



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The subject matter for late debate has been chosen:

Therefore be it resolved that the NDP has repeatedly chosen Nova Scotia Power shareholders over ratepayers, supports ratepayers funding the bonuses of executives, and have become the defenders of big business in Nova Scotia, following the tradition of successive Progressive Conservative Governments in Nova Scotia.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Yarmouth.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being, “We, the undersigned, are community members who are requesting that the provincial government be committed to keeping the Nova Scotia Community College Sport and Wellness Centre open to the community for all fitness and well-being programs that are currently offered to the public. We are the users of the Sport and Wellness Centre facilities, taxpayers, and concerned citizens of Truro, Bible Hill and Colchester County.”

I have affixed my name to that, along with 237 other residents.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause reading:

“ . . . we, the undersigned, are calling upon the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to stop the plans to change our “zoning” with regards to snow removal and road handling of our area and have it switched to the County of Lunenburg, and leave it in the capable hands of the Department of Transportation Staff in Hants West.”

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 1 – Status of the Artist Act.

Bill No. 9 – Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act.

Bill No. 11 – Nova Scotia Tartan Act.

Bill No. 20 – Public Trustee Act.**Bill No. 22 – Mortgage Regulation Act.****Bill No. 32 – Securities Act.**

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

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 24 - Purchasing Management Association of Canada Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: It is my honour to present the first annual report of Elections Nova Scotia under the new Elections Act for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction, if I may?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. LANDRY: I would like Ms. Tilly Pillay to please stand and receive the warm welcome of this House. She's up in your gallery there. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 776

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

Whereas the Department of Justice's Legal Services co-executive director Tilly Pillay was this week elected as second vice-president of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society in June; and

Whereas this election means that Ms. Pillay will progress to the position of first vice-president and then to president of the Barristers' Society; and

Whereas this new position will allow Ms. Pillay to bring valuable insight and experience to the society in a leadership role;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize Tilly Pillay's recent election to the position of second vice president of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and wish her all the best in her leadership role in the Barristers' Society over the next three 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 777

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

Whereas May 5th will mark the International Day of the Midwife, which is recognized in 70 countries around the world since 1992; and

Whereas midwives have been providing care to birthing women in every corner of the globe for at least a century; and

Whereas this is an opportunity to pay tribute to the dedicated and compassionate work of midwives and all those who are recipients of their care;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize International Day of the Midwife and acknowledge their role in providing quality care to 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?

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 Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 778

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Agricultural College has an international reputation for educating students who are making a positive impact on some of the world's biggest challenges, including food, water and the environment; and

Whereas 87 per cent of NSAC graduates are living in and contributing to the success of Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas on Friday, May 4th, the NSAC will celebrate its students' achievements for 2012 at the 107th NSAC Convocation Ceremony;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate NSAC's Class of 2012 for their accomplishments and hard work and wish them luck with all their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 779

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

Whereas the Tri-County Regional School Board and Digby SchoolsPlus, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Newcomer Navigator Initiative, are hosting the Digby County Welcome Heritage and Diversity Event on May 4, 2012; and

Whereas the event's performances are meant to expose youth to heritage, diversity and cultural opportunities, as well as to help develop a mentorship program for youth in the county; and

Whereas the new Digby SchoolsPlus site is an excellent addition to the community and will help students succeed;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge the Tri-County Regional School Board and Digby SchoolsPlus for working to expand options for youth in Digby County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, am I permitted to do an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. I'd like to draw the members' attention to your gallery, Mr. Speaker, where we're joined today by Mr. James Macnutt, Q.,C. Mr. Macnutt is championing an application to have both this House and Province House in Charlottetown recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which I am about to read a resolution for.

