



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Third Session

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2011

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 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. Before we do orders of the day, the subject for late debate has been chosen.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly declare that “promise and commitment” mean the same thing and a reference to one cannot somehow exclude the other.

This was submitted by the honourable member for Inverness.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens on an introduction.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of all members of the House to the Speaker's Gallery. We have with us today three incredible gentlemen and volunteer firefighters with the Liverpool Fire Fighters Association. With us are David LeBlanc, Jamie Payzant, and Naamon Barton.

If I can just tell the members briefly, our volunteer firefighters serve our communities each and every day. I represent nine fire departments in the constituency of Queens and these fine volunteers just recently demonstrated not only their skill and ability, but actually went into a burning building to rescue one of our citizens in Queens.

I'm so pleased that they are here today and before I sit down, I also want to give congratulations to Naamon Barton and his beautiful wife, Krista, who just recently gave birth to two beautiful twin girls, Tiana Lou and Mya Jean, and I'm sure your young son, Tytan, is very happy. So congratulations to all three of you. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

[GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2877

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 Nova Scotia's volunteer firefighters are dedicated to serving communities and put their own lives at risk in their attempts to save the lives of others; and

Whereas our volunteer firefighters are equipped with the training and skills that enable their quick, confident, and competent action and reaction in the midst of tragic events; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters Naamon Barton, Jamie Payzant, and David LeBlanc, of the Liverpool Fire Fighters Association, bravely put into action their training and skills to enter an intense house fire in Milton, Queens County, on October 23, 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Naamon Barton, Jamie Payzant, and David LeBlanc of the Liverpool Fire Fighters Association for their dedication to serving communities and for their selfless act of bravery on October 23, 2011.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2878

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the province's Jobs and Building Plan will invest millions of dollars in capital projects that will provide good jobs for Nova Scotians, help grow the economy, and improve health care for the people of this province; and

Whereas it is only the second time in the province's history that government is announcing a capital project before the Spring budget; and

Whereas government is releasing information about capital projects in the Fall of each year to be more open and accountable;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House endorse the province's Jobs and Building Plan, 2012-13 Capital Plan.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution, could I have your permission to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the House to the east gallery today where I'm very pleased to welcome some very special guests - one very special guest in particular - and I would ask the guests to rise as I introduce them. Maureen Summers, who is the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society of Nova Scotia, is with us here today and she is joined by her husband, Russ Summers, and their two children, Shelagh and Gavin, and indeed other members of the staff of the Canadian Cancer Society of Nova Scotia, including some people who are involved in prostate cancer. I would ask the members of the House to give Maureen and all of our guests a very warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2879

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

Whereas Maureen Summers, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Nova Scotia Division, began her career with the organization in 1996 and now, after 15 years serving Nova Scotians, has retired; and

Whereas it was under Ms. Summers' guidance that the Canadian Cancer Society in Nova Scotia grew to become a leader in cancer prevention and research funding and an influential partner for cancer issues; and

Whereas Ms. Summers' strong background in health sciences, public policy, and health promotion and her passion, dedication, and commitment to cancer issues in our

province has made her a key voice in the areas of tobacco control, exposure to environmental carcinogens, and tanning beds, to name a few;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Maureen Summers on her accomplishments as CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Nova Scotia Division, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2880

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

Whereas the Artists in Schools program offers students and teachers direct access to a diverse range of talented Nova Scotia artists; and

Whereas art partners such as the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Debut Atlantic, Nova Scotia Designer Crafts Council, Visual Arts Nova Scotia, Theatre Nova Scotia, Dance Association of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Choral Federation, Writer's Federation of Nova Scotia, and Writers in the Schools, offered a total of 544 workshops, concerts, and projects in 297 schools during the 2010-11 school year; and

Whereas over 98,000 students enjoyed learning in and through the arts, exploring a wide range of art forms and techniques including sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, drawing, painting, musical performance, composing, writing, and more;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank all of the arts partners and mentor artists for inspiring our students and teachers as we celebrate the ways in which the arts deepen human experiences and create healthy communities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

RESOLUTION NO. 2881

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

Whereas Dr. George Unsworth has committed his life's work in not only benefiting the accounting world but the communities he has lived in; and

Whereas John MacKinnon has spent his career researching better accounting practices and teaching university students; and

Whereas on June 27th, Cape Breton University announced that John MacKinnon will be the first holder of the George Unsworth Chair in Accounting;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Dr. George Unsworth for his great community work and wish Mr. John Mackinnon best of luck in his new position.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2882

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

Whereas Shirley Walsh and a group of women from Collingwood Corner have an aim to help others, especially during the holiday season; and

Whereas this group, who call themselves Just Friends, held a food drive in the Collingwood area in November, collecting 733 pounds of food plus cash donations for the Oxford & Area Food Bank; and

Whereas Shirley and this group of women have made a huge difference in the lives of those less fortunate in the Oxford and surrounding areas and will brighten the holiday season for many;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Shirley Walsh and the Just Friends ladies' group on their generosity in helping to stock the shelves of the Oxford & Area Food Bank this holiday season.

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. 2883

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 12th of this year, 15 volunteer fire departments on the South Shore were called to a major fire at White Point Beach Resort; and

Whereas Liverpool Volunteer Fire Association Chief Steven Parnell coordinated the work of all of the 15 departments equipped with the training and skills that enabled their quick, confident and competent action and reaction in the midst of this event; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters and fire departments are so important to all of our communities and we appreciate all of their volunteer efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Fire Chief Steven Parnell of the Liverpool Volunteer Fire Association for coordinating the efforts of 15 volunteer fire departments on the South Shore during the recent major fire at White Point Beach Resort.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

RESOLUTION NO. 2884

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

Whereas the environment is becoming an ever more important and serious issue in our province; and

Whereas every year RRFB Nova Scotia honours innovative organizations and individuals who have taken a leading role in reducing waste at its Mobius Environmental Awards Gala; and

Whereas this year RRFB recognized the work of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality as their Municipality, Region or Authority of the Year, for waste reduction;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the work of the CBRM in reducing their waste and helping the environment and congratulate them on their award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2885

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

Whereas three members of L'Arche Cape Breton community in Orangedale celebrated 25 years in residence; and

Whereas Maggie Sutherland, Buddy Payne and Susan Hajigeorgiou arrived at L'Arche 25 years ago and their contributions to the home were honoured by the staff and a large turnout of community members; and

Whereas L'Arche is an international federation of communities where men and women with disabilities, and those who choose to share life with them, live and work together;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Maggie Sutherland, Buddy Payne and Susan Hajigeorgiou on 25 years living and working at L'Arche, Cape Breton.

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. 2886

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

Whereas Nova Scotians have been paying higher taxes, higher heating fuel costs, higher gas costs and higher food costs since the NDP took power; and

Whereas the Premier has broken many promises which he made during the last election campaign; and

Whereas life has become more expensive under the NDP Government for every Nova Scotia family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House remind the Premier and the rest of the NDP caucus that the next time they go door to door for an election campaign, they are going to have to answer for their broken promises and for making life simply less affordable for Nova Scotians.

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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2887

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

Whereas after watching a story on television about a young boy dying of cancer, whose dying wish was to help others, Rhonda Boudreau of Wedgeport, along with her children, Josh and Connor, decided to participate in a program called Operation Christmas Child; and

Whereas four years ago, Rhonda approached École Wedgeport to get involved, and this year, with donations provided by the families of the children who attend the school, filled 70 boxes; and

Whereas the boxes were delivered to the Evangel Assembly in Yarmouth, and along with other boxes from other schools and many organizations, were shipped to Ontario to get distributed around the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rhonda Boudreau, her family, and École Wedgeport for participating in such a wonderful project and encourage them to keep the tradition going that helps so many deserving children across the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2888

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

Whereas Mildred Carrigan first became an employee with Eastern Counties Regional Library on April 21, 1969, and since has provided exemplary customer service which has been appreciated and acknowledged by the patrons she has served over the past forty-two years; and

Whereas Mildred is an expert in genealogy and local history who has answered countless questions for Nova Scotians in the course of her career and who has a keen knowledge of people in her community and their needs; and

Whereas Mildred Carrigan is described as being a truly wonderful colleague who is always there to help, and she is also characterized as a tremendous person who truly cares about rural library service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize the great service that Mildred Carrigan has provided to Eastern Counties Regional Library and thank her for her dedication to the patrons of the library and the citizens in the communities she serves.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2889

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

Whereas on November 27th, the Amethyst Scottish Dancers held their 5th annual A Kilted Christmas performance at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium; and

Whereas this year's performance featured ECMA award winner Colin Grant, Zeph Caissie and the Diaga Dancers, a Cape Breton super group of musicians, and the RCMP H Division Pipes and Drums; and

Whereas the annual A Kilted Christmas concert has to date raised over \$4,000 for the IWK Christmas Daddies Telethon and was produced for the fifth and final time by Mrs. Caroline Ross;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mrs. Caroline Ross on her outstanding dedication to the Amethyst Scottish Dancers troupe and wish them all many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2890

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

Whereas brothers Paul and Jason Finney of Northside Property Holdings purchased the former Bank of Nova Scotia on Commercial Street in North Sydney, which was built in the 1850s, and are restoring the building back to its former glory; and

Whereas the 14-foot ceilings, terrazzo tiles, and beautiful oak trim have already been refurbished and the work is expected to continue for another year; and

Whereas all of the work will be a tremendous asset to the downtown core of North Sydney as a significant and well-preserved piece of our heritage;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Finney brothers for taking on this massive project and making this contribution to North Sydney's downtown.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2891

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

Whereas since the NDP have taken power, the Premier has done nothing to curtail the rising cost of gasoline; and

Whereas the Premier called the tax on tax on gasoline “an immoral tax” while in Opposition; and

Whereas by not removing this tax on tax, he has gone against what he said he would do if he were elected;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remind the Premier that a promise is a promise and urge the Premier to remove the tax on tax on gasoline, which even he called “an immoral tax”.

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 Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2892

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

Whereas in 2004 the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency created the Tourism Atlantic Technology Award to recognize one tourism operator in each Atlantic Province

for innovative and strategic use of technology that benefits the individual and the larger tourism industry; and

Whereas an interactive Web site and effective and creative use of technology earned Oakwood Manor of Cape North, Victoria County, owned by Hansel and Sharon McEvoy, this year's award; and

Whereas in addition to using social media to reach customers, Hansel and Sharon have effectively integrated information technology into their operations, including an interactive Web site and free Wi-Fi for guests;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hansel and Sharon McEvoy on receiving this award and wish them continued success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 2893

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

Whereas the significant sacrifice and contribution that the Canadian Forces members have made and continue to make in Afghanistan was highlighted recently during a Remembrance Day service; and

Whereas three individuals involved in the Mission Transition Task Force Operation Athena realized it is indeed a small world when they discovered that they are not only part of the largest Canadian Forces family but that they are also connected through their families, who all reside in the small town of Bridgetown, Annapolis County; and

Whereas it is men and women such as these Canadian Forces members, who leave the safety and security of their communities and families to serve their country on often dangerous missions, who deserve our respect, appreciation, and gratitude;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Major Steve Ramey, Sgt. Steve Boyd, and Captain Nicole MacPhee-Meszaros for the sacrifice and commitment that they have made to the Canadian mission in Kandahar and wish them a well-deserved break with their family and friends at the end of their tour of duty.

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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 2894

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

Attendu que le vendredi 17 juin 2011, la Société historique et gène a généalogique de la Municipalité d'Argyle a tenu son assemblée générale annuelle au bureau des archives à Tuskent; et

Attendu que Thérèse Boucher, président de la Société historique et généalogique, a présidé la réunion; et

Attendu que la Société historique et généalogique a attribué pour certificats, les récipiendaires étant Guy Surette, bénévole de l'année, Kim d'Eon en tant de membre fondatrice du marché des fermiers, et Pauline d'Entremont et son comité pour le travail exceptionnel de recherché sur la famille Muis-d'Entremont et d'autres famille acadienne de la région;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent les récipiendaires des certificats et remercient tous ceux et celles qui oeuvrent dans la

Société historique et généalogique de la Municipalité d'Argyle, afin de préserver la riche culture et le patrimoine de cette région.

M. le Président, je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas on Friday, June 17, 2011, the Argyle Municipality Genealogical and Historical Society held their annual general meeting at the Archives Building in Tusket; and

Whereas Thérèse Boucher, president of the Historical Society presided at the meeting; and

Whereas the Historical Society presented awards to Guy Surette for Volunteer of the Year, Kim d'Eon, founding member of the Argyle Farmers' Market, and Pauline d'Entremont and her committee for the publication of her book tracing generations of Acadian families of the region;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate all the recipients of the awards presented at this AGM, and thank all the members and board of the Argyle Municipality Genealogical and Historical Society who work diligently to preserve the rich culture and heritage of this region.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 2895

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

Whereas Marion Inglis of Tupperville, Annapolis County, is a resident who is known to everyone in her own community and beyond for her seemingly boundless energy and zest for life; and

Whereas Marion has always been known to be on the go and championing a cause whether it is toiling on her fruit farm, preserving the history of the Tupperville School Museum, or being an ambassador and promoter of the province and county through tourism endeavours; and

Whereas Marion as a wife, mother, and grandmother has seen and done many things in her 93 years including exhibiting her prize-winning fruit at the Annapolis Valley Exhibition for over half a century;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Marion on being recognized as the oldest exhibitor at the Annapolis Valley Exhibition in Lawrencetown and thank her for her outstanding contributions to the community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2896

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

Whereas the Oxford Regional Education Centre's Senior Girls Basketball Team, the Lady Bears, opened their season at the annual Springhill Tip-off Tournament; and

Whereas the Lady Bears played three games in the tournament and were victorious against teams from Port Hawkesbury, North Sydney, and Springhill; and

Whereas the Lady Bears came home as tournament champions with Oxford's Madison Swan as tournament MVP and Heidi Dorneidy as tournament All Star;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Oxford Regional Education Centre's Senior Girls Lady Bears on bringing home the championship banner from the annual Springhill Tip-off Tournament and wish them continued success this season.

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. 2897

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

Whereas Megan Beamish participated in a national cycling relay, Cycle 4 What Matters, with her father Stephen Beamish, joining the team in Quebec City on August 30, 2011, and arriving in Digby on September 4, 2011; and

Whereas Megan, who is 13 years old and attends Park West School in Clayton Park was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2008 and raised over \$5,000 with her father to go towards diabetes research; and

Whereas Megan earned a reputation during the relay for her enthusiasm and zest for life and she acts as a hero every day by passionately advocating for herself and others with diabetes;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Megan Beamish on participating in the relay, raising money for research, and acting as an inspiration for all.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2898

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

Whereas Taste of Nova Scotia, a recognized and trusted brand that promotes Nova Scotia's culinary experiences, recently held their 2011 prestigious awards; and

Whereas Taste of Nova Scotia awarded Mabou's Red Shoe Pub Restaurant of the Year - Essence of Nova Scotia; and (Interruption) That's right, the Rankins.

Whereas this award recognizes the total commitment of management and staff to deliver an experience that stays with visitors and creates a positive marketing campaign that benefits all of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Red Shoe Pub for their commitment to the tourism industry of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2899

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

Whereas Sara Keddy of Berwick, Nova Scotia, was key in fostering support to rural communities, the buy local movement, and promoted a community newspaper through her editorials for The Kings County Register; and

Whereas Sara is also active in community events and organizations, and in particular leads a Girl Guide Troop in the Berwick area; and

Whereas Sara is now the managing editor at the 14 Wing Greenwood newspaper;

Therefore be it resolved that the House recognize Sara Keddy for her support, information, and continued involvement with her Valley 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 Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2900

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

Whereas local photographer Larry Kelly has recently turned his attention to nature photography; and

Whereas his work has been featured in Canadian Geographic, National Geographic Worldwide, Canadian Wildlife Federation Magazine, and Saltscapes; and

Whereas two of his photos were selected for the short list of the Photographer's Forum and Canadian Geographic, from thousands of submissions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Larry for capturing Cape Breton wildlife for the world to see and wish him continued success in his photography career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2901

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I am going to read this - or try to read this resolution - on behalf of the honourable member for Clare.

M. le Président, par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que Celebrating Communities and Conferences 2011 Awards a eu lieu le 29 septembre; et

Attendu que cette conférence a reconnu des néo-écossais qui ont contribué de façon spéciale au développement communautaire; et

Attendu que le Regroupement des personnes avec handicap de Clare a été reconnu pour sa contribution spéciale à la communauté locale de Clare;

Qu'il soit résolu que les députés à cette assemblée législative félicitent le Regroupement des personnes avec handicaps pour avoir et reconnu pour sa contribution communautaire et les encouragent à continuer le beau travail.

M. le Président, je propose l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débats.

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

Whereas the 2011 Celebrating Communities Conference and Awards was held in Yarmouth from September 28th to September 30th; and

Whereas the Celebrating Communities Awards Night was held to honour the achievements of Nova Scotians from across the province for their excellence in the areas of community development, client services, collaboration, innovation in community development, outstanding youth leadership, and outstanding volunteer achievement; and

Whereas CORD - Clare Organization Representing Persons with Disabilities - was nominated for the Excellence in Social Enterprise Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate CORD - Clare Organization Representing Persons with Disabilities - for being nominated for an award, and wish them continued success in their work and thank them for their important contributions to 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 Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2902

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

Whereas established in 1995 by volunteers such as the late Hector MacKenzie of Millville, Thelma and Duncan Grant, Emerson Kaiser, and Reverend Ritchie Robertson, the Boularderie and Area Food Bank has been serving the community for 16 years; and

Whereas the profound generosity of neighbours is found in the spirit of giving shown by the volunteers throughout the year; and

Whereas families, local churches, and non-profit organizations support local families throughout the year through the food bank and the spirit of Christmas increases support when it is most essential;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend a special thank you to this year's volunteers - Carol and Mervyn MacAulay, Evelyn Timmins, Joyce Trenholm, Hugh and Marilynn Gillian, John MacLeod, and Charles MacLeod - and thank the past volunteers, organizers, and contributors of the Boularderie and Area Food Bank for the overwhelming support over the years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 2903

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

Whereas for the past 19 years Inspector Stephen Gloade has served as an RCMP officer in Nova Scotia, serving in roles such as Aboriginal policy analyst and First Nations community policing coordinator for Cape Breton; and

Whereas Inspector Gloade was invested into the Order of Merit of Police Forces for his personal and professional dedication to the RCMP and First Nations people; and

Whereas this past July, Inspector Gloade was the first Mi'kmaq person to be commissioned as an officer in the RCMP, joining only 600 of 32,000 RCMP officers to be commissioned;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Inspector Gloade for his dedication in protecting and bettering our First Nations

community and wish him all the best in his new role as inspector in charge of Aboriginal policing for all of Saskatchewan.

