



**House of Assembly**  
*Nova Scotia*

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2011

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 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, please. The subject for late debate has been chosen and I will now read it:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge that this government is determined to jam through its special interest agenda that will discourage the very investment that would create jobs and that the Labour Management Review Committee process is nothing more than a sham.

This was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton West.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, as Acting Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 72 -Timely Medical Certificates Act.****Bill No. 93 - Education Act.**

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, before I table the Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation, could I be permitted to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of members to the east gallery, where we are joined today by a number of individuals whose names I will read and I would ask them to stand as their name is read: Krista Connell, CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation; Vanessa Fitzgerald, data analyst; Alana Andrews, communications officer; and Jessica Gilbert, project assistant.

I would ask the members of the Legislature to extend a warm welcome to our guests. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform all members of this House of the necessary action taken today to remove all responsibilities and authority of the South Shore Regional School Board and transfer it to a new, appointed representative.

As I am sure all members are aware, the South Shore Regional School Board made a request to the province to conduct a performance review for the board. This request came after concerns were raised about the openness and decision-making ability of the board. The province granted the board's request and Deloitte was contracted to evaluate how they function and operate as a board.

Mr. Speaker, Deloitte submitted their final report to me on Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, and today that report is being made public and I am tabling it in the House. The findings in this report were troubling and disappointing. Among other things, the report found “. . . strong evidence of not only failure to withdraw from matters under discussion, but also of active involvement in areas of pecuniary interest as defined by the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.”

The board made excessive and inappropriate use of in camera sessions. It spent 31 per cent of its meeting time in camera, reducing time for public sessions and causing it to fail to meet its obligation for public accountability.

Some board members reported that they did not feel they could speak freely without personal consequences. Staff members reported a considerable lack of trust between a number of board staff and members. And with regard to the school review process, “The personal agendas of some of the Board members appear to have trumped their responsibilities to the Board and the region as a whole.”

The conclusion stated, “We believe that the capabilities required to successfully implement the recommendations are largely absent from the Board, and success is unlikely to be achieved by the current members, even with substantial outside assistance.”

Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the report that this board is unable to function in the best interests of students and teachers. As Minister of Education, I could not allow this situation to continue, and today I met with the school board members and made them aware of my decision. This action, though necessary, is regrettable. It was not targeted at any individual, nor was it something I wanted to do. However, nothing is more important to me



than the educational welfare of students, teachers, and families. This is the right thing to do for students. The report also found that the staff and administration of the South Shore Regional School Board have continued to act professionally and I thank them for their good work.

Today I appointed Judith Sullivan-Corney to assume the full responsibilities and authorities of the school board. Ms. Sullivan-Corney is a former Deputy Minister of the Public Service Commission and Aboriginal Affairs; she has experience in governance, policy-making, and human resources; and she has even spent some of her career in the classroom.

Ms. Sullivan-Corney will assume these responsibilities until school board elections take place in October 2012. I am confident she will provide the necessary stability and leadership to ensure that the educational welfare of students and teachers is looked after.

Our regional school boards play an important role in the delivery of education to our students. They provide local input into decisions that impact their communities. I thank the members of the South Shore Regional School Board for their interest in public service and for the time they committed to serving their community. I have no doubt that individually each board member brought certain strengths to the board. I know they all care deeply about students and the communities they serve and I'm sure they all started out with the best of intentions. But as a group, as the Deloitte report shows, they are not functioning effectively or in the best interests of our students.

Mr. Speaker, today is a new day for the students, teachers and families of the South Shore. The work ahead will be challenging, but equal to that challenge is the positive impact our education system has on the future of our province. This process identified a gap in the Education Act. The board requested this review and under legislation today, the minister has limited power to request a performance review of a school board.

It is my intention to bring forward amendments to the Act that will clarify the minister's ability to conduct performance reviews, keeping school boards accountable to all Nova Scotians. This government remains committed to putting children and learning first.

With that, may I have permission to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly, but you're going to table that report also.

MS. JENNEX: Yes, I will do that. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce Judith Sullivan-Corney who is joining us in the east gallery. Ms. Sullivan-Corney has served the province for many years, including roles as deputy minister and chief executive officer of Aboriginal Affairs and Public Service Commissioner. Ms. Sullivan-Corney is a parent who has her B.Ed. and it is

her interest in students and education that will be our most valuable asset as she steps into another important leadership role with the South Shore Regional School Board. I would like to welcome her here today and thank her for taking on this important work for teachers, parents, and students in the South Shore Regional School Board. I hope she receives the warm welcome of my colleagues here today. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister's staff for a copy of the statement. I received it just before coming into the House but I do want to acknowledge the minister for providing that.

I would also like to, before I begin my comments, congratulate Judith Sullivan-Corney on the appointment that she has been given, the responsibility that she has been given, to administer the roles and responsibilities of the board for the South Shore.

I would like to first of all begin by saying I did attend the briefing this morning. I did review the report and as I've stated outside this House many times, the decisions that the minister makes and the motivation must be in the best interests of kids. If for some reason there is something that may be interfering with, or have the potential to interfere with, those decisions, then the minister needs to take action. Based on the ministerial statement here today and the actions of the minister, the minister is suggesting that it was in the best interests of students that she took the steps she did.

I want to first of all acknowledge the good work that was done by the members of that particular board. The minister has acknowledged that and the report acknowledged that. These are people who have given up their time to do what they believe is in the best interest of students, so we have to congratulate them. We have to acknowledge that.

We also have to acknowledge that the voter turnout in school board elections is very low and that sometimes there is no competition for board member positions. Perhaps that may be contributing to some of the situations that unfold. Members do run for election, members do get on school boards, and they do, I believe, have the best interests of students, but somehow during the process of working together those things fall apart. When they do, it does have the potential to negatively impact students.

When you look at the steps that the minister has taken, there was acknowledgement in the report that this particular board had managed their money well, that the taxpayers' dollars were being used wisely, and that the budget-building process was good, and I think those are primary responsibilities of any board. So I would commend that board for doing that. (Applause)

We also have to recognize that there is a responsibility for board members to adhere to their bylaws and to a code of ethics. When board members are elected, there are professional development programs in place. For many of the members there isn't really a true understanding of how the governance model works and what their roles and responsibilities are, so the Nova Scotia School Boards Association has put together professional development opportunities so that new board members can become familiar.

My concern with the minister's, perhaps, haste in making the decision she made is that if the board had recognized that they were not functioning well, I would have hoped they would have taken advantage of an opportunity, if it had been provided for them, to try to resolve their differences, to try to look at better ways of working together. That may not have been successful, but perhaps it is premature to suggest in the Deloitte report pretty strong language that they did not believe that would happen. I would have preferred that the board members had an opportunity, and if they took advantage of that and were still not able to function, then absolutely, the minister can go in and do what she did.

I would also have a concern that the responsibility for administering the board is now in the hands of one person. Some people may remember what happened a few years ago when the Education Act only allowed the minister to give the responsibility to one person. Much of the criticism that came at that time was that that responsibility should not have been limited to one. So the Education Act was changed, and it now reads, "one or more persons."

I guess I would have asked the minister if she considered one or more persons to assume the responsibility. We do have someone who has been asked to do that. I do wish her well. I believe that with the strong staff that exists in that particular board, the students will be sheltered from anything that may happen as a result of this decision and the teaching and learning in the classrooms in the South Shore board will continue to be top-notch. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take the time to thank the minister for providing me with an advance copy of her statement today. I would also like to express my appreciation for the comments made by my colleague in the Official Opposition. I also want to congratulate Ms. Sullivan-Corney on her appointment.

Elected officials at all levels of government are servants of the public. They, like all of us here in this House, have a duty and responsibility to hold themselves to a higher standard. Transparency and accountability are not behaviours that elected officials should exemplify - they are behaviours that elected officials must exemplify, but sometimes this does not happen, for whatever reason.

The minister notes that the report found "... strong evidence of not only failure to withdraw from matters under discussion, but also of active involvement in areas of

pecuniary interest as defined by the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.” Judging by her actions today, I know the minister takes conflict of interest violations seriously. I can assure her that the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus do too. I think all members of the House know that when an individual is involved in multiple interests, one could possibly be corrupted by the motivation of personal fulfillment or enrichment. We cannot allow these conflicts to exist in our school systems, we cannot allow them to exist anywhere. The future of our young people is at stake.

We need to ensure our school boards are working to provide the highest quality education possible for students in Nova Scotia. There is no room for missed opportunities and no room for under-performance in the education system, be it teachers in the classroom or elected representatives on the board.

The minister has indicated she intends to bring forward amendments to the Act that will clarify the minister’s ability to conduct performance reviews and keep school boards accountable to Nova Scotians. I can assure the minister I look forward to seeing her suggestions and working with her in the coming weeks and months. Thank you.

#### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2592**

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

Whereas youth from across the province entered their stories and poems in a creative writing contest held by the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs this summer in celebration of the International Year for People of African Descent; and

Whereas honorary contest judge Lawrence Hill, author of the award-winning bestseller *The Book of Negroes*, selected six winners in two age categories, with first place in the age 13-17 category going to Sarah Frame of Fall River, second place to Chantel Arbuckle of Halifax, and third place to Izra Fitch of Canning, first place in the age 18-22 category to Jennifer Deyarmond of Truro, second place to Elijah Masek-Kelly of Halifax, and third to Karl Fritze of Bible Hill; and

Whereas Mr. Hill commended the winners on their depth, creativity and uncommon wisdom in writing about the experiences of persons of African descent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate the winners of the creative writing contest, thank all of the young writers who took the time to enter and encourage them to continue their great creative work.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### **Bill No. 118 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)**

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, in the west gallery today is Mr. Richard Grant, who is the president of Halifax-based Grantec Engineering Consultants. He is a well-known strong advocate for a national offshore safety regulator; he is vice-chair of the Strategic Steering Committee on Offshore Structures, chair of the Fixed Steel and Topside Working Group of the Canadian Advisory Committee on Offshore Structures, and the Canadian representative on the working group for fixed steel and topside structures. He was awarded the 2010 Lieutenant Governor's Award for Engineering Excellence and he has 25 years experience in this area, including work as a principal structural analyst for the design of the Canadian Navy's Maritime Coastal Defence Vessel.

Finally, I might add as an interesting note, he was also involved at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in the Spallation Neutron Source, which is, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, the most powerful neutron source in the world.

Mr. Speaker, if the members would like to give him a warm welcome, we're all privileged to have him here. (Applause)

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

**Bill No. 119 - Entitled an Act to Require the Government of Nova Scotia to Enter into Negotiations with the Government of Canada to Create a Federal Regulating Body on Offshore Petroleum Safety Standards. (Mr. Andrew Younger)**

**Bill No. 120 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act. (Hon. Graham Steele)**

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

#### NOTICES OF MOTION

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

#### RESOLUTION NO. 2593

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

Whereas on November 24, 2011, White Point Beach Resort was presented with the top prize for Human Resource Development at this year's Canada Tourism Leadership Summit; and

Whereas this award recognizes the commitment made by this resort in the tourism workforce, through professional recognition, training and excellence in human resource management; and

Whereas this 83-year-old tourism icon, which has been known to employ over 150 people during the peak summer months, will be rebuilding its main lodge which was lost during a fire just a few weeks ago;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature extend our congratulations to Danny Morton and the staff at White Point Beach Resort on receipt of this prestigious award and wish them success in rebuilding their landmark to its former glory.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2594**

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 a significant number of students across Nova Scotia do not receive the nutrition needed to perform at the best of their ability in school and extracurricular activities; and

Whereas Feed the Students is an initiative to provide free lunch, once a month, to hundreds of students attending Cole Harbour District High School, while also promoting change and healing between young people and local law enforcement; and

Whereas this is the third year that officers from the Cole Harbour and Preston RCMP have offered the lunch program at the high school;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House recognize and thank these officers for providing students at Cole Harbour District High School with a nutritious lunch while also building stronger, safer communities by strengthening the relationship with the young people in the areas they patrol.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2595**

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

Whereas this is an historic week for Egyptians as they line up peacefully and in great numbers to cast ballots in the country's first election following the uprising of last Spring; and

Whereas the people of Egypt have had a turbulent year of unrest and this first in a series of three elections is a major step towards restoring a government and redefining the political structures of the country; and

Whereas the Egyptian community here in Halifax is hopeful that these elections will provide the foundation for a government that is committed to the principles of democracy and the rule of law, including the importance of protecting minority rights and freedoms;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Assembly acknowledge the importance of these elections and express our hope that the future will be politically stable and the resulting government will be democratic and will respect the rights of its citizens.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2596**

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

Whereas the ability to actively participate in our economy and contribute as a productive member of our community becomes much more meaningful and important when faced with a personal challenge; and

Whereas the Queens Association for Supported Living in Queens County is a dynamic organization which strives to meet the challenges that confront individuals in our community, through programs designed to foster personal growth and independence; and



Whereas the Riverbank General Store in Mill Village, Queens County, operated by the Queens Association for Supported Living, celebrated its grand opening on August 9, 2011, with the goal and vision to make a difference in the community while providing work-related skills to its employees in a retail setting, which also includes a café and gift shop;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Riverbank General Store and its employees for their contribution to the community of Mill Village and its economy.

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. 2597**

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

Whereas the Wayne Oulton family, of W.G. Oulton and Sons Ltd. of Martock, have been named Environmental Farm Stewards of the Year by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture; and

Whereas the Oultons are well known for their hard work and dedication in making their family farm “greener” with less labour, and employ 16 full-time and 10 seasonal workers; and

Whereas the W.G. Oulton family farm includes mixed livestock, orchards, woodlots, and an on-site abattoir, and is a fourth-generation farm with a mission;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the W.G. Oulton family farm of Martock, Hants County, for being such wonderful ambassadors of agriculture in this province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructural Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, could I do an introduction before I do my resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. ESTABROOKS: Joining us in the east gallery today are a number of important people. I'm not going to introduce them in order of priority, because I'm going to leave the most important man until the last. First of all, we have Kent Gilbert and Anne McCallum here. We also have Scott and Margaret Gilbert. I would ask them to stand, if they would, as I call their names.

I've left one person to the end: Max Gilbert, who is a BLT student who you will hear of in a moment. He is Maritimer of the Week, but more importantly I have some details, so if you could recognize these folks, the grandparents and parents of Max Gilbert. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructural Renewal.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Max, I used to be a teacher, so you make those other people sit down and you continue to stand, please.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2598**

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

Whereas thousands of men from Canada and around the world are sporting moustaches for Movember to raise funds and awareness for men's health, specifically prostate cancer; and

Whereas Max Gilbert, a Grade 4 student from Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Elementary School, had the idea to make felt moustaches so children and women could show their support for Movember; and

Whereas in recognition of Maxwell's extraordinary efforts, making more than 1,500 moustaches and raising more than \$3,000, Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Elementary School declared November 15<sup>th</sup> Moustache Day at BLT;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Max Gilbert for raising funds and awareness for men's health, and setting an excellent example for students across this province.