Members will also know that Mr. Macnutt is the author of *Building for Democracy*, a book about the history and architecture of the three Legislative buildings in the Maritimes. I ask all members to give a warm welcome to our guest today. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 780

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, established in 1758, has been in continuous service to its electorate for more than 250 years, and is recognized as the oldest Legislature in the Westminster system of government outside Great Britain, and has conducted its business in Province House since 1819; and

Whereas Province House was constructed in the British neo-classical style and is acknowledged to be one of the finest examples of that style in North America; and

Whereas Province House has been the setting for numerous legal, cultural, and political events having international significance, including the establishment of freedom of the press in Canada, the swearing in of four Governors General of Canada, the second meeting of the Fathers of Confederation which ultimately led to the creation of Canada as an independent country, and numerous events of significance in the military and political life in defence of its allies in World War I and World War II;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly believe its seat, Province House, is deserving of the designation as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and believe it meets various of the criteria prescribed by UNESCO for the designation, and for those reasons hereby request the designation by UNESCO, which the Assembly would consider an honour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 781

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

Whereas Progress magazine held its First Annual Innovation in Practice World Café and Awards! to showcase, promote and award innovation in the public sector on April 26th at the Nova Scotia Community College Waterfront Campus; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Virtual School is an innovative approach to teaching and learning in the 21st Century to provide high school students with more learning opportunities in their own communities and is a joint project between school boards and the Department of Education; and

Whereas this on-line learning centre was recognized as one of four finalists by Progress magazine in the Education category for achieving excellence in sustainable innovation practices;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and acknowledge the efforts of all those involved in making the Nova Scotia virtual schools an innovative and effective tool of 21st Century teaching and learning regardless of geography.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 782

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

Whereas James W. Macnutt, Q.C., is the former Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk of Prince Edward Island's Legislature; and

Whereas Mr. Macnutt is the author of a number of books on historical architecture, including *Building for Democracy: The History and Architecture of the Legislative Buildings of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick*; and

Whereas Mr. Macnutt is promoting recognition of our Province House as a world heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations - UNESCO;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly offer its sincere thanks to James W. Macnutt for all that he has done and continues to do for Province House.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 74 - Entitled an Act to Improve Patient Safety and Health Systems Accountability. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

Bill No. 75 - Entitled an Act to Provide Greater Flexibility for Nova Scotians' Retirement Savings in Locked-in Accounts. (Mr. Allan MacMaster)

Bill No. 76 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2010. The Personal Health Information Act. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

Bill No. 77 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Medical Society Act. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 783

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

Whereas today marks the launch of the Africentric Learning Institute; and

Whereas this long-awaited, first-class institute is the result of hard work by members of the community including the Council on African Canadian Education in partnership with the Department of Education, and many other educational partners; and

Whereas the Africentric Learning Institute is a great asset to our province, enriching our communities by providing policy analysis and Africentric educational research;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Council on African Canadian Education and education partners on this great achievement, and thank all of those involved with the development of the Africentric Learning Institute for their commitment to community and dedication to enriching education in our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, if I might be permitted to do an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BAIN: In the east gallery this afternoon we have representatives of the Grandparents' Rights group. I'd like to introduce just a couple of them at this time. I think Lizelle Brown is up there somewhere and Pauline Glenn. Pauline and Lizelle are executive members of the Grandparents' Rights group, Mr. Speaker. They are joined by other members and I ask if they would stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 784

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

Whereas the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is an important one that allows family traditions and ideas to be passed between generations; and

Whereas last April the Minister of Justice said in this House that “there is nothing richer in (his) life than the experience and relationship (he has) with (his) granddaughter and the love, the security and friendship is something that (he) cherishes and (he) wishes to have till the day (he) leaves this world”; and

Whereas a group of Nova Scotia grandparents do not enjoy the love, security and friendship of their grandchildren because of a breakdown in their family unit;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to take concrete steps that will allow grandparents and their grandchildren to enjoy the kind of warm, mutually beneficial relationship the Minister of Justice has with his granddaughter.

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 Citadel-Sable Island.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, before I read this resolution I would like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly.

MR. PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery today are six distinguished members of my constituency. They're here from Armbrae Academy to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Armbrae Academy. Armbrae, as you know, Madam Speaker, was formed by Anna Leonowens and some prominent members of the Nova Scotia community 125 years ago. (Laughter) Sorry, I get used to the - Mr. Speaker, if you occupy the Chair long enough it's hard to tell the difference. I will go ahead nonetheless.