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 Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 2904

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

Whereas every year Cancer Care Nova Scotia hosts Camp Goodtime, where children with cancer go for a seven-day excursion; and

Whereas the families of these children know that their children are safe due to Camp Goodtime's 24-hour on-site medical supervision; and

Whereas six oncology nurses from the IWK who volunteer their time for this camp were awarded Cancer Care Nova Scotia's Excellence in Patient Care Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the volunteers of Camp Goodtime and congratulate these nurses on their award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2905

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

Whereas three Nova Scotian legislators were accepted into the Council of State Governments' Robert J. Thompson Eastern Leadership Academy session, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from September 18th to September 22nd of this year; and

Whereas the member for Dartmouth East was elected president of the 2011 class of the Eastern Leadership Academy and was thus appointed to the executive of the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference; and

Whereas the member for Dartmouth East this week celebrated the launch of his book, *Ribbon of Water: The Shubenacadie Waterway from the Air*, for which he took all the aerial photographs and co-wrote the copy with Allan Billard;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the member for Dartmouth East on his achievements as a legislator, author, and photographer, and tell him "enough already" because he's making the rest of us look bad by comparison, while we nonetheless wish him every success with his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2906

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

Whereas Brian Bowers and Scotty Boudreau of Pleasant Supplies TIM-BR Mart employ a staff of up to 22 people, some of whom have been with Pleasant Supplies TIM-BR Mart for over 30 years, and Brian Bowers and Scotty Boudreau are supporters of the Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association, minor basketball, the Victorian Order of Nurses, the Women's Auxiliary of the Yarmouth Regional Hospital, Camp Peniel, MADD, and many others; and

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

Whereas Brian Bowers and Scotty Boudreau of Pleasant Supplies TIM-BR Mart received the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce Customer Service Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brian Bowers and Scotty Boudreau of Pleasant Supplies TIM-BR Mart on receiving the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce Customer Service Award and thank them for their ongoing contributions to and dedicated support of 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 Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2907

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

Whereas for the past two years Springdale Elementary School Grade 5 and 6 teacher Ms. Dockendorff has included the Entrepreneurial Adventure Program as part of her curriculum; the program encourages children to dream up a small business venture and aims to teach them how to take a business from a concept; and

Whereas this year's Grade 5 and 6 students wrote and published a book called *What If...*, which is a brilliant coloured picture book that looks at a variety of world issues; and

Whereas the class with the help of publisher Acorn Press, have been selling copies of the book for \$10 each with all proceeds, approximately \$8 per book, going to help charities such as Kids Help Phone, Metro SPCA, Ryan's Well Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Dockendorff and her students at Springdale Elementary School for their innovative thinking, success and community involvement.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 12:52 p.m. and end at 1:52 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - BOWATER AGREEMENT: INFO. - RELEASE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Premier is preparing to spend \$90 million on a deal with Bowater. The Premier needs to provide his justification for such an agreement to spend \$90 million of taxpayers' money. My question to the Premier, will the Premier release all the information material related to the agreement signed to give \$90 million to Bowater?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the agreement with Bowater Mersey, I think, in total was \$50 million. Part of that, of course, was the purchase of land which was for \$23.75 million, which will be a benefit to the people of Nova Scotia for generations to come; \$25 million of that had to do with the investment in new efficiency processes within the mill that will allow the mill to bring down its cost per ton; and \$1.5 million of that is for workforce retraining so that when the new technical aspects of the mill are in place those

workers will have the ability to operate the plant. If there is anything else that the Leader of the Official Opposition would like to know, I would be happy to provide it to him, and he will have an opportunity to say whether or not he supports this agreement shortly.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier forgot the additional \$40 million that he has signed into this agreement that he can spend out to Bowater to buy land, that that money can also join the \$23.7 million that he is going to give them to go to Quebec to pay down a debt and not invest into the community and not invest in the workers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier believes this deal is so important that he is bringing in legislation on the agreement, asking the House of Assembly to vote on it. But the Premier won't release the risks associated. We know that the NDP Government commissioned a study this past Fall on the future of the global paper market's worth and that commission cost the taxpayers of Nova Scotia \$80,000. But the Premier is refusing to release that study to help justify the case for the Bowater agreement. So my question to the Premier, why is the Premier refusing to release this information to the public?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course we did work with respect to the competitiveness of the mills. That information is proprietary; it has to do with the actual competitive nature of the mills themselves. It's important that we not turn that information over to the competitors of the mills so they can then do damage to their economic prospects. I'm sure the Leader of the Official Opposition understands that.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I would assume that the Premier did not only commission the report to deal specifically with Bowater, he was looking at the paper industry globally, not specifically to Bowater. I would hope that he's not showing preferential treatment to one mill in this province and not looking at the rest of them.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier and the NDP Government believe that this agreement is important enough to bring forward this legislation, the Premier should release details of the assessment to the House, so that the 52 members who represent the people of this province have an opportunity to examine the case for the Premier to construct such a deal. My question to the Premier is, why will the Premier not commit to releasing his government study to the House of Assembly so we can evaluate this deal on its merits?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I already explained that but I'll reiterate it for the Leader of the Official Opposition. When you undertake studies with respect to cost competitiveness, they identify the strengths and weaknesses both in the international market and in the mills that you have operating in your province.

The reason why you do those is to try and strengthen the ability of your mills to be able to compete in that marketplace and what you don't want to do is release information

which will allow their competitors to weaken the economic competitiveness of the mills in your region. Mr. Speaker, that is why.

The rest of the agreement with Bowater is transparent and self-evident. I would suggest that if the Leader of the Official Opposition is opposed to the maintenance of 2,000 jobs on the South Shore, he should just say that.

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

PREM. - BOWATER DEAL: IEF ADVISORY COMM. - CONSULTATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the capital loan of \$25 million that the government will be advancing to Bowater will be, in the beginning, charged to the Industrial Expansion Fund. I want to ask the Premier if he'll tell this House whether or not the Industrial Expansion Fund Advisory Committee was consulted about this part of the agreement.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund is an important part of the work that we do in the province in order to be able to support and maintain jobs in the province. As I understand it, that fund operated in the usual manner.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it seemed like a relatively straightforward question. On June 29, 2010, the Premier named five Nova Scotians with a range of business and investment experience, to the Industrial Expansion Fund Advisory Committee, saying at the time, "By having an independent committee review potential investments before they go to the minister, it will ensure we continue to make smart investments that create good jobs . . ." He also said, "The independent committee will ensure an impartial analysis of potential investments through the fund . . ."

I will table that quote for the benefit of the Premier, in case he forgets those words. My question to the Premier now is, why would he exclude the members of the Industrial Expansion Fund Advisory Committee from the process of examining an agreement that is so important to the people of Queens County and the 2,000 jobs that he claims he wants to protect?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that's what I said, he can check Hansard.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question was, was the advisory panel consulted or not? That was my question. I'm still waiting for a simple answer, it's either yes or it's no. Since it wasn't yes, we can assume that it wasn't.

I welcome the Premier's attempt to clarify whether the panel was consulted or not. I will point out that in the Auditor General's Report of May 2011, he highlighted a

significant weakness in the use of the Industrial Expansion Fund and the Premier's response at the time was the he could create an Advisory Panel, for the reasons that I just listed, to examine important investments.

Twenty-five million dollars is a lot of money. Why won't the Premier just admit that they didn't get consulted, that it's just a sham, like the Labour Management Review Committee is a sham, or will he take this opportunity to confirm that he used the committee and didn't break his own rules?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there's going to be legislation before the House with respect to this agreement. The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party can tell us at that time whether or not he agrees with the \$25 million investment to maintain 2,000 jobs in Queens County on the South Shore.

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

PREM. - BOWATER DEAL: IEF ADVISORY COMM. - CONSULTATION

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Between \$50 million and \$90 million has been committed by the Premier to Bowater in Liverpool. However, the details of exactly where this money is going to come from are scarce. We know that there is \$25 million that will be handed out from the Industrial Expansion Fund - which was just brought forward by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and apparently the Premier forgot to ask his own advisory board - but, Mr. Speaker, that leaves an additional \$23.7 million which is unaccounted for.

So my question to the Premier is, will the Premier explain to Nova Scotians where he expects to get the \$23.7 million by January 1st?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, very shortly the Minister of Finance will be in a position to table the quarterly update with respect to the province's finances. All of the liabilities of the province and the revenue projections will be available at that time, and we'll be able to provide the Leader of the Official Opposition with the details as to how that will be accounted for on the books.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has told the Minister of Health and Wellness to cut \$46 million out of health care. He told municipalities he was going to break a promise we had with them - the MOU. Many Nova Scotians are looking forward, unfortunately, to seeing a tax increase on their property taxes because of that agreement. As part of this deal with Bowater, there's an extra \$40 million that has been set aside that the Premier can use as he sees fit. The Minister of Natural Resources said to the media outside that he believed the \$23.7 million was coming from his department, but he would need to ask government and Cabinet for more money to offset that. Considering he can't

find \$23.7 million, I think he's going to find it very difficult to find an additional \$40 million on top of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, will the Premier explain where the Minister of Natural Resources may find all of this extra money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think first I ought to explain to the Leader of the Official Opposition how an option works. An option, you see, is a benefit to the person who purchases it, not to the person who gives it. It is the opportunity for us to be able to purchase highly valuable property from Bowater should we decide to do so. That is the benefit conferred on the province as a result of the option. Maybe now he understands it.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the option in this case may mean that if Bowater needs more money, call up the Premier and I'll write you a cheque. That could be what we're talking about. It's rather ironic that the Premier talks about buying valuable land with this additional \$40 million, since he can't tell this House, or any other Nova Scotians, what pieces or parcels of land he's buying with the \$23.7 million that he has already committed to.

We are running a deficit of \$319 million in the last fiscal update in September, and as the Premier had indicated, the Minister of Finance will soon be bringing forth an update, but on top of that now he has to deal with this \$90 million deal. So my question to the Premier is, Nova Scotians need to know where this money is coming from. Is the Premier putting this \$90 million directly on the debt of the people of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm astounded that the Leader of the Official Opposition knows so little about the history of the debt of the Province of Nova Scotia, because if he understood that, he would understand that it was those two Parties over there that heaped all of the debt of the Province of Nova Scotia upon the backs of the people of Nova Scotia - all of it.

Not only did we not do that, we paid off debt of this province. We were the first government, as far as we know, in history that not only ran a surplus but were able to pay off all of our capital expenses. We actually paid down on the debt of the province. That's what the Leader of the Official Opposition should know about this government. (Applause)

There is no question that as a result of the irresponsible actions of past governments we have a deep hole that we have to dig out of, but we're doing it. We're getting the province back to balance. We're doing it in a reasonable manner that does not mean unreasonable cuts to the services that are being provided. We're doing it in a way that leads to more efficient delivery of those services, and we are not going to walk away from 2,000 people on the South Shore who require the assistance of government. They need our help and we're going to give it.

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

PREM. - BOWATER DEAL: FUNDING - SOURCE

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier. In 2008, the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council produced an in-depth study and strategy on building competitiveness in Atlantic Canada's forest industry - and I'll table that study. According to the report, North American standard newsprint shipments dropped 40 per cent in a short, seven-year period. Bowater's predominant product produced in Liverpool is standards newsprint.

My question for the Premier is, what surge in worldwide demand of standard newsprint has occurred which would justify an expenditure of \$90 million in taxpayers' money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all just to be clear - I realize that they like to start off by trying to torque the reality of the situation - it's a \$50 million investment, \$23.75 million of which we receive a tangible asset in the form of high-quality, high-conservation value land. Do you know something? We have a process, unlike past governments that just threw a dart at the dartboard, we actually have a process that will identify that property to make sure we get the maximum value for it.

Now to get further to what was said by the member for Cape Breton South, the question of newsprint and the competitiveness of the mills - we didn't rely on any kind of rebound and we don't rely on any kind of rebound in newsprint prices; in fact, that is why we went through every single part of the cost chain with Bowater and removed costs so that they would be a low-cost, highly competitive mill in the market that exists.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that according to the reports that we've received, and some of the economic development reports that have been put out in the past few years says that standard newsprint operations are becoming dinosaurs - and that is a fact.

The report goes on to state that from 2004 until 2008 five mills in Atlantic Canada closed. Despite the contradiction of supply as a result of mill closures, and corresponding increases in the price of newsprint, further declines are almost certain to occur in U.S. consumption, which will no doubt result in further rationalization in the newsprint industry.

Bowater produces newsprint and very little of any other type of product; the only one product that it produces is not in demand. My question to the Premier is, why does the Premier insist that an expenditure of \$90 million to prop up a product that is declining in demand and with potential closures of mills that produce this product yet to come - why is that a good investment of taxpayer dollars, other than a political investment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the plan of the province is supported by the municipalities, by the Port of Halifax, by the union, by the people of Liverpool - they are all supporting the agreement that was put forward. I think if anything came out of that question, it is the opportunity for the member for Cape Breton South to apologize to the people on the South Shore for calling them "dinosaurs."

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the person who should be doing the apologizing around here is the Premier, because this is nothing more than a political investment to save seats in Queens County and other adjacent ridings - that's all it is. It is a political announcement, a blatant political announcement to save the hide of the member for Queens, that's all this is all about.

The report speaks for itself - newsprint exports dropped 42 per cent in 2002 to 2007, with no hope of reversing this trend. This export trend will only get worse, not better. Even with the closure of the mill in New Brunswick, newsprint still counts for 30 per cent of total production in the region.

I'm going to ask the Premier again - how can the Premier justify an expenditure of \$90 million for a product that has reached the end of its lifecycle?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this - by the time the Liberal Party is finished, they'll be as popular on the South Shore of Nova Scotia as they were in western Canada after the National Energy Program.

It does no good in this House to attack the people of a region for wanting to ensure that they have an important part of the economic architecture of their community saved, Mr. Speaker. They have asked for our help and we are going to give it to them.

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

PREM. - NOVA SCOTIANS: JOB CREATION IDEAS - INNOVATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in his State of the Province Address, the Premier invited anyone with a viable option to create good, sustainable jobs, to call his office. Apparently that doesn't include the members of the Industrial Expansion Fund advisory board, but it also doesn't include the 6,500 Nova Scotians living outside Halifax who have become unemployed in the past year, nor does it include the thousands of Nova Scotia families who are living in greater hardship, with higher taxes, higher power rates and higher user fees.

My question to the Premier is, what does he have to say to all those Nova Scotians who he did not invite to call his office yesterday?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, my invitation to people was as broad as it could possibly be. I said if you have a good idea that will create jobs in the province, we want to hear from them. In fact, that's why we set up the Premier's Advisory Council, to make sure that we have a good window on what is going on in the province, broadly. It is why members of my Cabinet are out in those communities, constantly listening, bringing in, bringing back good ideas. It is why the members of our caucus are out in all those communities, prospecting people for good ideas.

They are, in fact, listening and they are bringing that information back and we are acting upon it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, apparently it's broad but not broad enough to include the members of the Industrial Expansion Fund Advisory Committee, who he didn't ask on the largest investment he is putting before the House this session.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Premier's phone has been ringing off the hook lately with hundreds of small and large employers in our province asking him to shelve his first contract arbitration plans. Here is what they are saying, and I will quote from an open letter that was given to the Premier today: "With one voice, we have shared repeatedly that the current labour relations environment in Nova Scotia is enviable."

Further, it calls on the Premier to shelve his first contract arbitration plans. That one letter represents tens of thousands of Nova Scotia employers and 200,000 employees in our province. How can the Premier say that he invites Nova Scotians to call his office when they speak with unanimity in the tens of thousands on his bad idea and he doesn't listen?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, well we are hearing from Nova Scotians on a whole variety of issues. What I can tell the member opposite is that on each piece of legislation, of course we listen. We listened on that piece of legislation. We made some adjustments that we thought were relevant. We are very pleased and proud to see this legislation make its way through the House. We believe it will lead to a better and stronger economy in our province. Thank you.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, apparently you can call his office but if he doesn't agree with you have to say, you're just going to get a dial tone. That's what those tens of thousands of employers are trying to tell the Premier and continue to try to tell the Premier and his government.

Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Province Address yesterday the Premier talked about a couple of game-changers. One game-changer that's in his hands today is his plan for first contract arbitration, so I will ask the Premier one last time, will he take advantage of this opportunity to truly show that he and his government are listening when people call him up, and withdraw his bad bill on first contract arbitration, or is this invitation to call his

office a sham, just like his IEF advisory panel and just like the Labour Management Review Committee have proven to be a sham?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have to say it always amazes me when the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party gets going because all of the things he says are so skewed from the reality the rest of the province knows. It is alarming, I think. The reality is that people are phoning our office and they are asking us to deal with questions associated with health care, education, the economy. We receive all of that information and we deal with their concerns in a forthright manner.

With respect to first contract, 85 per cent of Canadians are already covered by first contract - 15 per cent of Nova Scotians are already covered. In all of those provinces . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would caution all the members on unparliamentary language during Question Period. I would ask the members to watch their language during Question Period. I would ask the honourable Premier to finish his statement, please.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we can disagree without being disagreeable, I guess.

The reality is that this is a part of stronger economies in six jurisdictions across the country. It's a good bill. It will be good for employers and it will be good for employees. Thank you.

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

PREM. - BOWATER: GUARANTEES - LACK EXPLAIN

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier. I'd like to table something from States News Service dated Friday, September 10, 2010, where it states, "NDP push for hearings on Harper's Abitibi Bowater pay off." I'll table that for the House.

Bowater has a history of taking government money and then closing up shop - ask the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The taxpayers in that province gave tens of millions to a company despite warnings that the industry was in decline. The head of the Stephenville Chamber of Commerce said he wasn't shocked by the mill's closure. He said: I'm shocked that our government has not been able to take on this issue and deal with it.

This is a glimpse into our future and the future opinion of this government. My question to the Premier is, why did this government leave the taxpayers of Nova Scotia on the hook for as much as \$90 million without any guarantees from Bowater?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, is it just me or is there some irony that's being asked by the member for Cape Breton South, who defended pouring money into Sydney Steel for so many years without doing what this government is doing, which is ensuring that any money leads to new efficiencies and a cost-competitive environment that guarantees the investments by its own parent company?

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I might remind the Premier that Sydney Steel was owned by the people of Nova Scotia. It was closed by the Tory Government eventually, but we looked after the workers down there as best we could. This is not (Interruptions) He's trying to . . .