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. (Standing Ovation))

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2599**

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

Whereas the Kinsmen Club of Sackville is celebrating 50 years of service in the community; and

Whereas for 50 years the Kinsmen have raised funds through jog-a-thons, Christmas tree sales, car shows, Monte Carlo nights and bingos; and

Whereas the Kinsmen have been instrumental in the realization of community projects such as the Sackville Sports Stadium pool, have supported charities like cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, and the Children's Trust Fund, and are currently involved in the creation of the Murdock MacKay Memorial Kinsmen Park at First Lake;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly applaud the work of the Kinsmen and wish them many more successful years of contributing to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2600**

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

Whereas Excellence in Teaching Awards are sponsored by the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union; and

Whereas these awards are presented annually to recognize outstanding teachers and to celebrate teaching excellence within the board; and

Whereas Jennifer Lynds of North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche was a winner of a 2011 Excellence in Teaching Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jennifer Lynds for winning this prestigious award and thank her for her exceptional effort to provide a learning environment that ensures the very best in education for her students.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2601**

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

Whereas power rates have soared even higher while this NDP Government has done nothing to stop the climb; and

Whereas the NDP Government has refused to take the tax off the tax on gasoline, a tax that the Premier called an immoral tax while in Opposition; and

Whereas the NDP hiked the HST, broke a promise to municipalities regarding the MOU, putting up property taxes, broke promises to taxpayers to end income tax bracket creep, and hiked over 1,400 user fees outside this Legislature;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to abandon their attempt to tax Nova Scotians into submission and make life unaffordable, and recommend that the NDP rethink their broken promises to the people 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?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2602**

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

Whereas Mathieu Muise of Southwest Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Inc. offers physiotherapy services to the tri-counties, presents to local events and groups, and volunteers his time with seniors in our community and the Special Olympics; and

Whereas on November 23, 2011 the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual business awards banquet; and

Whereas Mathieu Muise of Southwest Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Inc. received the Entrepreneur of the Year Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate my friend, Mathieu Muise, on receiving the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce business award for Entrepreneur of the Year and thank him for his contributions to the health and well-being of our 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 Digby-Annapolis.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2603**

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

Whereas Wendy Balser is no stranger on the golf course of this province; and

Whereas Wendy won the two-day club championship on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Digby Pines; and

Whereas Wendy then moved on to win the NSGA women's two-ball championship on July 27<sup>th</sup> at the Annapolis Royal Golf Club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Wendy Balser on her outstanding achievements in golf, and wish her continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2604**

HON. KAREN CASEY: 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 honour participation, fair play and service to school sport, and to reinforce the significant role interscholastic athletics plays in education; and

Whereas each school chooses a female and male student athlete and a coach who exemplify the qualities the NSSAF strives to develop through participation in school sports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Jody Upham, a coach at Central Colchester Junior High School, in Colchester North, for being the recipient of the 2011 Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Sport Award for Coaches.

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. 2605**

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

Whereas the Tremont World's Fair will celebrate 75 years on September 1, 2012, and

Whereas the Tremont World's Fair has been called "the biggest little agricultural fair in Nova Scotia"; and

Whereas a dedicated group of community-minded, hard-working individuals have successfully planned 74 years of fun and activities for the entire family;

Therefore be it resolved that this House congratulate the small rural community of Tremont as they prepare for their 75<sup>th</sup> Tremont World's Fair in 2012.

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. 2606**

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

Whereas IMO Foods exports its product to many countries around the world, and has been in business for 43 years, while employing 65 people and also providing financial support for other community activities; and

Whereas on November 23, 2011, the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual Business Awards Banquet; and

Whereas Phil LeBlanc of IMO Foods received the Export Achievement Award;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Phil LeBlanc of IMO Foods on receiving the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce Business Award for Export Achievement, and thank him for his contributions to business and 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 Digby-Annapolis.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2607**

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

Whereas the lobster industry of Nova Scotia is both a cultural and economic pillar of our coastal communities and across our province; and

Whereas today, November 29<sup>th</sup>, is “dumping day” for the lobster industry in southwestern Nova Scotia; and

Whereas hundreds of boats left harbours across southwestern Nova Scotia to begin their winter season;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature extend their well wishes and prayers for a great season, and safe fishing to all those aboard the boats headed out today.

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 12:50 p.m, Question Period will go until 1:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**NSP RATE APPLICATION: URB DECISION - OVERTURN**

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

Today the Utility and Review Board delivered its decision on the general rate application for Nova Scotia Power. Residential customers now face an increase of 6.1 per cent, beginning January 2012.

The Premier remained silent on this issue all year, now Nova Scotians are faced with higher power bills yet again. My question for the Premier is, will the Premier overturn the decision by the URB to increase residential power rates by 6.1 per cent?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, honest to goodness I can't think of anything that would be worse than the politicalization of an independent board that is supposed to look after the fair interests of the people of this province. That would be an unprecedented mistake and I'm sure it's not what the Leader of the Opposition means to suggest.

Mr. Speaker, the decision is a difficult one for ratepayers and we thoroughly understand that; that is why it is this government that recognized that it is a necessity of life. It's why we took the HST off home energy costs. But this is what happens when, for a decade, you ignore the responsibility that you have to reframe the energy landscape in this province. This is what happens when you allow a utility to continue to be chained to the international fossil-fuel markets, which is why this government is ensuring that does not happen in the future.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker that will be a cold comfort to Nova Scotians who are faced with the reality of a 6.1 per cent increase in their power bills this year. If this 6.1 per cent wasn't enough of a burden for homeowners to bear in the new year, they will also carry the NDP electricity tax set to rise again in January, 2012. The DSM charge, which the NDP didn't support in Opposition, now is creating an even greater burden on the ratepayers. My question to the Premier is, will the government freeze the DSM charge so ratepayers will not have to pay an increase to NDP electricity charge?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to cloud these things by talking about a demand-side management charge which, of course, this government had nothing to do with. What's more important here is the question of what it

is that the Opposition is suggesting; they are suggesting that nothing happen on the electricity side. It is, in fact, the programming that is put in place through that charge, through Efficiency Nova Scotia, which allows consumers to be able to reduce their energy costs and therefore reduce the overall cost of energy in their household. For whatever reason the members opposite are opposed to energy efficiency, they are opposed to ensuring that consumers are able to spend less on their power.

MR. MCNEIL: No, Mr. Speaker, we believe shareholders should pay that. Unlike the Premier we're not flip-flopping on arbitration. With the general rate increase, the NDP electricity tax, and Nova Scotia ratepayers will be faced with increases associated with the fuel adjustment mechanism; it's simply too much for Nova Scotians to bear and the Premier has done nothing to truly address power rates in Nova Scotia. My question to the Premier is, when can Nova Scotians expect their government to stand up for them and not Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: Well, fortunately Mr. Speaker, the people of Nova Scotia have a government that is standing up for them and getting them off of the rollercoaster of fossil fuels, signing agreements with Newfoundland and Labrador to access the Lower Churchill Power project, ensuring that we have a renewable electricity plan that reduces our dependence on fossil fuels, and making sure that the HST comes off home energy costs. Mr. Speaker, I would point out that - something that actually saves ratepayers money - is something that the Opposition voted against.

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

**PREM.: "BITE THE BULLET" ELECTRICITY PLAN - REVIEW**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, today's URB decision means that Nova Scotians are going to pay on average 5.6 per cent more for power in addition to the 3.2 per cent previously approved under the fuel adjustment mechanism. It was confirmed today that everyone is going to pay more, everyone's bill is going up. We cannot go on like this. Will the Premier commit today to reviewing his "bite the bullet" electricity plan that has all Nova Scotian's paying more?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if there were ever a time for the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to apologize to the people of Nova Scotia, it would be today. The simple fact of the matter is, the reason why we find ourselves in the position where the Utility and Review Board has to make this decision is because for a decade the former Progressive Conservative Government refused to engage in a renewable electricity plan that would get Nova Scotians off of fossil fuels and prevent the kind of roller coaster that we have seen in power rates that is directly attributable to the decisions of the past government.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only apology that's due here is the Premier's for the escalator, the ever up-going escalator that he has put Nova Scotians on starting with

Nova Scotia households who today are facing a 6.1 per cent increase in their rates on top of the 3.2 per cent that was previously approved - over 9 per cent for every Nova Scotia household. Whether you're a senior on a fixed income or a single-parent family, every single household has their power rates going up and up.

Will the Premier explain to all of those who are struggling with this escalator of power rates why he insists on sticking to his bite-the-bullet electricity plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, our electricity plan is designed to get the people of Nova Scotia off of fossil fuels to reduce our dependency on the international fossil fuel markets so that we will have stable, long-term energy rates. That is something the previous government refused to do and as a result, the cost of coal, which is directly reflected in our rates, has risen 75 per cent. That is as a result of the decisions made by the former government.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, even after all the work of the URB, industrial manufacturers like Bowater, like NewPage, will still be paying over \$60 per megawatt hour for their electricity. The workers at Bowater, under excruciating circumstances, have done their part. The monitor at NewPage is doing his part to find a buyer that will operate that mill as a going concern. Why won't the Premier do his own part and rewrite his bite-the-bullet plan so that Nova Scotians can get a break?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what plan the member is referring to except to say that we have a renewable electricity plan, which means this province will have stable long-term rates. If we heard one thing from businesses, it is that is the right direction to go in and they are commending this government for it. We continue to go in that direction because it's simply best for residential ratepayers and for businesses in the province.

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

#### **NSP - MILL RATES: URB DECISION - PREM. STANCE**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, today the URB also delivered their decision with respect to NewPage and Bowater raising the rates for the general rate application and further increasing power bills across the board. The URB has stated that the increase to all other customers is worth it and less expensive than having NewPage and Bowater go off the grid. My question to the Premier is, does the Premier agree with the decision?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I agree that the Utility and Review Board has done its job in terms of considering the range or the balance of interests that exist in the province. What I disagree with, of course, is the question of why it is that we are forced to accept these kinds of rate increases. That happens because past governments refused to get us off of fossil fuels.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the board only offered a three-year load retention rate rather than the five-year application that the mills were asking for. So in a strange way, while this is a concession for the ratepayers, it is a blow to the mills. The mills don't get what they want but the ratepayers are getting higher power bills and nobody wins. My question to the Premier is, considering that both NewPage and Bowater have stressed very strongly that they needed the load retention rate to stay in business, what is the Premier going to do to make sure those mills continue to operate?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the Leader of the Official Opposition is that we are in active negotiations and talks with Bowater. They have a whole series of issues, but interestingly enough, one of the things that they're looking at very closely is the question of energy efficiency, the question of how they go about actually reducing their power costs by reducing energy consumption. That is a concept that is directly applicable to residential ratepayers as well. It was one of the reasons why we wanted to see a comprehensive, across-the-board energy efficiency program that will help people spend less on energy.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, strangely enough, both of these mills pay the DSM charge yet do not have access to that money to create the energy efficiency that the Premier has been talking about. This decision sets a dangerous precedent for Nova Scotians. As you know, this decision applies to the two largest industrial users in the province, but as all Nova Scotians know, there are other industrial users across Nova Scotia, from Sobeys to Bragg, Oxford Frozen Foods, and the list goes on. My question to the Premier is, how will the Premier address this matter now that the precedent has been set by the URB today and make sure that all Nova Scotia businesses have access to fair power rates?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, when Nova Scotia Power was privatized and when Emera was set up under, at one point, the Progressive Conservative Government and later on under the Liberal Government, one of the things they did was put in place a regime under the Utility and Review Board to regulate the interests that are at play in the province. If people make applications to the Utility and Review Board during rate hearings, they will consider those applications.

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

### **PREM. - LMRC: STUDY DAY - PARTICIPANTS**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Labour Management Review Committee has been tasked to study the labour relations issues in the province and consult with stakeholders, both union and non-union, on how best to address labour issues in the province. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Labour Management Review Committee held a study day to look at the settlement of first contracts. Over 55 unionized and non-unionized groups came together as stakeholders to look at this policy and to consider the implications that it would have on their respective organizations. My

question to the Premier is, will the Premier table in this House today a list of the organizations that were invited to participate in that study day?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, obviously I don't have a copy of any such list, but I'll make the appropriate inquiries and see if it's available.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, Sobeys, a proud Nova Scotian company, employs approximately 10,000 people in our province. As the largest private-sector employer with substantial operations based in Nova Scotia, Sobeys is a mainstay when it comes to Nova Scotia businesses. However, Sobeys was not invited to attend the Labour Management Review Committee study day on first contract arbitration.

My question to the Premier is, how can this government claim that the Labour Management Review Committee has undertaken a fulsome consultation when the biggest employer of this province isn't even invited to the study day on a policy that could have great impact on its operations and future investments in this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we go out of our way to make sure we are as inclusive as possible, to ensure that we hear from Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other, from every element of the business community. As I said earlier, I am not aware of who all was invited or how those invitations would have gone out, but the paper was posted on-line for everyone to see and for everyone to comment on.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier can appreciate the frustration businesses are feeling. Here we have the largest single private-sector employer in the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Premier - or his government, or the three MLAs who represent Pictou County - would not call them and invite them to participate in a study day on a piece of legislation that will have a great impact on their business. The Labour Management Review Committee left Sobeys, the province's largest employer, out of this study day on a policy that could have a profound impact on Sobeys' future investment and job creation here in the Province of Nova Scotia. The Labour Management Review Committee has no non-union representation and is making decisions that have a direct impact on non-unionized workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, how can a committee with no representation from non-union workplaces objectively consider labour policies that will greatly affect major employers and not even invite Sobeys - the largest private-sector employer in the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we did hear from representatives on behalf of the non-unionized sector, but more importantly, this legislation does not, in fact, apply to non-unionized locations. (Interruptions) I don't think they've read the bill. They ask questions about it but (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: As I said, Mr. Speaker, this legislation that he's referring to does not apply to non-union shops, but I will ask the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education to address more directly the question that was asked with respect to who was invited to the study day and who replied or responded to the invitations.

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to clarify a couple of things. Representatives of the business organizations, the umbrella groups, and a few individual business representatives were invited to the study day. Several of them indicated that they were not able to attend. So I met with those representatives earlier in the week before the study day and I certainly encouraged them to change their plans and attend the study day.

As the Premier has suggested, I'm getting a copy of the list of people who were actually invited, but quite frankly, because Sobeys is - we do recognize that they're a very valuable business entity in this province, but they operate - and have for years - in other jurisdictions that have first contract, and so know full well that there is no threat to the economy of this province.

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

**PREM. - INFORMED CONSUMERS: OBJECTIVE - CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in the Utility and Review Board decision today they said: The objective of having informed consumers is a worthwhile goal. However, the board considers that the decision of how to inform ratepayers about the impact of government regulations and programs is a policy decision to be made by the province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. If informing Nova Scotians about the cost of government policies is a worthwhile goal, I ask the Premier, does he agree that having informed consumers is a worthwhile goal and that it is up to his government to ensure that it happens?

THE PREMIER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do, and I think consumers are well-informed that the reason why we have a 6.1 per cent increase is because of a government policy - the previous government's policy of allowing us to continue to be shackled by high fossil fuel costs.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that a broad consensus of all Parties, and indeed all Nova Scotians, resulted in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act that set us on a path to a renewable future that was affordable to Nova Scotians. It is his government that threw us off that path, that upset the apple cart, and made decisions that are leading to power rate increases like we see today. So my question

to the Premier is, will he ensure that the true cost of the decisions of his government with respect to power rates are made available to all Nova Scotians, for them to see and judge for themselves?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't mind explaining what the advantages of those decisions are. The advantage of the decision to move to renewables is that we have stable, long-term energy rates and that we are not shackled to the fossil fuel markets, the international fossil fuel markets, and face what we are facing now, which has been a 75 per cent increase in the cost of coal over the last six years.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we see the Premier in full denial again. He likes to go on about the benefits, which all Nova Scotians understand and see and agree on, but he writes a bite-the-bullet electricity plan where he won't tell them how much the cost is.