Armbrae Academy has been at the forefront of the struggle, particularly the education of girls and women 125 years ago, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce them by

name: Mattea Cacchione, Zachary Novack, Stefan Jukes, Ai Ai Gilmour - I may have mispronounced that - and Max Alwayn, and they are here accompanied by their headmaster, Gary O'Meara. I'd like to have them rise and receive the warm welcome of this House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our guests in the gallery and hope they enjoy this afternoon's proceedings.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

RESOLUTION NO. 785

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

Whereas Armbrae Academy is an independent, not-for-profit, close-knit educational community that prepares students from preschool through Grade 12 to be critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and engaged citizens; and

Whereas Armbrae Academy was originally incorporated as the Halifax Ladies' College through an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature on May 3, 1887; and

Whereas on May 3, 2012, Armbrae Academy celebrates its 125th Anniversary of promoting excellence, trust, integrity, fairness, and compassion through a proven academic program and small class sizes, supported by Headmaster Gary O'Meara and a dedicated group of staff and faculty;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the 125th Anniversary of the legislation incorporating the Halifax Ladies' College, now Armbrae Academy, thank Armbrae Academy for 125 years of excellence in education, and extend best wishes to all faculty, staff, and students for continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 786

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

Whereas Jim Stanley has been principal at the Nova Scotia Community College, Annapolis Valley Campus for the past seven years, guiding the school to a sound place among our post-secondary institutions; and

Whereas Jim served on the Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency board and was on the Socio-Economic Committee with the Fundy Energy Research Network, and was described in The Annapolis County Spectator as a veteran of community development; and

Whereas Jim also had careers with the Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development and the Nova Scotia Teachers College, a place that still holds the highest personal and professional regard in his long and distinguished career;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly acknowledge his record of achievement, leadership, and friendship and wish him good health in his well-deserved retirement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 787

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

Whereas author Joyce Allston once said, “Grandparents, like heroes, are as necessary to a child’s growth as vitamins”; and

Whereas a warm, caring relationship between a child and their grandparents provides benefits for the whole family; and

Whereas grandparents can provide grandchildren with a link to their past and a sense of belonging;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend their warm wishes to the grandparents sitting in the legislative gallery today and hope that they will soon have the opportunity to make the world a little softer, a little kinder, and a little warmer for their grandchildren.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 788

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

Whereas Gerry and Linda Simpson for the past five years have been growing grapes on their 3.5-acre orchard, Cobequid Tides Vineyard, in Lower Debert, Colchester North; and

Whereas their first commercially produced, full-bodied white wine, called Cobequid Tides L’Acadie, was debuted recently at the Masstown Market in Masstown; and

Whereas Cobequid Tides L’Acadie has received the silver medal at the 2012 Finger Lakes International Wine Competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gerry and Linda Simpson for their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the wine industry.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 789

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

Whereas today's ever-expanding world of technology has overshadowed small office supply companies which began building their business with the sale of paper clips, pens and pencils; and

Whereas Rick and Judy Rockwell began their business in 1992 in Windsor, by actually delivering office supplies to the doors of their customers; and

Whereas this year the Rockwells and their employees are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Brooklyn Office Supplies and are still applying the same old-fashioned business practices that make them so popular with their customers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend their best wishes to Rick and Judy Rockwell as they celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Brooklyn Office Supplies, and wish them many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 790

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

Whereas the Lake Loon-Cherry Brook Senior Citizens Group was formed approximately 35 years ago with Elizabeth Johnston as their first president, Elsie Johnson as coordinator, and a group of 25 to 30 people meeting at the Cherry Brook Community Centre; and

Whereas the group is still active and has accomplished much in their time together, such as publishing a book, *Living Libraries*, quilt making, fundraising for the Black Cultural Centre, awarding a youth scholarship for a student from their community attending university, as well as forming an offshoot of the club named the Cherry Brook Slowpokes Walking Group, amplifying their goal of bringing good health to seniors of their community; and

Whereas Alma Johnston has been president since 1999 and has been active in the organization's literacy skills group, dinners and trips;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize the Lake Loon/Cherrybrook Senior Citizens Group for their hard work and dedication over the past 35 years and wish them many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 791