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

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I state that this government would be better off giving money to the workers down there at Bowater, not to the company. This government wants to hand over as much as \$90 million to prop up a dying industry. They offer no guarantees or no long-term plans for the people in this community. After the company ceased operations in Newfoundland and Labrador, their legacy continued. They refused to pay for the cleanup of their former site. (Interruptions)

I see I have the attention of the member for Queens. If she wants to get up in this House and debate this issue, I'd love to see her try to defend this issue to the rest of Nova Scotia.

This company, after taking tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars only to close up shop, then left the people of the province saddled with a \$750 million cleanup. My question to the Premier is, why is this government rushing to sign a deal offering no assurances when this company has such a checkered past?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite. We entered into a detailed agreement that sets out the obligations on both sides and we ensured the protection of the workers, the protection of their pension plans. We ensured that we will keep the 2,000 jobs associated with that plant.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I've seen a government give money to a company to lay off people and that's what happened here - 100 people have lost their jobs down there, others are moving on because they see there's no future in that particular business in that part of Nova Scotia. Ask the workers in Queens County, who got laid off, whether they think this is a good deal or not.

Mr. Speaker, this company is not a good corporate citizen, and I'd like to read a quote: "Harper has thrown the door open to other corporate opportunists. This will strongly impact future decisions taken in the public interest by democratic governments and further

erode Canadian sovereignty. Parliament must close the door on this dangerous trend.” The corporate opportunist; the corporate opportunist of Bowater - the speaker, the then NDP International Trade Critic, Peter Julian, it was he who said that, so we’re getting a difference of opinion from some New Democrats and other New Democrats.

My final question to the Premier is, why is this government offering as much as \$90 million to a company this Premier’s own Party dubbed a corporate opportunist?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Cape Breton South knows that there has been a complete restructuring and that we’re dealing with Resolute now. But I want to make this point . . .

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Who laid off the people down there? You’re the only one I know who gave money to somebody to lay people off.

THE PREMIER: . . . I don’t know if the member for Cape Breton South has been in Liverpool lately - I don’t know if he’s ever been to Liverpool, but I have. I’ve been there very recently and I’ve talked to workers at that plant (Interruption) I talked to a guy I’ve known for many years who was part of that . . .

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Right after the next election the rest of them will be laid off.

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

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, you know it’s tremendously disrespectful to the people of Liverpool, of Queens County, that he’ll ask a question but he won’t even listen to the answer - he won’t even listen to the answer.

I was there and I met with workers of that plant. I met with one person who has been there for many years, he was at the top of the seniority list and he could have stayed working in the mill, but he decided to take his retirement so that a younger person on the seniority list would be able to continue to work in the list. That is the kind of person the member opposite is talking about. They made difficult decisions, and I applaud them, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

PREM.: ADVISERS - SELECTION CRITERIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Michelin directly employs 3,500 people in our province - the indirect employment is thousands more, of course. Michelin employs more people than the federal ship contract will ever, and keeping good jobs in Nova Scotia should be a very high priority.

In a January 2006 interview, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour president, Rick Clarke, now senior adviser to the Premier, serving on his Economic Advisory Panel, co-chair of the NDP Government's LMRC, told The ChronicleHerald the Michelin Bill was bad legislation. The article went on to explain that Mr. Clarke said the bill is still a sore issue and one his organization raises with every new Labour Minister who is sworn in.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is, why does he surround himself with advisers so firmly opposed to this piece of legislation, who are determined to put huge numbers of Nova Scotian jobs at risk?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the government surrounds itself with people who are dedicated to the well-being of the economy of our province, the creation of wealth so that people in the province have a better and sounder economic future - that's what we do.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Perhaps more serious than Mr. Clarke's dangerous position on the Michelin Bill is his lack of credibility. During a recent appearance on CTV News, Mr. Clarke was asked about the Michelin Bill. Mr. Clarke failed to mention that he thought it was bad legislation, and he also failed to mention that at least up until 2006 it was an issue his organization raised with every new Labour Minister who was sworn in. No, instead Mr. Clarke told viewers: I've been president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour since 1989 and that issue has never been on our agenda. Clearly he's singing a different tune these days.

My question to the Premier is, when will the Premier get rid of his supporting cast who say whatever is convenient in order to make them and the NDP sound harmless when, in fact, they are salivating to kill the Michelin Bill and jeopardize thousands of jobs in rural Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I don't know if the member opposite has ever been to a Michelin plant. I don't know if they've ever had the opportunity to talk to some of the families of the people who work there. I've been fortunate enough to be raised in a region where Michelin operates. Members of my family have worked for Michelin. I've made it very clear that I support the work that the company has done to provide good jobs. We've been very supportive of the investments in those plants. We want them to be a strong part of the economy of the province and we work with them whenever we can.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. Not only did the hot light of the CTV cameras cause Mr. Clarke's memory to go a little foggy, but only a few days ago, during an appearance before the Law Amendments Committee, Mr. Clarke was again asked about the Michelin Bill. His response according to Hansard, which I will table: I've been president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour since 1989 and the issue has never come out of our lips in all those years.

Misleading a committee of this House is a serious offence, not just to the members of this House but, of course, to the people of Nova Scotia. So my question to the Premier is, why won't the Premier fire, right now, this NDP backroom strategist from all of his key positions for misleading a committee of this House of Assembly?

THE PREMIER: You can always tell when it's getting to the end of the session, Mr. Speaker. When they've got nothing left, they start to insult ordinary citizens in our province who are working only to make the province a better place. (Interruptions)

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus are so overwrought about Rick Clarke's participation that they appointed him to the Minimum Wage Review Committee. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM. - BOWATER: EMPLOYMENT FIGURES - SOURCE

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been using 2,000 jobs to describe the situation at Bowater. There are 220 employees at the mill. At the last census, which I'll table, there were less than 5,000 people between the ages of 20 and 54 in the entire Region of Queens Municipality. In fact, that region has an employment rate of 46.5 per cent, which means that there's a working-age population of less than 5,000 people.

There are approximately 2,290 people employed in the entire Region of Queens Municipality. With that data the Premier is saying that if Bowater were to shut down, every single person in the entire Region of Queens Municipality will be out of a job. So the question is simple, will the Premier just explain exactly how he arrived at the figure of 2,000 jobs?

THE PREMIER: I would be happy to explain to the member for Glace Bay, Mr. Speaker, because the supply chain for Bowater mill extends into Lunenburg County, into Halifax County, into Shelburne County, into Yarmouth County, over as far as Digby, all of those, it's 2,000 jobs in that region.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, if you look at the 2008 study on industry done by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, we find that for every 100 direct jobs in an industry, we could accurately point to 35 indirect jobs which are supported. That means that for 220 jobs at Bowater there should be an additional 77 jobs indirectly supported by the operation. So with this multiplier that was calculated, we can accurately come up with a total of less than 300 jobs.

So, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians - and I guess myself - don't understand the Premier's figure of 2,000 jobs. So will he table the evidence that allows him to arrive at that figure?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member opposite doesn't realize that in addition to the Bowater mill, they also operate the Brooklyn energy company and they also operate the Oakhill sawmill. They are dependent, through Freeman's sawmill, through many of the other sawmills in the region, to be able to supply that particular mill. That's where the 2,000 jobs come from.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we're being asked to accept the \$50 million to \$90 million deal, but the Premier's not providing all the information we need. Nova Scotians are asking questions, they are serious questions, and it's important that we have answers to these questions. The \$90 million is certainly a lot of money, and I think Nova Scotians deserve to have the answers. It's simple - will the Premier table in the Legislature the data, the calculations, and the methodology which he used to arrive at this jobs figure of 2,000?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member for Glace Bay will shortly have the opportunity to debate the investment in Bowater mill when the bill comes forward. I know that the member for Glace Bay is a bit of an expert on ensuring the closure of industries, because it was him who carried the briefcase for the Member of Parliament for Cape Breton-Canso when they closed Devco.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - CCSVI: INVOLVEMENT - PLANS

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on November 22nd, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about the government's plan for CCSVI here in Nova Scotia. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 22nd, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about the government's plan for CCSVI here in Nova Scotia. The minister informed me that she would be meeting with her federal and provincial counterparts that week and a presentation on clinical trial guidelines would be included. The minister also said, "I and officials of my department are very much looking forward to that presentation so we can get on with planning our involvement."

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, what was the outcome of your presentation and what are the plans for the involvement?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as members know, Health Ministers met in Nova Scotia a few weeks ago, and on our agenda was the question of clinical trials for the liberation therapy for patients with MS. The federal government gave

us an update at our meeting. They called for research proposals, which were due November 30th, and they told us that the successful research team would be in place in March. Provinces will have an opportunity to participate based on the successful research team, and we will have to await those details.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we know that Nova Scotia has one of the highest levels of MS here in our province. It's one of the highest ones in the country. I have said to this House on many occasions, time is not a friend to those who have MS. The minister last year in this House said that indeed when the go-ahead came from the federal government, they would be there to participate in trials on the liberation treatment.

That permission came in June. We're here six months later. Can the minister tell this House when we here in this province can see clinical trials offered to the people of this province?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a quote from Dr. Beaudet, who heads up the Canadian Institute of Health Research, who are spearheading the clinical trials - and I will table this. Dr. Beaudet said, "The research evidence to-date is so mixed that the only way to get to the bottom of this is to conduct a well-designed clinical trial with appropriate stringent patient safety considerations factored in."

Mr. Speaker, this is what the federal government has called for proposals around. They called for those proposals the end of November. They will announce the successful respondents in March and at that time we will have more information about how people from our province with MS can participate in clinical trials. As I've indicated, we are very prepared to participate in clinical trials that have been established to be well-designed and safe, according to the federal government.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the minister told people of this province who had MS that when the word came from the federal government they were going ahead, that she would be leading the charge and she would go. I don't have a piece of paper but it's in Hansard.

So here we are, we have the permission. We have one of the highest rates in the country. We have people going all over the world looking for an opportunity to get the liberation treatment. This government has said, we're going to be there. The people in this province with MS took them at their word, like they have on many other things they've said.

Mr. Speaker, we have the people, here in this province, who are suffering. We need to move forward. This government should be a leader, not a follower. That Health Minister has the opportunity to do what's right for all these people that she already said she was going to. So how does the government plan to move forward, quickly, and how are we

going to be able to tell people in this province, who are suffering with MS, what we are going to do for them now, not two years in the future?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member that I had a great deal to do with making sure that the MS issue was on the agenda when the Health Ministers met here in Nova Scotia and that I, as chair, will continue to keep that on the Health Ministers' agenda, so that we continue to get regular updates from across the country and from the federal government.

I also maintain regular contact with the MS research community here in Nova Scotia. We have a very highly skilled, highly professional group of researchers and clinicians in a MS unit here in Halifax. They are fully aware of the call for proposals and they are fully aware that the Government of Nova Scotia is prepared to participate in trials if they wish to participate as researchers.

But I do not tell people in the research community what research they must conduct and I don't conduct research myself. This government is doing everything it can to advance the research required to sort out the effectiveness and the safety of this particular treatment, Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM. - BOWATER DEAL: JOB SECURITY - PLANS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the agreement that the Premier signed with Bowater has left Nova Scotians with many important questions. One of these questions is that there are no guarantees that the 220 workers at the plant will have job security. In fact, when questioned yesterday on this subject, the Premier referred to increasing productivity and efficiency.

Of course if we're talking about increasing productivity and efficiency, that means doing more with less, so I'd like to ask the Premier an expert question from me. Will the Premier tell 220 workers at the Bowater mill what steps he has taken to ensure their job security over the life of this agreement?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of - not the Leader, not yet the Leader, anyway. As the member for Glace Bay would know, the agreement between the mill and the union, with respect to the changes that are going to be made to the collective agreement, covers the questions associated with the workforce, with the manner in which the difficult questions of seniority will be dealt with. What we did is, we entered into an agreement that will provide for the operation of both of the paper machines over the next five years.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's contract requires that Bowater reports payroll numbers, but doesn't go any steps further. It is void of guarantees that any

of the 220 employees, as we discussed, at Bowater will have any job security for the life of the agreement itself, let alone when the \$50-\$90 million deal winds up. Why would the Premier sign an agreement and spend between \$50-\$90 million as identified without any guarantees of job security for the 220 workers at the mill?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay. I'm sorry, the Premier.

THE PREMIER: We're easy to confuse, Mr. Speaker, I understand. I'm the younger, better-looking one. (Laughter)

The reality is that we worked very hard with all the stakeholders in this process, with the workers themselves, with their representatives in the union, with the municipality, with the Port of Halifax, with the businesses in the region. I can tell the member for Glace Bay that the workers at that mill were put through an agonizing choice, and they made the choice to support the continued operation of that mill. We respect the opinion of those men and women and we are supporting them.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the region of southern Nova Scotia is already suffering from massive job losses. In the last year StatsCan reports that there have been 1,700 jobs lost in the region year to date and that employment dropped 2.2 per cent with the labour force contracting by 5 per cent over the same period from last year. The last thing the taxpayers of Nova Scotia need is a \$50-\$90 million deal which doesn't guarantee any jobs. The Premier needs to answer clearly and honestly - will any of the 220 employees left at Bowater lose their job during the life of this agreement?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well what choices were put before the union at Bowater and what the difficult decisions were that they had to make. It means that people they work next to will not be coming back to work. That is a very regrettable fact. They could have walked away from the mill. They could have said, no, we're not prepared to accept this. They could have voted in a manner which would have essentially led to the shutdown of that very important part of the South Shore economy, but they didn't.

They voted instead to ensure that there continued to be an operating paper mill in Queens County that would supply jobs, not just to the people in the mill but to the thousands of people associated indirectly to the mill - whether they were with Brooklyn Energy or with the Oakhill Saw Mill or Freeman's or any of the other suppliers, businesses, truckers, people working in the woodlands.

We support that decision. There's a bill before the House and the member will have the opportunity . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I remind all the honourable members in the Chamber that I keep time up here at this desk, and I keep time of all the questions. That's why lately the

questions are not getting asked in the amount that we had in the last session, because the supplements and the pre-questions are too long - by all Parties, not just the government answers. The honourable member for Cape Breton West just asked a question that took one minute and twenty seconds. Please realize that the honourable Premier has the time allotted to answer his question.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think I made my point. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

PREM. - BOWATER PENSION PLAN: UNFUNDED LIABILITY - DETAILS

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, a key piece of the Bowater equation is missing. The Premier is set to put \$50 million to \$90 million into Bowater without giving Nova Scotians the full story about this deal. For example, Nova Scotians have not been told what responsibility they will have for pension obligations owed to Bowater workers current and retired if or when the mill closes.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell members of this House today the current status of the unfunded liability of Bowater's pension plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the pension funds are fully supported.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, part of this government's potential \$90 million deal includes a land purchase of \$23.75 million. This land could be used as collateral for eventual windup of the pension plan. The concern is that if or when the company closes up in Liverpool that there may not be enough assets left to fund pension obligations to workers and retirees.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, if Nova Scotia is buying assets from Bowater, what will remain as pension collateral?

THE PREMIER: As I said, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we were clear with the company about was the full support of the pension and, of course, that remains the case.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, members of Bowater's pension plan need to know that their pension will be protected. Instead of using funds to go towards ensuring that the workers and retirees in Liverpool will be protected, the Premier has committed the province to sending between \$50 million and \$90 million to the corporation with absolutely no guarantees that this money or the corporation will even stay in this province.

Mr. Speaker, what steps will the Premier take to ensure that Bowater pensioners are not left out in the cold should this potentially \$90 million band-aid solution not work?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, or the Party opposite just spent their time complaining about the other \$40 million that's there in just some portion of the land that still belongs to Bowater. We are completely confident that the pensions are fully supported by the assets of the company.

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

PREM.: JOBS DEFICIT/JOB CREATION SKILLS - RELATIONSHIP

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the government is in way over its head when it comes to job creation in Nova Scotia and despite the Premier's denials, we now know there's a crisis in rural Nova Scotia - 6,500 jobs have been lost outside of Halifax. The only people in this province who don't see this as a problem happen to sit on the government side of the House. The reality is the members of the government have zero experience in creating jobs and they have the results to prove it.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. When will the Premier admit that Nova Scotia's jobs deficit is directly related to his government's job creation skills deficit?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we have people who throughout their lives have been involved in business, have operated their own business. They understand very clearly what it takes to operate and to maintain a business. I can remember my time in business and I certainly would put the business skills of the people on this side of the House up against the business acumen of that side any day.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, it's not enough for the Premier that his government doesn't know how to create jobs, now they're refusing to seek advice from those who do. We need only look as far as the sham Labour Management Review Committee to find a prime example. At a time when the government should be working with job creators to dig ourselves out of the hole they put us in, they've ensured that 85 per cent of Nova Scotian employees' workplaces are not represented on that committee.

On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we know that you don't create jobs by ignoring job creators. So my question to the Premier is, seeing how he has refused to work with job creators and come up with a real plan, what basis does the Premier have for assuming he knows more about creating jobs than employers in Nova Scotia with hundreds of years of experience?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, thankfully this province can now rely on a government that, in fact, relies exactly on those job creators. They sit on the Premier's

Advisory Council. They are providing us with good advice. The jobsHere strategy was based on the advice from the business people in this province. The workforce strategy was a product of those very job creators. It's just a shame that if there was really any business acumen on that side, that they hadn't used it when they were in government, instead of driving this province into debt.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's plan is failing and Nova Scotia simply can't afford more job losses. There's a crisis in rural Nova Scotia, whether the Premier likes to admit it or not. Day after day Nova Scotians read the newspaper and learn that more of their peers are going to be forced to depend on food banks and charities this holiday season.

Nova Scotians need a real job creation strategy and they need it now. So my question to the Premier is, since the Premier and his government have so clearly failed to create new jobs or even protect existing ones, will the Premier finally start listening to the advice of job creators in our province before it's too late?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased to see the latest economic data that says that employment is up, that unemployment is down, that the labour force is expanding, that we have the lowest level of unemployment in Atlantic Canada, that in fact Halifax has one of the lowest levels of unemployment in the country.

I want to tell you this, Mr. Speaker, there used to be a crisis with respect to rural Nova Scotia and when we defeated them, we fixed it.

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

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted an introduction before you go on with the business of the day?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BAILLIE: I would just like to draw members' attention to the west gallery and to a number of important individuals from the employer community. Wayne Fiander, who is no stranger to the members of this House, has been newly elected as the director of the Nova Scotia Chambers of Commerce - I know he's up there waiving at us; Heather Cruickshanks, who has become quite familiar to this House in the last little while, from Merit Contractors is in the west gallery; and Janet Hawley from the Contact Centre Nova Scotia Association, and a good friend of mine, is in the gallery. I'd like you, sir, to extend the warm wishes of the House to all those present. (Applause)

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[1:53 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

[2:38 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 100 - Municipal Elections Act and Municipal Government Act.