My final question to the Premier is why won't you be straightforward with Nova Scotians about how much your government decisions are costing them when it comes to power rates?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, our decision to pursue projects like the Lower Churchill, as good as they are for the economy of the province, are also good for the stabilization of energy rates over the long term. That is the fundamental difference between this government and the former government, it is called vision.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

### **ERDT - JOB CREATION: RESULTS - PROVIDE**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism stood in this House and congratulated himself on his marketing strategy, yet in response to question after question from our caucus, this minister can offer absolutely no proof of the jobs created. The minister stands here day after day, talking about cutting cheques and then warns the Opposition against getting caught up in growth targets and measurable outcomes. It is a blatant lack of accountability from this minister and the government that has resulted in thousands of jobs being lost across this province, even as the minister doles out hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is, when will this minister provide the House with any proof of measurable results?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this government has prided itself on, and we will continue to do that, is that this has been a tough couple of years and we will not try to make political gain on the hardships experienced by others.

I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, which is fact, that in Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia is experiencing the lowest unemployment rate of any of the other Atlantic Provinces.



MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada can provide some measurable proof to the minister. In the past year 6,600 people in rural Nova Scotia have lost their jobs: 600 people in the Valley; 1,400 on the North Shore; 2,100 in Cape Breton and 2,500 people in the southern region. This is the legacy of the minister's non-strategy - 6,600 fewer Nova Scotians working in rural Nova Scotia, hardly a strategy that any Nova Scotian would celebrate.

When will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism stop celebrating job losses and get around to creating hard targets and measurable outcomes, the key to a measurable success?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia we had - as the Premier has already mentioned once today, he used the word, vision - we have a vision and through the jobsHere strategy we are fulfilling that vision. We have a strategy in place to address the shortage of jobs within the Province of Nova Scotia. We will stick to our plan.

Mr. Speaker, with Lower Churchill, with Ships Start Here - we are 30 days into Ships Start here and as Mr. Irving mentioned just very recently, how pleased and happy he was that this government was part of that strategy, right from the get-go. We will continue with our strategy as we move forward into the future.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Official Opposition said yesterday, ". . .we are asked to celebrate a flimsy and weak job creation strategy without targets." The results of this feeble strategy are clear. There are 6,600 more Nova Scotians out of work in rural Nova Scotia today than there were last year. There are 9,800 fewer people in Nova Scotia looking for work than there were this time last year.

Mr. Speaker, what will it take before this minister institutes hard, economic targets and commits to measurable outcomes?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud, as Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, and also equally proud to be a member of this government, because since we've taken over power in this province, our unemployment rate is lower now than what it was before we came into power.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

### **ENERGY: POWER RATES - MIN. REDUCE**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, today we learned that a new buyer for the NewPage mill will have to apply to receive the new load retention rate for power. The Premier's been giving assurances that the government would do what it can to ensure that the mill is sold to a buyer that can operate as a going concern. He said the province would aggressively work with our partners to attract a new buyer as quickly as possible.

My question is to the Minister of Energy is, will the minister commit to doing everything he can to get power rates down in the future so a new buyer can afford to operate the mill?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly we're all concerned about power rates, whether it's the largest industrial rate down to the smallest consumer. Nobody wants to pay more than they have to, that's for sure. I think the URB has made a decision that's finding a balance between the consumers and the small businesses and large businesses, and as a department and as a government we're working on energy efficiency programs, and we have a strong renewable program, so there's a combination of help here that will try to keep rates as stable as possible.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, power rates are the mill's highest costs and power rates will be a primary concern for any new buyer. The only suggestion we've seen from the Premier to lower power rates was to ask the government's power partner, Nova Scotia Power, to lower its request for higher profits - and that was only after being pushed into it.

My question again to the Minister of Energy is, did the minister review all of his government's policies to see what costs the government was adding to the power rate burden placed on our mill?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as you know, in the past we've taken the HST off of energy, that's an 8 per cent saving for all consumers in the province, and we're working hard with Efficiency Nova Scotia programs to find energy-efficiency programs - the best kilowatt of energy is the one you don't use, and that makes eminent sense - and good renewable programs around wind and tidal and biomass and hydroelectricity from our neighbours. We have a plan, we have a vision, and we're moving forward with it.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it is of vital importance to my constituency and the Strait area and, really, eastern Nova Scotia and reaching out into other parts of the province, and vital importance to those worrying about the situation at Bowater Mersey, that our mills have every competitive advantage that they can have. No one wants to imagine that high costs imposed by this government could be part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

My question to the Minister of Energy is, when the Premier said he would do all he can, and the minister supports his Premier, shouldn't that mean for the minister to get to the bottom of these imposed costs and share them with Nova Scotians so they can decide for themselves if the Premier and his minister are really doing all they can?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as I outlined, we have a strong energy conservation program through Efficiency Nova Scotia. We have a strong renewable electricity vision and many good things are happening there. The real reason power has gone up is that past governments have not gotten us off of fossil fuels - coal has gone up 75 per cent in the last

five years and oil is up about 70 per cent in that time period. This government has a vision; I haven't seen it from past governments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **ERDT: ECON. DEV. STRATEGY - RESULTS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the lack of attention this government is paying to rural Nova Scotia is costing communities jobs, and the Valley is no exception. Over the last year our communities have felt the loss of 600 jobs, while 1,800 people exited the workforce - that does not include the recent losses at gypsum mines, at Minas Basin Pulp and Power, areas that the minister is very familiar with. The NDP Government has allowed the price of power, gas, and food to continue to soar, and this is having a measurable effect on our local economy.

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

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Annapolis Valley, as of this month the unemployment rate in the Annapolis Valley is 7.8 per cent. That is a lower rate than what it was with the last government and it's a lower rate than it was with the government before that government.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know the minister is well aware of those who have actually left the workforce, those who have given up looking for jobs and headed west. In every community the largest concern on everyone's mind is whether or not they'll have a job tomorrow. It should be innovation, but it's simply getting by. It should be productivity, but it's making ends meet. Families should be encouraging their children to be the most creative, healthy and imaginative they can be, yet they are worried that they will not even be able to provide a warm home and a healthy dinner.

As jobs disappear, as energy prices soar and healthy food continues to become more and more expensive, will the minister explain to families in the Valley why he's more interested in fancy logos and colourful billboards than he is in keeping them working in their communities?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, today I was talking to a government official in Berwick and that official reiterated to me how happy he was working with this government with the new plant. We have been on the ground working with Berwick to replace some of those unfortunate job losses. I've got to say that the reports that I'm getting, certainly from the Annapolis Valley area, from municipalities, is they are happy to be working with us. They are quite content that we are in government, as a matter of fact, they seem quite pleased. I think we all recognize that in tough times things happen that are out of our control and when we talk about some of those job losses, I suppose I could write a letter to the

President of the United States and I could ask him to get the construction industry booming again. I could do that, but, you know, what's the sense?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that Berwick is starting to recover from the disaster of 400 jobs lost at Larsen's, but that's cold comfort to the 1,800 people who left the workforce in the Valley in the past year. The lack of any hard targets, measurable outcomes, is pushing rural Nova Scotia to the breaking point. The minister seems satisfied with clever press releases; however, the people of the Valley are far from satisfied.

I remind the House that it wasn't his appearance in Digby that brought out the crowd, it was a time to honour a great warden, Jim Thurber, that brought out the crowd and also hoping that the minister may have an announcement for Digby. Last week when a job went up for a clerk's job, 71 people applied for the minimum wage job. Things are desperate in places like Digby. How many jobs will have to disappear before the minister takes concrete action on the economy? How many more jobs will be lost before we have a real strategy with hard targets and measurable outcomes?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that in the Annapolis Valley, the unemployment rate is 7.8 per cent, currently, that's the lowest it has been in years. We are experiencing, in Atlantic Canada, the lowest unemployment rate in the Atlantic Region, during tough times we are doing this. We have a plan, we have a strategy and it's called jobsHere.

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

### **LBR./ADV. EDUC.: LMRC - MEMBERSHIP**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, once again this government has proven that they're not interested in consultation with the business community when it comes to drafting new labour legislation. Only one year ago the Minister of Labour rose in this place and told us: We believe the Labour Management Review Committee will provide an informed approach to keeping our legislation current and responsive to the needs of the labour relations community.

Yet last night Dave Fearon, vice-president of human resources for Sobeys, the single largest private-sector employer in Nova Scotia, confirmed to members of the Law Amendments Committee that his company is not represented under the Labour Management Review Committee. Mr. Fearon went on to explain that the Labour Management Review Committee does not represent the majority of the workforce of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. How does the minister expect to benefit from an informed approach when the province's single largest private-sector employer has no representation on the committee?

HON. MARILYN MORE: As the members of this Chamber well know, the Labour Management Review Committee was set up to make recommendations and do research and consultation around the Trade Union Act, and also the collective bargaining Acts affecting highway workers, correction workers, and civil servants. They certainly have been doing that.

In discussions with the representatives of the business community, they have admitted to me that they have been brought in, in terms of providing input on this piece of legislation, earlier than other governments had provided. The process is working. When there is any possibility of impact or any interest by the non-unionized sector, they are able to have input and take opportunity of such things as the discussion paper, the study day, et cetera. So the consultation is working. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, clearly Sobeys is not alone on the government's do-not-consult list. In March, Heather Cruickshanks of Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia said, "The government has repeatedly refused to give non-unionized workers a voice on the Labour Management Review Committee." The Employers Roundtable, representing job creators like Michelin, Clearwater Fine Foods, and Bowater Mersey, has said that the LMRC should have representatives from employers, and employers not represented by a union.

In fact, during his presentation last evening, Mr. Fearon went on to explain that probably 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the workforce in Nova Scotia is not represented on the Labour Management Review Committee.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, why has the minister denied approximately 80 per cent of the province's workforce representation on the Labour Management Review Committee? Is this the government's way of trying to engineer the kind of results it wants?

MS. MORE: I'm not sure there is a lot of value in debating Bill No. 100 again this Fall. The Labour Management Review Committee is one of the mechanisms that government uses to get research, advice, and analysis. They deal with the Trade Union Act, and as I said, I am very pleased with the way that is working. There are, believe me, hundreds if not thousands of other opportunities for all stakeholders in this province to consult and provide input to the government. The discussion paper was available to all Nova Scotians, all businesses, whether unionized or non-unionized.

MR. BAIN: It's clear the government has left job creators out of the decision-making process. Their lack of consultation with them on important issues surrounding labour legislation and other matters in the province is telling. Sobeys, Merit Contractors, the Employers Roundtable, and countless other businesses and business advocates have expressed serious concern about the makeup of the Labour Management Review Committee and their lack of consultation. Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, when will the minister tell the truth and stop denying that the Labour

Management Review Committee is an all-out sham designed to make it easier for the government to ram through more extreme job-killing labour laws?

MS. MORE: I'm not sure if the honourable member is suggesting that my integrity is at stake here, but I'll go back to the essence of the question. This government values the important role of business in terms of providing benefits and prosperity to Nova Scotians. We work very closely with all aspects of business. There have been many things that this government has listened to from business representatives and has implemented. Certainly the advice of some of the businesses within the construction trade was not to include Part II and we didn't. We were listening, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

### **PREM. - VIOLENT CRIME: STRATEGY - LACK EXPLAIN**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, throughout the past year violent crime has been a serious issue in Nova Scotia and especially in the Halifax Regional Municipality. There has been an unusual amount of homicides which have taken place over the past 11 months, and the past few weeks have been no exception, yet this government has remained silent on the issue of violent crime in our province.

I repeatedly questioned the Minister of Justice on this issue during the Spring session and we still have no strategy from the government on violent crime. Mr. Speaker, considering that safety is on the minds of Nova Scotians across the province, why has the Premier yet to address violent crime with a comprehensive strategy?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question under advisement, I'll have the Minister of Justice respond to it on his return.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, an issue such as violent crime is not one that we would expect the Premier would not be aware of or would not be concerned with. Suggesting that the Minister of Justice alone should be dealing with this issue, I think, certainly is an indication of how seriously this government takes the issue.

Earlier this month it was reported that Halifax has suffered six more homicides and nine more attempted murders so far this year over the previous year. Since that report there have actually been other homicides and attempted murders in the city, including the murder of a senior and a double stabbing in the city as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's silence on the issue of violent crime is of no comfort to those Nova Scotians who are worried about this serious problem. My question is, when will the Premier address violent crime prevention with a comprehensive strategy?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course we take very seriously the question of violent crime, in fact of any crime in our community, and we're pleased to see that in many categories of violent crime those statistics are going in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, what I can assure the member opposite is that the Minister of Justice is working with the policing authorities right across the province to ensure that there is a comprehensive strategy, that there are appropriate assets and resources in place to ensure the safety of Nova Scotians.

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, based on the cheap legislation tabled by the Minister of Justice yesterday, it's very clear that his priority is not on dealing with violent crime in the Province of Nova Scotia. This is the same Minister of Justice who has been busy finding ways to cut back programs in his department in order to comply with the Finance Minister's budget directives. This is a government that made significant cuts to the Department of Justice at a time when Nova Scotians are looking for leadership and looking for a plan to deal with violent crime.

With more incidents of violent crime, people are thinking twice about how safe they are in their own communities, yet this government has failed to present Nova Scotians a strategy to address the issue and they have failed to pass any legislation which would have any effect in dealing with the high rates of violent crime in our province.

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is, what will it take before this Premier and this government finally take the issue of violent crime seriously?

THE PREMIER: Well, of course we take it seriously. As to the legislation introduced yesterday by the Minister of Justice, I can understand why that would be a touchy subject for the member opposite and for his caucus. Mr. Speaker, that is not, of course, our focus. Our focus is to make sure that people in this province have the appropriate resources when it comes to policing, to ensure that they are safe in their community.

The Minister of Justice works, both across the province and nationally, with police organizations to ensure that we have modern police forces, that they are well-equipped to ensure that we have the appropriate resources associated with not only crime prevention but crime detection. The member opposite knows that we've just made a major investment in a new medical examiner's facility as an example of the kind of seriousness that we attach to the ability of our authorities to do their job.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

#### **EDUC. - SCH. BD. FUNDING (2012-13): HOGG FORMULA - EFFECT**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. The Hogg formula, which is used to distribute funds to school boards, is

currently under review and I believe that's a good thing. Interviews have been completed. Boards have had both their high level and their detailed presentations, and the deadline for submissions from boards in response to what they have received is November 30<sup>th</sup>, which is tomorrow. So my question to the Minister of Education is, will the results of the current Hogg formula review have any effect on the funding to boards for 2012-13?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member would know that the formula and the budget considerations are two separate things. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: It's my understanding that the Hogg formula is used to distribute funds to school boards so I'm not sure how they are different. The budget-building process is well underway across all school boards in the province but they're operating with many unanswered questions.

