amendment but also to remind the Leader of the Third Party that this hoist is going nowhere, even though we're going to support the hoist.

The last time I looked there was a majority government over there, currently anyway - the member for Queens seems to get excited about that. The fact of the matter is that's today's reality. It might not be tomorrow's but it's today's reality on this particular bill. The Leader of the Official Opposition, our Leader, the Leader of the Liberal Party and our Party does not support this bill. We do not support Bill No. 102 and we'll vote against it at every stage that this bill finds itself in.

However, during second reading, members of this House debated a lot. Almost every member on this side of the House spoke against this bill and had their say. It's interesting that the Third Party, some of the members didn't use all their time to speak on the bill before when they had the opportunity. I would say that may be an oversight or maybe they've had some encouragement from others to do it on a hoist amendment here today.

I want to tell those who are interested in this hoist amendment what the amendment is going to do and what they can do. We spoke, all of our members who had the opportunity to before the hoist was called here today, we did have a couple of speakers left to go. What we decided was that it's time to let Nova Scotians have their say about what they think about this bill. It's time to get this bill into the Committee on Law Amendments so that Nova Scotians can come to the Committee on Law Amendments and try and get the government either to scrap this bill or to amend this bill or at least to listen to the dialogue of Nova Scotians regarding this bill, not to continue to listen to us in this House but to get to - where the solution can be found is in the Committee on Law Amendments and subsequently to Committee of the Whole House and to third reading.

Our Party will move amendments to this bill at some stage, once we hear from Nova Scotians. I suggest that those who are interested in this bill, today, should spend their time encouraging others to get to the Committee on Law Amendments and tell Nova Scotians what they think about this bill, the same that we think about this bill. It's not a good bill for Nova Scotia and it's a bill that shouldn't even be on this order paper.

The reason it's on the order paper is big labour. This Party owes big labour; they owe that majority government that the member for Queens is talking about over there to big labour. Now it's payback time. We know that, the Third Party knows that. What we want to do is encourage Nova Scotians to come to the Committee on Law Amendments and encourage those members of the NDP who are not in the Cabinet to have second thoughts about supporting Bill No. 102. I'm sure that if the people who are concerned - the small businesspeople of this province who we support - if they are concerned enough about this bill, they will encourage their fellow small businesspeople, their people who are running businesses, to go to their individual MLAs - yes, on the government side as well - and tell them they don't like this bill.

The MLAs are not bound by Cabinet solidarity, as I said the other day when I spoke for an hour on this bill, Mr. Speaker. They are not bound by Cabinet solidarity. They are bound by the wishes of their own people - at least, if they want to stay around here for any length of time, they should be bound by the wishes of their constituents.

The Leader of the Third Party did make one comment that caught my attention: the fact that some members, particularly from areas like Pictou County and that, should perhaps listen to or go and see the businesspeople in their area and find out what they think about this particular bill.

As I said, I'm certainly not going to trespass any more on the time of this House than necessary, because this Party wants to get this bill over there. This Party is not going to stand here for the next two days and listen to blabbering on about the need for a hoist when we know it's going down. We want this bill to get over there because this hoist is not going to do anything. If anybody up there or out there thinks that this hoist is going to change this government's mind, they are dreaming in Technicolor. What is going to change

this government's mind are the opinions expressed to them by their constituents and also the people who come to the Law Amendments Committee to speak against this bill.

I would like to hear in the Law Amendments Committee - and I sit on that committee - what labour reps are going to come here and have them justify why this bill is before this House, because no one over here can think of any good reason why the bill is even here. There's 25 bills on the order paper here, most of them window-dressing, insignificant compared to bills that should be here.

What is the government wasting all its time on? Bill No. 102, and nobody can tell us why. Nobody can tell us one good, solid reason why this bill is here. There's no labour discontent in this province that I'm aware of, so why is it here? We can only surmise it is here because it is payback time to big labour. They hope to organize a lot more people in the future of this province and this will give them the opportunity to do that.

The Premier got up here today and he talked about Michelin, congratulating an employee of Michelin. I thought that was great of the Premier to do that. However, I hope that in two years time he can still get up here and congratulate somebody from Michelin, if they are still in this province, because if the unions get another shot down there - and they've been trying for 10 years to get in there - if they are able to do it this time they will have the protection of this legislation to make it happen. That's exactly what is going on here.

I suspect and suggest to members opposite that there could be some serious consequences in their political futures as a result of this bill too. I don't see any reason for this bill, Mr. Speaker, other than paying back what they owe big labour. I'm sure that a lot of members over there who are sitting on the back benches probably are not aware of any kind of deals that are being made here, but there certainly are deals being made. They don't have to be consulted on this, because as I said the other day, they're not part of the government. They are MLAs on the government side and are here to do the bidding of and to represent the people who sent them here. They are not bound by Cabinet solidarity.

I mentioned that the member for Halifax Chebucto the other day convinced me of that. He came here and spoke his mind. He didn't care what the Cabinet thought about it. The Premier's very off-handed comment about it: the member for Halifax Chebucto used his independence as an MLA to come here and speak his mind. That's why his resolution was brought to this House, and whether you agreed with it or not, he brought it here, and he didn't have to ask anybody in the front bench if he could bring it here.

I suspect the same thing should apply about members of the back benches who surely will go home to their constituencies this weekend and ask small businesspeople in their areas whether or not they support this bill, and explain the bill to them and ask them, do they think it's a good idea for them?

Mr. Speaker, the people who represent small business in this province have a responsibility here as well - to convince their vast membership to talk to these MLAs, to come to the Law Amendments Committee to make sure their voice is heard. I don't care if the Law Amendments Committee takes two weeks on this particular bill, but I do feel that any belabouring on this bill in this House is a waste of time. I want to hear what Nova Scotians think about it. I don't want to hear anything more from the Third Party about what they think of it - I already know they're against it. We're against it.

We're not going to try to filibuster this bill in here. We want to go over it and as a responsible political Party we want to hear what Nova Scotians think and, as a result of that, we would like to think that there would be enough interest over there from Nova Scotians to convince the government that this bill should be thrown out or at least amended or at least put aside for the present until some further thought can be given to it. That is where I think we should be coming from, not sitting in this House trying to convince somebody in this House that a hoist is a good idea, because this hoist is not going anywhere.

I don't know whether or not anybody realizes this, but you can only affect a change on a hoist if you have the majority of numbers in the House to do it on a vote. Again, last time I looked we don't have enough numbers over here to do that. However, in conclusion, I would encourage Nova Scotians who are upset about this bill to get to the Law Amendments Committee to make their feelings known, to make sure that they have every opportunity to do so, and the more time we spend in here on this bill, the less time we're going to have over there. I suggest that the quicker we get this bill to the Law Amendments Committee - and in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you again and tell members of this House that this Party is against Bill No. 102, this Party will be supporting a hoist amendment, this Party will listen to Nova Scotians at the Law Amendments Committee, and this Party will move amendments at that time, once we hear from Nova Scotians and I hope that that takes a long time, I hope there's enough interest, that we're going to be sitting over there a long time.

My biggest disappointment will be that if we go to the Law Amendments Committee and nobody shows up. I would hope that the Law Amendments Committee will be packed, we will get a variance of opinions over there so we can take some solid action and that we can make amendments to this bill either at the Law Amendments Committee, Committee of the Whole House, or at Third Reading. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) Thank you, members, for your support.

I had a short but good conversation with the member for Truro-Bible Hill a few moments ago. We were talking about what has happened in the investment markets, we

were talking about if we go back to 2008 and we see what happened with our world economy, what started the ripple that we're now still experiencing. We had banks in the U.S.A. that were investment banks, differing greatly from our Canadian banks in the sense that they were out to make money through investment purposes as opposed to the traditional banking business we have in Canada here, that generates profits from lending people money to buy houses, to buy cars, to start businesses, more so on a small scale, traditional nuts and bolts banking, that had merit, that had a social purpose.

I think myself and the member for Truro-Bible Hill agreed that the investment banks in the U.S.A. that were at the centre of the collapse in the markets were socially useless. They weren't really serving any purpose for society, and because they were - and I'll explain a little bit more in a moment, but at the same time if we look back at government in the U.S.A. - and this goes right back to the Clinton administration, but it carried on through the Republican administration as well - there was an agreement that everybody should have the chance to own a home, no matter what. That caused what later became known as NINJA loans - no income, no job or assets. So really loans were given to people without any economic basis.

You also had a central bank that was maintaining a very low interest rate, so there was very little risk to borrow money, and it contributed to increased borrowing. So all of these factors came into play, but then the investment banks saw a chance to profit off this kind of activity and they created new forms of securities to hold all these loans that were being given out, loans that were really loans given with poor analysis to determine if they were reasonable loans to be giving or whether or not there was going to be some kind of payback, if there was going to be some kind of return on investment.

The rating agencies also played a role because the rating agencies all stamped these investments, investment grade. So they were, from anybody who was investing in the bonds or the securities that were holding these loans, they felt more comfortable to do it because there was a rating stamped on them that said this is a secure investment. Based on the credibility of our rating agency, you can be assured that if you invest in this security, you've got a very good chance of recouping your investment and enjoying a rate of interest while you hold it.

The banks, of course, were intermingling investment grade, or good loans, in with a lot of bad loans and they didn't want to hold the bag of these investments. When things started to unravel and collapse, there was a great amount of uncertainty - and the reason, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about all of this is because I'm talking about the redistribution of wealth, and I think that's what this piece of legislation is aiming to do. So there was great pressure on the government at the time to bail these banks out and anybody who was watching felt very helpless. There was a great deal of emotional strain right on down to the small individual investor. Because of all that concern, I have no doubt the government took that into account when they made the decision to bail out those banks.

You know, I guess at the end of the day there was a redistribution of wealth in that because we saw homeowners who to this day their homes are worth 75 per cent of the price they paid for them, so they have taken a loss. They have little chance - we hope they have a chance of recouping that, but when you consider the demographics in North America, when there's not an increasing rate of newborns each year or if there is, it's virtually flat, so there's not going to be more people coming here, or being born here to create a demand for those homes and, of course, we saw investors, and I'm sure everybody in this room, from pension plans and personal investments, have all taken a hit and they've yet to fully recover.

So there was certainly a redistribution of wealth out of the pockets of most average North Americans and there was a redistribution into the hands of people who profited from it - and I think the people who profited from it were a lot of times people who earned bonuses, millions and millions of dollars in bonuses in one year because perhaps they met their targets, or they may have blown their targets out of the water they did so well, but it was all done, really, through lies. The wool was pulled over people's eyes. So there were people who made really a lifetime's worth of money in one year and how can you consider somebody like that to be acting in the best interests of our society?

I suppose we shouldn't, Mr. Speaker, but that's where government comes in. I know that this government is trying to come in to try to redistribute wealth into the hands of people who are working in Nova Scotia, but that's where I fear that it's not going to do that. I appreciate the goal of wanting to redistribute wealth, but I believe this legislation attacks the wrong people.

We have some people in our gallery this afternoon. I would like to introduce them and perhaps if they do hear their name called, they could rise and be acknowledged. We did have Luc Erjavec here from the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association; we have Jim Cormier with the Retail Council of Canada; we have Ann Janega, who was just here with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Tim Tucker with the Nova Scotia Chambers of Commerce and the Truro and District Chamber of Commerce was here earlier; and we have Leanne Hachey and Amelia DeMarco with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; we have Heather Cruickshanks here with the Merit Contractors; Carol MacCulloch, former president of the Construction Association of Nova Scotia; Gordon Stewart may be here - yes, he is - with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia; and John Logan, Director of Membership and Operations of the Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association, is here with us. So there are a number of people, Mr. Speaker, and I thank them. Perhaps the members could give these people a round of applause. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these people are good Nova Scotians; they are representing good Nova Scotians, people who are creating economic activity in our province. It's nice to see them here, because they obviously have other things they could be doing today, but they felt that this legislation was important enough to leave what they are doing to come down to the Legislature here and express their interest in what we are doing. I'm sure we will



hear from some of them when this piece of legislation moves to the Law Amendments Committee.

As I said, I do think that this legislation attacks the wrong people, because I believe it's an attack on the Nova Scotia small business community. If we want jobs for Nova Scotians, every member in this Legislature, no matter what political Party you come here with, each of us must make sure that Nova Scotia has a government - whether you sit with that government or whether you are sitting in Opposition, I think it's important for all of us to recognize that we have a responsibility to Nova Scotians to ensure that, whatever leaves this Chamber, there is an understanding of the importance for Nova Scotia business to be competitive and to help Nova Scotia business to be competitive.

I fear that with this piece of legislation we're sending something from here that is going to do the opposite of that. This Legislature must make sure that the taxes that Nova Scotians and Nova Scotia businesses pay are competitive with other jurisdictions, because those businesses are competing against other businesses outside of Nova Scotia, who may be living in a very different reality and may have a much easier time of it to turn a profit. That's what's going to attract investment, Mr. Speaker.

This bill, in my mind, has a lot to do with labour costs. If we are setting up a dynamic where people working in Nova Scotia, without having to go on strike, can organize and arrange to put their demands to an arbitrator and that arbitrator rules that the business they are working for immediately has to raise their wages by 20 per cent or 30 per cent or 40 per cent, without any regard for the owner of that business, what are we doing for Nova Scotia businesses?

We might think we are helping the workers, but what happens if that business decides that it cannot sustain offering those wages? What happens if that business has already determined, through the competitive marketplace, that it can't afford to pay wages of that nature? At that point government has come in, it has interfered in the marketplace, and it has interfered with those Nova Scotians who are running those businesses, who are creating jobs for our constituents, and it's putting them out of business - and the workers who thought they were getting some kind of an advantage may end up losing their jobs.

I guess the question being asked, what we're really speaking about this afternoon, is why the hoist? I've heard the honourable member from the Liberal caucus speak, and I respect the fact that he would like to see this move over to the Law Amendments Committee. I too am anxious to know what Nova Scotians, through Law Amendments, have to say on this piece of legislation. We live in a unique province when we can have people come in off the street and give their perspective on legislation.

So why the hoist? Well, we believe that we should be using every implement at our disposal to draw attention to this piece of legislation, so that people understand it before it rushes through. We know the majority government, the power lies in the government's

hands to push this through the Legislature and if we stood here and said nothing, then it would just go through, it would happen, we could do nothing about it. We cling to the hope that some members in this Legislature will choose to listen to their constituents. In fact, the very fact that we are holding this up with a hoist today is giving members an opportunity to go back and speak with their constituents, to speak with the business owners in their constituencies, the people who are creating jobs, making payroll, they're taking the risk to create economic activity, find out from them before you just say, our Minister of Labour is a good person, I've gone through two elections with her and I trust what she's doing. Why not listen to your constituents?

With all due respect to our Minister of Labour, make sure that what's being proposed is actually something that's going to be favourable for the people you represent. There's time with this hoist motion for members to take the time to do that.

This is important. We could just let this go over to the Committee on Law Amendments but we want to draw attention to this. We want extra attention to be drawn to this piece of legislation. We saw with Bill No. 100, the precursor to this piece of legislation, when that was first introduced, I remember it was about one-quarter of an inch thick; there was a lot of information to digest there. A lazy member could just sit there and say, that looks pretty complicated, I'm not a lawyer. We'll just skip over that one and get on with whatever other business is going on that day.

We took a look at that and after some lengthy examination of it, it was discovered there were some clauses in there that were of contention, that would have an impact on the business community here in this province, and through legal advice people decided we don't want this piece of legislation. We don't want it to march through the House without any debate. At that point we started filibustering and because we did that, of course we have our media in Nova Scotia who drew attention to it. There was more discussion by Nova Scotians about it.