Bill No. 106 - Libraries Act.

Bill No. 109 - Safe Body Art Act.

Bill No. 114 - Consumer Protection Act.

Bill No. 115 - Labour Standards Code.

Bill No. 116 - Elections Act.

Bill No. 121 - Education Act.

Bill No. 122 - Environment Act.

Bill No. 123 - Corrections Act.

Bill No. 124 - Arts Nova Scotia Act.

Bill No. 125 - Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

Further, Madam Speaker, that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 55 - Medical Act.

Bill No. 90 - Safe Collection of Scrap Metal Act.

Bill No. 96 - Pension Benefits Act.

Bill No. 102 - Trade Union Act.

Bill No. 110 - Residential Tenancies Act.

Bill No. 118 - Motor Vehicle Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, which were reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole House, without further amendments.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 129.

Bill No. 129 - St. Michael's Polish Association and Benefit Society Act.

[MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 129.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 129. 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 Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 132.

Bill No. 132 - Acadia Recreation Club Act.

[MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 132.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 132. 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 Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 72.

Bill No. 72 - Timely Medical Certificates Act.

[MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 72.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 72. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 81.

Bill No. 81 - Identification of Criminals Act.

[MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 81.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 81. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, as this bill is moving forward, I thought it was important to say a few words on third reading. We certainly felt that changes are necessary to the Insurance Act, and I know there have been a lot of studies done about what would be best, some consultation with the industry, which we think is so important.

The industry, however, does say that the devil is in the details, and a lot will be determined as this is actually brought into play. I realize there are a number of changes and they're not all happening at the same time. I think some are scheduled to come in this Spring, in 2012, and another batch the year after, in 2013. The reason for that is that some of the details have to be worked out, and as well there's concern about what that might do to the premiums, whether or not it's going to affect premiums for Nova Scotians in terms of getting their car insurance.

At the same time, one of the deficiencies in the bill is that it doesn't make any provision for people who have been injured and were held to the cap in this period of time

between 2003 and - I think it would have been - 2010 when some changes were brought in. And in these current changes there's nothing that goes back to offer more recourse to people who were injured when the cap was very inflexible and was set at \$2,500.

I'm sorry to see there's no provision to look back in time. I realize that isn't often done, but at the Committee on Law Amendments recently we saw an amendment brought into one of the bills that had to do with people who lost their licence because the Registrar of Motor Vehicles might have removed the licence. The amendment that was brought in by the government did allow that to go back in time, so that somebody who was in limbo right now could apply for these better procedures.

Again, in this case it is very lamentable there are people who are left without any other recourse, who have been suffering from much more than just minor injuries or minor pain. This is significant pain. So we're concerned a little bit about that, and as I say, I think the industry is supportive, and that's important, and they will adopt these changes.

The Minister of Finance was saying that he expects this won't affect premiums. I hope he's right and I hope we can keep premiums down while these changes are introduced, because the changes appear to be better for consumers and will offer more support if you find yourself in the very sad situation of being injured in an accident.

One of the things we had been hoping was that there would be a good opportunity to educate consumers in the process on what the new changes mean, and how they can have some choice going forward. I know one of the changes that's waiting for 2013 is one that will actually offer a separate option, almost an opt-out option, where consumers could choose to buy an additional - I don't know what you would call it exactly, but part of their insurance policy.

AN HON. MEMBER: A rider.

MS. WHALEN: A rider, there you go - an additional rider, which opts them out of the cap and they could say we don't want to be held to the provisions of the cap if, in fact, we're injured - we want to have the greater recourse to go through the courts or to get perhaps more compensation and help should we be injured. So that will be an additional and perhaps a costly feature that might be brought in. We're not sure what that's going to cost but, because it's complicated, I know it's taking another year to bring forward.

The other thing I particularly support, which came from the consultant's report on insurance, was that we should maintain the use of gender in terms of determining what the premiums are going to be, and that particularly is for inexperienced drivers. Often we're talking about young drivers, but I think we use the term "inexperienced" in case somebody older gets their licence, but it means that the evidence is clear that women and girls who are driving have fewer accidents than boys and men who are inexperienced drivers and,

therefore, they said it's actuarially sound to maintain a gender lens as we look at what the premiums should be.

I think that's important because women pay more for an awful lot of things in society - we pay more for clothes, we pay more for haircuts, and we pay more for a lot of things that should be the same. You know, if you look at a shirt that looks just the same for a man or a shirt for a woman, somehow it costs a lot more for the woman. I think if there's one thing that can be backed up with evidence, that shows that women actually are safer drivers, more cautious when they're inexperienced and new behind the wheel, I think they should be rewarded by having lower premiums.

So that's important and I think that we need to do more, Madam Speaker, and I think that others in the House might agree with me. There is a trend across Canada to look at legislation with a gender lens and to see what the impact is for men and for women as legislation is passed. I certainly would support our government looking in every case at legislation and sort of measuring to see what its impact is on men and women, because often women are impacted - I'm thinking particularly of women being adversely impacted by legislative changes. So in this case I looked at that and said that's a good thing that we're going to maintain the ability to look at this with a gender lens so that insurance companies will not be wrong in doing so. So we certainly support that.

As I say again, we're looking at the URB to be the body that will look at any increases in premiums or assess any applications for such. I have some doubts about how well the URB is able to look at the consumers' interests and really hold the line on increases that are affecting consumers - and my concern comes primarily from looking at the Nova Scotia Power increases we've seen over the number of years. I think they've been consistent and high year after year in the last five to six years. So although there's a big process for a company to go forward and ask for those increases, they seem to be getting increases - and I'm worried that the insurance industry as well will come back with the need to increase their premiums and we are going to have to put our faith and our reliance on the URB to really look out for consumers and Nova Scotians.

So that's something that we will be watching in the Liberal Party as this goes forward. We're certainly interested to see how these changes are going to be instituted, the actual detail that comes with it and, as I said, the Liberal Party has said the devil is in the details, and so we need to monitor it as it goes forward. But this is certainly a timely change and we knew and recognize that the insurance regime that we have in place right now, the rules and the Act needed to be amended.

We're certainly supporting those changes as they go forward. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, we will be supporting this bill because we don't see really any - there have been some changes and, in fact, some changes that I know I had stood in my place here in the Spring of 2010 and recommended, and I see that they're in the bill, so we're pleased about that and I'll get to that in a moment.

Just a couple of points I'd like to put on the record. We don't see any significant changes made since the solution that was provided to Nova Scotians in 2003, which began to make auto insurance rates more affordable for consumers. I know that the members opposite had used this issue to try to score political points, but since they've been elected and the changes that we're seeing come forth are really not that significant based on what they had been critical of in Opposition. We have a full-torque product but what remains to be seen is if it will be affordable for the people who want to purchase it. That issue has not really been addressed. The cap was maintained, as we know, because the cap worked and the fact that this government chose to maintain it is a sign that the Progressive Conservative solution back in 2003 worked, and they kept it.

As I had mentioned in the Spring of 2010, I had recommended that we have a look at the Alberta diagnostic and treatment protocols for people who are insured because with those protocols in place they better help those who are injured. I was happy to see the government come forth with that. I don't know if it had anything to do with me but I did . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You can take the credit.

MR. MACMASTER: I'll take some of the credit and you can check Hansard on that one. I'm not going to take much longer here Madam Speaker, but one question that I had asked the industry, I asked, do they think that the changes are going to cause any cost increases for consumers in auto insurance, and they told us they don't believe so, so I hope they are right. I think with that, Madam Speaker, I've said my piece. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 86. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 93.

Bill No. 93 - Education Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 93.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 93. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

MR. CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 94.

Bill No. 94 - Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 94.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 94. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

MR. CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 95.

Bill No. 95 - Education Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 95.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 95. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 98.

Bill No. 98 - Fish Harvester Organizations Support Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 98.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, I won't spend too much time on this one. For many years, I believe, especially in southwestern Nova Scotia, there has always been a bit of controversy when it comes to fishing organizations in the area, where many times, even when I was minister and, of course, just being a member of the community, where we hear from different people who are continually questioning decisions made by other organizations. The best example really is District 34, the LFA 34 Advisory Committee, where a lot of times there are a number of decisions that of course are made by the president or the chairman, made by the port reps, that sometimes don't represent, I believe, the views of the fishermen or of other areas.

I hope that this allows a better way in which to keep these organizations strong, to make sure that the voices of all participants in a fishery are able to be heard, rather than people becoming complacent when it comes to the decision-making process where people will be staying away from certain decisions.

Madam Speaker, what continues to happen, though, is decisions are starting to be made where it is starting to cost fishermen, or fisherpeople, money - whether it's a \$100 fee for a safety organization, whether it's a \$100 fee for something else. So I hope that the department of course is careful and provides good guidance to the fishing organizations and the fishers of Nova Scotia, to make sure there are not added burdens on them as certain decisions and pieces are made.

I think this will help in trying to continue to make these strong but again, we have to keep a better eye on making sure that decisions being made are, of course, good for all fishermen.

Madam Speaker, many times we have seen crises happen in our fishery where the associations really don't know in which direction to go. I can say that right now in southwestern Nova Scotia there are some issues happening that I believe might become an

issue or two. I know that the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is more than aware of the lobster situation in southwestern Nova Scotia right now, which is concerning, I believe, to many people. Of course that situation is the quality of lobster and the pricing of that lobster in southwestern Nova Scotia.

As much as I'd like to say there should be a fix here, I think that good old Mother Nature is playing with a situation here where we're seeing the quality of those lobsters, because of warmer sea temperatures or of a second moult and there's a whole bunch of reasons why the quality of the lobster might not be as good as it could be, but I hope that with good direction from government and good direction from those associations, that we are able to weather this storm as we have many other times. I believe this piece of legislation is a building block, or at least a piece, to help that along the way.

Again, my final comment on this is that I hope the department and the minister remain vigilant, to make sure that all can be done, to make sure that they guide these associations to make sure they are working in, of course, the best interests of all Nova Scotians. Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Thank you Madam Speaker, I just want to rise in my place to say a few words on this bill. As the minister knows, and probably the member from Argyle, we've tried for years to be organized in the fishing industry. Every time we did get together and get partly or somewhat organized, it didn't seem to make any difference, especially when it came to Ottawa and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They didn't seem to want to recognize anybody unless they had millions of dollars in their pocket and wanted to take up and clean the fleet out and have it all to themselves; that is what always seemed to have happened in the inshore fishery.

It has happened in the group fishery. Fishermen were organized. Back in 1994 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans said too many people chasing too few fish, so we organized with community groups. When we got organized the Department of Fisheries and Oceans wouldn't recognize any history we had so they didn't give us any quota to go fishing with - so much for that organization. You can see how the fishermen in Nova Scotia are very sceptical when they're told you have to organize again. But I've always said to the fishermen, if you want to stay independent you better come together and try to do it. Just by organizing, I believe we can try to keep our independence and that's why I'm behind this bill - to help do that.

Right now in the lobster fishery we do have a problem. Like I said to the media the other day, I believe nature's changing and we have to change with it and I hope this Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture will get on to the bandwagon and get something happening here. We can't keep going by the calendar of when we catch these lobsters. I don't think a farmer goes and picks these apples on a date on a calendar, he waits until they

are ready to pick and then he picks them, and I believe we have to do that in the lobster fishery. If we want quality price for that fish, we need to bring in quality lobster, and that is just good common sense.

I know it's hard for fishermen to change, I know that deeply, it's hard for a lot of people to change. But if nature is going to change and if we don't change with it, we're hurting nobody but ourselves. I think that's something the minister needs to get on and not just tell the fisherman that they need to pay mandatory dues to an organization that's not going to do anything but give the fishery away a little more. If that's the case you're going to see a battle from a lot of fisherman. But it needs to be done, it needs to give us more clout in the inshore fishery to get things done like this, especially when it comes to this lobster fishery. I think we're having a little trouble here with it and I think there has been some bad play out there about the lobster in the public and I'd like to say to the public, how do you know when you have a good lobster?

I think a lot of people have asked me that around this House, two or three people yesterday asked me how can they tell if they're getting a good lobster. If you're going to buy a lobster out of a pound or out there in Bedford, or wherever you may be going, you pick that lobster up by the back, out of the water, and if those claws come up straight like this, it's a good solid, strong lobster. But if you pick that lobster up and it droops down, you don't want it. So when you pick that lobster up by the back and its old arms are sticking out straight and biting and frisky, you've got a good Fall lobster, I guarantee it. But if you pick one up and it is droopy and it's not lively, put it back, hopefully it will recover but I doubt it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Are you still talking lobster? (Laughter)

MR. THERIAULT: I'm still talking lobster. (Laughter). It's the truth, try it and you get a good Fall lobster. Not all the lobsters are bad it just seems to be getting – year after year here, the last three or four years, the lobsters have gotten a little softer because each year here – look at the weather outside here in December, it's warm, it's like September weather, so the lobsters every year they seem to be getting a few more softer ones and there's less meat in them, and they're not filling out so quickly. They fill out as that water temperature goes down. That's when you get the good lobster, so that's when we've got to go after those lobsters that are soft now. Anyway, if we can tell the fishermen to do that and we can improve the lobsters in Nova Scotia, lobster fishing, and if this bill will help us get organized (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter is getting a little high and I'm really interested in hearing the insightful and educational debate.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

MR. THERIAULT: I think I've got them thinking about Christmas and lobster, Madam Speaker. They're getting frisky, too. (Interruptions)

Anyway, if this bill that we're putting through here will help bring the fishermen together and make this happen, and get a better quality of lobster ashore here in Nova Scotia - because we have lots of them, it's one of the biggest industries in this province and we don't want to ruin it - we've got to bring in quality, people will pay for quality. But if you go out and buy a lobster, or a dozen lobsters, and take them home and can't get enough meat out of them for a sandwich, you're not going to buy them again. So we need to correct that. If we have to change things a little, along with nature, as nature is changing, so be it, but we will land a quality lobster and we'll get a quality price for it. I hope this bill will help make this somewhat happen and with that, I'll take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 98. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 104.

Bill No. 104 – Gaming Control Act.

Bill No. 108 – Perpetuities Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motions are carried.

Ordered that these bills do pass. Ordered that the titles be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bills be engrossed.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 111.

Bill No. 111 – Equity Tax Credit Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 111.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I just rise in support of this bill. I had an opportunity to talk to the Finance Minister about this bill the other day and I think it's a kind of a bill that's going to enhance what was already in place in terms of tax credits for opportunities in this province, particularly in my area, in Cape Breton, and I can point to a number of investments that were made in Cape Breton in the past couple of years that perhaps would not have taken place had the equity tax credit not been available at that time. This bill only enhances that and it strengthens it, but it gives some continuity to equity tax credits for, I believe it's for the next 10 years at least, but anyway, I just wanted to rise and congratulate the Finance Minister on bringing this forward, because I think it's going to give some certainty to some of the people in our area who are wishing to invest in new opportunities on Cape Breton Island. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 111. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 112.

Bill No. 112 - Community Spirit Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 112.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 112. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 126.

Bill No. 126 - Police Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 126 now be read a second time. It is my pleasure to begin debate on Bill No. 126, known as the Police Act amendments.

It is the intention of the province to create the most effective and efficient Serious Incident Response Team, also known as SIRT, in the country. When I announced the appointment of Mr. Ron MacDonald as the head of this team in September, I made it clear that this unit would be an independent unit. I have said repeatedly that we need to ensure public confidence in the handling of investigations around serious incidents, such as death, serious injury, sexual assault, or other public interest concerns involving police. This is why the SIRT team, under Mr. MacDonald, can independently launch an investigation or begin an investigation after a referral from a chief of police, the head of the RCMP in Nova Scotia, or the Minister of Justice.

Just as we appoint Mr. MacDonald through a Governor in Council appointment, it is our intention to appoint Mr. MacDonald's senior investigators through Governor in Council appointments as well.

The amendments contained in Bill No. 126 give Mr. MacDonald the flexibility to hire the right candidates for these senior investigative roles. The director anticipates that he will need to hire two investigators, who are known as team commanders in the major case management investigation model. It is anticipated that these team commanders will have extensive investigative experience at a senior level in the law enforcement field, or acceptable equivalent. They will need the experience in preparing and presenting cases for court. If required, these team commanders may be asked to oversee seconded investigators under the direction of the director. The bottom line is that they need to be highly skilled.

There is a precedent for this method of hiring. The Ombudsman is able to hire employees through appointment by Governor in Council. Again, the reason is simple: to protect the independence of these employees and get the best candidates possible.

Madam Speaker, these amendments were proposed to government by the independent head of SIRT, who believes that they enhance and protect the independence of

the team. It is the independent head of SIRT, Mr. MacDonald, who will put forward the names of those he wants to hire under the Governor in Council.

There will be transparency and protections built into the system, as Mr. MacDonald will use the same methods and procedures as those used by the Public Service Commission in hiring. It is a process that allows Mr. MacDonald the benefit of attracting top-quality candidates who work independently of government.

I will now take my seat and look forward to hearing the comments of the members of the Opposition. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, we appreciate the minister's remarks. I look forward to seeing if anybody does come forward through the Committee on Law Amendments, to see what members of the public have to say. Certainly there is a need for police to be investigated when some of the serious incidents do happen.

But I'm not going to speak too much more on it today. I just wanted to put that on the record. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 126.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 126. 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 Acting Government House Leader.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 128.

Bill No. 128 - Public Sector Lobbyists Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Madam Speaker, I move Bill No. 128 for second reading.

This bill will ensure public sector organizations, which are defined as government reporting entities as defined in the Finance Act, cannot use their funds to pay external consultants to lobby government.

With those comments, I await any comments from the members of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 128. 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 Acting Government House Leader.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 131.

Bill No. 131 - Snow Sport Helmet Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 131.

This piece of legislation will come into effect a year from now, in time for the skiing and snowboarding season of 2013. This is a piece of legislation that I, frankly, have spent a significant amount of time thinking about and working through. This legislation will require that all people who are skiing or snowboarding in the Province of Nova Scotia wear a ski helmet. This is legislation that is designed to promote healthy choices and to prevent traumatic brain injury in particular.