They're still reeling from a \$36 million funding cut last year. They've heard rumours that the government is once again going to slash public education in the next budget and they're looking for their funding targets and their preliminary profile sheet. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, district health authorities have information about their funding for next year, so has the Department of Education given school boards their funding targets so they can move forward with their process?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I did inform all of the school boards that when we have our budget targets, I will be going out and delivering that information to each of the school boards. We don't have that information at this time; therefore, as soon as we get it the school boards will be advised.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, that concerns me because we know that information is at the Department of Finance. We know that the Department of Health and Wellness has received theirs. My question is why the second largest funded department in the province would not have their funding. Boards have not been given their funding targets; they have no preliminary profile sheets; they have no idea what the review will do or what impact it will have. So my question to the minister is, will she commit to supporting school boards in their budget-building process and provide them with the information they need - now?

MS. JENNEX: As I said, when we have that information I will be making it available to all school boards.

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

**ERDT - JOB CREATION PROG. (ANNIV.):  
MIN. STATEMENT - DIVERSION CONFIRM**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were treated to the spectacle of the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism patting himself on the back and celebrating his failed job scheme. It was shocking that this minister would celebrate a



fiction and call something a success when every imaginable indicator proves it's a failure. For instance, last week allnovascotia.com reported that from October 2009 until October 2011, employment throughout the province was down by 5,000 and areas of the province outside of Halifax lost 7,900 jobs between the April and June period in 2009, and the same period in 2011.

Will the minister admit today that the press release statement in the House and the smiling photograph on the government's Web site marking one year of job losses was nothing more than a denial of reality and a diversionary tactic?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will say this, what is a diversion is when members from the opposite Party take the job losses, things that are out of the control of Nova Scotians, and use it for political gain. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, we don't want to see one job lost in the Province of Nova Scotia but I think what is a diversion, and what is completely wrong, is for Parties to misrepresent those numbers.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, those numbers came from allnovascota.com. Yesterday during his triumphant statement, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism bragged about all the money handed out. My question is, what did the job scheme do to maintain or create jobs at Bowater Mersey, NewPage, Minas Pulp and Power, Fundy Gypsum, Composites Atlantic, New Minas Co-op, Hart of Windsor and Port Hawkesbury, at Martin Printing in Windsor, Margolian's in Truro, or Signature Styles?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that in 1991 unemployment in Cape Breton peaked at 20.7 per cent; I know that, again, in 1997, it was at 26.6 per cent. What I also know is that unemployment currently today is at an all-time low compared to when either one of those Parties was in power.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada indicates that 2,500 people in southwestern Nova Scotia and 2,100 Cape Bretoners have lost their jobs since October. Will the minister deny that these people and many other Nova Scotians are struggling, and will he admit that his job scheme is doing nothing to help them?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I will admit to is that we are on the cusp of an economic boom in the Province of Nova Scotia. With Lower Churchill, Ships Start Here - we are 30 days into potentially 11,500 jobs, just through Ships Start Here alone. This is a great opportunity for Nova Scotians to live here, to come home here, to raise a family here. I would rather be nowhere else than right here in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**ENERGY - GRID UPGRADE: UPDATE - PROVIDE**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. The importance of upgrades to the grid cannot be understated. The Premier made an announcement in 2010, which I will table, that an upgrade would be made to the grid and lines between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We were obviously happy that the Premier took our suggestions, since the Liberals have been talking about it since 2008, and made it part of the campaign in 2009 - however, we haven't heard anything about it since. Would the Minister of Energy provide us with an update on this important project?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we work with our partners in Atlantic Canada, as you know, and the Lower Churchill project is an important component of that. Energy Ministers from the four Maritime Provinces have met regularly, looking at how we can co-operate and work together. As you know, there was a memorandum of understanding just earlier this year to work with the Province of New Brunswick on upgrading their system, and we'll continue to work with all of our partners here in Atlantic Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good minister.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I heard some Opposition member saying "good minister", but I'd be really concerned with that answer since Emera has said that that link is critical to Muskrat Falls or any of the renewable energy targets that the government wants to talk about - and the minister can't even tell us when that might be done or what the status is, other than to say they're talking.

One of the things that is not only required for the Muskrat Falls project to go forward, but of course it would open the opportunity for energy from Hydro-Québec, which would be clean energy at prices far less than what Nova Scotia is now paying - has the minister called Hydro-Québec to discuss the possibility of importing power from Quebec that will lower power bills for ratepayers?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are always looking for the best possible buy for electrical energy in this province, and we are continuing to work with our partners. The truth is that the infrastructure, the electrical transmission system, is just not up to grade at this point in time. It's just not possible to bring in large quantities of electricity from the Province of Quebec, but when the Lower Churchill project is in place, the transmission grid will be improved, will be upgraded, and then we'll be able to look at other options from other renewable sources.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I love it when the government keeps parroting that line that Emera has already said is incorrect. The Hydro-Québec study said that the infrastructure is in place. They said there's some upgrading needed on the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick line, but Muskrat Falls can't go ahead without that upgrading either, and the Premier is committed to that. The fact of the matter is, if that line has to be

upgraded anyhow - I would hope the minister can actually multi-task and not just work on one project, so he should be on the phone with Hydro-Québec making those deals now.

This is an issue that the NDP has an opportunity to take action on. It would make power rates more affordable by mixing in cleaner, much cheaper power, and it would help meet the environmental regulations set by federal, international, and provincial regulators.

Mr. Speaker, the job of the minister is to multi-task, not just wait for Muskrat Falls to happen, so why won't he explore the Hydro-Québec option as part of the energy solution for Nova Scotia?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we're always looking at the lowest possible costs. To further update on that, I will turn this over to the Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member asking the question often has a problem paying attention to what is actually going on in the province. He should know that we signed a memorandum of understanding with the New Brunswick Government around the transmission upgrades. That work is continuing. It involves not just Emera, but also the New Brunswick utility. There are many questions associated with strengthening the regional grid. In fact, the Minister of Energy and myself, along with officials from our departments, are working on all of those things in order to strengthen the energy landscape in the region.

I can tell you this as well, once the Lower Churchill project is on track, is on-line, that will give us the ability to also negotiate with Hydro-Québec, and if they want to send us cheaper power, we'd be happy to take it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

### **ENERGY - ALTERNATIVE FUELS: PLANS - DETAILS**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. If we are shackled to fossil fuel costs, as the Premier suggests, and the NDP Government has chosen aggressive movement toward alternatives, can the Minister of Energy table the numbers his government used to make this decision?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we're constantly working on our plan to get stable electricity prices in this province. I don't have those figures right at my fingertips, but I will certainly work with my department to make those figures and stats available to the honourable member.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this one is of general interest. Can the Minister of Energy tell us how many windmills would be required to power the NewPage Port Hawkesbury paper mill for the state of their operations before the hot idle?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, that's sort of a hypothetical question in many ways, because energy comes from a variety of sources. I'm not an electrical engineer and I'm sure neither is the honourable member. When the electricity goes on the grid and the electrons are put in there, how do you know for sure where it's coming from? It's a complicated mix from various sources. There's just no way to know for sure exactly where that energy is - is it from the local windmill, is it from the windmill at the other end of the province, is it from hydroelectricity, is it from biomass, is it from tidal power? Who knows? These are all difficult.

I do tell you that we have a plan in this province to produce renewable electricity that will have stable rates for the next number of years and will help Nova Scotians reduce their power rates and make life more affordable for all Nova Scotian families in this province. Thank you.

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. 115.

#### **Bill No. 115 - Labour Standards Code.**

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 115 be now read a second time. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and speak on Bill No. 115 - the Leave for Citizenship Ceremony - which contains amendments to the Labour Standards Code. This bill ensures that immigrants will be able to take time off work to attend their citizenship ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, becoming a Canadian citizen is the ultimate goal of most immigrants to our country and province. Immigrants who become Canadian citizens have the same protections, rights and responsibilities as does everyone born into Canadian citizenship. The province's Immigration Strategy stresses that Nova Scotia must create a welcoming environment that encourages immigrants to move, settle and make a life here in Nova

Scotia. Even relatively small gestures, like ensuring immigrants can have leave to obtain their citizenship, contribute to the development of that welcoming environment.

The Labour Standards Code already provides unpaid leave in seven specific circumstances such as parental, family illness, compassionate and bereavement leaves. Similarly, a person's employment would be protected while attending a ceremony to obtain their citizenship. This legislation is straightforward, it provides up to a day of unpaid leave to an employee to attend their citizenship ceremony and it requires the employee to provide 14 days notice to the employer, or as much notice as is possible.

Mr. Speaker, an immigrant to Nova Scotia suggested the idea for such a leave. I listened and agreed it would be a good idea. In October the Department of Labour and Advanced Education issued a discussion paper requesting feedback on the proposal. Almost all those responding agreed this was a show of support for our immigrants. I have attended a number of citizenship ceremonies and I have been moved by the emotion and pride shown by every immigrant as they receive their official citizenship. Sometimes they come on stage along sometimes with their spouse, and sometimes with their family. In every case they are extremely proud of their achievement, which is often the end result of a long and difficult journey. Each ceremony features immigrants from around the world who have come to our province in search of a new life.

Mr. Speaker, between 800 and 1,000 people in Nova Scotia become Canadian citizens every year. This legislation demonstrates the value we place on that achievement and it is just one of the ways we are building a welcoming environment in Nova Scotia. That concludes my remarks and I look forward to hearing from the members opposite. Thank you.

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say a few words on Bill No. 115, which is the Labour Standards Code. This bill, of course, as the minister just said, allows for time off without pay to attend your own citizenship swearing-in, which is a very important part of the whole process of immigration, as the minister has said, and as many of us know from personal experience, maybe not being sworn-in ourselves but going and attending those ceremonies.

When you do attend the ceremonies for citizenship, they often suggest and invite everybody there to take the same oath that the new Canadian is taking. It really is a very moving ceremony, I think, even for those of us who have been raised in Canada and maybe take some of our rights for granted. When you stand on the stage and see one after another of the new citizens crossing the stage and receiving their certificate, it's very moving to see the number of countries they come from and to recognize that each and every one of them has a story to tell of reasons why they have come to Canada, and some of them are very dramatic indeed. So we absolutely think that it's important that people be allowed to have time off to get to those ceremonies and to participate.

I'm interested to know a little bit more about the consultation that has taken place. I did see the survey that went out, and I'm wondering if the minister might at some other time make available the comments that were received back. That would simply help me, as the Critic for Immigration, to know whether there were further ideas that were presented or thoughts that people might have been looking for in this bill.

I know that we are just the second province in Canada to do this. I understand Manitoba has an Act like this and that we are following in their footsteps. I'd say that's a good thing in this case, because Manitoba has been successful in their immigration efforts over the last 15 years or more. They got underway with intense work on this a long time before Nova Scotia did, and I'm very pleased that we will look at some of the things they've done that have improved immigration in their province or improved the experience for the new immigrants when they get there.

But I would like to know what else might have been suggested, because it's interesting to note that close family members wouldn't be entitled to a day off to go and attend that ceremony as well. As I said, it is a very important milestone in a person's life. I really think you can look at it the same way you would with things like days when somebody is married and the thought that this changes your life - it's a legal change in your life. It makes a big difference and it's something you want to share with your family. So that would be something of interest, to see if that was a comment raised by the workplace, by the employers, or by others who might have been consulted in this.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's an opportunity to say a few words about immigration while we look at this, because the minister herself has said this is a gesture toward being a more welcoming community. I think it is important to note that it is a small measure that we're talking about here today. It's not a major change. I think in some ways I was surprised that this wasn't already widespread practice, that people and employers were not offering people the time off to go to their citizenship ceremonies without question. Since this bill is before us, I have to assume that there were cases where people couldn't get the time off to travel and go to those ceremonies.

So I'm glad to see that we'll take care of that through legislation, but what I really would like to see are some other measures that come forward that will help us have a higher level of immigration. I raise the issue, and have raised the issue with the Premier in Question Period a couple of weeks ago, about the current cap that we're under - the cap of 500 nominees under our Provincial Nominee Program. Many other provinces, even in our vicinity, have more of that than we do. Certainly Manitoba has many multiples of that. They're far ahead of us in the number of people they're allowed to bring in under the provincial program, and I think this is really important, that we not be held back in terms of attracting and bringing new Canadians to Nova Scotia. So the cap of 500 is something that we're hoping the government will speak loudly and strongly with their counterparts in Ottawa, to have that raised.

Given that there is now a cap in place for all provinces, I realize it's different, but we want to see that number increase. We believe that there are many more people who would come to Nova Scotia and that we could do the marketing for that as a province and not wait for them to go through the federal system, if we had more than 500 allowed in this province. My understanding, from talking to representatives from the Office of Immigration, is that we won't have any problem at all reaching the 500. We're there and we'll be able to maintain that. We really need a higher level so that we can welcome more new Canadians to our province and increase those numbers from between 800 to 1,000 swearing-in ceremonies, or people being sworn in as new Canadians, in Nova Scotia each year. We should be having double and triple and more in terms of the number that we're welcoming and settling in Nova Scotia.

So I hope that we'll see some other measures as well from the Minister of Immigration to help us get there and to help not only in this small way but in some bigger ways as well to move us forward on the immigration agenda. Again, as this bill and the provisions in the bill read, the Liberal caucus is fully supportive. It's an important measure. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just intend to say a few words on this bill. It is one of those "of course" types of bills, of course we're going to support the bill. If the minister believes that enabling new Canadians to take time off for their citizenship ceremony requires an Act of the Legislature, then we're certainly going to support that bill. For many of the reasons that have just been listed, it is a very important ceremony, it's a very moving ceremony. I encourage all Canadians, new or old, to attend one or more of these new citizenship ceremonies - it's a great tribute both to our own country and to the people who have chosen to come here.

Having said that, the issue of immigration is a gigantic one for our province. As many members will know, our natural rate of population growth, the births minus deaths, turned negative for the first time this year. Without immigration, whether it's interprovincial or international, we are now faced with the prospect of outright population decline; in fact many regions of Nova Scotia are already depopulating. What is the government's answer today? To ensure that there's time off to attend the immigration ceremony and, as nice as that is, it only scratches the surface of what needs to be done.

I am aware that there is an Immigration Strategy; my criticism of it is that it is by far too modest. If we truly want to take advantage of the shipyard opportunity, if we truly want to build a modern, dynamic, growing economy, we need to do far more than raise the targets by a modest few percentage points and make sure that people can have time off to go to the ceremony. We need a big, bold, dynamic, aggressive Immigration Strategy that targets people who want to be new Nova Scotians, that brings them here, that settles them in areas of our province where people are desperately needed, that ensures there is training

for the jobs of tomorrow, that ensures that our schools and our government and our businesses are all aligned.

For those who think that that is too much to ask for, I note the example of Manitoba was just mentioned - a province not far off our population, but spread over a must larger area - and they've done exactly that and they've done it very successfully. Why? Because they set real targets that they were committed to as much as they are to a budget target or a debt target or a jobs target. They recognized that you cannot have a growing economy and a shrinking population. They have dreamed big dreams, they have been big and bold, and they have made it work.

We can only wish we had the government here that took immigration with the same level of seriousness, beyond just ensuring that people get time off to go to the ceremony. Maybe someday we'll have that kind of government, but as for today, as for the issue that is before us, of course we all agree that people should have time off to go to their citizenship ceremony.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my honourable colleagues for their comments, and I would move that we adjourn second reading on Bill No. 115, which amends the Labour Standards Code. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 115. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would please call Bill No. 116.