Really, how many Nova Scotians are watching this discussion on this hoist today? Probably not too many, most Nova Scotians are busy working and whatnot. It takes time (Interruption) The honourable member suggested there are fewer today working in the province and I think he's correct. A lot of people don't have time to pay attention to what we're doing here. Sometimes we have to slow things down a bit and give them a chance to hear about it. That's why we have put forward this hoist today.

We plan to use every implement at our disposal to slow things down and draw attention to this legislation. We cannot afford to be asleep at the switch when a piece of legislation like this is going through. I hope members of the business community are getting ready for the Committee on Law Amendments because once that committee starts, of course, it will only operate as long as there are members there to represent their concerns.

Another positive impact of this hoist motion is that it's giving Nova Scotia business owners - who are, as we know, very busy - a chance to get organized, it's giving them a chance to think about this legislation, to better understand it. If they see how it specifically impacts their business they then have an opportunity to contact their MLA, no matter what side of the House we are on, and express their concerns.

I know that every one of us will have businesses in our communities that will be opposed to this legislation. When they have a chance to look at it and understand it and what it means for them, I know there has to be at least one business in each of our constituencies that will be concerned about this. This is a time for members to go, not only wait for their constituents to come to them, but it's a time to be proactive. Instead of moving on and discussing other matters in the Chamber here today, we continue to discuss this hoist and it gives members a chance to connect with their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I can't reiterate enough about the importance for members in the business community to be present at the Law Amendments Committee and the call should be going out to members from organizations right now. People who belong to an industry trade organization, those members should be being contacted, and I have no doubt that they are, to make sure that they are aware of what's going on and to be given some instruction about how to get involved. If they do wish to make a compelling statement at the Law Amendments Committee and I think volume of statements would say a lot and would be very compelling for this legislation, if there were a volume of people who keep coming and coming to the Law Amendments Committee and tying up that committee, to make the statement that we do want this legislation.

There are plenty of good reasons, plenty of good reasons to avoid moving forward with this legislation right now. One of the most serious ones stems from the government's simple lack of consultation with the business community. I talked earlier about redistribution of wealth and I don't think that this bill is achieving that, Mr. Speaker. I think it may achieve the export of wealth from our province. If we're trying to do something about the free market economy here in this province, or this country or this continent, we're not focusing our efforts on the right people to redistribute wealth if we're looking to Nova Scotia business owners. I don't think there would be any debate on that, especially the small business owners, people with 10 employees or less.

Even if we look at companies like - and we all like to use the example of - Michelin because they're such a significant employer. If we look at Michelin, we know that they're making business decisions not from Nova Scotia. They are a worldwide company and they can choose to either make further investment here or continue the investment they have made, which includes employing 2,300 Nova Scotians, or they may choose to invest in another area of the world. If they're looking at making an investment, they're going to take a look at a piece of legislation like this. Being a large company, I know they are very careful with government relations; they want to keep good relations with the province. I know anything they say would likely be guarded and because they're such a significant

employer, it would likely be said directly to the minister responsible or the Premier, perhaps. That's how they would communicate and I know that their communication would carry a lot of weight because they employ 2,300 Nova Scotians. Not only do they employ them but they employ them in areas of our province that are rural and that's where we need those jobs more than anyplace else in the province.

To lose 2,300 jobs in Halifax would be a significant blow, say one of these plants averages about 700 jobs. If we lose 700 jobs in the city here, it would be a significant blow, but there are other places for the people to go within the city to find work. But if you lose jobs, and I think of my own community in the Strait Area, which impacts a number of members in this Legislature, whether it be my area of Inverness County, Richmond, Antigonish, Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, those are just the immediate areas, you also branch out into Victoria County and the rest of Cape Breton Island. If we look at the list of creditors for NewPage, we see that there are businesses right across the province that are impacted by that, millions of dollars at stake.

Madam Speaker - as I know you've joined us and you're now in the Chair - the impact of a company like Michelin or NewPage leaving the province, especially a rural area of the province, I would call it my worst nightmare; in fact, that was the first thought that went through my mind when I got the news the morning that I heard about NewPage.

I always knew, because I had friends that I went to school with, people I knew growing up, I knew their parents worked there, and later on as I got older and they got older some of them worked there, but never did I realize, until I was elected, the size and the importance of the forestry sector in our local economy. I know I've said it already, but I'll say it again, I spoke with a young teacher in my area and she told me that probably 50 per cent of the children in that school have a parent working in the forestry sector. That was enough research for me to realize even more so the danger - or should I say the importance of making sure that government is doing everything it can to support these businesses. They are competing in a global marketplace, and what does Bill No. 102 mean for them?

I hope we're going to hear from them in the Law Amendments Committee - I have no doubt that some companies, as I've mentioned before, have expressed their feelings on it directly, perhaps to the Premier or to the minister responsible. When you think about this bill and why we've called for the hoist motion today, really we're at a turning point. I know the world economy has not been good, but I really see us at a turning point more than ever, especially in rural Nova Scotia. I think it's a real theme that's developing. Some would argue that it has been developing for 50 years maybe, but I think more so than ever now.

I know in the Strait area, if we lose that pulp mill and the associated jobs with it, the area is never going to be the same - we're not living in a world where once an investment leaves, especially one of that magnitude, it can come back, and just come back, because they're struggling as it is. We need to be doing everything we can to keep them here; once

they're gone it's very hard to build a compelling business case to bring them back. So it's another reason why I think this legislation is going to impact businesses like that.

I can think of no better way to spend my time, as the representative from the area, than to take my hour today to speak about it. I don't know, as I said the other night, I suppose we all come in here with our own decisions about how we're going to vote on a bill pretty much as soon as we see the bill, and I know we're all busy, we're probably doing work interspersed amongst our legislative business here, whether it's work for constituents and whatnot, so maybe it's naive of me, Madam Speaker, to think that my words today could have some impact - she's reserving judgment, I can tell by her expression.

But, Madam Speaker, I think this piece of legislation does need a second look by all members. I hope that everyone does take a close look at it. For the sake of 10 or 15 minutes, pick up the phone and call a business owner in your constituency and just see if it's all it's cracked up to be. There is never any shame in having a look at something and saying, you know what, maybe this isn't quite the right thing to be doing right now. I am sure - and I, as only one member of the Legislature - that if the government decided that, I commit to you right now that I would zip my lip and I would not say another word. I would let it go off peacefully, and respect the deliberation that took place and acknowledge that, okay, we've moved past that and let's move on to other business. You know, I think about NewPage and I know people have said, well, you know, the demand for paper is dying off, it's a dead business. Why not let it go?

But, Madam Speaker, we can never lose our nerve to support economic activity in this province. A passive approach is not going to lead to positive results and this piece of legislation will impact businesses, maybe not in the case of NewPage, but businesses of similar impact in the province. So we must not just lose our nerve and say when there's an industry in our province that maybe - when an industry in our province may need us the most, that is the last point in time that we should be losing our nerve and saying, well, let that go.

There may be people in this province who will have to live with first contract arbitration after this bill has passed. We've been hearing from some of them and they've been telling us that they don't want it, and these are ordinary Nova Scotians. They're saying it to us because they think it will be bad for their businesses, bad for their communities, and bad for jobs. We do know that our labour leaders want it and labour lawyers want it. I guess the problem with this is while these people may be leaders of their organizations, are they really acting in the best interest of all Nova Scotians? I think that's what we have to keep in mind in this Legislature because we have to act in the best interest of all Nova Scotians. A victory for labour, which could result in a loss of jobs for Nova Scotians - who wins, Madam Speaker? I don't think we win. So we want this bill to slow down and that's why we've called for the hoist today.

I think about - I might as well tell you a little story, Madam Speaker, about my own involvement. I know I happened to be here in the city, I think it was on a Friday back in September, and I went to a Labour Management Review Committee meeting. I went there because I was concerned. This board that has been put in place by the government has a very heavy tilt towards organized labour and I thought, well, somebody has to keep an eye on this. When I went, I presumed this meeting would be something that would be open, that there would be nothing that would be, say, behind closed doors, and I respect that they got together that day to speak about this without having any eyes, I guess, watching over them.

Madam Speaker, I know there were more than just the members of the committee in the room, there were representatives from the business community, but I thought why not go over and have a listen to see what they're talking about. You know, we had heard, I remember it being said in the Legislature here, that when this committee was formed we are not going to look at non-unionized workplaces. Yet they have been and we see that with Bill No. 102. It was obvious to me when the membership of this committee was appointed that something was up. We saw the heavy tilt in favour of the unionized labour leaders of the province, and that non-union employers were purposely kept off the committee.

I say that, Madam Speaker, because they could have been appointed but they weren't appointed, so obviously there was a move not to appoint them, and I say purposely they were kept off the committee. Perhaps their opinions aren't valued, at least to the same degree as those in organized labour in the province.

Anyway, this committee was put in place, and I know that I wasn't invited to go this meeting, it was over in Dartmouth, but then again I guess you could say that 80 per cent of the private sector employers in the province were not invited either. Maybe it was a bit bold of me, Madam Speaker, to be going over there, but I went anyway. We certainly weren't welcome. I know I wasn't welcome because I know there were some people from our office who contacted to see if we could join in the meeting and have a listen to see what was going on, but we were told that there wasn't enough lunch.

Then, when I got there, they were very surprised and I know there were a lot of eyes batting around the room. I was told I could stay for the first couple of speeches and that was fine. One of the very first speakers got up and said that they were pleased with the number of people who showed up that day because we were a little worried that we weren't going to get a full house. So obviously that conflicts with the fear that there might not have been enough lunch for me. I found that kind of humorous.

I know that before I left I was told that this place is no place for politics. That kind of amused me, too, Madam Speaker, because really there's politics in everything and there's certainly politics in this, I believe. Nobody was calling for this legislation, there is no evidence that it was being called for; so it's obviously politics that is bringing it to the floor of this Legislature.

If we look at the people who are on the committee, well we'd have to say that that's likely politics, too, because we know that organized labour is a significant supporter of the NDP. There's no big secret there and I'm sure that nobody in this Legislature would dispute that. In fact, as I recall, they had some donations that went over and above the allowable limit in the last general provincial election. Somebody used the term in here the other night about it being payback.

To say that me being over at the meeting, that it was really no place for politics and that I shouldn't be there - to me, Madam Speaker, well it is laughable. I was polite and I bit my tongue, as I often do (Interruption) I'm being counselled that that's not a good habit. I did refrain from making any comment but I was thinking in my mind that there's an awful lot of politics in what is going on here. I know that when I'm standing up here today, somebody will say that's politics, but I know why I'm standing here and that's for the people in the small business community, because politics aside, those are the people who drive our economy. Those are the people we should be listening to in this Legislature and those are the people we should be supporting because if it wasn't for them, if we just relied on the jobs - we often talk, we have arguments here every day in Question Period about how many jobs the government is creating (Interruptions) and somebody said, none. I hear the number 3,000 jobs but I often think about the net impact, so if you lost 6,300 and there's a gain of 3,000, well that's a net loss of over 3,000.

In any case, in my mind government doesn't really create jobs but what government can do is create the environment so that people, like in our small business community, can create jobs. I often think of how valuable it is to have small businesses that might be able to create that one incremental job, because if we created the climate where they could do that, we wouldn't have worries like we have about NewPage right now. We may still have them, but at least we're building a more diversified economy. Pieces of legislation like this - I think if people in the small business community are upset about it because they're afraid it might be a job-killing piece of legislation, I think we should be listening to them.

If we want to be on the side of creating jobs in this province - and I think we all want to - I'm looking forward to us all keeping an open mind. I'm looking forward to members listening to the Law Amendments Committee once it gets underway, and although I don't sit on that committee I sometimes have the chance to sit over there to spell off one of my colleagues. I know I'm going to be looking forward to hearing from people across the province, and I hope there are some coming up from Inverness County or the Strait area.

I'll obviously want to speak with them, but I want to know what they think. I hope that by us speaking here today on this hoist motion, it's giving people more time to get organized. These people, the people who are going to be affected by this legislation, may be busy managing people to make sure the work is getting done for the day. They may be busy making sales so that there's work to be done. They may be busy filing their HST

rebate. They might be busy doing payroll, remitting their payroll taxes. They may be busy looking at buying a new business to augment the one they have, to expand it. They may be looking at hiring new people because their business is experiencing some success.

Some of them may be looking to get out of their business; they may be looking at succession planning. They might be trying to determine - I'll speak about that more in a moment, but my point is, they're very busy people. Most times they don't have assistance so that they can say, here, look after this for me. Sometimes they have to do a lot of extra work to earn a decent living themselves, but they do it because they love it, because they're entrepreneurs, and I have no doubt that they're probably hopeful that a day is going to come when they're going to earn a nice earnings - maybe it's a good year, a good successful year where they might earn a few extra thousand dollars. They also have to look after their own pension plan. In most cases, they don't have a pension plan.

So these people are busy. I think it's another good reason why we're slowing this bill down, because we're giving more time to get the word out, more time for them to have a look at the legislation, to speak with the other people in the business community so they can have a look. I think of anybody who's looking at a succession plan, if they're going to look at selling their business, they're probably looking at this legislation and saying, I know how my business has operated to date, but what would the impact be? With the passing of this legislation, there will now be a risk to my business. What will be the impact when I go to sell my business if the new owner is going to look at it and say, well, ever since Bill No. 102 was introduced there's always the risk my labour costs might go up by 30 per cent, 20 per cent, 40 per cent - whatever the number happens to be?

If that fear persists, the buyer of that business will be able to negotiate a lower price. We all know that Nova Scotia business owners, most of them, really their pension plan is the sale of their business - whatever they get for the sale of their business is going to determine how much income they get every year. If they're able to get half a million dollars for their business, well they might be able to get \$30,000 to \$35,000 a year in relatively safe, you may call it pension income, retirement income; if they get a million dollars they might get double that.

If this piece of legislation starts to impact businesses, it's going to have a very real impact for people who may have worked 25 years growing their business, maybe from nothing, going through all the ups and downs, having the emotional experience of detaching themselves from their business, because you have to realize that a lot of these people work maybe 60-, 70-, 80-hour weeks, sometimes more, and it's very much a part of their lives and they're letting go of that and there's a lot of emotion attached to that.

But for those people, how frustrating it must be if now, after all of that work, at a point in their lives when they are looking to relax and enjoy the fruits of their labour they go to sell their business, and because of Bill No. 102 their business might be worth a fraction - suppose it's worth 80 per cent of what it was, that's significant. We don't know



that and maybe it's unfair to speculate, but I suppose that's what we have to do because we do know this legislation has certainly the potential to impact the workplace. But we don't know really what's going to happen, so I think at this point it is fair to speculate.

This bill, really, puts employees in a position where they're going to take an adversarial stand against their employer. They're going to be given the chance to ask for terms of employment which may not be practical or possible in that the very job they have may be lost if the added costs drive their employer out of business. This will all be done without the risk of having to strike and picket a workplace and lose a paycheque.

Madam Speaker, I think this bill and the reason why we've called for the hoist, and we've called for a further review of it to give people more time to digest what it's really calling for, I believe this bill is going to facilitate the creation of more unionized employment in Nova Scotia. And I've said it before, I would never begrudge somebody from wanting to earn a bigger paycheque, but there are some businesses where that's simply not possible. We can say, too bad, and we can say that for a little while, but I think - and I spoke on it the other night - what about call centres?