Ski and snowboard accidents are on the rise, and in Nova Scotia, since 2000, there have been 11 incidents of traumatic brain injury that have resulted in significant disability and impairment as a result of those incidents where people have not been wearing a helmet. The human tragedy that results when someone suffers traumatic brain injury is becoming more and more apparent to the public. There are people in our province who have known about this for a long time, and those people are people who work in our trauma centres, in our emergency departments, in our emergency health services throughout the province. They are all too familiar with the significant, the dramatic, and the tragic consequences of head injuries that occur from time to time in these sporting situations.

The cost of such an incident to our health care system, besides the human cost, is estimated to be about \$400,000 at the point of the incident, and annually an additional \$400,000 for the lifespan of the person who has suffered a traumatic brain injury, for a total of approximately between \$6 million and \$9 million for each person, to our health and community service systems. We've estimated that of the 11 people who have suffered the most serious form of traumatic brain injury over the last 10-plus years, the cost to the health care system is anywhere between \$65 million to \$90 million, which is also significant and something that certainly I have to take into consideration when I'm looking to make our health care system sustainable and available for people.

I have said to people, when you have a public health care system that is the insurer for people who suffer a health-related incident then I think you have to be prepared to give up some of your individual rights in our society if you're expecting that the collective resources of the citizens of the province will have to be brought to bear to deal with the health care situation that has developed.

We want people to enjoy skiing and snowboarding in the Province of Nova Scotia and we all, I think, agree that safety should be of paramount concern when people are enjoying these activities. A fair amount of research has been done by staff, both in the department, but outside the department in the area of traumatic brain disorder, the neurosurgeons and the neuroscientists in our province. Many people were spoken to in focus groups and a kind of survey - people who ski and snowboard who wear helmets but maybe don't wear them all the time.

It was really interesting, some of the findings, Madam Speaker. They found, for example, that when parents had their children they would wear helmets, but maybe when they were skiing without their children would not be so inclined to have their helmet. They found that the rate of helmets for younger children very high, but as you become a teenager and a young adult, the rates fall off. They found that people who ski would ski regardless of whether they were required to wear or a helmet or not. They enjoy the sport and they were prepared to wear helmets. They also found a very, very high rate of expectation among skiers and snowboarders that sooner or later mandatory ski helmets and snowboard helmets would be the norm, would be a regime that would be in place.

A lot of work has been done in preparation for this legislation. I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the ski hill operators for their involvement in the development of this legislation. Staff in the department worked very closely with them. I encouraged staff to hear the concerns of the ski hill operators. We know that they are small enterprises in Nova Scotia; we don't have a huge industry here, but we have an industry that we value very much in the communities they operate in. They add real value to our province, real opportunity for enjoyment on the ski slopes. They themselves practise very safe ski and snowboarding practices - they wear helmets, they encourage the use of helmets, they have participated with the department in developing public education around

the use of helmets, and they worked closely with us with respect to the development of this legislation.

This legislation does not penalize ski operators. If individuals are found to be skiing or snowboarding without a helmet, the onus is on the individual. The fines that are attached to the penalties are directed at individuals who choose to ignore the legal requirements placed on individuals in this legislation. I think this is a very fair way to proceed, rather than to penalize the operators for people making particular choices.

I don't know if members here followed the very tragic case in Edmonton on December 2nd or 3rd of a 20-year-old skier, considered to be a veteran in the sport - imagine, at 20 - who had grown up on the ski slopes in Alberta and who generally wore a helmet when he skied. He chose to ski without a helmet and hit his head, suffered a serious brain injury that wasn't apparent until the next day, and his friends found him unconscious in his college dorm. This is a tragic death that might have been avoided, had he just worn his helmet as he always did.

I say to people when I talk about this legislation - because I know not everyone agrees with this legislation - that I think the most difficult things I have to deal with, as Health and Wellness Minister, are brain injuries. Seeing a family which, in many cases, is under the enormous pressure of having a family member who was once a contributing, productive, happy, engaged member of their family become dependent and immobilized and a source of great stress for families is the most difficult situation that I deal with as a Health Minister. I think that most people know that Health Ministers have the occasional challenge around issues around the end of life, placement of loved ones and long-term care, access to surgery for all kinds of things, cancer drugs. These things are all difficult, but I have to say the most gut-wrenching decisions are to look at the services and the supports that are required to meet the needs of a person who has become incapacitated because of an acquired brain injury, a traumatic brain injury. So ultimately my decision, with respect to this legislation, came from my concern that if we can prevent any of these injuries, then we have an obligation to use whatever tools we have at our disposal to do that.

Madam Speaker, I want to indicate that in addition to the consultation we did with the ski-hill operators, we worked very closely with the Dalhousie Division of Neurosurgery and we had support from the Canadian Ski Patrol Association, from Doctors Nova Scotia, from Child Safety Link, from a whole variety of people who, like myself as Minister of Health and Wellness, deal with the consequences of traumatic brain injuries and who know firsthand the absolute importance that must be placed on wearing a helmet and preventing traumatic brain injuries.

So with those few remarks, I will take my place. I look forward to hearing the debate on this bill and, indeed, I'll look forward to hearing the interventions from the public, and the issues that come forward from the public, when it proceeds to the Law Amendments Committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, I just want to say a few words about this bill. I certainly have never snowboarded. I've skied periodically over the years and, interestingly enough, last year was the first year I ever wore a helmet skiing – I actually own one now. I promptly bought a helmet and crashed down the hill at Wentworth but the interesting thing about the helmet was, my first observation was, wow, this is warmer than wearing a hat. So I certainly thought that was a good enough reason right there to be wearing one.

There are a couple of things I just - I don't have any problem with this. I mean to some extent government is already following what's happening on the ski hills. This isn't really moving much forward that isn't already happening. If you go to Martock or Wentworth, they don't allow school groups on the hill anymore unless they're all wearing a helmet. The racers are required to wear helmets. It is actually rarer now, if you're on the hill - I actually was surprised to see the difference, having not been on a hill in a number of years, to see the difference and to note that there were very few people not wearing helmets, in fact, and I think that that's just the way things have changed and, of course, now there are designer helmets and the whole bit, which I guess are cool to wear with certain pictures.

There is just one issue that I want to raise with this bill and that's the fact that the federal government has actually not yet enacted the recommended regulations for the Canadian Standards Association on helmets. So if you go into any of our sporting goods stores here in metro, or indeed across the country, or across the province, the helmets are built to different standards and that's significant for one major reason. A number of years ago I got my motorcycle licence and one of the things that you learn very quickly is all the motorcycle helmets are built to withstand a certain standard and withstand a certain crash and that certain angle of impact and all that sort of thing. Although there's a standard written and voluntarily followed by some helmet manufacturers, there's no way to walk into a sporting goods store and know which helmets actually meet a certain safety standard and which ones don't. There's no indication I'm aware of, maybe the Minister of Health and Wellness has some information I don't, but there's no indication I'm aware of yet that the federal government is prepared to move forward and approve those regulations to have the formal CSA standard, which is actually unfortunate in a way because I would assume the manufacturers would like to see that standard as well, especially since there is actually a standard that's been agreed upon. I wouldn't think that would be a controversial issue.

The issue I therefore want to raise with this is the fact that I think, I would hope, that the minister, since this doesn't take effect until November 2012, I would hope the Minister of Health and Wellness will take it upon herself, after this passes, to lobby the federal government to enact those regulations - I assume they have to go into the Royal Gazette or whatever the case may be - so that standard exists, because putting people on ski hills with

potentially unsafe helmets is worse than putting people on the hill with no helmet at all. We don't know what that impact could be and I think that's important.

The other issue that's going to need to be addressed is enforcement. I assume the government isn't planning to go out and hire all kinds of enforcement officers to climb up and down ski hills and look for people who aren't wearing helmets. The minister has also said she's not looking to the ski hills to be liable for this so they'll have some enforcement, but they're not going to have - it's not their responsibility to enforce this. At some point we need to address the issue of enforcement. This is no different than many of the other bills that have come through on some of the traffic safety issues where, without enforcement, their use and application is going to be relatively limited.

It sounds good. But if you don't enforce it, it's not going to be much good. Much like we've talked about on some of the road safety bills in terms of reducing speed limits in school zones and so forth, it's important for the government to ensure there is a public relations campaign. I know one of the staffers in our office suggested the most moving image might be of a child asking their parent to wear a ski helmet in a television ad. That might be the most dramatic.

Whatever that case may be, I think that of all the issues with this bill, the biggest issue is going to be ensuring there's a standard. If there isn't a standard in place, you haven't solved anything unless you have a way of making sure that people are buying and using ski helmets that are actually made to a certain safety standard. Otherwise, the good intents of this bill fall flat. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to comment on this bill. I can say, probably, I've been skiing for quite a few years. I live just minutes away from Martock and have been there many times. My children all go there and certainly they wear helmets. I think I could probably safely say there are 95-plus per cent of the people on that hill who likely have a helmet on. As has already been said, the racers and a lot of others do. I can say that probably only in the last year or so have I started wearing a helmet as well. (Interruption) Too late, he says.

This is, in some ways, a very important bill, but it is unfortunate in other ways that we have to have tell people to put these things on, that we have to tell people to protect themselves and so on. It won't hurt, that's for sure. I know there was a letter that I received dated the 22nd of November, from ski hills in the province, the three of them combined in one letter, where there were some issues they had, some concerns about this bill going forward, but I believe that has since been worked out and I believe those were around the liability, perhaps, and the minister has spoken to that. I think once they get that clarity, that was a great concern for them, and obviously it should be given that they are a seasonal employer and it could end up costing them a lot.

The onus is certainly on someone else, which is fine with them and they're in favour of the protection and they have a number of helmets that they put out and offer them, if you wish to wear them, and now, as you will be wearing them. I think it has been said as well that there are a lot of people who didn't wear helmets because they felt maybe they didn't look cool or things like that but they do make a lot of neat-looking helmets these days to wear.

Also, I heard the minister, I think her words were that the industry is not a large industry, but I will say through the season Ski Martock employs a lot of local people. Some of them have been there for many years, which is certainly important to our area.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I'll just make those few comments and end with saying that we look forward to the season opening this year again, and if the weather ever does get cold enough to make some snow (Interruption) I'm sure it will come as well. Martock is one of the best you'll find anywhere. It may not be as big a hill as you may find in other provinces around the country and so on, but it is a great little hill and we certainly encourage folks to come out and have some fun and a little recreation and do some skiing.

I would close with letting the House know, and I'm sure they already do, we have some very talented championship snowboarders and skiers who come from Ski Martock in Windsor. With those few comments, Madam Speaker, we certainly support this coming forward.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank both of the honourable members from the Opposition Parties for their very thoughtful comments. We certainly will take those into consideration, particularly around having adequate safety standards for ski helmets. We do have a year to do some work on that and I'd be happy to have any further discussions with members on their thoughts around that as we move that forward.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would move that we close second reading and move the bill to the Law Amendments Committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 131. 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: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 133.

Bill No. 133 - Bowater Mersey Pulp and Paper Investment (2011) Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd now like to move second reading of Bill No. 133, and I'm happy to stand and take a few minutes to talk about the bill, the Bowater Mersey Pulp and Paper Investment (2011) Act.

This bill sets out the legislative authority to ratify and confirm the recent agreement between the province and Bowater Mersey Paper Company Limited, which will see the pulp and paper mill near Liverpool continue to operate for years into the future.

This agreement is all about maintaining over 2,000 jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia, keeping communities strong, and providing opportunities for the pulp and paper mill to be more competitive and innovative.

Madam Speaker, we believe it is important to be open with the people of Nova Scotia about all the details of this agreement and that is what this legislation is designed to do, to be open and transparent and consolidate all aspects of the deal under one piece of legislation.

Bill No. 133 will implement the multi-year agreement between the province and Bowater Mersey Paper Company Limited that includes capital investment, land acquisition, and workers' skills training. This agreement also opens the door for collaboration on innovative ways to maintain sustainability and competitiveness in the long term at the pulp and paper mill.

Madam Speaker, while there are no guarantees, we believe we have put in place a plan that we are confident will make the mill competitive and keep it operating for the next five years and, hopefully, well beyond.

Before I go further, I would like to emphasize that government was not alone at the table. Municipal and business partners, and the workers themselves, all made contributions to keep this mill operating. In fact, Madam Speaker, I am sure that the workers probably had to make one of the toughest decisions of their lives - in accepting the company's labour changes, workers remaining at the mill will see family, friends, and fellow co-workers lose their jobs, to help maintain a future for the mill and for the community. And, Madam Speaker, we should never lose sight of this great sacrifice as we move forward with this legislation that provides the legislative framework for the province's agreement with Bowater Mersey Paper Company Limited.

Madam Speaker, a key part of this bill involves funding for capital investments. This funding takes the form of a \$25 million forgivable capital loan that will help the mill achieve productivity gains and energy savings. The company has identified two significant capital projects. First of all, the long-fibre refining project, which will result in reduced electricity consumption at the pulp and paper mill, and those savings will grow as time passes along. Secondly, the building of a topping turbine for the Brooklyn biomass facility. This will be a source of green energy. It will recover steam that is currently wasted and use it to produce additional renewable electricity.

Also, as this is a forgivable loan, the company has an opportunity to earn annual forgiveness - up to \$5 million a year if they continue to operate the two papermaking machines on a competitive, ongoing basis, and secondly, they provide the province with annual estimates of pulp and paper amounts and payroll budgets and advise the province in advance of decisions around anticipated downtimes of the newsprint production. The capital loan will be secured by lands, and that's certainly a strong protection for our investment. The company will also have an opportunity to accelerate the rate of forgiveness if they undertake other capital innovation or productivity investments.

Another aspect of the agreement with Bowater Mersey Paper Company Limited embodied in Bill No. 133 involves the province purchasing 25,000 acres of land held by the company for \$23.75 million. This is something that I'm very pleased is part of the plan, as Minister of Natural Resources. While we're still in discussions with the company around the exact lands that will be purchased, I can assure members of this Legislature, and really all Nova Scotians, that we have a good sense of what we want and hope to have that finalized before the end of this year.

Since 2009, we've invested more than \$90 million to increase Crown land assets in our province. This land purchase will add to that and is consistent with government's goal to increase ownership of the total land mass for the province. Some of the land that's being purchased through Bill No. 133 will be used to help the province meet its land protection goals. The land will also provide Nova Scotians with more opportunities that support tourism, recreational, commercial, and community uses. The investment also represents tangible assets, and I should add that Aboriginal interest in the potential use of that land has also been considered.

The agreement also sets out some conditions for Bowater Mersey Paper Company Limited in relation to the land sale. Specifically, the sale proceeds must be used to ensure the long-term sustainability of the pulp and paper operations, the company will provide public access to certain lands, and thirdly, they will provide the province with a five-year option to purchase up to an additional 50,000 acres of company-owned land.

This bill also includes another critical component of the agreement, and that is providing funding for skills upgrading and cross-training for mill employees in the amount of \$1.5 million. This funding will be available from 2012-14 through the Productivity

Improvement Program. Skills upgrading and cross-training are paramount to achieve workforce efficiencies, especially with new technology constantly coming on stream. The bill also sets out a tax break for the pulp and paper mill, as requested by the region of the Municipality of Queens.

Bill No. 133 embodies a plan that supports jobs, communities, and the forest sector in western Nova Scotia for many years to come. This will be done by keeping good jobs and the community strong in rural Nova Scotia, by providing time to seek out innovative ways to keep the mill sustainable and continuing to reposition the Nova Scotia forest sector for new product development, mill efficiencies, and new market opportunities.

When the Premier announced this deal last week in Liverpool, there were many from the area who expressed through tears, hugs, and handshakes their gratitude for the government's help. I'd like to stress that this deal is all about keeping people working and creating new opportunities. We will continue to work with partners to identify and support strategic opportunities that are both innovative and globally competitive.

So, Madam Speaker, Bill No. 133 is about doing what is right for the people of the South Shore, for their communities and for all of Nova Scotia.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to say a few words on Bill No. 133, Bowater Mersey Pulp and Paper Investment (2011) Act. It has been of much debate in this House, I know it has been of much debate across part of the South Shore and, unfortunately, not the fullest of debate because the citizens and community of the South Shore didn't realize that the mill was in trouble in August, when the Premier found out, and I assume - I can only assume - that was the same time that the member found out, that the issue happened in August and the community became aware of it much later on.

What is extremely interesting is that from this side of the House, when we start asking questions about the financial aspects of this deal, it's like we're opposed to the community of Queens while in actual fact, Mr. Speaker, the people in Queens are asking some of those questions that we're asking - what exactly is involved with this potentially \$90 million deal? How many jobs will be secured and for how long? What happens when we invest our \$25 million to make the mill more efficient, which all of us believe it should be, and I believe quite frankly all Nova Scotians would believe it should be? They say to themselves, what happens to the, 220 roughly, people who are left? Are their jobs secured for that investment for five years or will some of them be laid off?

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you're well aware that the workforce was cut by about 40 per cent. The union was broken in many ways. Community member after community member had to make this decision, talking about their neighbours, talking

about whether or not the jobs would be there. I wonder how they feel today knowing that after they made that very tough decision, that very tough decision which was a very close vote I might add - a very close vote - in a community that was divided on whether or not to keep this mill going. I wonder how they feel today that they know that we, as a province, as a government, have offered up \$60 million to this company.

I noticed in the remarks by the minister there are no strings attached to that money. We're purchasing land, he said to use to effect their operations but we all know in this House, if you read the bill, that we're going to front them a loan on January 1st. The lands that we speak about will not be available at least until the end of March, probably into the new fiscal year, but we're going to front them a loan and that loan is going to leave our province to go pay down company debt and have no real benefit for the people of the South Shore or the people of this province.

As part of that clause there's another. The minister spoke about the possibility for the province to buy another 50,000 hectares, at approximately \$40 million, and there are no strings attached to that money either. That money will be left to go pay down debt, Mr. Speaker, not to make sure that people are working. So when we bear in mind that the community, the workers of this mill went in and voted to reduce the mill by 40 per cent, voting the workforce by 40 per cent, we have now laid out to the company an additional \$60 million to go elsewhere. I'm sure some of the questions that are being asked, I know they're being asked because we hear them, well, if we're offering \$60 million to buy land, couldn't we have been certain that some of that money would have been used to keep us employed?

Mr. Speaker, when the agreement was brought forward and the company started to speak, they have not given any reassurance that this company has a long-term future in Nova Scotia either. They were very evasive on how long employment would last and if you go into the community of Queens, it varies: two years, three to five. But when we decide - "we" as in investing public money - I would think our first and foremost suggestion would be, how will this benefit Nova Scotians? How can we ensure that the investment we're putting in remains here to keep Nova Scotians working, to make sure that - as was brought up earlier in Question Period, I don't know of another time when we have invested this type and this kind of money to lay off 40 per cent of the workforce.