**Bill No. 116 - Elections Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance, who is Acting Minister of Justice for today.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Justice, I move that Bill No. 116 be now read a second time.



It is my pleasure to begin debate on this bill which amends the Elections Act. In the Spring our government introduced a new Elections Act. We wanted to increase voter turnout and improve accessibility for voters. We believed then, and we continue to believe, that Nova Scotia needs a modern Elections Act. But when we introduced this legislation in the Spring, professionals in the privacy field raised concerns relating to the disclosure of the elector's year of birth. With these amendments the government is addressing those concerns. We listened to leaders in the field of privacy and acted upon their advice. The amendments in Bill No. 116 require that the chief electoral officer disclose the age category, or cohort, of each elector to registered political Parties and MLAs, not the year of birth of voters. As a result, this change is endorsed by Nova Scotia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer.

Mr. Speaker, allow me now to read the words that the Privacy Review Officer, Ms. Dulcie McCallum, shared with Nova Scotians, "I am pleased that government has introduced this amendment to correct a privacy concern raised by my office. This change - to put each elector into an age category or cohort - does not constitute collection and sharing of personal information. This amendment affords Nova Scotians with better privacy protection while at the same time addressing what is a laudable goal - to improve voter participation."

I also want to speak to the second set of amendments, the changes related to the held assets of registered political Parties acquired before July 11, 1991. This amendment requires that any held assets of a registered Party become the property of the Crown if a registered Party does not divest itself of the assets by March 31, 2012. Held assets are defined as funds or assets held in trust for a registered Party before July 11, 1991 and includes income earned on those funds or assets.

We are addressing an issue which dates back decades, one that speaks to the fundraising tactics of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia dating back to the 1970s. This episode put a dark cloud over the democratic process in Nova Scotia. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was many years ago and there is a new leadership in the Liberal Party, one that promises to remedy the situation. The Liberal Party has announced that it intends to create a public policy institute with its trust fund, in fact some in the Party are telling the media that the money has been transferred. We welcome this news. However, it is also important to remember that this situation has been going on for many, many years. Our amendments bring legislative clarity to the situation and ensure that this troubled chapter in Nova Scotia politics is closed.

Once these amendments pass the House of Assembly it is the intention of our government to move forward quickly and request the proclamation of the Elections Act. With those words, Mr. Speaker, I welcome debate on this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, it's with mixed feelings that I rise to speak on Bill No. 116, an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2011, the Elections Act, because it was just mere months ago that we were discussing this very issue which the government seeks to amend today. As I said before, for a Party that spent its entire existence in Opposition telling Nova Scotians how they would do things differently, this is but one more example of how things changed the minute they got a taste of power. The minute they got a taste of a majority all the ideals, all the goals of how they would do things differently, went out the door and I'm going to give examples of that as I speak for a few minutes on this.

If there is one bill where a government should have been able to stand in its place and say we have all-Party support for the changes we are making, it is the Elections Act. That is the one set of principles that guides how our democracy is going to move forward in our province. Yet even with such a sensitive piece of legislation, this government thumbed its nose at the Opposition and said we have a majority and it's going through and that's it. Lo and behold, here we are today with the government with its tail between its legs, coming to the House to say, you were right, the Liberal caucus was right, we were wrong. (Interruption)

Now, I know the minister of museums and stuff says that they'll never admit that but that's just another example of the arrogance of this government. That is another example of the arrogance of this government when you hear the minister of museums and if he's threatening my constituents with funding for what I'm about to say, then let him stand in his place, rather than cowardly shouting from that side of the House about threats of funding to my riding or to my constituents. If he has something to say, let him stand in his place and say it.

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

MR. SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, if the minister has something to say, let him stand in his place and say it. I think at least his constituents should hear what he has to say, rather than the clucking that we are hearing from across the floor right now - hot air from this side.

This is a bill that says - we got it wrong. That's exactly what it says - we got it wrong, that's exactly what it says. (Interruption)

Well if you have something else to talk about, stand in your place and say it. Stop clucking on that side and stand in your place and say it. Say it right now if you have something to say. No, well that's what we have, Mr. Speaker, again another example of the arrogance of this government. When challenged they'd rather sit in their place and try to be quiet rather than defending their position.

Mr. Speaker, we said at the time that the NDP proposal to disclose the age of electors in Nova Scotia violated privacy laws. No other Party in this province supported that change, only the NDP. So just to help the Minister of Finance, who I know has quite the revisionist history since he is on the government side, he said they had to review this because of concerns brought to their attention by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer.

Let's go back and see how that all came about. That came about because I, as Justice Critic, wrote to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer, asking for her opinion on the changes being proposed by the NDP Government. At that time she expressed reservations with the change being proposed. Hansard will reflect that, Mr. Speaker, and I believe I'll have the opportunity to remind this government, word for word, of the discussions that took place in the Spring where the Minister of Justice and the Premier were told there are concerns about privacy and you should take your time, hold this bill until those can be addressed. Instead, one more example of the government saying we have a majority and we're going to ram it through, just as they are saying on Bill No. 102, first contract arbitration, we have a majority, we're going to ram it through.

There's absolutely no need for it. There was no pressing issue that the Elections Act had to be changed, that there was an election that was going to take place and that the government had no choice. They had a choice. They could have said to Nova Scotians, there are concerns that have been raised with the rules, with the guiding principles of how we carry out elections in this province, by the two other Parties. We take that seriously. We will take our time and we will look into those concerns.

That, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, would have been the responsible thing for a government to do, yet the NDP Government said, no way we're going to put it through. Instead of coming to this House today and saying, we made a mistake, we're going to fix it, we heard the concerns from the Opposition, we heard the concerns they have when asked for an opinion from the protection of privacy officer and, as such, we're going to bring about changes. It was too much for them to do, to just come and be humble and say, we made a mistake. Your concerns were legitimate and we're bringing forward the changes as a result. Instead, they had to play politics with it and they had to say, how can we somehow say - what can we put in the bill to say, look over here and don't focus on the fact that we screwed up, and we got it wrong, and that we rammed it through when the concerns were raised here on the floor of the Legislature.

What did they put in there? A cheap clause - because that's what it is - a cheap clause, a political smear at a Party in this House for a problem that has already been dealt with. So here we have a Minister of Justice bringing in that kind of cheap legislation at a time when Nova Scotian families are grieving over the violent deaths of their loved ones. That's what the Minister of Justice is focusing on - and what does he tell the press? The ridiculous statement of constituents and people on the street are talking to him about held assets - what more foolish statement to come from the Minister of Justice?

I can tell you what my constituents are saying, what I'm hearing on the street: they're saying what can be done to stop violent crime in this province? What can be done to stop job losses in this province? What can be done to bring stable power rates to this province? Not once has anyone ever asked me about held assets - and it was absolutely ridiculous, and I think embarrassing, for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to tell the press that that's why they were bringing about these changes.

As I indicated to the press, it was very clear at our last annual general meeting that a motion was made and unanimously approved to divest of held assets and to create a new public policy institute under the name of a great Cape Bretoner, a good friend and a great Canadian, Allan J. MacEachen. It's something that I think all Nova Scotians can be proud of and we all look forward to the great policy that will come out of that institute. Yet that was too tempting for the government - rather than show respect for Allan J. MacEachen and the decision that had been made and say it was a right decision, an appropriate decision, they chose instead to try to smear his name and to try to smear our Party once again when given the chance.

As I said yesterday, it was cheap then and it's cheap today, and for those who have supported the NDP over all these years and have thought they will be different in government, they won't be like the Liberals, they won't be like the Tories, it will be a new form of government, something we can be proud of - well, look at Bill No. 116 and there is nothing for anyone in the NDP to be proud of in this province.

There was a way that this could have been avoided, Mr. Speaker. All the government had to say is we hear the concerns of the Opposition. We want an Elections Act, a new modern Act with the support of all political Parties. If we can't achieve that, we will at least undertake every reasonable measure to make that a reality, and instead it wasn't done. The Minister of Finance didn't stand in his place to say, I hear the concerns of the Opposition; the Premier mocked the issues we raised around privacy; the Minister of Justice mocked us on the issue of privacy - yet here they come with their tails between their legs with Bill No. 116, admitting, we screwed up, we got it wrong. And it didn't have to be that way, but that's what we have under this government.

Last night it was interesting because at the Law Amendments Committee meeting which the Minister of Justice was chairing, we had more examples of presenters coming in and saying the concerns that they were raising were about regulations to legislation. We had very interesting submissions made on behalf of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project about the impact that the Justice Minister's bill dealing with legal name changes will have on that community.

Now, the old NDP would have been standing behind them and would have said, that's a question of human rights, that's a question of dignity, taking a group that has suffered discrimination, that has suffered hardship and yet has made so many gains over the years, to tell them now that this government believes they should be fingerprinted and they should have to go to criminal record checks because of a name change of an individual

who is transgender. What does the Minister of Justice tell them? We'll take care of it in the regulations.

So we're being asked to pass a bill that a community has identified significant concerns with, and rather than the government say we take that seriously, and so you know what we're going to do, we're going to work on the regulations first so that when we bring this bill back to the House we're going to be able to say here are the regulations, here's how this is going to work, and this is how it fits with the bill. Then we could stand here as legislators and say, that's the responsible way of doing it.

Now, I'm not suggesting that every single piece of legislation that comes in here that we should see the regulations first. In a perfect world, that is the way it would work, but there are certain bills that come before this House that are of such a sensitive nature to human dignity that we should take our time to get it right, and that's one of them.

Only time will tell whether this government tries to ram through that piece of legislation before the regulations are put in place, before the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action committee has the opportunity to give input on the regulations and on the bill itself. The message last night was very clear: they felt there were other ways for the government to achieve its concerns over criminals changing their names legally without being so intrusive to the personal freedoms and rights of Nova Scotians. Time will tell whether they will use that approach as well.

Another example that was given to us last night was from the scrap-metal dealers - honest, hard-working Nova Scotians and, as was pointed out last night and I think the government needs to be reminded, it's because of scrap-metal dealers - they have played a large role in the fact that Nova Scotia continues to be a leading jurisdiction in waste management and diversion in this province. They are the ones who go get the old clunkers, they're the ones who get the old water heater, the old stove, the old fridge, the old freezer, and so many other items around households, around sheds, around garages, and around businesses. They're recycled. Not thrown in the woods, not thrown in the ditch, not thrown in the front yard - they're recycled. This government should be acknowledging the efforts of that industry.

Last night it was impressive to hear them talk about the different initiatives that they have put in on their own to try to identify any materials that may have been stolen, or try to prevent theft itself. It was interesting when they pointed out that their industry is one of the industries that faces the most incidents of theft in this province. So this government is of the belief that they're all buying stolen goods, whereas they're trying to stop people from stealing from their own yards.

Again, the details will be in the regulations, and that industry said, let us see the regulations first, let us negotiate, let us talk, let us work together. That was the message from that industry. It wasn't, we don't want the government to be poking its nose in our business; instead it was asking the government to help them work with industry, to work

with government, and to work with Nova Scotians to find solutions. I think they should be commended for that approach, rather than have government trying to ram through legislation. So that's another example where there will be time for the government to decide whether they're going to push this through or actually wait, get the regulations in place, and then seek the approval of the Legislature.

Let's go back to Bill No. 116, the Elections Act. When it came in the Spring, one of the first glaring omissions of the new Elections Act was that it did not place limits on third-party advertising. Now why is that an issue? Well, we know, ironically, that when the NDP talk about a dark history in Nova Scotia politics, somehow once they got into government they must have broken every mirror they had in their homes and in their offices. If they looked in the mirror they would see that they are the first political Party in Nova Scotia's history to have been fined by the Chief Electoral Officer for violating the Elections Act; for cheating, in essence. They got a \$10,000 fine, and yet they have the unmitigated gall to stand in this House and try to talk about a dark chapter in Nova Scotia history and send that toward another political Party in this province. They have yet to even acknowledge that they broke the law.

Rather than have a full investigation they got saved by the statute of limitations, in that too much time had passed for a full investigation to see exactly who knew what - what did the Premier know, what did Ed Wark know, what did the others in the Premier's Office and the NDP caucus office know, what did the union leaders know when they tried to funnel money to the Party, breaking the laws of Nova Scotia? Yet they stand in their place and when they have to come here and say, we got it wrong when we did it in the Spring, and then they have the gall to throw a section in there saying they want to correct a historical wrong in Nova Scotia's political history.

Why was third-party advertising an issue? Because of the fact that not only did we see the government, with their union friends, violate the Elections Act, we saw further examples of how the unions were trying to find ways around the Act of still advertising politically to support NDP candidates and the NDP. Yet this government, knowing that had taken place, brought in an Elections Act without addressing third-party advertising.

Other jurisdictions have it. The federal government has it. We clearly said there need to be limits so everyone understands the rules of the game and that elections are seen as being fair in this province. At first, the Minister of Justice refused, never heard anyone talk about third-party advertising; heard them talk about held assets, never heard about third-party advertising, if you would believe that.

Finally, at the eleventh hour, the Minister of Justice comes with 18 pages of amendments and tries to get it passed at the Committee on Law Amendments, within hours. Again, is that what those who supported the NDP over the years - since the 1960s and 1970s - is that the type of government they thought they were going to get if an NDP ever formed government in Nova Scotia - really? Trying to bring 18 pages of amendments

and then having them show up at the Committee on Law Amendments mere hours later and asking for them to be voted on.

What was in those amendments? The age disclosure, it got slipped in there with third-party advertising. We caught it. We tried to tell the government, take your time with this. We have an electoral commission in Nova Scotia which is made up of representatives of all three political Parties and the idea of that commission is that they would bring forward suggested changes to legislation to the government and to the other political Parties, that it would be done on a co-operative basis, and that there would be general agreement to those changes.

Instead, the government made it clear that changes were coming from the NDP and they were going forward. As I mentioned before, we had the discussion about privacy. I contacted Dulcie MacCallum, who is doing a fine job for us as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer, and asked, are you aware of this and has the government sought your opinion? Had it come back that the Minister of Justice or the Premier could have stood in their place and said we didn't, here's the opinion from her saying she feels this is fine, this does still protect the privacy of Nova Scotians.

How a government would try to bring about changes knowing how sensitive Nova Scotians are now, and I think all Canadians, to their privacy and protecting their credit cards, protecting their phone numbers, their mailing address, their home address, protecting the privacy of their children - it's not something that's foreign to Nova Scotians, it's on all of our minds - and yet the government brings forward a change which clearly raised red flags. Rather than asking and getting an opinion and saying, a legitimate issue has been raised here, let's take our time and make sure we're onside, they rammed it through and here comes the changes to try to fix that. No one has ever asked Nova Scotians whether they are comfortable with having this information disclosed.

I remember a few elections ago I had a veteran call me and say, I'm not going to be able to vote this election. I said, why would you not be able to vote? He said, I don't think they're going to put me on the list. Naturally I asked why they would not put you on the list. You're a veteran; you've lived in Richmond all your life, why would they not put you on the list? He said, the enumerator asked me my age and I refused to give it.