Well, it's not going to take them long to make a decision. We can say too bad, you're going to have to pay the higher wages, and they might last a few weeks, maybe a couple of months, and guess what? Call centres are gone. A very wage-sensitive business, nobody can dispute that. I know the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has been helpful to me in the past with the call centre in the Strait area, in Port Hawkesbury, and I know that he knows the wage-sensitivity nature of those jobs.

We can look at the restaurant industry or the retail sector, Nova Scotian consumers are going to make decisions. If you're going to buy clothing at a clothing store or a meal at a restaurant where the wages are higher then, yes, we certainly don't mind people earning more money, but people are going to make decisions, and they may decide not to eat out as much and so on. Every action out of this Legislature is going to have an impact.

We look at small manufacturers, another industry that is very sensitive to wages. When you're competing against companies that are making the very same goods in parts of the world where there are lower standards of living, Madam Speaker, we may be closer to the marketplace if it's being sold in North America; maybe we have quality advantages, whatever the advantages happen to be.

If we're going to expect our Nova Scotia manufactures to be operating in an environment where they're going to have to face higher wages, it's going to make them less competitive and they shave down their profits margins to the point where they can't make any money anymore, they're going to come to the point where they decide to close up shop. Should that happen then we will know, it will be confirmed beyond the speculation here today that Bill No. 102 is a job killer. What have we won then?

We talked about the redistribution of wealth, I don't think that this bill, if it's trying to extract it out of the hands of hard working small business owners in Nova Scotia, to put it in the hands of their employees - I don't think this is going to achieve the goal of wealth redistribution. I think what you're going to see is where its impact is felt, you're going to see maybe a short-term gain in wages, then you're going to see a long-term loss in jobs and you're going to see that activity that had been in the province move to other areas, move out of province, maybe out of country.

I've mentioned already today, Madam Speaker, it is so hard to bring back a business once it leaves. Once a decision has been made to pull out and move somewhere else where there is enthusiasm for that new location, it's very hard to bring back a business. If a business simply just disappears, it doesn't take long for the people that were involved in that business, in most cases because they have to find a new paycheque, to leave, move on for other opportunities. Once we lose jobs it's very hard to get them back.

I'm hoping that the members on all sides, once again, are going to speak with people in their constituencies because I know that we all want, despite what's been happening here with the Labour Management Review Committee stacked with organized labour, I know we all at the end of the day, putting it aside - we all want to see Nova Scotians have a job to go to. We want to do everything in our power, from all sides of the legislature, to make sure we're creating the environment so that happens.

I want to mention something else, and I mentioned it the other evening as well, Madam Speaker. If people want a better paycheque in the province, we all have the power to go out and become an entrepreneur and it's something we need more of in the province. It would be an amazing thing for everybody to go out and live the life of an entrepreneur, even for a month, and understand what it means to take a risk. So many of our Nova Scotians never experience that, and I'm sure a lot of them are happy they don't have to experience that, and I don't blame them, but what insight people would get if they lived the life of an entrepreneur for a month.

Yes, you get to create your own paycheque. I was on either the Department of Education or the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Web site the other day, and I was looking at - it was a great site focusing on encouraging young people to start a business. It has some questions and answers and one of the things I found interesting was a lot of people when they get into business think, I'm going to be able to create my own pay check, I'm going to make all kinds of money. Perhaps, Madam Speaker, when we look at this legislation there's a sense, with some people in the legislature, that people in business do make all kinds of money, they are selfish and we need to take more from them to give to somebody else. When I was looking at the site, it's so true - they were trying to communicate to young people that it take a lot of hard work to run a business and you may not get to pay yourself everything you'd like to pay yourself.

I would invite - I don't know if they'll be listening to this, and I do invite them in good spirits - the leaders of organized labour in the province. I know they have a role to fulfill, Madam Speaker, and I also know about the history of the labour movement. I know the history of the co-operative movement and the goal to try to put some power back into the hands of the people. I know about the importance of ensuring that there's fairness, so that people are earning a decent percent of whatever product or good or service is being put out there. I believe in all that too, but I also have seen the other side where people take risks.

It's easy to paint business - the people I talked about at the start of my speech here today - as those investment bankers down on Wall Street, but the fact is, there are a lot of business owners in this province who are the furthest thing from those people. They are not much different from your average Nova Scotian worker. They work hard, some of them work a lot of long hours, and sometimes they don't get paid what they are worth, so there are certainly parallels there.

In good spirit, I do ask the leaders of the labour organizations in Nova Scotia to consider what small business owners in this province - who will be affected by this legislation, because these leaders are sitting on the Labour Management Review Committee, and I know they have goals and objectives and I know the government is certainly supportive of it. That's why they're sitting on the committee, and sitting on the committee with a majority. In good spirit, I would ask them to think about what they are really doing. Are they really getting at - if I may call them "the evil bankers on Wall Street" - or are they hurting somebody else here, close to home - our people, our constituents?

If there's a chance, Madam Speaker - I think real leaders have to look at things from all sides, and if these people want to be real leaders, the next time there is an opportunity for organized labour to take over a company, why not take it over and why not form a profit-sharing arrangement with the employees? Then you are showing real leadership, where you are maybe taking the company out of the hands of some - maybe it's a large, private employer - and you are really having to deal with the same things that they have been having to deal with, and the same pressures. Then all the talk goes out the window, then the rubber hits the road, then the numbers don't lie and then there's an opportunity to turn that business around.

Maybe the workers have to take a lower wage for a while, but maybe they make it back up because if the company is profitable they can pay tax-efficient dividends, and maybe the employees will make even more money than they did under the previous employer. If that employer was taking too much - and if that's what this bill is about, about better redistributing the wealth from the employer to the workers - then you would have shown true leadership. You would have taken that company and you would have done it for the workers, not by putting legislation like this in place that penalizes people in Nova Scotia who are not the evil bankers on Wall Street - just a regular Nova Scotian small business owner.

If you want to carry the big stick, why not walk the walk, as they say. I would love to see it and I say that in good spirit, because there's always opportunity. If you really want to make a difference, instead of coming at it from a piece of legislation like this and saying, well, we're not going to do the work, we're just going to scrape our little piece out of whoever is doing the work, that's not leadership.

I think we've all received that e-mail at one time or another about the ant and the centipede or something - it doesn't really matter - but it was talking about how one worked hard all year to collect the provisions for the winter and the other did nothing towards that but wanted a fair share of it when the winter came.

I guess, Madam Speaker, the point I'm making is that leadership is not what we see in this bill. If you want to better redistribute wealth in the province, and if organized labour wants to do that, why not show real leadership and use your knowledge. If you need to gain investment from another party, if you put forward a good business plan, the same as a Nova Scotian business owner would do, you will get investment support. If you need some kind of expertise that you don't have, you can hire. The point being, this bill is not leadership. Leadership would be actually doing something about redistributing wealth. So I encourage organized labour in the province to think about that.

So with those remarks, I'm going to start to wind down. I have to have another drink of water, I'm getting a bit parched, but I say that in good spirit because, you know, we'll come and go from here. I think the average life of a politician is seven years. I'm sure we'll still be dealing with these matters 20 or 50 years from now but what's important is right now. That's why we've called this hoist today because we want people to look at this and realize that this is not the answer. This is not the direction we need to be going in today or 50 years from now. Let's take our own future, put it in our own hands and if we want to redistribute wealth, let's do it in a way that's honourable and that's fair to everybody and that's not going to be harmful to Nova Scotia business.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I'm certainly glad to be able to take my time here tonight to add to the discussion about the motion that's before the House, this hoist motion where we would put this bill off for six months to allow time for consideration of what's going on.

I want to start off my remarks by saying that I was glad to hear my colleague, the member for Cape Breton South, say that he and his Party were in agreement, that this is not a good bill for the Province of Nova Scotia and, indeed, that they supported the hoist and that they did not think that this bill was going to serve any purpose for the Province of Nova Scotia. I think they're right on that and we agree on that.

I also wanted to say that, one of the reasons that I think it's so important to put this bill off for six months, Madam Speaker, is indeed to allow small business the opportunity to get prepared to come and talk about what it is they don't like. Now, the member for Cape Breton South said, you know, it doesn't matter because there's a majority government and we need to get to the Law Amendments Committee, and we do need to get to the Law Amendments Committee, we need to get there and we do need time but there's something that we have to consider. A lot of the small business owners here in the Province of Nova Scotia, they're the ones who open the door in the morning and lock the door at night. They're the ones who put in 10, 14, 16 hours a day and they need time to make arrangements so that they can come here to Halifax, to make their presentations to the Law Amendments Committee.

Now, it would be really good, Madam Speaker, if indeed, we, as a House, could go around the different communities, similar to what they're doing with the Boundaries Commission for the Elections Act. We should be going out and we should be in Yarmouth where the small business person is and listening to what the small business person there has to say. We should be in the Valley and listening to them. We should also be on the South Shore, in Amherst, and all parts of this province, in Cape Breton, because it is an added burden that we are putting on the small businesses of this province, telling them that they have to travel to Halifax in order to plead their case, in order for them to tell us what their fears are.

Now, normally, Madam Speaker, they could go to their representative, their MLA, and tell them we do not like this for this, this and this reason but, unfortunately, as pointed out by the member for Cape Breton South, the government has a majority and it doesn't appear, from where we sit on this side of the House, that the people who are not members of Cabinet are hearing or listening to the small businesses in their community and that is truly sad.

In order for this bill to get a real hearing, in order for the business people in this province who have made this province what it is today, to give them the opportunity to come forward and state their case, make it known to those who are in this House making the legislation, they should have as much time as possible to do that. I guess one would have to ask, if this legislation as presented to us by the government is so great, it's such a good thing today, well then we have to ask the question, would it not be a good thing in six months' time, after people have had an opportunity to be heard, to be listened to, instead of ramming it through because as the Deputy Premier said, we've got a majority government, so it's inevitable, we know what's going to happen? The reality is if we were sincere, these 52 members of this House, we would take the time; we would travel around this province, we would hear people and not put an extra burden on them.

Some small business people cannot leave their business to tell us what their problem is. Of course, they're worried about what the ramifications may be if they speak out too loudly. I look at my own community and I just think of the changes I have seen in

the time that I've been there. You start in an area like Marion Bridge and you drive to St. Peter's and you go through a community like Gabarus that at one time had two small stores, two small businesses. Then you come up to Gabarus Lake, there was another small business there, a small store and another guy had a gas pump and that was a small business and he used to make some money on that. Then you go to Forchu and in Forchu they had two stores and a gas pump. They were all small businesses; they were the reason why our communities were unique; they were the reason why people were able to stay in our communities.

You go on from Forchu to Framboise and there was another store and it was a booming business. It employed five or six people because there were a couple of pulp contractors there and they were buying all their food and supplies from that one store. Now, with what's going on with NewPage, those kinds of things don't happen as easily. Then you drive on to a place called Grand River, and again, a place that had two stores, two sets of gas pumps and people were working in small business.

Some will say, there are a lot of challenges out there in a small business and there are. You have to be careful of the type of legislation you put in place or those small businesses, the very fabric that has made our communities so strong and made our province what it is today, will disappear. Once those small businesses disappear, they're not coming back. It's like trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube, it's impossible to do.

What we need to do is be sure that the people here who were elected by the people of the Province of Nova Scotia - and they weren't elected by big business and they weren't elected by big unions. They were elected by residents who said, we want you to go and we want you to take our views to Halifax and make sure that we have a good, strong province. That's not what this legislation is going to do. As a matter of fact, we're told by people who are in small business that this probably could destroy some of the very fabric that we're talking about.

I don't want to be called an alarmist and I don't want people to say, that's not so, it simply isn't true. What I want is to be sure that people get a fair hearing, that the people who said you, you go up there and represent me, that they are heard and they get a sound hearing by a group of people in this building.

I think the intentions of everyone in this building, all 52 members, are honourable. Sometimes some people in this building, in our Parties, don't stand up and speak for the ones who brought them. We have a saying around home: you dance with the one that brung ya. The one that brought us to this House was the electors; it was the people in our constituency.

When I was home last weekend I was at many different community events, and person after person said to me, what's this bill about, why do we need that? I don't understand it, what's it all about? You try to explain it, and they say, that doesn't sound like

we need that, why are we doing that? I can tell you that if I were to take a poll in Cape Breton West, the majority of small businesses there would say this is not necessary. We have a business, we have our employees, they're loyal to us, they're good workers.

One of the reasons that we are so successful as a province, one of the reasons that Irving was able to bring in this giant contract for shipbuilding, was the quality of the workforce that's known right across this nation. People know the quality of work that is delivered by Nova Scotians. When you go out to Alberta to the tar sands, out in that area, when they hear you're from Nova Scotia, you'll get a job right away because they know you have a strong work ethic. There's probably nobody in this House who doesn't have anybody there working in that oil patch.

The unfortunate part is that since this government took power there are more of them working out there than there are at home. If we pass this type of legislation, we have an opportunity to see even more go away. That's not what we want. When people have to go away to work, there's a cost. There is a true cost, and that cost is not just about the economy. It's the cost on the families of the Province of Nova Scotia. It's the cost on the children of our province.

When you have a unit where the wage earner has to be away for two and three weeks or months at a time, there is an effect on the children and there is an effect on the family. I don't think that's what anybody in this House wants. I don't think anybody here wants to see that kind of thing deteriorate the quality of life that we have here in the Province of Nova Scotia.

I think like many here, we've all had opportunities to go away and we made our choice. We decided we wanted to stay in Nova Scotia and be part of a Nova Scotia that we're so proud of. Now we're looking at a piece of legislation that could change that, could make things different and make it harder. That's really not what we need.

The whole idea of having an extra six months to look at this piece of legislation, to allow more people to have their input, to make sure that everybody who wants to have their say can have their say, is not a strange request. As I said earlier, and I'll say it again, if this legislation is so great and grand now, then it will probably be no different six months down the road. The difference will be that people will have had an opportunity to express their interest, their concerns, the reasons why they don't like it or maybe, just maybe, the reasons why they do like it. If we as a House, as the people that represent them, don't give them that opportunity, then are we not failing them? My answer to that would be, yes, we are. We're failing them.

I know there are people lining up right now to come to the Committee on Law Amendments and there will be more that will come, but there will be many who can't. We've sent people around this province to hear the concerns that they have when it comes to boundaries in the elections.

Why do we do that, Madam Speaker? Well, I think we did it because we all believe that it's important to see the full picture, to hear what everybody has to say. So there are nine members of our House travelling around this province, listening to what people have to say, hearing what they have to say, and they're going to come back and make an opinion as to what they heard and how is the best way to move forward in putting together the guidelines for the commission.

Well, if that is what we need to do, when we have to listen to people who are looking at how and where, and how many people they were going to vote for, would it not make sense, would it not be a real stretch or leap to believe, that indeed, why the business shouldn't be heard? Now, I'm a pretty simple guy and, you know, I got a couple snickers from the other side already and I don't really care. Do you know why? I'll tell you why I don't care because I'm who I am and it doesn't matter what they think of me. (Applause)

What matters is that collectively we do the right thing and the right thing is to listen to the population and the businesses of this province so that we can, in 10 years or 20 years, or when my grandchildren or your grandchildren get older, they'll have a province to call home. They'll have a place where they can find work and they'll have a reason to stand proud and say I'm from Nova Scotia but now, Madam Speaker, all I would like to see is the opportunity for everyone to have their say. They can prove the government is right or the Opposition is right but isn't that what we're supposed to be all about? Isn't that what the goal is supposed to be, is to make sure that we're doing what is right?