I think it's pretty common knowledge in the community of Queens that there are other layoffs to come - it just won't be on the union side. The belief is that there will be an equivalent, percentage-wise, on the management side. We've asked government to explain to us how this ends up being a good investment for the people of the province.

When you start looking down this deal, the province has really taken on the entire liability. We've taken on the liability for Nova Scotia Power, we've taken on the liability for the municipalities, and we've taken on the liability for the company. There's not a single dime of this \$90 million that is company money - not a dime. The Premier says their

investment is they've had losses over the last number of years. Well, Mr. Speaker, I know in your community, in my community, and in communities from one end of this province to the other, there are business owners who've had losses over the last couple of years. I don't believe that when they go to the bank the bank says, that's their investment, that's their collateral for future borrowing, because you've had losses last year. They want to know what are you investing, what are you putting in?

In this case, this company is putting in zero dollars. It is the people of the Province of Nova Scotia who are investing and the people of Queens County who are investing by having to lose 40 per cent of the workforce, by saying, this job has to go and we're going to vote it out. As all of us know, that vote was very close. People are very concerned. When they realize that \$60 million of public money is going to this company for land - albeit we're buying an asset, no question about it - I'm sure they're going to ask themselves, where was that money when it came time before we voted, before we decided to terminate 40 per cent of our workforce? Where was this money to ensure that Nova Scotians were working?

The minister spoke about the \$25 million investment in energy efficiencies and called it a forgivable loan. Mr. Speaker, it's a grant. As the Province of Nova Scotia, we're going to cover the investment of the efficiencies into this mill - we the people of Nova Scotia, for doing that, for the company laying off 40 per cent of their workforce. And by doing so we're going to say, we'll front you the money, and if you keep your doors open for one year, we'll forgive you \$5 million; if you keep it open for two we'll forgive you \$10 million, until the five-year agreement disappears and we have paid the full bill.

You start asking these questions about how we're covering the \$25 million investment in efficiencies, we're covering the \$23.7 million for land purchasing, we're covering the \$1.5 million for retraining, and we have inside this arrangement another \$40 million for future investment, so a \$90 million package. When you ask what the company is putting in, that's what you get - silence. We don't hear of any of their investment. We're also concerned, quite frankly, about what's going to happen in the long run after we've made our investment, after we've committed our money to the project. The Premier, the company - no one will commit to the 220 jobs being secure even for the life of this agreement, let alone living beyond five years. As a matter of fact, the community will hear of other job losses associated with this mill. There's absolutely no question.

We've asked some simple things. Where is the information that the government and the Premier have used to make their decision? We know they've consulted globally to look at what the paper industry is like and what it will be like in the long term. Why won't they share that with us; why won't they show us that? Let us know what they know. Is there something in there that potentially is going to be recovery - let's hear it, show it to the people of Nova Scotia - on the investment? Show it to the people of Queens, so they can determine for themselves whether or not this is a good investment.

We've had this debate in this House, in Question Period we've asked questions a number of times and the Premier is using the spinoff jobs of 2,000. He knows it's inaccurate; it's not right. They have numbers there that will tell him that. They've commissioned a study about what the spinoff jobs in that mill would be. I think they know and they won't release it because they know it's not accurate. They simply know it's not accurate.

When we, on this side of the House, hear that kind of multiplier being used, it makes you wonder why - what's in here that we don't know that he's trying to puff up the numbers on the other end? Those are the kinds of questions that Nova Scotians are asking. It was interesting, I had the chance yesterday to be listening at the chamber event, to the Premier speak, and I found it interesting. I was curious about the crowd, and afterwards I had a chance to talk to a number of people.

Quite frankly, it was people who are good to see prior to going into the holidays. It was interesting, their concerns were - a couple of things they brought up and I've heard this on a number of occasions. There was, first of all, the fact that when the Premier was asked about first contract arbitration he wasn't quite accurate with that when he talked about 85 per cent of Canadians are covered, when it's actually 4 per cent for this particular model, but they were also interested when he wouldn't commit to not bringing in other labour legislation. But the next thing in our conversation that they went to - because I had asked the people about how they feel about the commitment - they said it's rather interesting, where is the number 2,000? That's a multiplier, where did that come from, how did he get from 220 to 2,000 - almost a multiplier of 10? They asked, how did you get to that number? And we've asked the simple question of the Premier, how did you get to that number?

He has yet to provide us with the evidence. I'm hoping, as we continue down the road, the conversation about this bill, and whether or not people come in to present at the Committee on Law Amendments, we hear from them, that part of the equation is talked about, so we can all, as a group, have all the information when we make our vote on this piece of legislation. I think it would be extremely important.

The other aspect that we have talked about a number of times, coming into the conversation about when the mill was talking about making itself more efficient, in having to reduce its workforce by 40 per cent you're asking yourself, how can you get the same output when you're reducing your workforce by 40 per cent? I don't know of any business that has 40 per cent waste in their workforce. So when you change that number of your output, all the input numbers are going to change too. These are all reasonable questions that we're asking of the government - you know, whether or not the 220 survivors can feel secure for the next five years or not?

There's the issue also that was brought up today in Question Period, the issue around the pension plan and the unfunded liability. The Premier suggested today that pension plan was fully funded - that is simply not true. He knows that; it is simply not true.

That pension plan's unfunded liability is secured by the lands that we're purchasing and other land, but it is not - and I think if you listen, most people would suggest to you we're paying a good dollar for an acre of land, depending on the acres we buy. Let's assume we're going to buy good quality, let's say what's left is probably not as good and potentially means the resale value we're going to sell it for is less, that means the ability to fund that unfunded liability in the pension plan becomes that much greater.

We're looking for some reassurance from the company that they have enough of an asset left of quality that would provide them with enough revenue to fund the unfunded liability for the people who have worked at the mill for generations, who are on pensions. As I'm sure you're well aware, one of the big issues in the Strait area is the unfunded liability of the pension plan and if it winds up - what's going to happen to those who are on pension already?

These are all legitimate questions. No, we're not against economic development. We're not against people retiring in an affordable lifestyle. As a matter of fact these questions are trying to protect that. If we're going to invest this type of money and no one is making any commitment for some real measurables - we're going to secure 220 jobs for five years, there will be no further layoffs, the money we're going to spend is going to be invested in the community - that's one thing, but no one is saying that. Mr. Speaker, we might be better off to say to the community, we have a pot of money here and we're going to invest in your community and we want you to help us. We want your small businesses to grow, create more than 220 jobs - \$90 million is a lot of money, and as we've seen with the entrepreneurial spirit of Nova Scotians, we've seen some of them grow businesses beyond their wildest imagination.

When you look at what is happening in that area - I know that during the Question Period earlier, these questions were being received in a very negative way but they're questions that are being asked in the community, whether or not we are going to protect those jobs. Are we going to secure those pension plans? Are we going to make sure that it's a long-term solution for this company here in Nova Scotia?

Mr. Speaker, we're asked, as members of this Legislature, to vote on this bill without the government releasing all of the information that they have, without the government giving us all the facts justifying where they've come up with the two, the multiplier of 10, telling us how that has happened, telling us what the report looks like that they commissioned about the paper industry in North America. These are all legitimate questions.

It has been rather interesting for me to go through this process. You know when the good people of Yarmouth talked about their ferry service (Interruption) No, your multiplier's too high, and it wasn't a multiplier of 10, Mr. Speaker. You know I had the opportunity to be in Queens not that long ago. Bowater was certainly talked about but I can tell you that I heard from more people in Queens who told me that the cancellation of The

Cat and the ferry service in Yarmouth has had such a negative impact in their community, far greater than what anyone could have imagined. The belief that that was just going to affect the community of Yarmouth was simply naive and it has spread all the way up the South Shore and through the Valley. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the Valley, in some ways, has been protected a little bit only because of the Digby ferry, but from Digby down, around Yarmouth, through the South Shore, that's not where the traffic is going, it's going straight up the Valley from Digby.

So when we look at the justification for this agreement, to sign this agreement to support a project that has had little to no measurables, no security really, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, no guarantee of the jobs, yet we said no to a much lesser investment in Yarmouth, which would have a huge impact across Nova Scotia. As a matter of fact, very few Nova Scotians have questioned whether or not it would have been a good idea to invest in the ferry in Yarmouth - almost to a person, they say it would have been. But I can tell you not everyone is saying that about this investment in the mill.

So what does the government know that they're not telling us about this investment? If this is a great investment, answer the questions. Make sure that not only are we going to invest that money and purchase land, we're going to purchase the very best of lands and that we're going to make sure that those 220 jobs are there for more than a year or 18 months - and then more layoffs come. What assurance do they have, all of those people working through this period of time? They don't have any and the company is not willing to give them any. That should cause us some concern, when you look at the kind of money we're looking to invest.

Some of the lands that I know will be purchased will actually be in Annapolis County. Bowater owns large chunks of land in Annapolis County, almost all of which is in the riding of the member for Digby-Annapolis. They own large portions of land. You know, we're asked to vote on a bill that is going to buy property for the Province of Nova Scotia, and we don't even know what properties we're buying. We don't know the details, we don't know if it's been cut off five years ago, we don't know whether it is going to be strips down through the middle of properties. We don't know any of that, nor do the people of Queens County or the people of Nova Scotia.

I think it's important that whatever information the government has, they lay out here so that all of us get an opportunity to look at the full project, the full investment, and the full benefit to the people of this province. Why is that so unreasonable? Why is it so unreasonable that the Opposition Parties and the people of Nova Scotia would want to know what it is they're investing in? Why is it unreasonable that the communities, that the workers in Bowater who went in and negotiated and actually decided they were going to lay off 40 per cent of the workforce - why is it unreasonable that we should reassure them that their jobs would be there for more than a year or 18 months? Why is it unreasonable that they should get an opportunity to realize, after they've gone through that, that we're

putting \$60 million on the table for the company to buy land and move out of here to pay debt somewhere else?

These are all important issues and important concerns. Mr. Speaker, I hope that as we move from here to Law Amendments Committee we'll hear from members of the community about this deal. I hope the government will explain their investments and allow us, as legislators, to get the full details.

They could go a long way, quite honestly, for all of us if they just released the \$80,000 report that they commissioned on the paper industry globally. That would help. Something that affects a particular business, we can take that out, but if they were truly looking at the global industry there would be lots of things there that would apply to all mills, not just this one. It would tell us what the future is or is not. It would tell us whether or not this is going to be a good investment.

The Premier has been quoted as saying, it's trying to be one of the last mills standing. Standing for what? If there's going to be a decline in the paper industry that they're making, what are we standing for? What's left? Let's try to cushion this and let's try to transition our communities to something new. This is a lot of money. To the strong entrepreneurs of the South Shore, of Queens County, it would make a lot of difference and help a lot. It would make a big difference.

We, as a caucus, have been listening to Nova Scotians - not only Nova Scotians here but Nova Scotians who live on the South Shore - about this investment. We're going to continue to ask the questions, regardless of how sensitive members of government become on them, to find out so we can have all of the information before we make a decision on how to vote on this piece of legislation. It is important for the province and for the people of the entire province that we understand the full impact of this investment.

There have been a number of things talked about, some of which I've read in the media more recently, which was about moving this bill from here quickly to the Law Amendments Committee and back. There is absolutely no reason to move this bill with haste from here to the Law Amendments Committee. It is important that whenever this bill arrives at the Law Amendments Committee, there has been ample time to notify Nova Scotians, to notify the people of Queens and the South Shore to come forward to express their support or ask their questions about this piece of legislation.

So here we are on Thursday afternoon, shortly after 4:00 p.m.; there is no need that this piece of legislation needs to be rushed through the Law Amendments Committee. We're here next week. It will give an opportunity for us to put out lots of information to express to people who come in, to decide whether or not they support this, whether or not this is a good deal for Nova Scotians. Do you know what? At the end of the day we might be told by Nova Scotians, this is not a great deal but we have to support it - we might be - but we might also be surprised that Nova Scotians will come in and say, listen, if we're

going to put \$90 million on the table, let's make sure that \$90 million benefits Nova Scotians. Let's see what we could do with \$90 million, how many jobs we could create - 220, 300, 100, 500. Who knows, because the government hasn't looked at other options.

This is a large investment of money and, yes, it allows us to move towards more of our protected lands. No one is arguing that. I would have hoped though, as we did that, we would have somehow made sure that the money we were investing in that land would have been reinvested in the community of Liverpool and not used to pay down debt somewhere else. That would have been a real meaningful gesture to the long-term viability of that plant. Quite frankly, it would have been a real gesture to the workers of this province and the citizens of Nova Scotia. Think about it.

I know it has been spoken about by the minister when he spoke, and I know the member for Queens, the Premier as well, and I think I may have mentioned that in my remarks when this issue first came to the House - how difficult it would have been to be one of those employees. To have to go in and decide whether or not to let 40 per cent of the workforce disappear, to basically have the union that has been representing you for a period of time be broken - very difficult, and the way the vote went, to my understanding, was very close.

Now, imagine how they must feel today when they realize \$60 million of public money is being given to this company that forced them into this situation, that cut 40 per cent of the workforce, that money has now gone elsewhere, or going to go elsewhere - \$23.7 million on January 1st will be gone and mark my words, Mr. Speaker, the other \$40 million will be handed out in dribs and drabs before this company closes. It will be going elsewhere. But imagine if we had said to the workers of Nova Scotia and the people of this province, we believe there may be a future. We've studied this. Here is the amount of money we had and we're going to make sure every dime gets invested in you and in your community, for long-term stable employment, and if it's not at the mill, it will be somewhere else in your community. Imagine what a signal that would have sent.

Would we have gotten to our protected land? Probably not, probably not, but what do we want to invest in - land or people? Bearing in mind we spent \$27 million in 2007, the same mill - well Mr. Speaker, I believe Nova Scotians would rather have us invest in people, in these very difficult times, and not land. If this company couldn't secure, and this company would not commit to keeping those Nova Scotians who are left employed beyond, for any length of time - it would have been a positive thing, but they won't. We should be concerned about that. Why won't they? Well, we're going to continue to ask these questions. We're going to continue to ask them in this House. We have a responsibility to continue to gather information. We're going to continue to reach out, ask people to give us their thoughts. I hope a number of them come to the Law Amendments Committee to express their views.

Mr. Speaker, there's a part of this bill that deals with property tax and the municipal leaders in the South Shore have every right to do as they see fit and we would support them in doing whatever they see fit when it comes to property tax, but this bill has become much more complicated than just that because the government has chosen to make this a political issue. They didn't like the fact that we were questioning things, didn't like the fact that we somehow might want to ask questions that affected citizens of the South Shore. Well, we're going to continue to ask those questions.

It's unfortunate for the municipal leaders that they got pulled into this, for the municipal governments. The only change that really had to happen was to change the municipal property tax for this whole deal to happen. It would be the first time in the history of this province that the government would need support of the House to use the Industrial Expansion Fund, because we know how that works - no business plan, no accountability, go in behind closed doors, write the cheque, and out they go. So they could have done that for this deal too - no different.

We know, and I think the minister is on record as saying that the money for the land, first purchase will come from his department. He also said he will need extra money coming from somewhere, so we need to know that. This bill doesn't need to be in front of the House. The government believes in the direction they're going, why aren't they going? Why wouldn't they go? One reason - they're playing politics with it, Mr. Speaker, and it's unfortunate, and it's unfortunate for the people of Queens and the South Shore. We're asking these questions, it's on their behalf.

If the government was really secure in this decision this would be finished, and the only thing left would be for this House to agree that the municipalities have a right to change the property tax. It's the only thing that would be left, and I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, I think we would all agree that the municipalities have the right to do that and we would give them that right.

But we also, collectively, have a responsibility to ask some of the other questions. And knowing some of the history outside of our province about what has happened to other governments who have put in money without any commitments, making sure those jobs would be secure, all of the same things we're asking here - what about the pension plan, is it solvent? All of the same things we're asking here, the workers of other provinces have been left looking to cover that debt.

We're going to continue to ask those, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to ask those questions and we look forward to this debate as it continues - and we're going to look forward to Law Amendments. We're going to also look forward to the government giving us all the information that they have so that we can make a decision with all of the information that they're using to make their decision.

Mr. Speaker, if they want to come out and say that the report that they received says there's no future in the paper industry and they're doing it because it's the only industry in town and they want to try and save the town, then just say that - we'll all make our decision based on that. But if the report says there's a future in the paper industry in North America then tell us that, too. We'd like to know that too because that would affect how you think about it; this is important. I hope in good conscience that government decides it's going to turn over that information to us as we move from here to Law Amendments and back for third reading.

As you can tell, we have some concerns about this piece of legislation, we have concerns about what information was used to make this decision and, quite frankly, is it the right decision for the entire province? With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and will hear the rest of the debate.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. First of all, I rise in incredible disappointment tonight. I had expected truly that all Parties would in fact do as they said they would all those weeks ago when this issue first came up - deal with this very important and weighty matter in a non-partisan fashion. I can assure you, sir, that as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party we are doing our best to hold that true in our case.

I cannot tell you how disappointed I am at the blatantly political actions of the government on this important issue, as recently as this afternoon. And I will say to you, sir, that it shows incredible arrogance on behalf of those on the government side that merely because there are those on this side who need to do their jobs and ask the important questions that need to be asked about an expenditure of this magnitude - and not just about the expenditure, but to ensure that there are guarantees in place for the very people that this bill is there to serve, the people of Queens County, the people of the South Shore, that just because questions are being asked in this House - which exists for that very purpose - members on the government side would put out such a wrong, factually incorrect, politically motivated, blatantly disgraceful news release like went out an hour ago.

I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, it is absolutely ridiculous, because the member in question knows the release is wrong, knows from statements that I have made in this Chamber and outside this Chamber exactly what the position of the PC caucus is on this.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the bill.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, it is about the bill. Madam Speaker, for your information, a release went out from the NDP, describing the PC position on this bill. (Interruption) Okay, I'm sorry. I thought you were conferring.

For the record, Madam Speaker, I have told the member for Queens, I have told the government side, I have told media repeatedly that we're going to do our job, we're going to ask the questions that need to be asked, but we are going to vote for this bill in the end. It is on the public record. So to put out a release that says the opposite, that says we oppose the bill, is absolutely disgraceful and wrong, and the release is on this bill. This bill gives effect to that agreement.