For him, a veteran, it was a matter of principle. He didn't feel government should have to know his age for him to go vote. Clearly, being a veteran, he was of age to vote so it wasn't a question of whether he was 18. Yet to him, that meant it was important. I respected that. After a few phone calls we were able to resolve the matter. But that meant something to him and that was an important matter for him. As a veteran or any other Nova Scotian, we should take that seriously.

When the government brought this in, obviously, I immediately thought of that veteran and I immediately thought of all other Nova Scotians who are so concerned about their privacy. Yet the government, rather than saying, we want all-Party support on the

Elections Act, they rammed it through. What message does that send to future governments? Should they try to get all-Party support for changes to the Elections Act? Or should they as well simply bring in legislation that suits their political purpose and ram it through?

If there's one thing I've learned, governments change in Nova Scotia. I hate to break it to the current government, but they will not be in government forever and a day here in Nova Scotia. Another Party will eventually form government. Yet if they are to follow the example that is being put in place by this government, then one can only wonder what will eventually happen to the election laws of this province.

Again, when I look at the second clause dealing with the held assets and the comments made by the Minister of Finance, I think it's important that we do a bit of history in this, being that he likes to talk about a dark period in history. I remember when we first brought about changes to electoral financing in this province, where limits were placed on corporate donations and union donations. It was under the government of Rodney MacDonald, and it was decided at that time that there should be limits placed on the use of held assets by the Liberal Party. We had quite a vigorous debate here in this House.

One thing that happened which I would say probably fits in the Minister of Finance's category of being a dark period in the political history of our province is that during that debate - I believe for the first time in the history of our province, Mr. Speaker - two members of the NDP were found to have breached the privileges of the members of this House. Maybe the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will remember that time, and Nova Scotians may be wondering, well, who were those members?

Allow me to help, because I wouldn't want them to think it was the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, or others who may have been here at the time. It was the then-member for Halifax Fairview, who now is our Minister of Finance. So he, who has on his resumé having been found to have breached the privileges of members of this House, has the unmitigated gall to stand in his place and talk about a dark period in the political history of Nova Scotia. To this day he has never officially apologized to the members of this House for the accusatory comments he made toward not only members of our Party - sitting members, former members, and the hard-working men and women who supported our Party over the years.

The other member was the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, but to his credit, he at least immediately stood in his place after a Speaker's Ruling, withdrew his remarks, and apologized - I'd even use the word "profusely," because I think he was honestly sincere in his apology. I have no doubt of that at all. But the Minister of Finance never accepted the Speaker's Ruling and certainly never gave anything close to a sincere apology for the defamatory statements he made against members of our caucus, members of our Party, and hard-working men and women throughout Nova Scotia who have supported our Party over the years.



Yet we're left to wonder why the government was so reluctant back then to bring in third-party advertising. It's interesting - when the issue was raised yesterday about our held assets, someone said, how much money was in the held assets? And I said it's about the same amount of money that the NDP received in union donations since 1998.

The government is never fond of reflecting upon that. When one looks at donations of \$80,000, \$60,000, \$125,000, the total in that 10-year period was well over \$2 million. Yet Nova Scotians are wondering today - and last night Sobeys, Barrett Lumber, and the Contact Centre Association were wondering why the government is so determined to ram this through. The Government House Leader has already said it is going through - do what you want, we have a majority and it is going through. That's the message.

Again, I wonder how many long-time NDP supporters thought that this is the type of government they would get. Rather than listening to Sobeys, the single largest private sector employer in Nova Scotia, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education can't even stand in her place and say whether they are invited or not to give input on changes made. Shame on that minister for not being able to do so and for somehow suggesting because Sobeys does business in other provinces that have first contract arbitration we shouldn't ask them for their opinion.

It's a shame she wasn't there last night because you know what Sobeys doesn't have in other provinces? They don't have their corporate head office. You know what else they don't have in other provinces? They don't have their payroll centre. You know what else they don't have in other provinces? They don't have all of their human resources headquarters. They have them here in Nova Scotia. If that's not enough to warrant the consideration of this government, I don't know what Nova Scotia companies need to do to get this government's attention.

That's another example of the arrogance of this government. When one looks at the millions of dollars they've received from labour, one has to ask - what truly is behind this push by the government? The Minister of Labour has said, there's no problem, labour relations are good in this province but we're still going to move ahead with this. She said, better now than trying to deal with it when there's a crisis. What crisis, is she predicting one? Is she aware one is coming and this is preventive medicine and preparing for that crisis? There is no crisis. Every presenter last night said Nova Scotia - part of its selling point to businesses coming here is the great labour relations that exist between employees and employers.

That's something I think Nova Scotians can be proud of. I know as a legislator, hearing that, I was very pleased to hear that. When these business owners go out and talk to colleagues in other provinces, that's the message they give about Nova Scotia and it can work because, Mr. Speaker, I was at the event that the Halifax Chamber of Commerce had on Friday night celebrating the awarding of the ship contract to the Irving shipyard. It was interesting, and I think it was something impressive, to hear Jim Irving stand in his place and thank the members of Local 1 with Canadian Auto Workers, which is the union that

represents the employees at Halifax Shipyard, and saying that they have been partners in moving forward on the success of this project. To hear someone of the stature of Jim Irving make comments like that about a union I think is something that was impressive, to say the least, and last night the messages that we heard from employers was the same. They're very proud of their employees.

Last night, for example, we had a presentation from Co-op Atlantic. Ironically the Co-op stores in Nova Scotia are about 50/50, 50 per cent are unionized, and 50 per cent are not. The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island said he was disappointed and shocked that Co-op Atlantic, with its history of the co-operative movement, would be against first contract arbitration. I have to say Robert Lemoine who was there, gave a tremendous answer, and he said, we enjoy a great relationship between our employees and management. What we do not support is a third party coming in and imposing a contract on us. We have shown that we can have success in having collective agreements and negotiating fairly, and we don't want to see legislation telling us that a third party can come in and tell us how to run our business. I think that was an honest answer. I think it made a lot of sense and it brought a unique perspective because many of the presentations that we had were from employer groups that had no unionization at all. To hear from Co-op Atlantic and to hear half are unionized and half are not, and yet they still oppose first contract arbitration, I believe, was very telling and only time will tell whether it has had any impact on this government.

Mr. Speaker, when you're a majority government, time is on your side. I've been through minority governments. I've been on the government side and I've been on the Opposition side, Official Opposition and Third Party. When you are a minority government you wake up every morning wondering, am I going to survive until the end of the day? That's not the case when you have a majority and you can do things differently if you choose. When the Elections Act was brought in, the government could have easily said, we're going to take our time with this, and if concerns are being raised - legitimate concerns over privacy, over third-party advertising, over anything that somehow would compromise the absolute fairness that must exist in the Elections Act - we are going to take our time to try to get it as right as possible.

Now, trying to get all-Party support is not always an easy task. It is possible at the end of the day, once we all had our chance to express our concerns, the government would have been able to come back and say, we've heard your concerns, we've looked into them, here's what has come back to us, now we have to make a decision. That's possible. Maybe there would not have been all-Party support, but at that point the government could have at least stood in their place and said, we took all reasonable steps to address the concerns raised by the Opposition and to try to have all-Party support for this legislation.

They couldn't say that on the Elections Act, and they haven't been able to say that on a whole host of legislation here in this province. Yet now we have to spend the time of this House, at a time when we want the Minister of Justice to focus on dealing with matters that impact the lives of Nova Scotians - instead, he's bringing in legislation to correct the

wrongs that the government did in the Spring, when they were so clearly told that it was wrong at the time and it would come back to haunt them if they didn't take the time to get it right. That's not the way government should work. When Nova Scotians were told to vote for a better deal, that's not what they expected, and yet that is what we've come to expect from the government.

Last night we saw it at the Law Amendments Committee. The Minister of Justice is there as the chairman, I'm here making comments to a presenter, and I'm sure I hadn't spoken 60 seconds when I got interrupted by the Minister of Justice. It didn't take me long to point out to him what the Rules of the House were, what his job was as chairman, and that it was not his place to try to prevent me from speaking as an elected member of this Legislature.

We've been through that before, where a government that, when in Opposition - I sat on the Law Amendments Committee with them - where we fought to make sure that presenters were given the adequate amount of time, that all efforts were undertaken to hear from Nova Scotians, that when amendments were brought forward by a Party, the government would take it and look at it overnight and come back and say, we think it's reasonable or we don't and here are the reasons why. That's not what life is like under the NDP Government.

Previously when I sat on the Law Amendments Committee, if the head of an organization or the head of a union - whether it be Joan Jessome or Rick Clarke or others - we would give them 20 minutes. We would give them half an hour sometimes. Under the NDP? Ten minutes. You know, you're hearing a presentation - last night Sobeys was giving a presentation. The single largest private sector employer in Nova Scotia, a company that has such a proud history that our books in schools teach our children about the Sobeys example and their success story of starting with one little store, and eight minutes into his presentation, the Minister of Justice shouts out, two minutes left; 60 seconds later, one minute left. Really? A representative of 10,000 Nova Scotian workers is given 10 minutes and interrupted by the Minister of Justice? That's what life has become under the NDP, because they don't want to hear opposition.

They didn't want to hear us when we stood in the House in the Spring and talked about privacy issues with this bill. They dismissed it. They mocked it. The Minister of Justice did, the Premier did, and I'll have the opportunity, possibly at a later time, to go through some of the comments that were made by both the Minister of Justice and by the Premier on this very issue. As we tried to get them to pay attention to it at the time, they simply dismissed it. Yet here we are today with the government coming back, admitting they got it wrong, and now asking the House to approve changes which, once again, no one has really asked Nova Scotians whether they were comfortable with this type of information being made available to political Parties here in this province.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians need to have assurance that the rules that exist under the Elections Act are fair to all political Parties and to all candidates. The

government's actions to date have put that into question and to now see them coming back and making changes to what they had told us was good legislation when they first brought it in makes us wonder what else is in the changes, made in the Spring, that is not right.

They have at least admitted to one error - what else is in there? Only time will tell, when the next election comes, as to how the new rules on third-party advertising are going to work. Will the unions find a way around the Elections Act and its intent of once again finding ways of funnelling money to support NDP candidates, even when the laws clearly state they are not permitted to do so?

Will those limits be respected or will efforts be undertaken to try to get around them? We all know that this is the Party that got fined by the chief electoral officer for violating the Elections Act. Never before had we seen that, yet rather than the NDP saying we want to clear the air - I think that's what the Minister of Finance said, that they just want to clear the air and get the issue of Liberal-held assets dealt with once and for all. I'm wondering why he won't stand in his place and say that the NDP will voluntarily waive the statute of limitations under the Elections Act and allow for a full review to take place of exactly what went on between Ed Wark, on behalf of the NDP, the unions under Cordell Cole, and the Premier during the last election campaign.

I can tell you that there's still a lot of cloud that exists there, lots of cloud, yet for some reason this government doesn't appear to be interested in trying to lift that cloud that exists so that Nova Scotians can know what exactly went on - more importantly, not just to be making accusations and finding someone at fault but, more importantly, to be able to learn to make sure this doesn't happen again in the future. I have yet to hear anyone on the government side say that they want to deal with that dark chapter in Nova Scotia's political history.

As I said, this is a government and a Party that has had an unhealthy obsession with the finances of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party. It has been an obsession with the Minister of Finance from the time he was in Opposition to now, his time on the government side, and again to hear the Minister of Justice suggest that this is an issue being raised with him, I would suggest that other than the Minister of Finance and a few of his colleagues, that is about the only one that he is hearing this from.

As I said before, establishing the Allan J. MacEachen Institute of Public Policy is something Nova Scotians should be proud of, and shame on this government for trying to once again use a cheap shot at our Party and at Allan J. MacEachen in bringing this legislation forward.

All Nova Scotians and those who support the NDP should be asking themselves, who is next? If they are prepared to try to muddy the name of Allan J. MacEachen, who else are they prepared to muddy the name of as well?

It's unfortunate, the government could have easily brought in the bill and said we heard your concerns, we took the time after the bill was passed - which is not the way it should work, but regardless, they at least took the time to look at the concerns and they're bringing forward the changes based primarily on the issues that were brought forward by our caucus at the time of that debate.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been given ample opportunity now and ample examples of where it can do things differently in this province, that it can clearly tell Nova Scotians that they are going to provide them with a government that is not the same as the others. What they did in the Spring with the Elections Act, what they're doing this session with so many other pieces of legislation makes it clear that the minute they got a taste of government, the minute they got the taste of a majority, they have done exactly the same as what other governments may have done. Worse than that, I would suggest to you that they've taken some of the worst elements of majority governments in the past and they are exercising them today.

Allow me to give one more example of that. I stood in this House in Opposition with many members of the NDP when the John Hamm Government tried to bring in essential services legislation for nurses, to take away their right to strike. During that, the NDP were the Official Opposition and we were the Third Party. During that time, on second reading, the NDP moved a hoist amendment; on Committee of the Whole House, they moved another amendment; and on third reading, a third amendment. That bill went through almost 120 hours of debate.

Yet this government, when we dealt with the labour bill last year, creating the Labour Management Review Committee, when one amendment was brought forward, the Government House Leader stood in his place and said, I move the original question now be put, which for legislative terms means bringing down the hammer.

A Party that used those tools so frequently now, in government, the first time it was even taken out they brought down the hammer. When one looks back, the Hamm Government could have easily said, whoa, there could be a strike here. This is a matter of public safety, everything else, I will not allow the Opposition to use these delay tactics. He would have had a legitimate argument. Yet, to his credit, he allowed democracy to work the way it should work. Even the NDP should be there to acknowledge that.

We did the very same thing over the paramedics strike. I was there that night when that ambulance was parked outside, inside the gates, with the lights turned on and the siren going. The paramedics locked the doors and walked away. The delay that had taken place over that legislation led to a strike taking place. The government then allowed the Opposition to do its job, allowed them to stand in their place and to fight for Nova Scotians as they felt they should.

Yet this government, when it gets into office after having used delay tactics so many times to try to force government changes - in many ways, it did lead to government

changes, it had the desired effect. Yet on a labour bill, to set a Labour Management Review Committee, where there is no pressing issue, there is no issue of public safety, there's no danger, and they brought down the hammer.

If that wasn't embarrassing enough, when we had debate on Bill No. 102 here in this House, on second reading, when an amendment was introduced, immediately the Government House Leader stood up again and wanted the question to be put, to once again bring down the legislative hammer. Over what? First contract arbitration, to fix a problem that even the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, who brought it in, says doesn't exist. There's no issue of public safety, there's no pressing concern, there's no danger to Nova Scotians. Once again, they looked to stifle the debate from the Opposition on a labour bill, of all things.

There is no strike. There is no work stoppage. There is no essential service. To their credit, the Tories allowed democracy to take place, yet the NDP, when they get their first chance, bring down the hammer and try to stop the Opposition from raising the concerns that the Committee on Law Amendments is clearly proving to us that Nova Scotians have. I think we're hearing more of that today; unfortunately, I can't be in two places at once. I'll have the opportunity to go over to the Committee on Law Amendments shortly after this to hear again from Nova Scotians who are taking time out of their day to express concerns with this bill.

Yet the government is not interested in hearing the debate. The Government House Leader, rather than saying, we want to hear any concerns the Opposition has, or if the business community has amendments, we're prepared to look at amendments, or we're an open government, we want to make sure this is the best legislation - what did he say? We have a majority. This bill is going to pass one way or the other, and I intend to see it through. Apparently that's the better deal for Nova Scotians from the NDP.