I don't think anybody elects people to tell them what's good for them. I think that we elect people to make sure they do the right thing. We are here to listen and bring those concerns forward and we've been trying to do that time and time again. Yet we hear from the other side, that's simply not true. Well, Madam Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. We see some of the highest power rates in the country. Some businesses, because of those power rates, are saying we may not be able to survive.

You know, Madam Speaker, you'll say, well, what does that have to do with the bill? Well, the very fact that something as simple as power rates, can determine whether a business can survive, will tell you how fragile it is to operate a business, how hard it is, and that there are so many things that you have to have your finger on in order to make sure that the doors are open and that people have work to come to. So if their power rates are going up and then they don't know if they have any say in first contract arbitration about what their wages are going to be, that's an unknown, how are they supposed to be able to survive?

I mean nobody gets into business to lose money and I can tell you that this province can't survive without people and businesses. Yes, it's important that everybody is getting a fair shake, and everybody is trying to make sure that people get a good wage and a fair wage but, Madam Speaker, as my colleague, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, said in the early days of this debate, if there are no employers, there are no employees and for that



reason we have to really consider where we're at. I just wonder sometimes if the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour has talked to the people in his constituency and asked them, what do you think about this? Because there's a very rural part of this province, businesses in those areas are struggling to survive and we need to know what they're saying. Or people who represent the Eastern Shore, have they talked to the people that they represent and to the small businesses? And as I look across at the government side of the benches, there are people over there who actually were small businessmen, people who ran businesses, people who should understand how important it is to be in touch with reality.

I would say to you, Madam Speaker, that there is not an employer in this province that won't tell you that one of the reasons that they're successful in their business is because of the quality of the employees they have. Each and every one of those businesspeople do the very best that they can with what they have, to make sure that the persons who are working for them are treated fairly and get paid as fairly as they can possibly do it, so that the business can make sure it survives and at the same time the doors stay open. It's no good to be able to say, when I worked I made \$15 an hour, but I don't work anymore. It's more important to say, I work 12 months of the year and I make \$12 but I know every week I'm going to have a paycheque. If we're going to put small business into jeopardy, let's be sure we're doing it for the right reasons. I'm not convinced that we are.

We start on this whole bill and we talk about where this bill is and what it's all about. Why would we name a bill an Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour Disruptions and Protect the Economy? Why would we name it that? We've heard from many people, from many areas, that over the last number of years there's only three times we had to see any contract arbitration. To me that would mean that things seem to be working. So if things are working, again, I guess it might be a Cape Breton saying, but if it ain't broke don't fix it - and this isn't broke, it's working. We have some really good relationships between unions and businesses, and it's working. They sit down and they discuss where they are and how they can get to the next point.

Today we see in NewPage, for example, a business that looks like it's really not going to survive, but there are discussions going on. Guess what's happening? The union that represents the people who are working at NewPage are here in this city sitting down and talking to the potential buyers and trying to work their way through to make it work. They don't need first contract arbitration. They are sitting down and talking. What's wrong with that picture? From where I sit, there's nothing wrong with that. That's how it survives. That's how this whole thing works, is to make sure that things are in place.

The name sort of distracts me: an Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour Disruptions. Yet when you ask the government to point out all these unnecessary labour disruptions and protect the economy, they have nowhere to point. Protect the economy, well, that's exactly why we're fighting this bill - to protect the economy. Instead of seeing the economy shrink,

instead of seeing the employers shrink, we want it to be a fair playing field. We want it to be a place where people can come and determine whether they can make a business work.

We've seen the direction that this government has taken us. When it comes to looking at the economy and doing what's right for the economy, one of their very first moves was to take away the subsidy from the ferry in Yarmouth. From what I've been told by the people who I know who live in that area, and by listening to the member for Yarmouth, who's very capable at bringing forward the concerns of that area, as well as the member for Argyle, they're telling us that indeed that had an impact on their economy, and not a positive one. But that was something that this government trumped out in the early days, pounding their chests on what a great thing we've done here, we saved the province \$7 million - but it cost 300 jobs. What effect does that have on that region? What effect does that have on those families? I would say to you, Madam Speaker, the effect is great because there is the trickle effect, the same as we talk about the trickle effect with the Irving shipyard. Irving Shipbuilding is going to build all these ships and they're going to need subcontractors and they're going to need subcontractors for the subcontractors and so on. That contract is a great thing for this province.

It's the same thing when you have a ferry - it needs services, too, so it contracts out and gets fuel supplies and other types of supplies that it needs, and they contract out to other people. So there's a trickle effect there, too.

AN HON. MEMBER: With the hotels.

MR. MACLEOD: The hotels in that area have seen an effect on them. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, the hotels in Cape Breton have seen the effect of the Yarmouth ferry being closed down - 40 per cent of the bus tours that used to come to Cape Breton Island came across on that ferry and they're not there anymore. Of course, when you listen to our Minister of Rural and Economic Development and Tourism, he'll tell you, well, it's the world economy. I know we don't have any control over that, but I do know we had control over the Yarmouth ferry and we blew that out of the water.

So what else do we have to do to convince this government that waiting for six months is not such a bad idea? Well, I guess we heard from the honourable member for Cape Breton South earlier, that he wants to hear from the Law Amendments Committee and we do, too, but there was an open letter that was sent to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. It was sent on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. I'm not sure how many members on the government side of the House have had an opportunity to hear this, and I'm not sure if all our members on this side of the House heard it. Madam Speaker, I'm going to let them know what it had to say. I'm going to read it to you and then I'll table it. (Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, am I correct that it is you who controls the debate in this House?

MADAM SPEAKER: The member has the floor. Carry on.

MR. MACLEOD: I'm not going to read the whole letter - I'm going to leave out the address on it, so it won't be the whole letter:

“Minister More:

On behalf of tens of thousands of businesses in Nova Scotia, we write you today to outline our disappointment with your plans to bring First Contract Arbitration to Nova Scotia. We are disappointed this is being done despite the unanimous opposition of businesses - large and small - across the province. We view both the legislation and the process that drove it as ‘anti-business’ and, as such, urge you to reconsider”

Madam Speaker, what I've just read there is basically what I've been talking about for the last little while; it's about giving people a fair chance to be heard. People want to be heard, and they're telling us that in this letter.

It goes on, “As we have repeatedly heard, we have a harmonious labour environment in Nova Scotia and are fortunate to experience one of the fewest numbers of lost days, due to labour disputes in Canada.”

Again, a good thing, here in Canada. Then it goes on to say many other things and then it goes on to say, “As we have shared in the past, there are tools already at government's disposal to deal with the rare circumstance where first contracts cannot be settled.”

Well you know, Madam Speaker, again, that's what we on this side of the House have been saying to this House, there are tools already in place; there are measures already in place; there are things already here and nobody on that side of the House has been able to prove to us, as a community, that this is good for everybody.

It's amazing how we don't know, we listen and get letters from the people who are actually in business and driving the economy of Nova Scotia, who when they write a cheque they know what's going to happen to their cheque and what effect it's going to have, very dissimilar to what sometimes takes place across the floor. These are the people who the government says they are trying to help, and these are the people who are saying, no thanks we don't need your help; we don't need it because we've got something that is already working.

What else does this letter say?

“We have shared these views in every aspect of the process: in our correspondence with the department, during the study day, in our efforts to reach out to employer representatives on the Labour Management Review Committee (LRMC) and to the LMRC

itself - to which we presented.” Now that’s interesting, they presented to the Labour Management Review Committee and I have a letter from the Labour Management Review Committee and I would like to read from that.

It says (Interruptions) You know what? I had the question from across the way, are you going to read it all? Well, it’s only two paragraphs and surely they can keep their attention span that long to listen to two paragraphs. But I’ll just read one, Madam Speaker, because I don’t want to take advantage of your great nature.

“After some very engaging and productive discussion, the Labour Management Review Committee has been unable.” - I’ll repeat that – “unable to reach a consensus on whether the first contract arbitration should be available under the *Nova Scotia Trade Union Act*.”

Now isn’t that interesting. So in one letter we have the business community telling us we don’t need this and we made representations to the people who are supposed to be listening to us. So they said already they didn’t have to have it, they don’t need it. Then from the government’s own committee they have a letter that says we can’t figure out if we really need this or not.

But it appears that side of the House has made their decision. You’ve heard from your own committee, you’ve heard from the business community, but yet you sit there and you say you have to have this; this is what’s good for you. Madam Speaker, it doesn’t appear to be the case - and those are not my words, those are the words of the business community and the committee. I will table that letter, that’s the letter from the review committee, but there are still some more interesting things taking place in the letter from the business community.

“We will acknowledge” - the business community says - “that most Canadians live in jurisdictions where the FCA exists. This seems to be the sole and consistent argument put forth in favour of FCA. On this point we would like to clarify that while 85 per cent of Canadians live in jurisdictions that have some form of FCA, only *four per cent* have the model of FCA that is being proposed for Nova Scotia.” And that would be the Manitoba model.

Here we are - we are talking about a piece of legislation that we’re being told is supposed to be good for the Province of Nova Scotia; good for the workers in Nova Scotia; and good for the businesses in Nova Scotia. Yet we have a letter from the businesses that says no, this is not good for us; we have a letter from the government’s own committee that says no, we can’t make our mind up if this is what we really need in the Province of Nova Scotia in the Trade Union Act; and then we find out that although the argument that the government has been using about 85 per cent of the provinces in the country are using this method, only 4 per cent have the same model that’s being proposed for us here in Nova

Scotia - in a province that is governed by the same Party as governing Nova Scotia. That's interesting.

All of these businesses, I don't think, can be wrong. I'm going to read to you the names of the people who signed this list and you're going to see that there are some very successful companies there - they must know what they're doing, they must know how indeed to run a business, to keep their employees happy and to make sure that what's taking place in their workplace is productive. Because, as I said earlier and I'll say again, nobody goes into business to lose money - they can't afford to, they can't survive, and they can't keep their doors open.

I know there are some small-business men on that side of the House, and I certainly know there are some on this side of the House who have had businesses in the past and they've been successful because they kept their employees happy.

I just want to give you a hint as to who all these people are. Here's how they close their letter: "For all of those reasons, we urge you to reconsider "An Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour Disruptions and Protect the Economy" and ask that the government instead focus on measures we can work on together to improve labour relations in Nova Scotia while growing the economy. We do not believe FCA will achieve either."

It's signed by the Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, Canadian Taxpayers Association, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia, Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Association, the Nova Scotia Chambers of Commerce, the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association, the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association, the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, the Retail Council of Canada - Atlantic Office, the Sackville Business Association, the Scotia Group of Companies, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, and the Truro and District Chamber of Commerce.

That's quite an impressive list. I would guess that, between them, they employ a significant number of people, a lot of Nova Scotians; a lot of Nova Scotians who rely on small business to survive. A lot of small communities and small municipalities and villages and it's the small business that enables them to do things like have parks and do fundraisers. When you go to small business - and I've had the opportunity to do a number of auctions for people who are trying to get a treatment for MS, and every time you go to one of those auctions, small business after small business after small business donates - they take out of their profit margin and give back to the communities so they can help the people that they support.

We've seen in Sydney, and I'm sure in other areas, when there are campaigns to raise funds for cancer units, who's leading the parade to make that happen? The small-

business people in the communities of this province. So when we ask that they have an opportunity to be heard, when we ask that the time is taken to make sure that everyone is heard, I don't think that's an unfair request. I think that's one of the strongest reasons, and one of the things that the member for Cape Breton South and I may differ on is that we need time to make sure everybody is heard.

Unfortunately, not everybody can travel to Halifax. If you're a small-business owner in Yarmouth or Amherst or Glace Bay and you're the key person, you're probably the one who opens the door in the morning, as I said earlier, you're probably the one that makes the dash to the bank to do the deposit, you're the one that does the ordering, and you're the one that makes sure the doors are locked at night. In order for you to make sure that you're able to come and make a presentation, you need time so you can plan those other activities for other people to do for you and that's what this will allow to happen. It will allow the opportunity for people to come here and make a presentation.

Now some are saying that this is a useless cause for us to stand here and talk because there is a majority government. Well you know what, Madam Speaker? When I was home on the weekend, as I said earlier, I had people say, make sure you don't vote for that bill, that bill is not good for me, it's not good for my business.

What about the small business? You have people working in it who have never done anything else in their lives. They have worked in this small business, whether it be a small construction business or a logging company, and their skill sets are the highest quality in that area. If that small business closes, how easy is it for them to find a new place to work?

We have to be sure, Madam Speaker, that we are giving every Nova Scotian an opportunity. That's our obligation, that's part of what we are here to do as MLAs, to give people as much of an opportunity as possible.

You know when I think about how we don't hear from the government back bench about what is going on in their communities, it reminds me of a time when I was a shepherd. One time, Madam Speaker, I looked after 1,500 sheep and the one thing that I could tell you is this - if you had one sheep that found its way through the fence, the rest of them would follow. It appears that we have a bunch of sheep on the other side and someone has led them to the trough and said, this is good for you and the others just followed to the trough and they are going there like a herd of sheep, going away from what the constituents have asked them to do and put them in a place where they are doing what they are told to do. That's not what this House is supposed to be about, Madam Speaker.

Now we've seen jobs declining in this province and do you know what? That might happen regardless of who is in government. It is how that government reacts that makes the difference. If you keep burying your head in the sand and saying there is not a problem then, indeed, there is an issue.

We've seen things about job decline. We've had questions in this House, yesterday and today, about the job numbers in this province and how they've declined and there are not as many jobs - using the numbers that were supplied from the Department of Finance who, I understand, gets their numbers from Stats Canada. Yet when they are asked questions in the House, the government says well that's simply not so. Well tell that to the guy in Yarmouth who is not working on the ferry anymore. Tell that to the guy or gal at NewPage who is not able to have a job in the paper mills anymore. Tell that to the person who works in the hotels and there are no jobs. If it's not so, why is it that there are so many people unemployed?

NewPage, Madam Speaker, is fighting for its survival. We've seen, in this House, people who worked at NewPage who are up in the gallery, pensioners who are concerned about what was going to happen to them because they worked for years for these companies, in good faith, delivering what was promised. Now, through no fault of their own, their jobs are in jeopardy. We need, in this province, a made-in-Nova Scotia energy solution, so we can help address some of these problems that these companies are facing. All I hear sometimes from our Minister of Energy - who by the way I respect, but he says, well you know, coal is dirty, we shouldn't be using coal and do you know what there are chances, there are problems, there's new technology coming out all the time, but we need to go to green energy and our Party is in favour of going to green energy. His own department will tell you that this province will be reliant on coal for the next 10 to 20 years, regardless of how much green energy we put in place. They will tell you that, his department tells you that, it's not me, his department. Nova Scotia Power will tell you that.

We have resources in this province, like coal in the mine in Donkin, that if we develop that, we'd be putting Nova Scotians to work, supplying coal for Nova Scotians, paying taxes in Nova Scotia and helping to stabilize power rates because you would be dealing in the same denomination of dollars. Instead, they opt to bring in the coal from the offshore. The government says, well, that's not our decision. I believe if they look, that there are some things they can do. If you are using a resource from Nova Scotia and if you are putting that to the benefit of all Nova Scotians, wouldn't that make sense to you? Because it certainly makes sense to me. What would it do for a small community like Donkin? One of the things it would do is it would help support a lot of these small businesses we're talking about. It would also help to keep people from travelling out West to find work, which means it would help the family units and it would help the children of our communities.