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

Whereas Jennifer Jesty, a former resident of North Sydney, is the only Canadian serving on the International Fire Relief Mission board of advisors but firsts are nothing new for Jennifer who is the first Aboriginal woman to graduate from a paramedic program in Pittsburgh, the first Aboriginal woman to become a member of the Nova Scotia Firefighters Association, and the first Canadian member of the board of trustees for the International Association of Women in Fire Emergency Services; and

Whereas Jennifer is presently working as an advanced care paramedic for the Canadian Industrial Paramedics in Dawson Creek near Fort McMurray, Alberta; and

Whereas the International Fire Relief Mission collects used, serviceable fire and EMS equipment from American and Canadian fire departments and sends that gear to developing and war-torn countries along with teams that distribute and provide demonstrations on the proper use of the equipment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jennifer Jesty for her dedication and humanitarian service and wish her continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 792

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

Attendu que le vendredi 27 janvier 2012, le Regroupement des aînées et aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) a présenté des certificats de reconnaissance 2011 pour la région d'Argyle à Armand Bourque, Adéline d'Entremont, Francis Corporon et Sylvester Corporon; et

Attendu que Armand Bourque était nommée par le Club Indian Sluice Seniors, Adéline d'Entremont par Nouveaux Horizons de la Baronnie, Francis Corporon et Sylvester Corporon par le Club de Acadiens Seniors de Wedgeport; et

Attendu que chaque année lors de l'Assemblée générale annuelle, le RANE souligne la contribution exceptionnelle d'une aînée ou d'un aîné qui mérite un Certificat de reconnaissance régional;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent Armand Bourque, Adéline d'Entremont, Francis Corporon et Sylvester Corporon de leur dévouement à leurs communautés.

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

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

Whereas on Friday, January 27th, 2012, le Regroupement des aînées et aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) recognized Armand Burke, Adeline d'Entremont, Francis Corporon and Sylvester Corporon from the Argyle region for their contribution in the year 2011; and

Whereas Armand Burke was nominated by the Indian Sluice Seniors Club, Adeline d'Entremont was nominated by the New Horizons of the Baronnie of West Pubnico, Francis Corporon and Sylvester Corporon were both nominated by the Acadian Seniors Club of Wedgeport; and

Whereas at their annual general meeting, the RANE recognizes seniors who have contributed to their clubs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Armour Burke, Adeline d'Entremont, Francis Corporon and Sylvester Corporon for dedicating their time and talents to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 793

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

Whereas since 2009, Two If By Sea Café has been a popular downtown Dartmouth destination known for their mouth-watering baked goods; and

Whereas TIBS, as it's know by many, has partnered with Chef Renée Lavallée to create the TIBS Family Dinners to promote local ingredients and alternatives to fine dining; and

Whereas TIBS helped create the I Love Dartmouth campaign, fostering pride in their community and on the anniversary of their opening won a Halifax Fusion Innovation Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Tara MacDonald and Mr. Zane Kelsall, co-owners of Two If By Sea on their success in Dartmouth and on their opening of the unofficial Dartmouth embassy in Halifax's historic properties, teaching everyone on this side of the harbour that there are many reasons to love Dartmouth

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 794

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

Whereas Windsor Forks Grade 6 elementary school teacher Melissa Greenough is a remarkable and caring teacher to all of her students; and

Whereas Melissa Greenough goes above and beyond the call of duty of any teacher by ensuring that all her students have the necessary warm clothing and footwear each winter, while preparing her students to be leaders in the school and the community; and

Whereas this remarkable leadership also saw Melissa organize a “Hearts for Haiti” presentation and fundraiser and resulted in the Windsor Forks teacher receiving a Nova Scotia Education Week Award on April 23, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend sincere congratulations to Melissa Greenough for showing so many of her students her warm and caring ways and wish her every possible future 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 Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 795

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

Whereas several Yarmouth residents recently competed in the provincial Candlepin Youth Bowling Championships; and

Whereas Yarmouth's Cody Bourque, Will Crowell, Jesse Gallagher, Cameron George, Bryer Cunningham, Robbie Crowell, Cameron Smith, Tyler Wyman and Shaylynn Smith won either silver or gold at the provincial Candlepin Youth Bowling Championships; and

Whereas Cody Bourque, Will Crowell, Jesse Gallagher, Cameron George, Bryer Cunningham, Robbie Crowell, Cameron Smith, Tyler Wyman and Shaylynn Smith will now compete at the Candlepin Youth Bowling Nationals being held in Fredericton, New Brunswick on May 5th;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate these young bowlers on their recent provincial success and wish them luck as they compete at the national level.