Even if he didn't mean it, you'd think he would have at least said those very words, we're open to hearing the concerns of Nova Scotians, of employers, of employees, business groups, unions, anyone in the province, and we'll try to make sure this is the best possible legislation and we go into it with an open mind. Yet it was too much, it was too much. Whether it was the union's pressure that they are not prepared to listen to anyone, and they're showing such arrogance for a government by saying we have a majority and it's going through one way or another. It just doesn't matter is the message that has come.

Last night, ironically, Dave Barrett was there for Barrett Lumber, and he was telling us that he first made a presentation at the Committee on Law Amendments, I think he said 1965. He said G.I. Smith was the chairman of the committee. I can tell you I certainly wasn't around for that so I have to take him at his word for what he was saying. But he said at the time that he felt he was being listened to and he said that's why he came back to the Law Amendments Committee over the years, because I honestly felt I was being listened to and that government was actually open to hearing my concerns. Last night

he said, right now I don't feel I am being listened to. I feel that you've made your conclusions; you have made your decisions.

Even worse, what he added to that, Mr. Speaker, was, this just adds to my level of cynicism over government. There are no worse words for an elected official to hear than those types of words, especially from a respected business leader, but that is what we have right now in Nova Scotia with this government. They're not even pretending to want to hear Nova Scotians' concerns; instead, the Government House Leader has made it clear - we have a majority and this bill is going through.

Sobeys, last night - which one would expect to have sent a chilling effect throughout the entire government, the Premier just mocked him today, just laughed it off. Sobeys wasn't part of the consultations. He didn't have the list he said; I don't have the list, why would I have the list? Who has the list? I don't know who has the list, I don't have the list. Really, the one issue that has consumed this House this session, the one issue that's consuming Nova Scotians, and consuming the business community of Nova Scotia and he doesn't know whether the single largest private-sector employer was invited or not. What kind of government do we have here in this province?

Last night I had a chance to ask a few questions to the representative of Sobeys and the question I put - and I'll repeat that here today - I told the gentleman, your headquarters are in Stellarton, Pictou County, and you currently have three members on the government side: the member for Pictou East, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and the Minister of Justice - one backbencher and two Cabinet Ministers, that's not bad for Pictou County. Now I said, could you tell me if any of those three individuals, two Cabinet Ministers and a backbencher who represent the very area where your corporate headquarters are located, did they go and let you know that first contract arbitration legislation was coming forward, or did they in any way ask for your input on this matter? The answer was a very simple two-letter answer - no.

How, I have to ask, knowing the Sobeys story, knowing that this could have a negative impact on them, or that it might cause them concern, that two Cabinet Ministers and a backbencher would not have seen fit to at least give them the courtesy of telling them this is coming forward, or asking their opinion on it. To suggest that anything would come up in this House that could have a negative impact on a business in my area and that I would not go and tell them first or seek their input, to me, is foreign, it just doesn't make sense. Which leads you to believe - because I believe those three individuals are honest, hard-working representatives here in this House, and they mean well - what have they been told about first contract arbitration that would lead to such actions?

How beholden is this government to the labour movement? We know they've received millions of dollars. Many of the members over there have seen thousands of dollars go into their own campaigns, their personal campaigns. How beholden are they? And we'll have the opportunity, I believe, to talk on that subject a little bit further as we move along, but when we start seeing the types of companies, Nova Scotia success stories,

coming to the Law Amendments Committee and saying, we have concerns, and the government says, the bill is going through whether you like it or not - that's not a better deal for Nova Scotians. It's not a better deal for the 10,000 employees of Sobeys in this province. That is what we have seen here from this government.

But there's still time, Mr. Speaker. On a positive note, I remain cautiously optimistic that the government can change its ways, that it can show this House and all Nova Scotians that government can be done differently, that there is a better way than having government ram through legislation only to show up the very next session with a significant, fundamental change to the bill.

Now, we've seen the Minister of Justice bring in minor typos or minor changes in some of the legislation we've already dealt with - one clause, 10 words, 12 words - but this one was one of the lightning rods in the Elections Act from the Spring - having voters' ages disclosed to political Parties in Nova Scotia through the voters lists. It is a fundamental change. It has taken up the time of this House. It's something that could have been avoided if we had a government that truly was looking to give Nova Scotians a better deal, was truly looking to show Nova Scotians there's a different way to govern, that our democracy works, our Legislature works, and that even though they have a majority they can work with the Opposition Parties to try to bring forward the best legislation possible for Nova Scotians.

That is not what's happening right now. There is still time for them to change it, but Bill No. 116, as it's presented, the changes that are there, and then to throw in - after basically admitting they were wrong and they made a mistake - a clause dealing with Liberal-held assets, when they know and every Nova Scotian knows that that matter has been dealt with - it's cheap. Nova Scotians deserve better. They pay too many taxes in this province to see those types of cheap shenanigans from this government. Merci, M. le Président.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I just have a couple of quick comments on the bill. With respect to the removal of the year of birth, the Progressive Conservatives also opposed this on third reading, and we remain opposed to it. This amendment fixes an obvious flaw in the original piece of legislation that was brought to the Legislature here at the last sitting. No one asked for this info that we are aware of, and certainly nobody in our Party wants that kind of information. So we welcome the amendment.

With respect to the held assets, it really doesn't have any impact on us and we don't really have anything more to add. So we do support the bill.

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



The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. GRAHAM STEELE: I thank the members opposite for their contributions. I will be sure to ask the Minister of Justice to review the Hansard of their comments. With that, I move second reading of this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 116. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that ends the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet tomorrow from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., which will be the business of the Official Opposition after the daily routine.

With that in mind, I'll turn it over to the Opposition House Leader to call the business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Opposition House Leader. (Applause)

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Government House Leader for that rousing applause.

Opposition Business for tomorrow, we will call Resolution No. 1110 and Resolution No. 1857.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is for adjournment, to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 2:00 p.m.

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 motion before the House for late debate today was submitted by the honourable member for Cape Breton West:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge that this government is determined to jam through its special interest agenda that will discourage

the very investment that would create jobs and that the Labour Management Review Committee process is nothing more than a sham.”

### **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

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

### **LBR. /ADV. EDUC.: LMRC - VALIDITY**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it is parade season in Nova Scotia, and all across the province families are coming out to see their community at its best - fabulous floats, marching bands, clowns, and even Santa Claus. The crowds are lining up to see such a spectacle.

There is a parade going on right here in the Legislature, too - business leaders and job creators are coming through, lining up to tell legislators about the sham, better known as the NDP's Labour Management Review Committee. And I don't think the government is listening, and I don't think they see what is going on in Nova Scotia.

These business people see what we all see, Mr. Speaker, it's all just a facade. When the NDP introduced Bill No. 100 they gave us all the assurance that the Labour Management Review Committee would only address issues in unionized workplaces. Well, if job creators were on the LMRC, the government could have heard some good ideas to stop the job crisis in Nova Scotia - a crisis that the minister and Premier say does not exist.

Well, rural Nova Scotia feels like there's a crisis that exists, Mr. Speaker. The people in Cape Breton are lining up to leave the province, to pursue employment in other areas of the country and even the world. People in Yarmouth believe there's a crisis, with the loss of the ferry the jobs in the area have suffered. Ask them if they feel there's a crisis. I think I know the answer, we all know the answer - that would be a "yes".

So when they didn't allow participation by non-union employers, employers that represent 80 or 85 per cent of Nova Scotia workplaces, they said don't worry, this committee doesn't address concerns they might have. What a surprise it was then - well, not a surprise really, Mr. Speaker - when the first topic to be addressed by the committee is legislation aimed directly at big and small non-unionized workplaces.

They had a study day. Not all people were invited to this study day - even our own member for Inverness was not allowed in to attend . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Not enough lunch.

MR. ORRELL: He was told there wasn't enough lunch.

AN HON. MEMBER: And he eats too much.

MR. ORRELL: He eats too much, yes.

How transparent is that, Mr. Speaker? Businesses in our community, in our province's history, that didn't even get invited to an infamous study day. How many businesses weren't invited or allowed in?

Sobeys didn't get invited to a study day to talk about topics that affect their businesses, things that will affect their employees and the way they do business in Nova Scotia. They employ over 10,000 people in our province. What does this say about your study group? The Labour Management Review Committee didn't invite a lot of people and as I said, when one of my own colleagues tried to attend, he was told there wasn't enough lunch.

Ironically, the sandwich trays probably came from Sobeys, made by the good employees of this organization, people who work here, pay taxes here and raise their families here. Good people and they want to live here, but these bills may have an effect on their ability to stay here and the ability for Sobeys to keep them employed here. There was enough effort for made-to-order sandwich trays, but no interest in inviting Sobeys.

Other important business people, who tried to get in, weren't allowed. Not only did the LRMC run a sham of a study day, they reached no consensus on the issues they were given to work on, but the government is using this input to pass bills in the province. It's clear that an agenda was being pursued all along, an agenda to reward special interest groups, the same groups that support this NDP Government.

It began with the creation of the committee and the decision by the NDP Government to exclude representatives that stand up for most employees and employers in Nova Scotia. It continued with a phony study day. Is that the NDP's new word for consultation? That's where the sham comes into play. Can we expect more study days like this in the future and what topics are we going to be dealing with?

The only lesson learned by the Labour Management Review Committee study day is you can't trust this NDP Government. They say they're open and transparent, but we know that's not the case, especially in their so-called study day. They said don't worry about Bill No. 100, it won't affect you. They said we will consult with you. They consulted with who they wanted and not the people this bill would affect.

Their invitation to study day must have been lost in the mail. Sobeys' invitation must have been lost in the mail. How many others were lost? No one is surprised this government has promised a lot of things - balanced budgets, no tax hikes. We know they raised taxes 2 per cent and they raised over 1,400 user fees. They promised to keep ERs

open 24/7, we know it's now 7/24 in most areas. I know in North Sydney last year it was closed for a total of two-and-a-half months. Their word meant nothing during the election campaign so it comes as no surprise that the assurances around Bill No. 100 meant nothing either.

Now Bill No. 102 is here and we are told not to worry, it will not affect jobs, job creators or employment in Nova Scotia. They say they have a plan to move forward, but we don't see the plan's targets. They tell us how much money is being spent on this plan and how the plan is helping jobs in rural Nova Scotia. Ask NewPage, ask Bowater how this plan has helped them.

This sham is not helping rural Nova Scotia. Jobs in these areas are on the decline - 2,500 in southwestern Nova Scotia, 2,100 in Cape Breton and that doesn't include the ones who have left the workforce and gave up looking. They say that unemployment is on the decline, over 15 per cent in Cape Breton. That's not something we should be proud of and not something we should be bragging about. This, as well, is a sham. This is not the better deal for Nova Scotian families.

If we're going to use consultation to help with input into these committees, we should include everybody, especially the job creators in Nova Scotia because they're the ones, the small businesses in this area, that provide over 50 per cent of the workforce in Nova Scotia. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today here in the House of Assembly to take part in late debate and represent our NDP Government, a government which I would like to say here that I am very proud to be a part of. In particular, today I would like to address the issue of first contract legislation.

As I was sitting here earlier today, I noticed that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education said in the House during Question Period, "This government values the important role of business, in terms of providing benefits and prosperity to Nova Scotians." Some of our stakeholders told government that they did not want us to include Part II in this legislation, and we didn't. We are listening.

I think that this provides a perfect example of the fact that despite what my honoured colleague on the other side has suggested, the opposite is true. The LMRC received considerable input from a wide variety of Nova Scotians. They held a study day for stakeholders, posted a discussion paper on-line, and met with groups for presentations. They brought this information back to the government, which then made an informed decision. Our government is committed to sound, logical legislation that benefits both the workers and the employers in Nova Scotia. We believe that first contract does just that.

First contract settlement has existed in Canada for 37 years. It is good public policy that has been brought in by governments of all political stripes right across this country. It was brought in by Premier René Lévesque and his PQ Government in Québec, by the federal Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and by Liberal Premier David Peterson in Ontario in 1986. Progressive Conservative Premier Brian Peckford introduced it in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1985 and it has been there ever since, including under Premier Danny Williams.

Six provinces and the federal government have first contract legislation. It covers 85 per cent of the Canadian workforce. Research clearly reveals that no major problems have occurred as a result of first contract legislation. In fact, the legislation is rarely needed because most negotiations result in a voluntary agreement between both parties.

I believe the intent of this bill is simple enough. It is there to prevent unnecessary, costly strikes in newly-unionized workplaces, which would hurt businesses, workers, and the economy. Our government's goal is to preserve the stable labour relations environment that we enjoy in Nova Scotia. We want to make it easier for employers, employees, and unions to resolve their differences in a mature and responsible manner, just as we would like to see things held here in this House. Bill No. 102 deals with the difficult task of creating a first collective agreement, and it creates incentive for parties to reach a collective agreement on their own. In the rare event that they cannot, this legislation allows for a third party to resolve any outstanding issues in the dispute, avoiding a prolonged lockout or strike.

There are very few situations - two or three in the run of a year in Nova Scotia - where negotiators aren't able to conclude a first agreement on their own. I feel quite confident in saying in this House that I believe it will strengthen Nova Scotia's business climate to attract more businesses and investment in our province. In the end, first contract arbitration means that workers keep getting paid and that employers enjoy continued productivity, and that is very, very attractive to people wanting to invest or expand their businesses in Nova Scotia, which is certainly something that I believe everyone in this House should and does support.

Our government has been working very hard on strengthening our economy, especially in very difficult times, as we all know. You only have to turn on the news - the world news, or the national news - and you see what we're dealing with. Two significant opportunities, including the \$25 billion shipbuilding contract and the Lower Churchill agreement, are coming into play. We have worked with the business community, we have listened to them and we continue to listen to them. We have enacted many changes to make it easier to do business in this province by, for instance, lowering the small business tax by 20 per cent and we are, in fact, the first government to do so in at least 10 years.

We have just announced that we are extending the Equity Tax Credit. We have added several incentives for innovation and productivity through our jobsHere economic strategy. Through jobsHere our government has made many great investments to create

good jobs for Nova Scotians. Last week, for instance, marked the one-year anniversary of our government's jobsHere strategy. Our government recognized that to be prosperous, we need to help people learn the right skills for good jobs, grow the economy through innovation, and help businesses be more competitive globally. More than 175 businesses are making productivity improvements and becoming more competitive through investments in new equipment or training for their employees, with financial assistance from PIP, the jobsHere Productivity Investment Program.

JobsHere is also investing in high-value sectors which have tremendous growth potential and pay high salaries, such as ocean technology and financial services, from market studies and research and development, and a \$24 million Clean Technology Venture Fund is bolstering support for green tech companies. Over the last year jobsHere investments have supported jobs in every part of the province including \$10 million to the LED Roadway Lighting, supporting 210 jobs in Amherst; \$8.8 million to Shelburne Ship Repair, supporting 60 jobs; and \$1.5 million to Ledwidge Lumber, supporting 50 jobs in Enfield.