Now, that's only one example of how we could do something proactive, put Nova Scotians to work, ask them to pay taxes and at the same time, secure a constant Nova Scotia supply for Nova Scotia Power. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, some of those people who live in this province who say, we need all green energy - and I have no problem with green energy, I want to make that very clear, I have no problem with green energy - but the minister's numbers say that you're going to be relying on coal for some time to come, so we should be using Nova Scotia coal, we should be putting Nova Scotians to work and we

should be doing it in a way that we're all proud and taking and helping to solve a problem that is, indeed, major in this province. (Applause) We have seen two major employers tell us that one of the reasons that the jobs that they provide are in jeopardy is because of power rates. Here is something that we could do as a province to help make sure that that comes back.

Madam Speaker, you're giving me that look as if I'm roaming a little bit, but it's not about roaming, it's about trying to be practical and helping to share ideas because that's what we should be doing in this House, we should be sharing ideas of how we can make this province better for everybody to live in, regardless of what Party we sit in. It's about making sure, that indeed we are proud Nova Scotians, first and foremost and that's why I talk about those kinds of things. But let's get back to some other things.

We have three government members from the County of Pictou: Pictou East, Pictou West and Pictou Centre. Two of them sit in Cabinet. In Pictou County we have one of the largest employers there, in Sobeys. They provide a tremendous number of jobs in this province, through their different holdings, not just their grocery stores, but all of the other things they do. Now the question is, have these members, who represent those areas, sat down and talked to anybody from Sobeys? I see the Minister of Energy over there shaking his head yes. Now I guess when I ask him this question he's going to shake his head as well. When you were there, did the Sobeys say, we need first contract arbitration? That would be the question I would like to see. Now I don't see anything shaking - oh no, his boots are shaking - I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't know how to answer that, because other members of Cabinet are looking at him, but I'll tell you what the people of Pictou County will say - we don't need this. We have people here who are providing good jobs for us. Why would you put it in jeopardy?

The member for Pictou East won't even pick his eyes up to look over to see what's going on now, because I'm sure that he met with the view - and I'm sure that the member for Pictou East, who is a progressive socialist in his own words, and who was always talking about "my Louisbourg" - Mr. Speaker, has he sat down to talk with the people there? Not only the people who own the company but the people they work for, the people who work in the company? Have they sat down and talked to you and said, oh, you've got to get this done and you've got to get it done right now because it's going to make a big difference in my life. I'll even have Christmas now because you got this done so quickly?

The reality is this hoist will allow the opportunity for more people to have a chance to have their input. As I said earlier, if the bill is good now, it will be good in six months time. So in my way of thinking, my simple Cape Breton way, if something is that good, we can wait. We can wait and we can see what everybody has to say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is nobody in this House who cares more about his constituents than you do. We know that. We know that all members of this House care about their constituents, but we all have an obligation. It doesn't matter what Party we sit



in. I've seen it before in this House, where members of the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party and the NDP have worked together on things that were good. I can draw from my own experience of being from Cape Breton Island, and when there's something good for Cape Breton Island, the Liberals, the NDP, and the Progressive Conservatives work together. We work to make sure that that's what's good for the area, because that's our first goal. Our first goal is to do what's good for the area, do what's good for the province, and that's why we need to do what's right for this province.

We need to make sure that the people of this House do the right thing. I've said this before, but I'll go back to it again: that's why I'm having trouble understanding why we can't put a commission together and send it around the province, the same thing that we've got going here now with the Electoral Boundaries Committee. They're going around, and the member for Argyle is here. So far he has been in Truro, he has been in Port Hawkesbury, he has been listening to people. There are five members from the government there, there are two members from the Liberal Party, and there are two members from our Party. They've been listening to what people have to say. Why do they go around to the different areas? Well, it's pretty simple. They go around to the different areas because not everyone can come to Halifax, but it's also because they want to make sure that they had a good hearing, that they had the opportunity to listen to enough people.

It's called democracy, where we are the home of democracy. When you look at democracy as we know it in the Commonwealth, this House is the second place after Westminster where it has taken place. That's not something we should take lightly. That's something that we should all be very proud of, and that's something that we should be talking about right now. This bill, after listening to labour, listening to business, listening to the communities around, it's saying, we're not sure why you're doing this. We're not sure why you're putting this in place.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I talked about the Sobeys in Pictou County and what's going on there. But when I look across, there are members there that have some severe employment problems and issues and challenges going on in their communities. Like the member for Queens, there are issues going on there and I know that she's working hard to try to address those issues. I have no question in my mind that she's sincere about doing everything she can to make that better.

There lies my problem. In one case when we see a business in trouble, we know that the members work hard to make it happen. But then we see a piece of legislation that the businesses say shouldn't be put in place, and they gave a bunch of reasons in a letter that I tabled earlier, I wonder, why the difference, why the change? Why is it not working?

We have another big employer in this province and that employer is Michelin. Michelin has three plants in the Province of Nova Scotia and most people already know about them, I don't have to tell them about them. I bet you there's not a person in this room that doesn't have somebody that works at Michelin in some way, shape or form. Those

people have good jobs. The product they produce is known worldwide. They live in our communities, they're people we represent. They are people who have given us our jobs and we're saying, well, you know, I have to ask the question - is this bill about getting to Michelin?

Is this bill about seeing Michelin become unionized? I see the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage shaking his head, no. You know what? I hope he's right. But he's a member of the same government that said we're not going to raise taxes by 2 per cent. He's a member of the government that said, we're going to fix the ERs and they'll be open 24 hours. He is the fellow who said - one of them who said - they would balance the budget in the first year. None of those things have come true.

Now the minister's not over there shaking his head anymore, he's shaking his finger. (Interruptions) Fortunately, it's a good finger. He's trying to point something out. The minister is one of those people who will come to you and he'll speak to you and he'll explain what's going on and again, there's nobody on that side of the House who is in government that we dislike - or at least I dislike. We have a difference of opinions. I'll clarify that - there's nobody in the House tonight (Laughter) But, very sincerely, we're all here trying to do the same job. We may not agree on the path that we take to do that job, but we all are doing it.

The only thing I'm asking here tonight, of all of us, is to make sure we do the right thing for the rest of the people who aren't in this House, and that is to make sure they get a fair hearing. That is to make sure the request we had from that list of businesses is listened to. That is to make sure that what its own committee has said is listened to. When there is that much doubt, would it not be better, would it not be the right thing, to take this bill and leave it for six months so more research can be done, so more evidence can be found - pro or con - so that anyone in the Province of Nova Scotia who wanted to make a representation had the opportunity to make the representation.

So then, one of two things would happen. The government would decide that they're going to go ahead with this legislation because it's been proven to them that it's the right way to go. Or, this legislation would move forward because they've listened to the constituents that they've been asked to represent; they've listened to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia and they've heard that we do not need this at a time when our economy and our job situation are so fragile.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an issue that can be addressed by saying it is simply not so. This is an issue that needs to get a true hearing, a real hearing from all the people in the Province of Nova Scotia, and this government has the opportunity to do the right thing. I would encourage the members on that side of the House who are on the back benches to really talk to the businesses when they go home this weekend, to listen to the people who sent them here, and take that message back to the front benches and say to them what they've heard. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, as I did last session, I'm pleased to rise on what seems to be a very contentious issue before the House, as I did on Bill No. 100. I am pleased to support the hoisted movement, and my colleague from Cape Breton had quite an effort to point out why we're going through this process when we are faced with a majority government.

I'd like to think that it's called political strategy, Mr. Speaker. Back in late summer or early September, a lot of my constituents were asking me, when are you going back into the House? When is the House going to resume so that we can get some things done in this province? I explained to them that the reason we go back in late is because we are either waiting for something good to happen or something bad has taken place.

When we look at the time when the government came in to sit, October 31<sup>st</sup>, it was also mentioned that it is so that government can say they sat for a number of months. The one thing that holds true in political moves is the fact that this is the time of year when most people aren't paying attention to politics. However, it's also a time when government can slip in something as contentious as Bill No. 102, and therefore the reason why I support the hoisted motion by the Progressive Conservative Party is to allow these business owners who obviously, in the last number of weeks since this was announced, are paying attention.

If we don't allow these individuals the time to make their way here to Province House, as I said about Bill No. 100, as I stated around the Fair Drug Pricing Bill, I believe that this is a move that this government will regret and the people of this province and businesses in this province will regret for many years.

I know that back in 2009, in an NDP campaign that focused on coming to power, there was an issue of where do we get the seats, and those seats simply have to come from rural Nova Scotia. It is widely known that the NDP held a number of seats here in the metro region and for years they could not break into the rural seats. Well, to their credit, they made that effort. The orange tide swept over Nova Scotia and they now have a majority government, in large part due to the success of the candidates who ran in rural Nova Scotia.

Now saying that, and hearing some of the numbers and stats that we've heard from this side of the House over the last number of weeks around job losses and lack of job creation, it's troubling. To hear today from the member for Inverness about the out-migration, some of the largest numbers this province has seen in history, is concerning. Right now those residents in rural Nova Scotia would probably, after two years of an NDP government mandate, be sitting back and saying, well, perhaps we should take a sober, second thought. Of course they will when the next election is called.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said by a number of members in their debate that Bill No. 102 is payback to the big unions. Bill No. 100 would have set that trend - probably the only

contentious bill in the previous session, other than the Fair Drug Pricing Bill, when we saw 50-plus pharmacists, independent pharmacies, show up here to the House for the Law Amendments Committee to stress the importance of fair negotiations with the government and the Department of Health and Wellness.

So we know that they're out there paying attention and by hoisting this, yes, we're going through the motions. It's a political move on the Opposition's part, but we have to ask ourselves, why? It is simply to give them time because as my colleague for Cape Breton just made mention, a lot of them are small business owners and it takes time to put things in place, put employees in place to make the travel and the trip to Halifax. That's what, I guess, we're hoping tonight sends out to them, that we're listening.

Recently, as of yesterday, I received an e-mail from A&M Fabrication up in Oxford. I'm sure many of us got that very same e-mail and there are some concerns. The other night there was an event that unfortunately was cancelled. The Canadian Manufacturers had an event at the World Trade and Convention Centre and they wanted to meet their MLAs. I have to admit when I first got the invitation, I didn't respond in a timely fashion, and then another e-mail attempt came by the organization and again, I did not respond. Well the other day when I was in my office in the afternoon, I got a phone call from that organization stressing the importance of having me come to that event. Today, I guess, with Bill No. 102 on the floor, it could lead one to think that they needed to bend our ears on this very issue.

The government simply sits back and says, Bill No. 102 was accepted in 85 per cent of all jurisdictions across Canada, absolutely - so why not here? Well, if you look at some of the stats and figures over the years when it comes to labour negotiations and disputes - what's the reason? We've heard it time and time again, this is my opportunity to recite it, 97 per cent of the bargaining in the province does reach agreement during conciliation and over the last 14 years the Labour Board has only had to step in three times. That's a pretty good track record. I think it's easy to say that it's probably one of the best in Canada, so the question is why? Why, because we have a majority government. Why, because it's obvious the public knows that the NDP have always had a large following with the labour movement. We also know there are labour leaders who sit on the Premier's Council on the Economy.

With Bill No. 100 we saw the creation of the review board that, interestingly enough, as it's been mentioned a number of times, could not come to a general consensus on this very issue. That board is made up of organizations that don't allow a non-union member to sit on it.

Recently the Premier held a dinner, it was a \$175-a-plate dinner and it allowed any Nova Scotian who wanted to partake in that dinner to hear about his vision for the province. I didn't attend, to no surprise, because the vision that I had, that I accepted, was the one that he had laid out for the people of this province in 2009, and we know what

happened then with that vision, with the very campaign that the Premier took around the province about balancing the budget, about not raising taxes and decreasing the deficit, the job creation, addressing rural Nova Scotia out-migration. A lot of things have changed.

To the credit of the Premier, and we've heard many times during Question Period, he has taken the HST off electricity and we commend him for that, but that was two years ago. With the Demand Side Management program we've seen the tax go right back on and many seniors, when they got their bills when that tax went on, immediately started calling the office and saying, where did this come from? Well, we know the environment is important and unfortunately low-income Nova Scotians have to suffer and there's nothing that government can do to fix that, or have done.

When we talk about the economics, we have had some of the worst GDP growth in all of Canada. We've heard from organizations like CFIB - 5,200 members - we've heard recently, over the last week, from 33 chambers of commerce that represent around 7,000 businesses, about their dismay to the timing of this. You know what, perception's tough and you cannot get away from it. You cannot get away with the fact that we don't have any labour issues.

We had a strike last session, I do remember that, it was a four-day strike with the Housing Authority. I couldn't quite figure that one out, but we remedied it, and we have another pending strike with the small local, Local 26, which I raised a question on. But I'm sure that this government and the minister are going to make the efforts to appease those members and give them the credit that they deserve, so I don't see anything longstanding there.

But Mr. Speaker, when you look at the people, the businesses and the organizations that are coming to the members on this side of the House, I know they're also going to the government members, because as I said, many of them live in and represent rural Nova Scotia. They have legitimate concerns with the amount of job losses. When we look at the Bowaters, and the NewPages and the Fundy Gypsums, the folks who are suffering in Yarmouth, Colchester County, Springhill, today we heard from the member for Cumberland South about the manufacturers in the Springhill area that are going to struggle if the unions have this one final piece that they need.

I guess that's the whole premise of this, is this the Premier's vision for the next number of years? If it is, despite the fact that they don't see it - maybe I think they see it, there some very intelligent people on that side of the House, they just don't want to believe it or they drank the Kool-Aid and it hasn't quite turned to the poison yet - because businesses will withdraw. Entrepreneurs will not begin to start a business. We need a competitive business environment and Bill No. 102 definitely doesn't assist it.

When you look at the title of the bill, this has also been mentioned, but it's worth it, at this point in the day, to continue on with it - an Act to Prevent Unnecessary Labour

Disruptions. Have there been any? I think if you look at the track record of this government, and the last two years that they carried out their mandate, a number of unions went to their final hours in negotiations but somehow, even after the Deputy Premier voiced his opinions to the media about this one per cent, we're only going to throw this one per cent out, and he was quickly caught by the Premier and reined in for that comment, we still had some of those large unions get exactly what they wanted in the final hours, so no labour disruption. But here we have the one final cog that the unions need.

In the campaign of 2009 - and I wish I had it here in my hands right now - but I believe there was a briefing note sent out by the NDP. In my riding of Dartmouth North, Mr. Speaker, I have a large industrial park, the largest east of Montreal that I represent, and quite a number of people who are in the business world, who live in my community, expressed to me at the time, about mid-way through that campaign, because they saw that tide switching and they saw that Nova Scotians, for the first time, were going to give the NDP a chance. What came out on the doorsteps, interestingly enough, was the fact that I was being questioned on whether the then Leader of the Opposition, who would become Premier, would he tamper with the Michelin bill. Now we're not tampering, that bill is not on the floor, but this definitely allows the labour movement to have that final piece.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen 6,600 jobs lost in rural Nova Scotia over the last year. That's a hard pill to swallow and what we have is the minister and the Premier announce a new strategy, as they did last session with jobsHere and now we have a Workplace Strategy. Yet the minister stands up and he says he has no exact targets and that targets aren't good to have because they allow governments to have a ceiling on jobs.

It's kind of interesting because I know when a lot of these business owners that are contacting us now go into the credit unions and the banks for loans, they have to have a business plan, Mr. Speaker, and that business plan calls for targets, so to hear the minister say that kind of question whether or not we should be worried about the economics of this province in that minister's hands.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is one of the only provinces that don't index personal income tax brackets. They have the highest sales tax, the highest corporate tax, the second highest Workers' Compensation premiums in Canada, and we've heard many members on this side of the House talk about the high power rates. What do we hear from the Premier and this government? We hear that for the first time in 20 years they've lowered the small business tax and, to their credit, they have. I believe one of the backbenchers said the other day, we've lowered it twice and that's correct but when you own a business and operate a business, there are many components which lead you to success and to profit, and the business tax is just one piece.