Before the member for Queens moves along in this Chamber, I actually think the right thing to do to get us back on track is . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It's not uncommon for there to be a difference of opinion of what is stated as factual and non-factual. At this point I'd ask the member to speak to the principles and to the substance of the bill, not something that's outside of the House. Thank you.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. This is second reading and there is a significantly greater latitude for any member to speak toward the very broad principles. The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is well within the realm of what is permitted to be spoken about on the bill in second reading.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much again. I will ask - Order. Again, I will stand by my order, which is the member would speak to the bill. It's not uncommon for there to be a difference of opinion on things that are stated here in the House, so I would ask the member to speak to the bill. Thank you.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

MR. BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, for the benefit of the House, I am going to table the press release that describes the PC position on this bill incorrectly.

Now, as for the bill, it is important that on a bill which proposes to lend \$50 million - or \$90 million, depending on what you count - of public money and gives hope to the people of Queens County and the entire South Shore and the 2,000 jobs that are at stake, that on a bill like this members of the Opposition side have a duty to scrutinize the bill and ask questions about it. We are going to do that, and no release which so blatantly, falsely describes our position is going to stop us from doing our job to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia and to the people of Queens County. That is what I am trying to say.

If the member for Queens and her cohorts, her henchmen in the Premier's Office who I have no doubt wrote that disgraceful piece of paper, want this to go well, they should at least do the right thing and apologize, when they have a chance to speak, for doing something so blatantly political after promising not to. That is also my position and the position of the Progressive Conservative Party as we debate this bill.

Now, having said that and made it clear - the way I believe the House of Assembly is supposed to function when it debates a bill like this, and the respect that I expect members will show for each other, when they know better - I will go on and tell you that this is a very important bill to the people of Queens County and all of the South Shore. It is also an important bill for all of Nova Scotia, who want things to go well for that mill and for Queens County, and who also want to know that when their money is being expended or lent out, this House does its job.

I certainly appreciate, Madam Speaker, and everyone in the Progressive Conservative caucus appreciates, what this means to Queens and the surrounding area. I will say, for the member for Queens, that I can just imagine the pressure she is under as we go through this process. None of that excuses the political angle in that release.

Having said that, we continue to pledge to go through this process on this bill in a non-partisan fashion and that means asking questions about the deal, about the bill, to ensure the taxpayers are protected and the workers in Queens County are also protected. I'm very disappointed, as you obviously know by now, that in that spirit the NDP have chosen, in the last hour, to take this disgraceful action; but secondly, that they brought politics into this at all. I will point out that the bill itself is a political act because, as many people who know how this House works, know it's not necessary.

Interestingly, when the Premier was asked why he was bringing forward this bill, he confessed that it is a political act. That was yesterday. He said it is a political decision. He confirmed that to all Nova Scotians. (Interruptions) I know we have a government that sees a difference between a promise and a commitment, now they're splitting hairs between political and partisan. Here we are trying to do the right thing and get this bill through all the steps that it needs to go through so we can get on with life. (Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I'll tell you, I can only say this so many times, we have to do our job, but unlike usual, right up front, we made it clear that at the end of the day, because there's one bill, because there can only be one deal or no deal, because the government so arrogantly said it's this or nothing, that we will tell the people of Queens and the entire province that after we've done our job, after we've asked all the questions, we are still going to vote yes on the bill. They can't take yes for an answer. How sad is that?

The reason we're here now, at this point, is that when told that it's this deal or nothing, this bill or nothing, we have done the right thing and said publicly, repeatedly and privately - and by the way, in a letter that I wrote to the Mayor of Queens Regional Municipality, putting it in writing, copying the MLA for the area, that we're going to vote yes in the end, because no deal is not acceptable to the PC Party. I cannot be clearer than that.

As a result, we will continue to do our job, despite the arrogance on the other side, and ask the questions that need to be asked. I do hope that the right thing does happen and

an apology is forthcoming for the actions this afternoon, so we can put it behind us and get on with the job of going through the bill, making sure people are protected, and then voting yes and seeing that it's passed so that the mill has a future.

Having said that, let me also be clear that after the bill passes, we will continue to hold the government to account for its consequences. We will continue to monitor the results of the deal the government has reached to ensure that taxpayers are protected every step of the way and to ensure that the guarantees that have been provided to the people of Queens County are also there. That is what it means to do your job as a legislator on this side and hopefully we can get back to a place where people act less disrespectfully of each other in this House so that the right thing can happen. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and speak to second reading of Bill No. 133, an Act to Sustain Jobs and Invest in Southwest Nova Scotia's Pulp and Paper Sector. As the MLA for the constituency of Queens and being very close to the Bowater families who work and live in Queens and surrounding areas, and being very close to the communities of Queens in general, I can tell you I'm very pleased that this bill has come before the House today. I'm very proud of this government for having the foresight to recognize the seriousness of not only the challenging times for the pulp and paper industry but also the challenging times facing the forestry industry.

When AbitiBowater approached the province back in August, it certainly was recognized by the Premier and by his staff that the reality was that AbitiBowater was quite serious about closing the mill doors. The Premier and his various deputy ministers, crossing several departments, acted very quickly and very swiftly because this also came on the heels of the downturn at NewPage and the Premier's Office very quickly acted to put together a team - the mills committee team. It is the first ever seen in the Office of the Premier where a whole floor exists, housing many deputies and many experienced personnel within the various departments, to look at the seriousness of the crisis that was facing this government.

That mills committee has worked very diligently over the last couple of months, meeting frequently with not only the management at AbitiBowater but also meeting with the municipalities of the Region of Queens and Bowater, keeping myself very informed as well. As the Premier's Office and the mills committee came closer to negotiating a very strategic investment plan, that plan was discussed with not only Bowater Mersey management but also with the Region of Queens and union representatives for both Local 141 and Local 259, and also various businesses in and around the Region of Queens, businesses that would be most impacted by the closing of Bowater mill doors.

So I'm very pleased that this strategic investment package that we see in Bill No. 133 is now before the floor of the House to ask all members of the House to give

unanimous support for this very important bill. It's very important, Madam Speaker, because Bowater mill is a huge economic driver for the entire South Shore and beyond and even southwestern Nova Scotia certainly has some indirect economic spinoffs from the Bowater Mersey plant.

Madam Speaker, what I want to tell you, and what I want to tell this House, is the last month, month and a half, has been a very difficult time for the families in Queens and most particularly the Bowater families. There are many people who work in the mill and, of course, for many years their family members have supported the employees working at the mill. What I can tell you is those union men and women had to make a very difficult decision, a decision that they did not take lightly at all.

They voted to keep the mill doors open, Madam Speaker. They were one of the partners at the table along with the Region of Queens, along with many other business partners around that table, along with the Premier's mills committee, and we have a very strategic plan in place to see that mill remain viable, to see our Bowater Mersey mill viable for the next five to 10 years or more, for many years to come.

I can't begin to tell you about the stress for many of those families as we were waiting to see if this very strategically negotiated package would have been accepted by AbitibiBowater and I'm very pleased to tell this House, as we all know, that this package has been accepted by not only the workers but by the Region of Queens, by the communities and families who have come out in support of the workers at Bowater.

Madam Speaker, we've heard a lot about this bill over the last couple of days; a lot of questions have been asked in the House here. Here on this side of the House, we can certainly agree that this is a very well-thought-out investment for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. The province has secured lands with a \$23.5 million investment into the purchase of some prime lands owned by Bowater Mersey and some would say that those lands are some of the most ecological and conservation lands that will be part of our conservation package. As you know, Madam Speaker, the province's goal is to protect 12 per cent of lands in the province by 2015, and the investment of \$23.5 million to purchase lands from Bowater Mersey certainly helps us reach that goal.

Madam Speaker, I also want to give thanks to the Region of Queens, Mayor John Leefe and the councillors who sit around the table of the Region of Queens. They have provided a tax reduction for Bowater Mersey, a tax reduction of approximately \$135,000 a year. Most people would recognize that Bowater Mersey is the largest contributor to the tax base within the Region of Queens Municipality so I really give a lot of credit to the Region of Queens and Mayor John Leefe for stepping up to the plate and coming around the table as one of those partners to make that investment towards sustaining the mill. Certainly we know that gesture by the Region of Queens is not the key economic cost-driver for Bowater Mersey, but certainly we can say that the Region of Queens definitely recognizes the importance of the economic driver that Bowater Mersey is.

I also want to say that at the table as well, discussing their role, was also Mayor Don Downe from Lunenburg and many of the other mayors from the surrounding towns - the Town of Bridgewater and the Town of Lunenburg. Many people were at that table recognizing that should the mill close the doors, that it would have a huge impact not only in Queens County but all along the South Shore, to the tune of at least 2,000 direct jobs outside of the mill that depend on Bowater Mersey for their economic survival, companies, woodlot owners, independent sawmills. We have Freeman's, we have the Oak Hill sawmill; certainly the car dealerships all along the South Shore were expressing concern should the mill close its doors. Madam Speaker, the impact this would have had if we did see Bowater Mersey close its doors would be a huge economic blow all along the South Shore.

Before I close, Madam Speaker, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to both unions, Locals 141 and 259. They certainly struggled with their decision over the last few weeks and they were one of the first partners at the table to make their decision. I give them all the credit that they deserve for recognizing how important Bowater Mersey is, not only to the communities of Queens County but all along the South Shore, to watch workers basically vote to see a job loss of well over 80 unionized employees in the mill, knowing that they were also voting to save and protect the jobs of their fellow worker. I give them great credit for that; it was a very difficult time for them.

What I can tell you is, after the announcement was made by the province here, when I went out into the community later on, people were really expressing their gratitude that there was a strategic investment found, that the province was there to support this mill and to support the community and most importantly, support all of the families, not only families of Bowater but also all of the families all along the South Shore whose livelihoods depend on that mill's survival. I went to an event later and people were definitely in the Christmas spirit. I heard comments like "we can breathe now", "we can relax", and "there is going to be a bright future for us over the next many years". They're very hopeful, they're very positive that this indeed is a signal for a long-term viable solution for Bowater Mersey.

With that, Madam Speaker, I'll thank you and the House for listening to me and I would request that we adjourn debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 133. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on the morrow at the

hour of 9:00 a.m. The House will sit until 6:00 p.m. The order of business on the morrow will be the daily routine and then we will be calling Public Bills for Third Reading: Nos. 55, 90, 96, 100, 102, 106, 109, 110, 114, 115, 116, 118, 121, 122, 123, 124 and 125. I move the House do now rise.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

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 Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Inverness:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly declare that ‘promise and commitment’ mean the same thing and a reference to one cannot somehow exclude the other.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle

PROMISE/COMMITMENT - MEANING

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution. It’s a great operative line where “Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly declare that ‘promise and commitment’ mean the same thing and a reference to one cannot somehow exclude the other.”

It’s either a promise or it’s a commitment - we’ve heard it used in many different ways in this House of Assembly. On November 30th, the Premier said very proudly that this government has kept every single commitment it made during the last election. That is true - he said, every single commitment. This was repeated more than once.

Madam Speaker, Abraham Lincoln once said, “Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality.” If this is the case, then the government has not only honoured their promises but they have turned every single one of them into a reality.

Every single person in the province knows that this is not the case. The NDP Government committed to balancing the budget, which they didn't - in the last budget we had a deficit of \$389.6 million. The Department of Finance's September forecast shows a \$319 million deficit in the upcoming budget. Seems to me there's more than one word the government doesn't know the meaning of.

The Dexter Government promised they would not raise taxes, and if you'd like to see the reality of that promise just check any receipt that you pick up from a store or seller or service that you're paying for in the Province of Nova Scotia. The now-Premier promised to keep ERs open 24/7; not only has this not happened but rural communities all over the province experience ER closures so frequently that they're forced to travel long distances to hospitals in more urban areas. The government has made an effort to mitigate this problem by opening collaborative health care centres around the province, but the fact remains it is not the same as a commitment to keeping ERs open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The government's own annual accountability report on emergency rooms shows that emergency rooms across the province were closed 18,920 hours last year alone. CIHI, or the Canadian Institute for Health Information, indicates that less than 75 per cent of patients in Nova Scotia received treatment within benchmark wait times for hip replacement, knee replacement, cataract surgery, and cancer radiation treatment. During the election campaign, the NDP promised to create 2,200 jobs a year through a 10 per cent manufacturing and processing investment tax credit. Statistics Canada indicates that there are over 4,000 fewer jobs from November 2010 to November 2011.

During the election, the now-Premier stated that he would come through on all Tory promises. Well, that isn't so, Madam Speaker. The Premier, despite his efforts to go back on his promise, did not go forward with plans for a proposed jail in Springhill. The NDP Government is committed to building only 1,121 of the 1,320 long-term care beds promised under the Tory Continuing Care Strategy.

While in Fall River to kick off the general election of 2006, Dexter said, "You can count . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the member that we would not use proper names for members in the House. If you could retract that and say it properly, thank you.

The honourable member for Argyle has the floor.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much. I apologize for that. Sometimes when you get into the notes you kind of go over that.

While in Fall River to kick off the general election in 2006, the Premier said, “You can count on the NDP to ensure that Nova Scotians who need nursing home beds will have the beds they need, without further delay.” The only way for Nova Scotians to believe this promise wasn’t broken would be for the government to make public their future plans for bed building - something this Party has requested several times during this session, but we have not had it as of yet.

The government broke the agreement that we as a government had put in place with municipalities across the province. The cancellation of the MOU, or memorandum of understanding, downloaded millions of dollars onto municipal governments all over Nova Scotia. The shift can’t help but cause property taxes to go up. Why is the government under the illusion that Nova Scotians can afford to have their taxes skyrocket on every level?

The NDP election platform 2009 states, “Nova Scotia workers and managers can compete with the best in the world, especially with” - and I’m going to have to edit this again - the Premier’s “fresh attention to fundamentals of economic success” - or actually at the time he was just the member for Cole Harbour - “like stable energy prices and more skills training.”

Power rates are soaring. People all over the province are struggling to pay their power bills and, while in Opposition, the Premier spoke of power rate increases negatively and said when the price of power starts to outstrip the consumers’ ability to pay, it’s time for government to step in.

In the next year alone, Madam Speaker, we can expect an 8.2 per cent increase in the cost of electricity. The job losses in the province give the government no inclination that Nova Scotians can afford this increase. A survey conducted by the Nova Scotia Home Builders’ Association showed that in about two years there will be 20,000 fewer people in Nova Scotia’s workforce. The Nova Scotia Home Builders’ Association told The ChronicleHerald that Nova Scotia needs hundreds of carpenters, framers, and bricklayers for the residential construction sector and it needs them fast. The government is not following through on its commitment.

The NDP 2009 platform explains that they will double provincial immigration targets and initiate an immigration job strategy. As of October of this year we see that the number of immigrants to the province is somewhere around 400. This will bring us nowhere near the department’s target of 7,200 immigrants a year by 2020. The results, of course, are laughable.

Now the list goes on, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately what this shows is that the Premier either needs a refresher course on what has come of many of his promises, maybe ask for a couple of extra briefing notes, or that he has some of the briefing notes but he is choosing to ignore them.

Making the argument that there is a difference between commitments and promises is like the government trying to argue that no, they're not being aloof, or whatever you want to call it, they're being steadfast. It makes no difference which thesaurus the Premier likes to read from to avoid taking responsibility, Nova Scotians know the meaning of what has been broken, and the people on this side of the House are really tired of playing the games.

I do have a number of quotes that I did use in there that I can table, as they were part of my speech here. Again, what it really falls down to is that there really is no difference between promises and commitments. When you're not making most of these, I don't know how the Premier could stand in this House and say that he's kept all of his commitments, because that is exactly incorrect.

All we want is a little bit of honesty, to say listen, this is where we've been, this is what we see, and maybe this is where our target is going to be in the future. A lot of time it just requires a little bit of going back and saying, well listen, maybe we didn't know some of the information and maybe we need to find ways in which to keep up our commitments and promises because, Madam Speaker, they are the same thing. I look forward to hearing from all members of this House on this so important issue and I hope that a lot of things can be clarified over the next number of hours, days, weeks, as we continue to move on in this Legislature and, of course, as this government continues to mature. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the following resolution: "that all members of this House of Assembly declare that 'promise and commitment' mean the same thing and a reference to one cannot somehow exclude the other."

At the crux of this issue is the concept of promises and commitments made by politicians vying to be elected and the level of follow-through that takes place once the ballots are counted.

I would like to take a moment because the Christmas season is upon us, so I think that I would like to relate my words to a very famous Christmas story, one we all know, *A Christmas Carol*, by, of course, Charles Dickens. The scene begins with the clock striking late debate time and suddenly we hear the sounds of rattling chains, the heavy chains of the many broken promises of both the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals, from years gone by. And who is wrapped up in the chains but the ghosts of Christmas Progressive Conservatives and Liberals.

Now, let's take a moment to look at the past. In Nova Scotia we've had a long history of Progressive Conservative and Liberal Governments who made big promises, but

followed through with small, if any, deliveries, and I would like to provide you with a couple of examples, Madam Speaker, that I believe illustrate this point quite well.

Let's go back to 1998. The Liberal Premier at the time made an awful lot of promises to Nova Scotians. He promised he would move quickly after the election to announce a tax break on home heating - then the Liberal Government spent all on Dynatek, a fly-by-night company that flew to Toronto with taxpayers' money.

A broken promise but, unfortunately, not the only one, Madam Speaker. This same Liberal Premier promised Sable gas for Cape Breton, as well as for the mainland, and then signed a deal that locked out industrial Cape Breton - yet again a broken promise from Christmas past. In 1993, and again in 1998, the Liberals promised to protect health care, but during their tenure in government roughly 2,000 health care workers were laid off, putting essential programs and services at risk - well, another broken promise.

Now, the Progressive Conservative track record isn't much better, as we see from the ghosts of Christmas past. When they formed government back in 1999, the Progressive Conservatives promised to increase the number of nurses in our province and, instead, dozens of nurses' positions were cut. The rate that created with that, and what happened with that, many of our new nursing graduates had to in turn leave the province. The Progressive Conservatives under the previous Premier promised to give working families a break through lower taxes on household essentials like energy; however, the tax break on household energy ended on May 15, 2008, when the Tory budget was approved, imposing an 8 per cent tax on household electricity - another promise broken.

I will add by the way, Madam Speaker, one of our first moves as a government was to correct this mistake. We removed the provincial portion of HST on home energy. The previous Progressive Conservative Governments promised to be good stewards of Nova Scotia's economy, but over the course of 10 years they managed to add nearly \$1 billion to the provincial debt through unapproved spending; through unapproved spending - ah, that sounds like another broken promise from Christmas past.