Recently we announced the Workforce Strategy, which will further help Nova Scotians get the right skills for good jobs. The bottom line here is, I believe we are in the business of creating a better economy and we are doing just that. Investment after investment, our jobsHere strategy has proven that it is working and we will continue to put this plan into action for Nova Scotia businesses. First contract legislation is one more step in creating a stronger economy. Based on decades of experience in other parts of Canada, it is my firm belief that this legislation will help to build a stronger economy right here at home in Nova Scotia and it makes our province much more attractive to people wanting to invest in, expand businesses, and move to Nova Scotia.

I'd also like to say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that when I see what is going on south of the border, with governments there, regional state governments trying to bust up unions and trying to get rid of union legislation, I am proud to say that I live in a province where a government respects both the employers and the unions and workers, all workers right across the board, in this wonderful province of ours. With that, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know we hear time and time again that this government is creating jobs, that first contract arbitration is going to support the economy. What members of this government don't voice in this House is that every single employer in the province, every one of them, the big ones like Oxford Frozen Foods; Michelin; Sobeys, the biggest private sector employer in the province, employs over 10,000 people; all the stakeholders who represent business; the chambers of commerce; the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; retailers; construction workers; road builders; everybody, every single employer in this province opposes this piece of legislation - big ones that employ thousands of Nova Scotians - and yet this

government stands up in this House and says, we're listening to employers. We're supporting business. We're supporting economic development.

The opposite is the case, Mr. Speaker, and nothing has been made clearer than that, with the voices of opposition in the public, from those small businesses, those big businesses and employers that are employing thousands of people in this province. Let's look at the record of this government when it comes to economic development and job growth: 12,500 jobs have been lost in this province since this government took office. That's 12,500.

Thousands in my area of southwest Nova Scotia, thousands in Cape Breton, thousands in the North Shore, hundreds in the Valley - jobs gone under this government, and instead of actually bringing forward a strategy that is going to help us grow, that's going to bring in legislation that actually affects the fundamental challenges that this province has when it comes to economic development and job growth and supporting business, we have a Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and other members of this governing Party who stand up and say, the job losses that are not our fault, that's not our responsibility, that's because of Greece and Italy and everywhere else that has nothing to do with us. That's what they say.

They bring forward a job strategy that has no measureable targets or goals in it, because the minister has said goals and targets limit us when it comes to having a strategic plan. How does that make any sense? How does having goals and targets in a strategic plan to create jobs negatively impact the strategic plan? How does that limit you? It doesn't. When you have targets and goals in your plan it allows you to measure your success. It allows you to reach for something - Step 1, Step 2, Step 3 in your vision. The problem is that this government doesn't have a vision. That's why they can't have targets in their plan, because they don't want anybody to be able to assess whether it's actually working or not.

But the numbers speak for themselves: 12,500 jobs lost under this government, and they tout the fact that their economic strategy's working? I don't think so. People are living that experience each and every day; people are losing their jobs each and every day, thousands of them in every region. This Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism stands up and says, we don't have any control over job losses, that's not our fault, that's not our responsibility. I'll tell you something he and the Premier and this government had control over: the Yarmouth Ferry. Is he going to stand up and say he didn't have control over that? Because of that decision, 300 jobs were lost immediately. Over 2,500 jobs gone from southwest Nova Scotia in the last year, and the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is going to stand up and say, it's not my fault jobs are going elsewhere. The proof is in the pudding, Mr. Speaker. The numbers speak for themselves.

There are some fundamental challenges that this province is facing when it comes to job creation, when it comes to economic development, when it comes to having a supportive business climate here. Energy prices: Bowater, NewPage, two of our big

employers have come out and said, a big problem we have is energy prices. The same problem everyday Nova Scotians have, energy prices. They're going up and they're going to go up again in the new year, by over 6 per cent, I believe, if I'm not mistaken. Energy prices going up, and this government has not brought in one single piece of legislation to address that, that will support business and that will support everyday Nova Scotians, families, especially those of us who are having a hard time making ends meet in the province. Not one piece of legislation.

Taxes: we have an uncompetitive tax structure here in Nova Scotia, some of the highest taxes in the country. Not one piece of legislation brought into this House to address taxes. Not one. Gas prices, the price of fuel, the cost to travel within the province and outside - not one piece of legislation brought in to tackle the increasing gas prices.

Instead what we do is bring in first contract arbitration. That's the biggest thing we have on the agenda this session. The biggest thing we have on the agenda, and we're told that's going to support economic productivity in the province when every single employer in the province says, no, it's not, it's actually going to negatively impact future investment.

What hasn't even been recognized by the government is the fact that the Labour Management Review Committee, the group that supposedly brought this idea forward, was divided on the issue. The Labour Management Review Committee was divided on the issue, but yet we still have a government, as the resolution says, jamming this piece of legislation through. We've had the member opposite say that we have harmonious labour relations in the province and this piece of legislation will ensure that continues. I'm sorry, if you look at our history, the fact that we've had harmonious labour relations in the province, despite the fact we haven't had first contract arbitration, speaks for itself.

We have harmonious labour relations here because we have employers that care about their employees, and employees that understand the economic climate that we live in - that's why we have harmonious labour relations. This piece of legislation isn't fixing anything; it's not fixing any problem - not one. It's not doing anything to support the economy. It's a distraction, in the words of our Leader. Our Leader said it's a distraction from the real issues. And that's what this is.

Now, instead of talking about those issues that are affecting our province the most - power rates, high taxes, high gas prices, an uncompetitive economic environment that has not been made any more competitive under this government, job losses - instead of talking about all those things that actually really matter to business, to employers and employees, and our constituents, we're talking about first contract arbitration, a bill, a piece of legislation, that the members opposite in the government actually have said isn't fixing anything. It's not fixing a problem - no problem exists with labour relations here. We've all said it - it's been harmonious.



So why bring this forward? We know why it has been brought forward. The big union bosses who have ensured that millions of dollars have gone into the NDP over the course of a number of years . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: A fact.

MR. CHURCHILL: That's a fact; those numbers are on the record. The big union bosses have been ensuring this Party receives political funding. They advertised for them in elections. It's because they're asking for it - they even said it is payback time on a YouTube video that was on the Internet. Then they took it down - who told them to take that video down?

The only groups pushing this piece of legislation are the political allies of this government. I'm sorry, you do have a majority, but it doesn't mean you're an oligarchy; it doesn't mean you don't listen to stakeholders; and it doesn't mean you don't listen to business owners - big employers like Sobeys, Oxford, Michelin, retailers, construction workers, everybody else who has come out and said that this piece of legislation may harm business in the province. They said "it may."

When you have big employers like Michelin and Sobeys saying this will impact future investment, at a time when we have the lowest rate of economic growth in the country, is that a good thing? How does that support business growth in the province? When you have the biggest employers in the country saying this piece of legislation is going to impact future investment in Nova Scotia, yet we still have government members standing up on the side opposite saying this will be good for Nova Scotia, it's going to increase our economy, that can't happen when your employers are saying it's going to impact future investment in a negative way.

So I think it's time that this government started listening to those people who are creating jobs despite this government's poor record when it comes to economic development, started listening to those stakeholders who represent small business owners in this province, those people who employ everybody here. I think it's time this government started listening to them and actually bring in some legislation that matters to Nova Scotians and matters to economic development. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for the late debate has elapsed.

I thank all honourable members for taking part in a lively debate today.

The House is adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:34 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2608**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Players is the only community theatre in Dartmouth; and

Whereas September 2011 marks 24 years for the Dartmouth Players having produced well over 60 plays during that time and grown their audience continually to reach well over 5,000 people a season; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Players has just completed a highly successful “SOLD OUT” run of the world-renowned 1966 musical, *Cabaret*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating director Ian MacDermid as well as the entire cast and crew on their efforts, and wish them as much success with their production, the comic thriller *The 39 Steps*.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2609**

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Ray Ivany has been executive vice-president at the University College of Cape Breton, president and CEO of the Nova Scotia Community College, and was named in 2004 to the Honour Roll of Top Ten Canadians Who Made a Difference, has been named one of Atlantic Canada’s Top 50 CEOs four times, and has received many other accolades; and

Whereas since becoming president and vice-chancellor of Acadia University in 2009, this charismatic Cape Bretoner has overseen successful faculty contract negotiations and improved enrolment, financial performance, and student satisfaction at the school; and

Whereas Ray Ivany follows a leadership model that espouses “the courage to do the right thing” and ascribes to the importance of the “organizational good”;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ray Ivany for a history of executive leadership and community involvement, and wish him every success in future endeavours.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2610**

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

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

Whereas the Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation raises funds to purchase approximately \$500,000 in medical equipment for the centre each year; and

Whereas the Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation is holding its second “A Grand Day for Cobequid” fundraising event, which raised \$66,000 last year for an EKG; and

Whereas the Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation hopes that this year’s “A Grand Day for Cobequid” kayaking/paddling fundraising event to be held on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> on Grand Lake in Wellington, will raise enough money to purchase a backup EKG for the centre;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly thank the Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation for raising funds to purchase medical equipment for the Cobequid Community Health Centre and wish them success in this year’s “A Grand Day for Cobequid” event.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2611**

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 Emma Bush, a student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, took fourth place overall in the regional competition of the Canada-Wide Science Fair; and

Whereas Emma’s study on the health of horses (the relationship between equine conformation and lameness) won her a cash prize, a school plaque, and qualification as a member of the team representing Nova Scotia at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Toronto; and

Whereas Emma won a bronze medal of excellence in the intermediate category, as well as a cash prize and an entrance scholarship to the University of Western Ontario;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emma Bush for winning this prestigious award, and for representing and bringing acclaim to Nova Scotia.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2612**

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 Julia Reid was named senior female athlete of the year at the North Colchester High School Athletic Awards Banquet held in June; and

Whereas Reid won a gold medal in April at the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Wrestling Championship; and

Whereas Reid helped the basketball team to the provincial championship tournament, was a member of the softball team, and captain of the soccer team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Julia Reid for her athletic achievements and wish her success at St. Francis Xavier University as she works towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Kinesiology.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2613**

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 Shelby Jamieson was named senior female athlete of the year at the North Colchester High School Athletic Awards Banquet held in June; and

Whereas Jamieson also won the MVP award for senior girls basketball; and

Whereas Jamieson won the Coaches Award for both the senior girls soccer team and the senior girls volleyball team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Shelby Jamieson for her numerous athletic achievements and wish her continued success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2614**

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 Murray Foote from the Falls, Colchester North, was named North Colchester High School's senior male athlete of the year at the school's athletic awards banquet held in June; and

Whereas Foote, a point guard considered one of the best basketball players in the province, helped the Mustangs win the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Division 4 Provincial Championship; and

Whereas Foote was an offensive star with the Mustangs soccer team, which won the school's first regional championship, and also played on the school's first softball team;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Murray Foote for his athletic achievements and wish him success at Holland College.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2615**

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 Lindsay Tucker, a student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, is an excellent role model for her classmates; and

Whereas students and teachers describe Tucker as energetic, hard-working, well-organized, reliable, and honest; and

Whereas Tucker shows her diversity of interests and skills since she is a member of the junior girls' soccer team, plays hockey, babysits, and even mows lawns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this deserving student for being chosen as the North Colchester High School student of the month, for her numerous achievements and her positive attitude.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2616**

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 North Colchester High School student Russell Miles, besides being an excellent academic student, has many outstanding qualities and talents; and

Whereas Miles is a defenceman on the school soccer team, plays softball, has played basketball and competed in track and field, plays bass guitar, and is an avid reader; and

Whereas Miles is a member of the Reach for the Top team and the Math League, works with the After-School Program at the elementary school, and has a part-time job;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this well-rounded student for being selected as the North Colchester High School student of the month for June.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2617**

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 Stevie Isenor is noted for her involvement in the life and activities at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche; and

Whereas Isenor is not only a member of the Girls' Leadership Group but also numerous committees including Yearbook, Prom, Safe Grad and STOP; and

Whereas Isenor has been an active participant at four NSSSA (Nova Scotia Secondary Schools Students' Association) conferences and was asked to be a skillbuilder at their last event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Isenor for being chosen as Student of the Month for May at North Colchester High School and commend her for her leadership abilities, her organizational skills, and her work ethic.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2618**

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 Hannah Martin, a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, gives her best to whatever task is at hand; and

Whereas Martin strives for excellence in her academic work and won a bronze medal at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Ottawa; and

Whereas Martin's determination to excel is also apparent on the soccer field, on the basketball court, as a student council representative, or as she enjoys snare drumming, long distance running, or drawing;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hannah Martin for being chosen as the student for the month of May at North Colchester High School and for her determination and self-motivation to reach the goals that she sets.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2619**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal is presented annually to one male and one female student in Grade 11 from every high school in the province; and

Whereas students are nominated by their school, based on academic performance and qualities of leadership and service demonstrated in their school and community; and

Whereas this year the students in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board were presented with their medals by Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Mayann E. Francis, at a ceremony held in the Oxford Regional Education Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kerri Veno of North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche for receiving the prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2620**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal is presented annually to one male and one female student in Grade 11 from every high school in the province; and

Whereas students are nominated by their school, based on academic performance and qualities of leadership and service demonstrated in their school and community; and

Whereas this year the students in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board were presented with their medals by Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Mayann E. Francis, at a ceremony held in the Oxford Regional Education Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matthew Allen of North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche for receiving the prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2621**

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 over 40,000 student-athletes participate annually in school sport programs throughout Nova Scotia; and

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

Whereas each school chose a female and male student-athlete, and a coach, who exemplify the qualities the NSSAF strives to develop through participation in school sports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Stephen Zegrav, a student at Central Colchester Junior High School in Colchester North, for being a recipient of the male Nova Scotia Athletic Federation Sport Award for 2010-11.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2622**

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 over 40,000 student-athletes participate annually in school sport programs throughout Nova Scotia; and

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

Whereas each school chose a female and male student-athlete, and a coach, who exemplify the qualities the NSSAF strives to develop through participation in school sports;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica Frenette, a student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, for being a recipient of the female Nova Scotia Athletic Federation Sport Award for 2010-11.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2623**

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 over 40,000 student-athletes participate annually in school sport programs throughout Nova Scotia; and

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

Whereas each school chose a female and male student-athlete, and a coach, who exemplify the qualities the NSSAF strives to develop through participation in school sports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Duncan Forbes, a student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, for being a recipient of the male Nova Scotia Athletic Federation Sport Award for 2010-11.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2624**

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 over 40,000 student-athletes participate annually in school sport programs throughout Nova Scotia; and

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

Whereas each school chose a female and male student-athlete, and a coach, who exemplify the qualities the NSSAF strives to develop through participation in school sports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate David Fisher, a coach at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, for being a recipient of the 2010-11 Nova Scotia Athletic Federation Sport Award for coaches.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2625**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas Florence Wolfe is a well-respected name in Annapolis Royal, first as the previous owner of the Annapolis Royal Nursing Home and now as a talented artisan and owner of an outlet for local crafters to sell their wares; and

Whereas Mrs. Wolfe has always been quick to recognize and respond to her community's needs over the years with a kind and generous spirit; and

Whereas having a facility where she and others could keep fit, healthy, and socially engaged was such a priority to Mrs. Wolfe that she recently donated \$10,000 to the Y's Capital Campaign to assist in reaching the YMCA's goal of \$500,000 to complete their renovations and reopen the fitness facility to the public;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the generosity and love Florence Wolfe continues to show to her community.