You have to be able to make payroll. You have to be able to pay all your overhead, your salaries, your power bills, your suppliers, and if we give the labour movement this one piece, that's being orchestrated through Bill No. 102, we are opening up ourselves to a

movement that I don't think our province can take right now. It's not the time. We are on shaky ground and the numbers state it but here we are in the middle of November and we've gone through two and a half weeks, no one's really paying attention, but they will now. Hopefully, like the member for Cape Breton South had stated earlier, quite poignantly, this is their time now because we're 52, we have the opportunity and this government was given a four-year mandate of uninterrupted business, to do what's right for the people of this province.

To do this now, to bring this bill in now, the timing of it is just - there's something interesting about that, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it's payback and if it is, I wonder if the Premier spoke about that in his speech the other night when he had his dinner and he was talking about the vision that he has for this province. Are we going to rely on the Irving shipbuilding contract, which we really won't start reaping the fruits of that until 2013? Are we going to rely on that, that's the silver bullet that's going to carry this province?

I'm not quite sure, Mr. Speaker, there definitely will be an influx and we appreciate that federal contract but we can't rely on one magic bullet. When you're talking about places like Michelin, 3,500 jobs, boy, wouldn't that be a blow. You lose Bowater, you have Michelin potentially unionized. I remember in 2007, I had an opportunity to go to Paris and I went to Paris with the member for Cape Breton South. We were there for an international composite material expo and there was a gentleman there who has been sought after and recognized internationally, and awarded internationally for his efforts. That gentleman's name was Mr. Maurice Guitton. I know Maurice, you know, he's a great spokesman for Nova Scotia and I remember him saying he loved having those little pins that we wear on our lapels and everywhere he goes, he takes those Nova Scotia pins because he's proud of having the opportunity to build Composites Atlantic up to the point where they are.

Mr. Speaker, he built that company up to over 300 jobs – 300 non-unionized jobs. I remember on that trip, you know, we had some time to talk to Maurice and I asked him, I said, you know, how, and he knew, he knew at that time I was a New Democrat, and he knew and he figured that he didn't know much about my background but he figured I was in support of big labour. He still wanted to have a conversation with me to kind of gauge where I'm coming from, what my politics really are, beyond the Party lines.

I remember asking Maurice at that time, have the unions gone in to Composites Atlantic? Have they tried to unionize those 300-plus members? I remember Maurice saying quite simply, oh they've tried, they've tried three or four times and his employees there at Composites Atlantic in Lunenburg simply said you know what, we're okay. We have fair wages. We have a great drug plan and we have somebody who treats us like family. Quite simply put, they didn't need a big union come in to represent them. What did we see this past Fall? There were 37 jobs lost in rural Nova Scotia. Maurice just recently received a big award again, an acknowledgement, even though he'd retired, but I'll never forget what he said there.

I come from a family where my father was in the International Steelworkers Union, so I have that background, but to hear a business owner stress the importance of treating their employees fairly, but also being able to grow his business without the threat of the big unions coming in, that was something that stuck with me and that was back in 2007. Here we are several years later under an NDP watch, when in 2009 there was a clear message that the now-Premier would not tamper with the Michelin bill. Again, this is not the Michelin bill we're talking about, but this is the one piece that's missing.

I had a thought today, and I know I mentioned it to one of the members on the other side - there was discussion today around the members for Pictou County, obviously represented by three NDP members. I asked the question of one of those members around the former TrentonWorks. I know TrentonWorks was unionized at one point and I know we funnelled in several millions of dollars with a foreign company to go in there and build wind turbines. So some of those folks are back to work and that's a good thing for that particular area. But I asked them, do they go back in and have union certification automatically? He couldn't answer that, but I came to think, what if all those workers got back there and a union came in? If it's not unionized - and I'm saying that because I don't really know - I was given the impression that there's no union there now. What if a union when in there? Would that foreign company want to stay? I'm not sure.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, I have a large call centre that I represent in Highfield Park, Convergys. I know over the years there was a lot of criticism by the member for Halifax Chebucto around NSBI's willingness to give payroll rebates to those contact centres or call centres and businesses come in and set up with no clear targets, initiatives or guarantees that they're going to stay here for any period of time.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South brought this up the other day and I started thinking about Convergys and the hundreds of jobs that are in Highfield Park right now and the effect that Bill No. 102 would have on that particular company. I'll tell you what it would have, it would have a resounding negative effect not only on the employees and business owners, but on the taxpayers of this province because of the amounts of money that former governments and this current government give as incentives for those companies to come here and set up. You think about all of the contact centres that are around this province - what if there was the ability to unionize? Would they want to come here? Chances are they wouldn't want to come here; they won't come here. The other resounding effect, unfortunately, would be a lot of them would probably pull out and go to markets like the U.S.A. or markets like India.

We have a government now that campaigned on change. This isn't change. This is giving us exactly what the labour movement wanted, what Nova Scotians pretty much read into what they would get with an NDP Government - favours for the union. Well, I don't want to call it favours for the union, but it's a slippery slope and a bad trend and a bad message for this Premier and this government to send to the business community - a



Premier who knew back in 2009 that he had to somehow break ground with his NDP members into the business community.

This is the wrong message to send, as was Bill No. 100. I stated back in the last session that Bill No. 100 sent a bad message, that on one hand the Premier is saying he wants to acknowledge the business community, but on the other hand, he is slapping them. We're talking about employers in rural Nova Scotia: Michelin, Composites Atlantic, Oxford Frozen Foods, Sobeys. We all know the success of Sobeys in this province and around Canada. We know how many people they employ. We also know, as has been mentioned during this session of the House, the amount of high taxes we pay in this province, arguments about motive fuel tax, heating costs going up.

Something else that has gone up in this province is food costs. One would have to think that if Bill No. 102 goes through and an entity as large as Sobeys is telling us whoa, put the brakes on, well, I'm going to think back that maybe if Bill No. 102 gets put in place with this majority government - because they can - Sobeys is going to have to find a way, if wages are going to be demanded to be increased and unions go in there and run roughshod. I would have to think that food costs are going to go up even more.

I can tell you right now that in tough economic times, with the amount of job losses that this province has seen in the last two years, that's going to be devastating for the people of this province. Many of us MLAs know that the route to the food bank is a tough one to haul, and there's not much, as the member for Cape Breton Centre, I believe, would know. He had struggled with his food bank recently in New Waterford.

I fear for people like Sobeys - good corporate citizens, give back to the community and always have, want to continue to grow as they have in this province. Bill No. 102 would stymie that, Mr. Speaker.

That trip to Paris in 2007, there was a member from Economic Development who had been with the government for quite a long time, Mr. Marvyn Robar. I remember talking with Marvyn and asking him why we don't have more manufacturing set up in Nova Scotia and why we don't have more companies coming here. He said, well, we don't promote ourselves enough, we don't go out and approach companies. As was mentioned earlier in the week about former Premier Frank McKenna, we don't go out as much and invite companies to come here.

When you think about this, whose tool is this? Is this the unions' tool? Is this the government's way of inviting business to this province? Again, as legislators, we have the right and the opportunity and the privilege to bring in and promote and change existing and new legislation, and we all take great pride in that. Bill No. 102 and the premise of it, when we're looking at business growth in this province, this is devastating. This is not the path. I can't believe that this is the path the current Premier wants to set this province on.

Sadly, if proclaimed and put in place, and we begin to see the trends and the job losses continue and companies decide not to show up and start up and companies begin to leave, like McKesson, which was mentioned the other day by the member for Cumberland South. If that is the path and the vision that this Premier has for us, it's not good times now, it won't be good times in the future, and it's going to take another government to change that.

In hoisting this - allowing those large entities and businesses and those small mom-and-pops, the 5,200 that make up CFIB members, the opportunity to come here and impress upon this NDP Government, this majority NDP Government, that they are concerned about the future of this province. I believe that was part of the change that they voted for in 2009, for the first time ever. I remember campaigning and going after the Progressive Conservative vote immediately. They came out and on those doorsteps they said to me, I voted 50 years for Progressive Conservatives, but I'm going to give you guys a chance. I don't know how you're going to balance the budget. Don't raise taxes.

Where are we now? Two years in, 6,600 job losses in rural Nova Scotia over the last year. Difficult number to swallow. With Bill No. 102 I think we have the unfortunate situation where there's no doubt we're going to see more. Is that the legacy that this government wants, that a first-time NDP Government wants, that the Premier wants?

I'll tell you, touting the Irving Shipbuilding contract over and over is only going to get us so far. I remember questioning the Premier in the Spring of 2010 on the budget - the disappointment in Yarmouth, the high unemployment rate in Cape Breton, Cumberland County, Colchester, the Amherst border. I remember asking the Premier a very simple question: So early in your mandate, the province is in such discord and disarray and people are unhappy - how are you going to bring that all together?

He went on for a good number of minutes explaining how he was going to do that. Two years later, almost two years later, we're still falling apart. I know it sounds like doom and gloom, but there's a way out. There is a way out. It's not with Bill No. 102. The unions do not need this tool. They don't need this tool. (Interruption) Three times in 10 years, absolutely. The Labour Board has been called in three times. If we go to strike next week with Local 26, I think we're going to solve that. Hopefully it won't get to the point where they are on the picket line.

If rumblings at small manufacturers in Colchester County start to happen, if places like - I know the Premier said Michelin hasn't said anything to him. No, they're waiting. I guarantee it. The first time Bill No. 102 gets proclaimed, the unions will be knocking. Why, in such a contentious time, do we want to aggravate the business community? Why, when the review panel made up of union members and representatives still couldn't come to consensus on this? But a majority government and the minister see fit to bring this forward in a piece of legislation, so I guess the writing was on the wall, or the document was already planned and they just needed to put it in place. Either way.

We heard earlier in the week about YouTube videos and certain union members citing that this was a gift, this was payback.

This model is one of the most regressive forms of first contract in all of Canada. I believe it was a 1.9 per cent GDP growth, the worst of any province in Canada and now we're going to do this? This government actually thinks that bringing the House in this late in the year and this being the one piece of legislation that is actually contentious, that no one will pay attention? That backroom politics and political strategists might be relying on the fact that yes, they do have a majority, but they also have a responsibility to all Nova Scotians. (Interruptions) Not at this time we can't afford it.

Quite simply put, too many people are struggling and when we have a government that continually stands in their place and talks about and hearing too and acknowledging that collective bargaining agreements and opportunities that unions and members have to go through that process and not wanting to step in, Bill No. 102 pops up and doesn't even give those business owners, won't even give those business owners, enough time or even the opportunity, to engage in conversation with potential disgruntled members and employees. Is that fair? I don't think so and many of the businesses that we've been approached by and will continue to be approached by in the coming days and weeks, don't believe so either.

I want to - as the member for Cape Breton South had stated earlier - encourage those small business owners and the large business entities to come to Province House. Do you know what? Even with a majority, I'll say this, if they choose not to listen and this is really the path that the Premier wants to go down, wow, what a legacy. There are a number of them that will retire next time or be voted out and we'll be right back in the same position as Nova Scotia, what's our vision? Maybe I should have paid the \$175 the other night and I would have heard what his vision is. I thought I had it in 2009, but I guess it has changed. I hope that both employer and employee and rural Nova Scotia do not take another hit, but I believe they will with Bill No. 102. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand this evening to speak to this bill, this hoist motion that is before us. Before I get into the meat of my speech, I have a couple of quick comments that I want to make first. One, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for the roads being nice and clear for my trip back from Port Hawkesbury. I know he didn't hear that yesterday, but I just wanted to say that the roads were in excellent condition in the morning. I do want to thank, of course, the drivers, I know it was a busy day yesterday and I just wanted to put that on the record.

I do want to say that I did have the opportunity to be in Truro-Bible Hill a couple of days ago. I had the opportunity to chat with that MLA, of course, on her birthday and I

didn't have a chance to wish her that happy birthday in this House, so again, it's a happy birthday to her. I did have the opportunity to buy her CD and listen to it on my travels across the province and I do want to thank her for spending some time with me in my car and I thought she did a darn good job of that CD, it was great to have her along for the ride.

After having those all lined up I want to talk to this. (Interruptions) I was nice, isn't that a nice way to start? I'm going to stick to what I've got here because I think it's important. I also want to thank quickly the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. I had an opportunity to stop in on them this afternoon. It was interesting, celebrating their 116<sup>th</sup> year of incorporation, I guess, is what you would call it and getting together to be there for farmers in Nova Scotia. There are a number of issues there that I thought were extremely important to all Nova Scotians and I wish we were here talking about agriculture in this province or talking about fisheries. That's what I think we should hear from this government, is how they're going to be working with them, protecting them, trying to find ways to make them more economical and making them not just survive but thrive in today's marketplace.

So, Mr. Speaker, we get back down to the issue of today which is, of course, the bill and the hoist that is before us. It's funny, I did have the opportunity to speak to this one already and I think it's important and I thought what a great opportunity to send this off for a hoist, to say listen, we feel that the people who have been chatting with us, are not accepting what they see in this bill, that they want more time to consult and what better way than saying we are going to push this off for a six-month period so that more consultation can happen.

Good legislation isn't rushed, good legislation takes time to develop, good legislation requires proper consultation with relevant stakeholders and important groups. I have to say that what we see before us is not good legislation. What this government has done is tried to ram through this legislation, without doing their homework and taking the time to get it right for Nova Scotians. It's not a huge surprise, we saw it in Bill No. 100, we've seen it in a couple of other bills that necessarily are not given the true sounding board, that are not necessarily given the true consideration that they need to be given by Nova Scotians.

When dealing with legislation such as this, it is important that proper consultations occur, that government reaches out to both labour organizations and job creators, the employers we have here in Nova Scotia. From the submissions released by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, it is clear there's a very strong divide between the employers of this province, the entrepreneurs who create jobs for people of our province and the risk-takers and the union groups.

Every letter from business groups were set against this legislation, every letter from union representatives were for this legislation. Each side representing thousands of people in this province, the considerable divide shows there is nowhere near a consensus, Mr.

Speaker, there is nowhere near enough consultation done to consider this legislation at all. The consultation has occurred here in regard to this legislation. This is not real consultation. We want consultation to happen with those employers, those job creators across this province.

Now I know the minister talks about the study day. We know that that study day was thrown together at the last minute. I think when the government realized that they might have some tough going on it, so many groups, unions and business, not only received a couple of days' notice but were really unable to attend or send representation, because of the sort of haphazard method that that was put together.

We have talked about this one before, where the member for Inverness did try to participate, to listen to what the minister had to say, to see what organizations had to say but was asked to leave that.

The discussion paper brought back a divided result. The committee heard representations that were divided. The Labour Management Review Committee couldn't even come to a consensus, as was presented by the member for Cape Breton West, Mr. Speaker. Only a few days later, this government, after all that questioning, came and introduced first contract arbitration legislation into this House. Not only did they introduce first contract legislation, they introduced the most anti-business model of first contract arbitration in the country.

Many times we've heard through the paper or through the media, talking about the six provinces that have this, well maybe Nova Scotia could accept some kind of first contract arbitration but not this one. Maybe they could accept in other provinces but since this consultation necessarily didn't happen, we're into a place where we're either for this one or against it.