In the last election the Liberals presented a platform that made huge promises to Nova Scotians, but they neglected to explain how they would pay to implement that. This omission was so clear of an indicator of their disregard to how they could keep their promises that The ChronicleHerald actually published an article that I will table, Madam Speaker. They said in that article that there are good ideas and bad ones in these 33 pages, but the package in its entirety is pretty meaningless and would be meaningless at 53 pages, or 103 pages, if there's no plan to pay for it.

Madam Speaker, the difference in this Christmas story though, I have to inform you, is that certainly over the years the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals were not Ebenezer Scrooge in their behaviour. They proved to be Ebenezer spendthrifts, and that's what got us in trouble as a province.

Now, in contrast, the NDP laid out a plan with seven key commitments and we have made significant strides on each and every one of them in just two and a half years in government. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that after more than a century of Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments promising Nova Scotians the world, and then offering up little in the way of change, Nova Scotians were ready for a change.

The NDP was elected in this historic June 2009 election with a strong mandate for change and to make life better for Nova Scotia families. We made a number of promises to Nova Scotians and our Better Deal plan included seven key commitments, and I'm very pleased to stand up here and report that we have made significant progress in just two and a half years on our promises and commitments.

When we were elected, the seven key platform commitments: to create the secure jobs Nova Scotia's economy needs; to keep emergency rooms open and reduce health care waits, to ensure more young people stay and build a life here in Nova Scotia, to take the HST off of home energy to make life more affordable, to fix rural roads and keep communities strong, to give seniors the option to stay in their homes and communities longer, to live within our means, to move Nova Scotia forward, and to fulfill our pledge to bring fresh energy and new ideas to make our province an even better place to live, to work, to do business, and to raise a family.

Our NDP Government has quickly acted upon its promises. On jobs and the economy, better health care sooner, education, fiscal responsibility, and social justice, our bold actions have set out a new course for our province.

Despite the efforts of those who want to see our NDP Government fail for their own political or personal gains, Premier Darrell Dexter and our team have stood firm on our commitments . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I have to remind the member, as I had before, that you may not reference a member with their proper name.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Premier Dexter and our team have stood firm on our commitments . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Unfortunately, you just did it again.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: The Premier and our team have stood firm on our commitments and desire to bring real change to Nova Scotia. Our NDP Government has already built a strong record that we can proudly stand on. Our first commitment, to create the secure jobs Nova Scotia's economy needs, is already well underway. Tough economic times call for genuine leadership. The previous government had no real plan whatsoever to grow Nova Scotia's economy and create jobs.

In fact, people have to remember that Nova Scotia had the worst-performing economy in Canada for over the past 20 years with the former Tory Government. Our government has a plan to address this, and that is called jobsHere. November 23, 2011, 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. We have many things to be proud of in terms of going through all these commitments. What we have to remember is the fact that we're only two and a half years in and it's absolutely an incredible Christmas story to be able to say, bring us to the present and bring us toward the future of hope and prosperity, because Nova Scotians know that the way to get there is not through Tory or Liberal Governments but an NDP Government. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak here in late debate.

We've been treated to a story, a fiction, from the previous member - a fabrication, if you like, something that was read word for word - right down to the errors in the text were word for word. What's important is to be able to respond to things that are said here in the House and to use our knowledge of what is the truth and speak from that experience that we all have. I think that makes it more real and more sincere.

As I say, it was cute, it was storytelling, but it was not true. One of the last things that the member opposite had just said was something to do with the worst-performing economy in Canada, and she was pointing to previous governments. What she's missing is the last year, which was entirely a year the NDP were governing this province, when we had in Nova Scotia the lowest GDP growth of any province in Canada. That is a Statistics Canada fact: 1.9 per cent growth, lowest of any province in Canada. That's not something you blame on previous governments. That's something that rests here. She fails to talk about the economy. She fails to talk about the high taxes that are in place today.

My job this afternoon is to talk primarily about the broken promises. This comes from the resolution put forward for tonight, which says that - and actually points to the difference between a promise and a commitment. It came about because a couple of days ago, in the Legislature, during Question Period, the Premier of our province was asked about something and he tried to make a little differentiation, a nuance, that it was different to commit to something than it was to promise something and that therefore he hadn't broken a promise because it was a commitment not a promise. Nova Scotians, and people in general, are tired of this kind of pettiness. You make a promise and you make a commitment, people see it as exactly the same thing.

Madam Speaker, I took the liberty of taking out the large dictionary, the Oxford Dictionary, from the library. A commitment, and I have just written down, it is “a pledge or an undertaking,” a pledge or an undertaking. Of course, it’s a little bit longer, it says “an engagement or obligation that restricts freedom of action, the process or instance of committing oneself, a pledge or undertaking.” I think people would be hard pressed to see the difference between that and an actual promise, which again is so much the same; it is “assurance that one will or will not undertake a certain action, behaviour, et cetera.” Using the word “undertake” again, and so we said it is an undertaking or pledge if it’s a commitment, or you undertake to do something if it’s a promise.

I think nobody in Nova Scotia would see that there is any way that you can try and basically split hairs and say that one is less binding than the other and that’s really what the Premier tried to say. The member for Bedford-Birch Cove had written something the day after in which she defined what a whopper is, among things it is - well I don’t think I can say it in the House what a whopper is - but she indicated that the Premier had told a whopper. The definition of that, I think, has a word that’s unparliamentarily so I’m not going to mention it. But it was done in humour because there is no difference between a commitment and a promise.

Madam Speaker, in preparation for tonight I do have some written notes so the member across the way knows that I also have written notes to rely on but that it’s actually a list of promises and the truth of what was said and what is now the case. I’m wondering, how many minutes do I have Madam Speaker, just so I know exactly?

MADAM SPEAKER: About five and a half.

MS. WHALEN: Five and half minutes, that won’t be enough for me to expand on a lot of these and I may not get to all of the promises that were broken, but let’s start very quickly with the promise not to raise taxes. That was clearly stated in a leaders debate that was televised during the last election and the Leader of the Liberal Party looked straight at the camera and said: I can’t promise not to raise taxes because we don’t know the full extent of the finances of this promise. But the Leader of the NDP Party, hoping to be Premier, looked straight at the camera and said: we won’t raise taxes, we will not.

That was clear and, of course, that was music to the ears of Nova Scotians. Anybody in an election hopes that you’re not going to raise taxes, but to tell the truth and to say we don’t want to but we’ll have to see. Anyway there was a promise made, no new taxes, we’re not going to do that, and yet the truth is that the Dexter Government increased the tax that we pay on almost everything by two per cent, right off the bat, with the increase in the HST.

Many things, including gasoline, went up at that time because we have an HST on our gasoline, and remember that becomes the immoral tax on tax, to use the Premier’s very words, that adding an HST tax on top of a motor fuel tax was immoral. But the truth is,

once in government, the NDP failed to eliminate the tax they once called immoral and are making more money from the tax on tax because of the increase in the HST and also because of the increase on the cost of fuel, which has also pushed up the amount that they'll be collecting in HST, so no move to remove that.

How about keeping ERs open? I know the earlier speaker from the Progressive Conservative Party mentioned that - a straight out promise to keep all ERs opened 24/7. Again this is particularly important, and it's really breaking faith with rural Nova Scotia, because that's where those ERs are in jeopardy, where there are fewer people and the ERs weren't as busy and it was also difficult to staff them. But the promise was blatant, we'll keep them all open 24/7, and what is the reality about the ERs as well? We've now done another nuance, a redefinition of what an ER is, and we coined a new slogan about collaborative care centres and we're now saying that really the promise is kept but it was not. It has been twisted. It has been changed. The reality is, in 2011 a government report shows that ERs were closed for 18,920 hours, which is 788 days in one year - under the current NDP Government. So that's hardly 24 hours, seven days a week. We feel that again, using semantics, using changes of words, is no more than misleading Nova Scotians.

I find the government is full of empty slogans and slick marketing, quite honestly. I'll give you credit for that - slick marketing, you know, jingles and slogans coming up endlessly in every answer in Question Period, in every speech made by every member of the Cabinet - and in fact, all backbenchers who get up and have a chance to speak. So we are inundated with slogans that are supposed to answer the realities and make people feel good, just as the Christmas story is supposed to make people feel good.

The absolute reality is that these are empty slogans. They are absolutely empty. The stats that come out from Statistics Canada, the reports done by the Home Builders' Association, by other industry associations, show that this is not the case. We're looking forward, as much as anybody, to a bright future in Nova Scotia and a chance to keep our children at home, but we expect to have a frank, open, transparent, honest debate about these issues, and that's not what we're getting.

I want to go quickly along to a few other broken promises, Madam Speaker, because I'm going to run out of time and I think it should be known by all. The merit pay issue: when in Opposition the NDP decried the Tory practice of offering merit pay to civil servants, and they said that they were doing that while they slashed social spending - and also the fact that the Tories tried to hide merit pay, according to the NDP. But in the last year the NDP has paid out more than \$2 million in merit pay to civil servants while they slashed education and health budgets. That's the truth. Like the Tories, they only released information after there was a freedom of information request. So no greater transparency, no better reason for us to know about it.

Let's go quickly to the IEF, the long-time Industrial Expansion Fund which all governments have made use of in trying to address urgent situations as they come up.

There are economic times when you need to do something quickly. Even the Auditor General's Report acknowledged there was a need for a fund like the IEF.

Let's just go quickly to what happened when the NDP were in Opposition. At that time they described the IEF as being without oversight, without lending rules or safeguards, and they called it a slush fund. In reality, the Dexter Government increased the IEF to more than \$260 million.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. I would remind the member that we are not to use proper names to reference a member within (Interruption)

Thank you for the information. It appears that "the Dexter Government" is allowed. Forgive me. Thank you.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. WHALEN: Thank you very much. I will be careful, but I thought it was okay, so that's good.

As I said, the IEF has been increased to a record \$260 million, and I have to say that in addition to that, 90 per cent of the IEF funds went to NDP ridings, and they did not explain why it was acceptable for them to use IEF funds like that. The NDP members, when they were in Opposition, would have absolutely roasted any previous government that would have directed 90 per cent of the IEF funding to their own ridings. That really is unconscionable. Again, broken promise - do I have a minute? I don't even have a minute.

Madam Speaker, thank you. I appreciate your giving me a moment to just wrap up. I have a number of other points I wanted to raise today, but I think the point is made that a promise and a commitment are the same thing and that we hold the government to a high standard on both. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The time allotted for late debate has elapsed. I thank all members for participating this evening.

The House now stands adjourned, to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 5:19 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2908**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas anniversaries are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it is said that “A marriage anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance and tenacity, but the order varies for any given year”; and

Whereas on August 4, 2011, Doris and Benoit d'Entremont celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Doris and Benoit on their remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 2909

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas anniversaries are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it is said that “A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person”; and

Whereas on November 20, 2011, a very special occasion took place at the West Pubnico Fire Hall when Félix and Barbara d'Eon celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Félix and Barbara on this remarkable milestone in their life together and in wishing them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 2910

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

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

Whereas on November 6, 2011, Edward A. LeBlanc celebrated his 80th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 80 years of age and continue to be active and share a lifetime of memories with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Edward A. LeBlanc on reaching this milestone in his life and wishing him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 2911

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

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

Whereas on August 28, 2011, George Abel Warner celebrated his 80th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 80 years of age and continue to be active and share a lifetime of memories with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate George Abel Warner on reaching this milestone in his life and wishing him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 2912

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 the significant sacrifice and contributions our Canadian Forces members have made, and continue to make, in Afghanistan were highlighted recently during Remembrance Day services; and

Whereas three individuals involved in the Mission Transition Task Force Operation Athena realized it is indeed a small world when they discovered that they are not only a part of the larger Canadian Forces family, but that they are also connected through their families who all reside in the small town of Bridgetown, Annapolis County; and

Whereas it is men and women such as these Canadian Forces members who leave the safety and security of their communities and families to serve their country in often dangerous missions who deserve our respect, appreciation and gratitude;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Captain Nicole MacPhee-Meszaros for her hard work and dedication to the Canadian mission, and wish her a well-deserved break with family and friends at the end of her tour of duty.

RESOLUTION NO. 2913

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 the significant sacrifice and contributions our Canadian Forces members have made, and continue to make, in Afghanistan were highlighted recently during Remembrance Day services; and

Whereas three individuals involved in the Mission Transition Task Force Operation Athena realized it is indeed a small world when they discovered that they are not only a part of the larger Canadian Forces family, but that they are also connected through their families who all reside in the small town of Bridgetown, Annapolis County; and

Whereas it is men and women such as these Canadian Forces members who leave the safety and security of their communities and families to serve their country in often dangerous missions who deserve our respect, appreciation and gratitude;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Sergeant Steve Boyd for the sacrifice and dedication he has offered to the Canadian mission, and wish him a safe and speedy return to his family and friends.

RESOLUTION NO. 2914

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 the significant sacrifice and contributions our Canadian Forces members have made, and continue to make, in Afghanistan were highlighted recently during Remembrance Day services; and

Whereas three individuals involved in the Mission Transition Task Force Operation Athena realized it is indeed a small world when they discovered that they are not only a part of the larger Canadian Forces family, but that they are also connected through their families who all reside in the small town of Bridgetown, Annapolis County; and

Whereas it is men and women such as these Canadian Forces members who leave the safety and security of their communities and families to serve their country in often dangerous missions who deserve our respect, appreciation and gratitude;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Major Steve Ramey for the sacrifice and commitment he has made to the Canadian mission in Kandahar, and wish him a well-deserved break with family and friends at the end of his tour of duty.

RESOLUTION NO. 2915

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas Ruth Corkum of Rockland, Kings County, has been involved in snowmobiling since its introduction to this province; and

Whereas Ruth Corkum has been instrumental in organizing the permit process, which involved countless phone calls and long hours of dedication to the sport; and

Whereas Ruth has travelled twice to the USA to represent Annapolis Valley Lake and Ridge Runners to accept the prestigious Club of the Year Award;

Therefore be it resolved that Ruth Corkum of Rockland be congratulated for her achievements in the sport of snowmobiling in this province.

RESOLUTION NO. 2916

By: Mr. Harold Theriault (Digby-Annapolis)

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

Whereas the Basin Breakers is a newly-formed football team in Digby; and

Whereas this team consists of 10- to 12-year-old boys and girls looking to enjoy the challenge of a new-to-them sport; and

Whereas the Basin Breakers' only home game proved to be a good luck charm for them, defeating Middleton's Western Valley Wings;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate the team members and its coaches on all their hard work and wish them continued success in the sport of football.

RESOLUTION NO. 2917

By: Mr. Harold Theriault (Digby-Annapolis)

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

Whereas the construction industry stands out amongst most other industries for their leadership in safety performance improvement; and

Whereas every year the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association recognizes individuals and organizations for exemplary performances; and

Whereas this year I.T.S. Construction Inc. was recognized by the NSCSA with the Chair's Award of Excellence for Safest Companies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank I.T.S. Construction Inc. for their excellent work in keeping their workers and our constituents safe.

RESOLUTION NO. 2918

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Richmond)

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

Whereas tourism has been a major part of the Cape Breton economy; and

Whereas a part of this great tourism tradition has been the fine local food; and

Whereas this summer the first annual “Right Some Good: Ten World Class Chefs, One Extraordinary Foodie Adventure” was launched, with the first event being at the Judique Community Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the organizers of this great event and wish them the best moving forward.

RESOLUTION NO. 2919

By: Mr. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Lena Fevens evolved her designer cake business into the recently opened downtown Yarmouth bakery Goodies, which offers a broad range of delicious sweets, pies, cheesecakes, specialty cakes, and catering services, and Ms. Fevens helps support her community by making financial contributions and donating gift certificates from her bakery to individuals and organizations in need; and

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

Whereas Lena Fevens of Goodies Bakery received the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce’s Youth Entrepreneur Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lena Fevens of Goodies Bakery on receiving the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce’s Youth Entrepreneur Award, thank her for the contributions she has made to her community, and wish her every future success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2920

By: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

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

Therefore be it resolved that members approve the province's 2012-2013 Capital Plan, as tabled in this House on Friday, December 9.

RESOLUTION NO. 2921

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 this year marks the 6th Anniversary of the Dartmouth Kiwanis Dragon Boat Festival on Lake Banook in Dartmouth; and

Whereas funds raised at this event support the Kiwanis annual Music Festival, the school milk program, and Cystic Fibrosis Canada; and

Whereas this year's Dragon Boat Festival brought out ten competing teams and hundreds of spectators despite the rainy weather;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating all participants and organizers of the Kiwanis Dragon Boat Festival as well as the Kiwanis organization for their contribution to the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 2922

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Ty Nickerson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Coxswain's Swagger Stick at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Ty Nickerson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Ty Nickerson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Coxswain's Swagger Stick for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2923

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Tanisha Finlay was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Fellowship Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Tanisha Finlay was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Tanisha Finlay for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Fellowship Award for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2924

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Megan Swimm was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Music Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Megan Swimm was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year,

taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Megan Swimm for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Music Award for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2925

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Mary Theriault was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Citizenship Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Mary Theriault was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Mary Theriault for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Citizenship Award for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2926

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Logan Nickerson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Seamanship Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Logan Nickerson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year,

taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Logan Nickerson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Seamanship Award for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2927

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Jared Brannen was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Junior Male at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Jared Brannen was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Jared Brannen for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Junior Male for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2928

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Jared Atkinson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Espirit de Corps Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Jared Atkinson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area who complimented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-11 year,

taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Jared Atkinson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Espirit de Corps Award for the 2010-11 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2929

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Faith Richardson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Overall Cadet Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Faith Richardson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers;
and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Faith Richardson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Overall Cadet Award for the 2010-2011 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2930

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Dustin Newell was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Most Improved Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Dustin Newell was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Dustin Newell for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Most Improved Award for the 2010-2011 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2931

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Chandra Nickerson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Junior Female Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Chandra Nickerson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Chandra Nickerson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Best Junior Female Award for the 2010-2011 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2932

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Brett Nickerson was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Commanding Officer's Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Brett Nickerson was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Brett Nickerson for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Commanding Officer's Award for the 2010-2011 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2933

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Brandon Ensor was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Leadership Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Brandon Ensor was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Brandon Ensor for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Leadership Award for the 2010-2011 year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2934

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Austin Amirault was presented with the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Fellowship Award at the annual review on June 11, 2011; and

Whereas Austin Amirault was one of 39 youth from the Barrington area that complemented the Ship's Company for RCSCC 327 Unicorn during the 2010-2011 year, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and challenges the cadet program offers; and

Whereas the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps is a vibrant part of the local community that participates in many events throughout the year, bringing pride to themselves, their families, and their officers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sea Cadet Austin Amirault for receiving the 327 Unicorn Corps' Junior Fellowship Award for the 2010-2011 year.