Maybe there's some updating, maybe there's some to consult and actually come up with something that is going to work for everyone. In fact, it reminds me of the consultation that happened around Bill No. 100, in our mind another piece of extreme anti-business legislation.

As was the case with the NDP's Bill No. 100, members of the business community and other stakeholders are hardly given the opportunity to make their case to government. Instead, this was a last minute process designed to really just silence some opposition from the members of the business community in Nova Scotia. So proceedings like this, in a way this government has done, can only damage the relationship between the Government of Nova Scotia and businesses in our province.

These job creators, Mr. Speaker, are the backbone of our economy. They deserved more respect than this. They deserve to have their voices heard and that's why it's so important that we wait on this, that we make sure the business community has been

properly consulted and has had their voices heard. After all, they're job creators. They are the people who will have to deal with the consequences of this misguided legislation. Shouldn't the government at least take the time to hear what they have to say?

One of the most serious problems with the consultation process that this government has put together is the very nature of it, Mr. Speaker. It does nothing to foster a healthy relationship between the members of the government and the job creators. In fact, it creates controversy. It makes it harder for all of us. As a matter of fact, it really kind of looks like a divide-and-conquer tactic so that while everybody is not getting along, government can sweep in and really do what it wants. That's why we should wait. The government and job creators should be working hand in hand to help grow the economy.

Instead, because of this government's - what we feel - adversarial approach to first contract arbitration or legislation, we've seen that relationship, already sour because of the Bill No. 100 fiasco, deteriorate even further. I know that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism will see the fallout of this legislation and really should be lobbying at the Cabinet Table to maybe have this one put off until true consultation is actually taken.

So to wait, Mr. Speaker, to hold off with this for six months, would give the government and the business community enough time to come together in a proper consultation period. Let us also remember the purpose of the Labour Management Review Committee is to improve labour relations in Nova Scotia and to provide a forum for the business community and the labour community to discuss important issues relevant to them. Instead, the government has actually been using the committee to forge ahead with its own anti-business agenda.

It's not just that the government hasn't given the business community enough time to engage in a proper consultation process, that's not the only reason to wait for this, the government hasn't properly made their case yet either, where the empirical evidence that shows us first contract arbitration is needed in Nova Scotia in the first place. So where is that data? In fact, all of the evidence I have seen suggests that we are pretty harmonious and we've had pretty harmonious relations with labour in this province. Hundreds of collective agreements get ratified each year in Nova Scotia; that all happens without strikes or walkouts, so why has the government placed such a high priority on first contract arbitration now?

Nova Scotia has had a work stoppage rate that is below the national average. That's extremely impressive. So why are we doing this now? Why are we moving ahead with first contract arbitration? The government has yet to make its case and we're all waiting to hear it.

We spent lots of time talking about this bad piece of legislation, and that it is a bad piece of legislation, but I would like to spend some time talking about why this is a bad

time, why this isn't the time for first contract arbitration, and why we should delay. Businesses in Nova Scotia are already feeling the pinch. They're already suffering from too much at the hands of this government. Let's look at the HST. When the NDP raised the HST, they made it harder for businesses, especially small business. That hike, the NDP's HST hike, took money out of people's pockets. It has given them less disposable incomes and who does this hurt? That hurts grocery stores, convenience stores, gas stations. These are all important businesses that already feel the pinch. They can't afford first contract arbitration, they can't afford that now.

Or let's look at power rates, we have the second highest power rates in the country thanks to this government. Job creators like NewPage in Port Hawkesbury have said it, they've told us power rates have hurt our business; they've hurt our bottom line, and it's all due to this government's "bite the bullet" energy plan.

Of course, there's our regulatory burden. This NDP's regulatory policies have hindered business, hindered entire sectors of our economy, and now when we have to look at the current challenges our businesses face, it's clear that this isn't the time to experiment with first contract arbitration. Maybe if we had mass labour discontent in Nova Scotia, the government could justify moving ahead, but we don't. We don't have labour discontent and it's clear that the existing provisions of the Trade Union Act already provide protection for any improper bargaining tactic by either employers or unions.

These protections have worked so far, they have actually worked quite well, so again, why now? There is no need for any interference with collective bargaining through first contract arbitration; this bill, if it's passed, will only make it harder for unions and job creators to build those important relationships. We shouldn't only be considering the relationship between job creators and unions, we also should be mindful of the relationship government should be maintaining with job creators in the business community. This process, proceeding with this legislation this way does nothing to improve those relations between the government and business, and we should all know that that's an important relationship.

Supporting a hoist motion, which I have to say, again, is a way for us to slow down this process. It's not just a dilatory motion or a way to hold this up, we actually want people to consider waiting a little bit, truly doing the consultation that's important to them because it is important that we grow our economy, that we really work with the job creators.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know whether the government has actually met and consulted with the Employers Roundtable members. Has the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, or the Premier, or anyone from the government side reached out to Bowater Mersey about this issue? I know they're busy with other things, but have they talked about contract arbitration with them? What about Clearwater Fine Foods? Clearwater is an important company with a history here in Nova Scotia, surely they deserve to be consulted. Crossley Tandus is another important participant in the Employers

Roundtable and I wonder what they think that this first contract arbitration does. Does the government know, have they taken the time to ask or consult?

Here is an interesting fact, Irving is a participant on the Employers Roundtable and we all know that Irving was recently awarded that \$25 billion shipbuilding contract. All members of this House, all Nova Scotians were excited by that - rightly so. But in the years to come Irving will have some important decisions to make; they're going to have to subcontract some of that work and when they're deciding where some of that work will go - how can we be sure that it will be done in Nova Scotia?

The truth is that we can't be sure of that, but what we can do is create an environment where Irving wants that work to be done, where it's advantageous to have that work done here in Nova Scotia. Then there are things we can do to make that happen - we can lower taxes, we can get to work on lower power rates, we can lessen the regulatory burden that businesses face. There are also some things that we can do to make it harder for Irving to send that work here too, to make it harder for Irving to justify sending that work to Nova Scotia, and one of these things, in our mind, is, again, first contract arbitration.

Another member of the Employers Roundtable is Sobeys; Sobeys employs Nova Scotians from one end of this province to the other. Sobeys has a deep-rooted history in Nova Scotia. Are we willing to sacrifice that deep-rooted history with first contract arbitration? These are the kinds of questions the government should be spending time pondering before we move ahead on this bill. That's why it's important; that's why a hoist motion at this point makes sense.

I talked about Walmart when I had the opportunity to speak before. They're a major employer in Nova Scotia and there have been a lot of examples where Walmarts in other jurisdictions - I'm talking about Quebec, where a Walmart has simply moved jobs and closed down departments because a first contract was imposed upon them. Do we want that to happen at Walmarts here in Nova Scotia. Do you think, honestly, that we can afford that?

And there is more. There are lots of other members of the Employers Roundtable who don't feel that they have been consulted properly. Members like Dalhousie University, ECPLP, Farmers Dairy, IMP, Killam Properties, Medavie Blue Cross, Michelin, Mount Saint Vincent University, Dexter's, Nova Scotia Power, Oxford Frozen Foods, Scotia Investments, Scotsburn Dairy, and The Shaw Group. Mr. Speaker don't they deserve a say on this one?

Many people have been coming before this House to talk about this, different organizations - Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Construction Association of Nova Scotia, Canadian Taxpayers Association, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Association of Nova Scotia, Merit



Contractors of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Association, Nova Scotia Chambers of Commerce, Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association, Nova Scotia Road Builders Association, Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, Retail Council of Canada - Atlantic Office, Sackville Business Association, Scotia Group of Companies, Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, and the Truro and District Chamber of Commerce have all come forward to oppose this legislation today.

That's an awful lot of people that these folks represent. These groups, combined, employ thousands upon thousands of Nova Scotians. Why has this government refused to work with them on this?

I guess that the members of the government, I'll give them the benefit of doubt. If they're busy killing jobs, maybe they haven't had time to read their letter. For the benefit of the members on the government side, I think we should take the opportunity to, of course, discuss it. Let's look at some of the organizations and consider the impact that it will have

The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, employing thousands upon thousands of Nova Scotians across our province have opposed the bill. Again, the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association, they're important contributors to our province's economy. They've called on the government to put an end to first contract arbitration scheme. The Nova Scotia Road Builders Association, we depend on them for so much and they too have come forward and asked the government not to forge ahead with this dangerous legislation.

What do these groups have in common? They have the potential to disrupt collective bargaining - what it does is it deprives the parties of finality in the most important contract that they'll ever negotiate which, of course, is their first contract.

I would love to stand and continue speaking on this bill. I just might continue to speak on a later date, but I would like to adjourn debate on this bill so that the House Leader can book business for tomorrow.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet again on the morrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m. The House will sit until 12:00 midnight, or until the conclusion of business.

The order of business tomorrow will be Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, and 112, and Committee of the Whole House on Bills on Bill Nos. 65, 73, 76, 78, 80, 84 and 85.

I move the House do now rise to meet from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have now reached the moment of interruption.

The adjournment debate was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton South:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Premier recognize the employment crisis in rural Nova Scotia and direct the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to devise a job strategy which includes targets and measurable outcomes.”

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **ERDT - RURAL N.S.: CRISIS - PREM. RECOGNIZE**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this serious issue that rural Nova Scotia is facing is part of a trend. I believe there is a crisis, we've seen the numbers come out from Statistics Canada and I know for a fact that all of us, every single member from a rural riding, has experienced this negative trend back home.

We've experienced when our constituents come into our office because they're out of work and don't know how they're going to provide for their families. We experience it when someone comes into our office and says, I'm not working, I can't afford my power

bill this month. What do I do? We experience it when our storefronts in our downtowns close. We experience it when employers leave and oftentimes the employees follow suit.

There is a problem in rural Nova Scotia. The economy of that area is changing and we have not had a government in place that has chosen to react to this or be proactive in stopping the bleeding that is happening in rural Nova Scotia. Instead of acknowledging that it's an issue, instead of saying yes, we realize there are challenges in our rural communities, there are job losses, there are people struggling, there are families forced to move elsewhere, either to Halifax or beyond the borders of Nova Scotia, instead of even acknowledging that, we have a Premier who stands up and treats this serious issue, this vital issue that is affecting thousands of Nova Scotians and their families, we have a Premier who stands up and treats this crisis with indifference. We hear no, there's no problem, everything is fine.

We have a Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism who instead of realizing this is an issue, this is a trend that's happening in our rural communities and that our province is actually changing around us, we have a Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism who stands up and boasts about being the guest speaker at a chamber of commerce meeting. These are the answers we get from this government when we bring up this critical issue that is affecting families all over this province.

I, for one, as a MLA from a rural area who has experienced economic hardship first-hand in my community, am offended by those kinds of responses. I know that every single family in Nova Scotia in which one or more members of their family have lost their job, have been forced to vacate the province, who are struggling right now to make ends meet, I know that those people are equally offended by the indifference that this government has shown them, because that's what it is, it's indifference.

We have members of the government who stand up and criticize the numbers that we present. They say they're not accurate, these job loss numbers. We have a Minister of Finance who yells at us every day from his seat, but refuses to stand up and explain to this House, and to the people of Nova Scotia, why these numbers are inaccurate, if they are, and what his numbers are. I think the reason that the minister doesn't stand up and do that is because he knows if they are different than what we presented, they are marginally different.

We can sit here and debate the stats all we want in the House. We think we know what these stats mean when 2,300 people left the labour force in Cape Breton and when 2,100 people have lost their employment - when their unemployment rate has gone up in Cape Breton, I think we know what that means. On the North Shore 1,400 people have left the workforce, employment is down 1,400 jobs and the unemployment rate is up. We know what that means in the Valley when 600 people have lost their jobs and 1,800 people have left the workforce. We know what it means in my region, southwestern Nova Scotia, when

4,300 people in this last year alone have left the workforce and 2,500 people have been left without work.

We can sit here and debate these numbers all we want, and people on both sides can try to manipulate the numbers and make them prove their point, but what we can't deny is the experience of all those Nova Scotians who are out there in our home communities who are going through these economic struggles. It's one thing for the Premier to stand up and say the numbers are wrong; it's another thing for him to stand up and say there isn't a problem, because there is. There are thousands of individuals and families who are facing that challenge, that struggle, every single day in our communities. I do not doubt for a second that any single member of this Legislative Assembly from a rural community can say otherwise, based on their experience in their home riding.

We've had instead of a government that acknowledges there is a concern and that brings in legislation to actually address it, we have a government that stands up and blames everybody else - oh, there are problems in Greece, there are problems in Italy, this is a tough time right now - but that doesn't mean that this government does not have a responsibility to address this, they do.

Instead of moving to do that in a meaningful and realistic way, they've presented this House with a so-called strategy that does not have any goals in it, does not have any targets, in which we have no way to measure the success of this program. For a Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to stand up in the House and say I don't think we should be caught up in goals, I think is a scary thing. Speaking about having goals and targets and a plan, as if they somehow limit what you're trying to accomplish. I, for one, do believe in the unrestricted potential of this province. I believe that what we can accomplish together is unlimited but that this doesn't happen overnight and it doesn't happen if we don't fight for it.

We have to have an approach in this province where we address our challenges step by step and that begins with having a plan with goals in it, with targets, so that together we are working towards something concrete and if we succeed those targets, good for us; if we don't, then perhaps we need to change the plan. Without having targets that are measurable and a plan, there is no way to assess whether it's working. If you cannot assess whether your plan is working, it is not able to adapt to any sort of changes in our environment.

A plan without goals, without a way to measure its success, isn't a plan at all, Mr. Speaker, and to say otherwise flies in the face of the teachings, of, I think of probably every single economics or business professor, or teacher, in this province. I do want to caution this government because one strategy alone isn't going to fix the challenges that we're facing in Nova Scotia. One plan isn't going to do it. It needs to be holistic, it needs to be a holistic approach, it needs to be comprehensive and multi-faceted, and looking at all the fundamental challenges in this province that businesses are facing, that each of our constituents are facing individually, sky-rocketing power rates, increased cost of fuel, the

highest tax jurisdiction in the country. Looking at those fundamental issues that affect not just every constituent of ours but every business in the province, there has not been one piece of legislation that has been brought in by this government to address any of those.

This government has presented a very – for the most part – boring legislative agenda and I realize why you want to do that in your first term, to stay under the radar, to not upset people, but this is a time when we need this government to be courageous. We need them to have the courage to tackle Nova Scotia Power. We need this government to have the courage to address the tax on tax on our gas. We need this government to have the courage to address the most fundamental component to a competitive society – our tax structure. This government stands up and says, all these negative economic things that are happening are outside of our control. I just listed three things, fundamental things, that are within the control of this House of Assembly and are within the control of the government and this government has not moved on one of them, not one of them. Instead, they ignore the problem, they ignore the issue. They treat it with indifference and boast about a plan that doesn't have targets that you can't measure the success on and say their job is done.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, this government's job is not done. We need real action from them and we need them on the issues that matter most to Nova Scotians. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the resolution put forward by the members opposite. I want to start out with the fact, it's disappointing frankly, to hear the Opposition Parties rail on week after week in this House misinforming Nova Scotians, fear-mongering - I could call it all kinds of things. We've watched it day after day as they become master spin doctors of the details, the facts as they see it, petty politics, quite frankly, at a time when Nova Scotians finally have a reason to be hopeful.

They have a reason to be excited about their future. They're excited, and it's finally a time when they can think about a strong future. I think it's shameful that our Opposition members would be - I know the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley spoke yesterday, and he termed it a fog of negativity or a cloud of doom and gloom. We all laughed, but quite frankly, that's kind of what we feel like is going on over there, at a time when Nova Scotians are smarter than that. They know better. They're seeing the results.

Nova Scotians are talking, absolutely. I'll grant you that. They're talking about prosperity; they're talking about the excitement. I have a constituency in Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage that probably has a good portion of the types of residents or skilled labour who can truly benefit from the Irving shipyard contract. They're excited and I know that they're not an anomaly. They're all over Nova Scotia.

That's what they're talking about - they're excited. That's over 11,000 jobs that potentially could be coming here to Nova Scotia at a time when they know they're looking to their government to take on initiatives and to continue to invest in things like that, that give them hope and a future for not only them but their children.

This is not accidental, that these kinds of changes and opportunities are coming to Nova Scotia. It's not accidental at all. It's a result of a good NDP Government with a vision for prosperity and a future for this province. Growing the economy and creating jobs is a priority of this government, and I totally agree with the member opposite from the Liberal Party who said that that doesn't happen overnight. I'll give him that.

It doesn't happen overnight, but we're well on our way. The facts are that over 3,000 new jobs have come to Nova Scotia since 2009, and it was this government that did it. We're coming out of a 20-year downturn from former governments that we're recouping from. Mismanagement. It's due to incentives and programs that we are bringing forward, that only an NDP vision could bring forward. (Interruptions)

The vision, the vision. They're looking for a strategy. How many times do we have to say it out loud? The jobsHere strategy. Again, I'm going to give credit to the member opposite. He nailed it. It needs to be comprehensive and multi-faceted. That's what we've done. The jobsHere strategy is that. We're celebrating - yesterday, today, I'm not sure - the one-year anniversary of the jobsHere strategy. It's because our NDP Government recognized that to be prosperous in the Province of Nova Scotia we need fundamental things. We need the right skills for the good jobs that are out there. We need to be innovative and we need to help our businesses be more globally competitive.

This is multi-faceted and comprehensive - things like the Productivity Investment Program under the jobsHere initiative. Over 175 businesses are making productivity improvements and becoming more competitive because of this program. This is what our government is doing to invest in Nova Scotia businesses. Our small business tax cut - since forming government, 10,000 to 12,000 small businesses in Nova Scotia are benefiting from that tax reduction of 10 per cent.

This is the first time in almost 20 years, and that's because of our work. Homegrown Success is another program, the 10-year plan. It's a broad approach for growth with the agricultural industry. I'll carry on with the list: Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive; the Credit Union Small Business Loan Program; the Productivity and Innovation Voucher Program, the Business Development Program, the provincial government's procurement legislation, these are all things that are creating prosperity opportunities here in Nova Scotia, the Clean Technology Fund, all part of the jobsHere strategy, all NDP Government programs, all captured in an NDP Government vision.

This is about prosperity for Nova Scotians at a time when our Nova Scotians have been starving for something to hold on to that says we have a strong future.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand that there are residents, there are constituents, there are citizens of Nova Scotia who are impacted when our global economy creates an environment where their jobs are at risk, or going, or disappearing, I absolutely get that. We know the pain and the challenges that's causing our Nova Scotia families. Bowater - we all watched how that unfolded, and our hearts broke for them, but our strength we sent with our Premier and our member for Queens down to them to speak to give them the strength they needed, the resources they needed, the information they needed to know that all Nova Scotia was behind them, pulling for them to find a solution.

It's not one that we want every Nova Scotian to have to struggle through but we brought strength to them and we will continue to be there for them in a hopeful way, not the doom and the gloom and the negativity that we're hearing day after day in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I think if the members opposite spent more time in their constituencies talking to their businesses about connecting them to the programs that our government is offering, to the incentive opportunities that are here for them right now, they'd be happier and more productive and on their way to being more prosperous in their own businesses.

I would encourage our members to bring those businesses to the table, that's what it's there for. If they would spend more time doing that, we know we can have a successful Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, it takes strong leadership to turn around 20 years of the worst economics in Canada. It takes time and, frankly, it takes an NDP Government.

I want to sum this up and I want to go right back to the resolution put forward. That resolution speaks to a strategy - three words, the jobsHere strategy. It speaks to measurable outcomes - 3,000 jobs and climbing, that's the measurable outcome. It speaks to targets. The sky is the limit in Nova Scotia, that's what we're talking about, the sky is the limit and this government knows it and this government is moving on it and this government has continued to walk down that path and face the challenges that come before it, because they need a strong government, Nova Scotians need this strong government to continue the resolve to move it along.

So no matter what the opposition in this Chamber, or in their communities at home when this Legislature rises, no matter what they tell you, no matter how they spin it, the NDP Government, the jobsHere strategy, the honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism are creating good jobs for Nova Scotia and offering the hope and the potential for a fabulous future that I look forward to being part of, that I look forward to my children being part of, that I am proud to say I've played a part in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll start off by saying I don't know what part of Utopia that speech got flown in from, but we know that must be where it came from. You know this Premier stands in this House and goes on and on and his ministers on the front bench stand in this House like there's nothing wrong. I've never seen anything like it. There's no crisis here, it's glorious, it's wonderful, or so they'd like you to believe.

Do you know what? That member who just spoke was right in one point, that Nova Scotians are not stupid. They're paying attention. They read the papers. They see the TV. They meet with their own MLAs and they talk about the problems they're having, like putting food on the table, paying 2 per cent more.

Oh, that's right. That's what the NDP did - raised taxes they promised they would never do. That's what they did on the campaign trail, Mr. Speaker, and their slogan was "a better deal for today's families." That soon turned to what it really was: a bitter deal for today's families. You ask any of those people out there who are hungry today and they'll soon tell you what's been done to them and for them. They'll soon tell you, and they're wondering where their MLAs are. They're wondering where their government is, because they're not looking out for them, in their opinion.

There are lots of calls that come in and there are a lot of people that walk in, and they're wondering, where do these ideas come from? How can we possibly afford to pay more money out in things like power bills with an added 2 per cent over and above on the tax that they were already paying and the already too-high rate that they're paying? Where does that come from? But the Premier stands up in this House and waves his hands and puts a little smile on and he looks good on camera, I suppose, and he says we have no problem here, everything is wonderful, we have put up 3,000 . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He would have managed the finances better . . .

MR. PORTER: Now that minister over there is going on, but she should have gotten up and spoken if she was so determined this evening. I would have loved to hear that. That would have been something.

AN HON. MEMBER: I will someday. Don't you worry.

MR. PORTER: We know, minister, we know, Mr. Speaker, through you to that minister, and all the rest of the people in this House and everybody in the gallery who's paying attention to what the Opposition are saying. They know the reality of what's going on in this House. They're not listening and taking home the Utopian speeches that we're just hearing from the government, and the NDP being the glorious be all and end all.



Now the other day the member over there said nothing's been done for the last 400 years. Well, we know that's not the case. There's been a lot of good work done by multiple governments in this House, Mr. Speaker. You know it and I know it and the member from Yarmouth knows it and the members across the way know it. So do the people of Nova Scotia.

Everybody expects that their government is going to be perfect. We know that that's not reality, but they expect programs to be put forward that are going to help them, especially when the times are tough, and unfortunately this government is failing Nova Scotians. We've seen jobs lost. They keep going on about jobsHere. You know what? I had a call from the local media, The Hants Journal, and she asked about the jobsHere strategy. I said, don't take my word for it. I'll give you my take on it, but don't just take my word. You call the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and you ask them - get them to give you a quote, two quotes, send you something. Guess what? When I asked that young lady, the reporter, how she made out when she called that department, she just shrugged and said, I didn't get anything. I said, I told you that. That's no surprise, because jobsHere is truly "jobsWhere".

We've had a great announcement - one really good announcement in the last three years while this government's been in power - and that was the Ships Start Here program. They'd like to stand up and take credit for that, but it's not about taking credit for that. We know the shipyard here in Nova Scotia won that on their own merit, and someone will stand up and say, thanks to the federal government. Well, in some respects you have to say thanks to the federal government for having the vision to put forward a plan that was going to help carry us through tough times and was going to spend money across Canada - not just in Nova Scotia. There were billions going west, there will be billions spent in the centre of this country, and there are certainly going to be billions spent right here over the years. That is what's good for our economy. It's 3,000 jobs - good thing we got those, if they ever come to light, and we know they will. The negotiations will get done and slowly but surely those jobs will come on-line, which is what we need to have.

But nobody in this House, at least on the government benches, is interested at all in talking about the real statistics of the people in this province. Now they say they've increased 3,000 jobs. How many have they lost? Well, do you blame them directly for losing them? Not every job can be blamed on government when it is lost. It is tough economic times around the world, and I think that every member in this House understands that. I know we in this Party and this Opposition understand that. Sometimes there's just nothing that can be done.

We've seen those examples. We've seen Bowater, we've seen NewPage, unfortunately, we've seen Minas Basin in my backyard - 13 jobs doesn't sound like a lot, but one job is a lot right now. Those 13 jobs seem very small, but I can tell you all 13 of those families will now be struggling desperately to figure out where they're going to go in

the tougher times. We've been through tough times before and we've bounced back around, and we're certainly hopeful that we'll do so again.

But the Premier will stand up in this House and say, no crisis. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism will stand up in this House and say there's no crisis - as a matter of fact things are great, I can go to a party and be the guest speaker and fill the house. It would be interesting to know how many people were in the house, I'm sure it wasn't that great but it doesn't matter, he was in Digby. Where else was he? Were there any jobs created the other day when he was in Digby? Did he make an announcement about jobs in Digby? No, he didn't, we know that for sure. Did he talk about the jobs that were lost? No, that would be admitting something else.

Governments always want to stand up and take credit for creating jobs. Where? Show us where. We've asked many times, Mr. Speaker, where are those jobs? What we do know is that there is a crisis, and we even took the time today to look this up to make sure that we had it right. Webster's Dictionary defines the word crisis as "an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life; a situation that has reached a critical phase."

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask you, what do you think about those 1,000 people down there in Cape Breton, right there in the Strait area? Do you suppose that's a critical situation down there? I would tend to think that those people - it's an emotionally significant event. Do you suppose that was an emotionally significant event, I would ask the members of this House? That's a pretty emotionally significant event.

The Yarmouth ferry, just out of the blue one day, good-bye, we don't need you anymore. Well, you know what? There was debate about the boat - maybe the boat was losing money, maybe it wasn't, maybe there was another plan. It didn't matter, the only other plan was canning the boat.

We already know. We've spoken so many hours in this House over the last couple of years about what that meant, not just to Yarmouth. I know that in my area it meant a lot. I know that in Cape Breton it meant a lot. I know that, travelling, to people who would have driven around and through other provinces, it meant a lot.

Did we need that during a tough economic time? No, but we needed the boat. We needed the people coming in. We needed tourism but that minister responsible for that tourism was part of cutting it. Where is the rationale in that? Where's "jobsWhere" in that? Where is that good government? I struggle to see where that is good government.

Here we are again, Statistics Canada will show, and we've heard all kinds of figures in this House, I heard 12,500 - or something here yesterday or the day before - jobs lost in Nova Scotia. Well, let's just say that there were 12,000 jobs. Let's do easy math for people who might not get it all. Let's just say 10,000 jobs for easy numbers, Mr. Speaker, gone.

And you create 3,000 more jobs if, in fact, you did, yet they can't show us where, but if they did, let's give them the credit and just say for a minute that they might have created 3,000 jobs. My math says that is still minus 7,000 jobs.

That's where that math is, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of people out of work in this province. There are people who are leaving this province. Now, how many are there? We've heard numbers today - into the thousands of people walking out of Nova Scotia. Do you call that prosperity? No. Is that the Utopian world that member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage just spoke about? Mr. Speaker, people are not in Utopia; people are smarter than that.

I see that I have only a minute left and that's too bad because I probably could have spoken for two or three more hours just on this very topic tonight about jobs, Mr. Speaker. I'll stay if you want to and we can talk for a long while tonight, debate it with other members who are here in the House, I'm sure they'd all like to have some input. I know the member for Yarmouth who spoke would probably get back up and go at least another hour easily, without breathing, probably, having a drink.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there's not enough time in this debate allotted tonight for us to go on any longer, but I look forward to it again, and I'm sure that this very topic will be debated and debated and debated some more before we're done. With those very few words I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I want to thank all members for their participation in the debate tonight. We shall now rise and meet again tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 6:29 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2513**

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Cyril Kinsman of Welsford was instrumental in installing artificial ice in the Berwick arena and ensured that the arena operated to its full capacity; and

Whereas Cyril also assisted the Figure Skating Club, the local Junior High School Hockey League, the local Scout team, and didn't just run the arena, he was the arena; and

Whereas Cyril Kinsman single-handedly ran a Bantam Hockey Program that included 48 boys age 12 to 14 and was an innovator in making hockey safer;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize the late Cyril Kinsman for 25 years of dedication to the Berwick Arena.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2514**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas each year in Nova Scotia, public libraries, the RCMP, municipal police forces and the public schools partner with the Adopt-a-Library Literacy Program to host WOW! Reading Challenge; and

Whereas the competition is for elementary and junior high schools, from November to April, to out-read the schools with whom they are competing; and

Whereas an average of 453 books per student were read at Bible Hill Central Elementary School, Colchester County, during the competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Bible Hill Central Elementary School for taking top honours in the category of elementary schools in Nova Scotia with less than 250 students.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2515**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas each year Ford of Canada reviews the previous 12 months, analyzing everything from statistics to customer survey results; and

Whereas the Summit Award is then presented to the top 10 per cent of dealership staff nationwide to recognize the extraordinary effort they put into making the customer experience better every day; and

Whereas Brian MacLean of Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, received a Summit Award for Master Technician;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brian MacLean for the professional accomplishment of receiving a Summit Award.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2516**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas each year Ford of Canada reviews the previous 12 months, analyzing everything from statistics to customer survey results; and

Whereas the Summit Award is then presented to the top 10 per cent of dealership staff nationwide to recognize the extraordinary effort they put into making the customer experience better every day; and

Whereas John Matheson of Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, received a Summit Award for Master Technician;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate John Matheson for the professional accomplishment of receiving a Summit Award.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2517**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas each year Ford of Canada reviews the previous 12 months, analyzing everything from statistics to customer survey results; and

Whereas the Summit Award is then presented to the top 10 per cent of dealership staff nationwide to recognize the extraordinary effort they put into making the customer experience better every day; and

Whereas Michael Forbes of Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, received a Summit Award for Service Advisor;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael Forbes for the professional accomplishment of receiving a Summit Award.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2518**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas each year Ford of Canada reviews the previous 12 months, analyzing everything from statistics to customer survey results; and

Whereas the Summit Award is then presented to the top 10 per cent of dealership staff nationwide to recognize the extraordinary effort they put into making the customer experience better every day; and

Whereas Campbell Foote of Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, received a Summit Award for Service Manager;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Campbell Foote Matheson for the professional accomplishment of receiving a Summit Award.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2519**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Michel Belliveau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Michel Belliveau will be recognized on November 26, 2011 by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Michel Belliveau for receiving his Fire Service Long Service Award for his 15 years of service to his community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2520**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Renald Comeau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Renald Comeau will be recognized on November 26, 2011 by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Renald Comeau for receiving his Fire Service Long Service Award for his 15 years of service to his community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2521**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas George Comeau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas George Comeau will be recognized on November 26, 2011 by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 15 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter George Comeau for receiving his Fire Service Long Service Award for his 15 years of service to his community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2522**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Gary Hicks will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Gary Hicks will be recognized on November 26, 2011 by the Little Brook Fire Department for his 5 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Gary Hicks for receiving his Fire Service Long Service Award for his 5 years of service to his community.