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. 796

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

Whereas Cape Smokey Storm and North Highlands Huskies girls basketball team came together to form a representative team to attend a tournament held at Cape Breton University hosted by the Riverview Sonics rep team in March; and

Whereas coaches Jenny and Stanley Symes, and assistant coach Tony Whitty and the team worked very hard to prepare themselves to compete; and

Whereas preparation, team work and dedication enabled them to bring home a silver medal;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud and congratulate coaches Jenny and Stanley Symes, assistant coach Tony Whitty, team players Cassidy Best, Olivia Symes, Brianna Lynn Ferguson, Drew MacDonald, Teah Fricker-MacNeil, Joni Whitty, Jade Wilkie, Brianna MacKinnon, Meghan MacLellan, Cherilyn MacLellan and Baylee Usifer on their success and wish them the best in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 797

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

Whereas Off The Hook, a Digby longline fishing co-op have caught a big prize from the Solution Search contest; and

Whereas Off The Hook was runner-up in the international Sustainable Fisheries contest sponsored in part by National Geographic; and

Whereas Off The Hook sells shares or subscriptions at the beginning of the summer and then delivers the “fresh fair fish” to customers in the Valley, Halifax and across the province;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Off The Hook for their creative way of helping to sustain the fishing industry in their most impressive award in this contest.

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. 798

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

Whereas close to 300 children are registered for the Leah Dugas Memorial Kids Against Cancer Hockey Tournament held yearly in Sydney Mines; and

Whereas the tournament was renamed in honour of Leah, who served as the tournament princess until she lost her battle with cancer at nine years of age; and

Whereas tournament organizer Joey Bonar said the goal of the tournament is to raise awareness and funds for cancer research and to allow kids to have fun on and off the ice, with all profits going to the Sydney Mines Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the army of volunteers who make this annual tournament a reality and thank them for all their work they do in the fight against cancer.

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. 799

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

Whereas Mr. Thomas Simmonds celebrated his 100th birthday on April 12, 2012; and

Whereas Mr. Simmonds was born and raised in the community of North Preston, where he and his wife, Eunice, raised 15 children and where he still resides today, in his own home, continuing to do many of his own repairs; and

Whereas Mr. Simmonds worked for the City of Dartmouth until retirement age of 65, providing excellent service to the residents of the area;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize Mr. Thomas Simmonds on his 100th birthday and extend congratulations and best wishes to this very remarkable man.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 800

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

Whereas John Russell from Sydney River is preparing to take a walk down memory lane at the Montreal Shriners Hospital for Children, a place that ensured such a journey was possible; and

Whereas John Russell first went to the Shriners Hospital when he was just six years old with serious leg and hip problems, but went on to become an iron worker and use his legs to climb some of the highest structures across the country; and

Whereas John's return to the hospital this month will be a chance for him to say thank you for the treatment that helped him go on to live such an active life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish John Russell the best as he prepared to thank everyone at the Shriners Hospital and wish him success with all his help that he now gives to the Shriners.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 801

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

Whereas rural Nova Scotians for many years have depended on the members of volunteer fire brigades to keep their families and properties safe from fire; and

Whereas training, fundraising, first aid, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the many additional responsibilities of the members of the brigade; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, but most fire brigades hold a banquet each year to thank members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Shane Slack of the Debert Fire Brigade, Colchester North, for receiving the Fire Officer of the Year 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 Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville on an introduction.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in my place today to introduce two very important women in my life. My wife, Charlotte, and my daughter, Morgan, are here visiting the House today. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 802

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

Whereas Nova Scotian Sylvia Hamilton was named a WAVE Award winner at Women Making Waves 2012, the second annual Women in Film and Television Atlantic conference, in March 2012; and

Whereas Dr. Hamilton is a multi-award-winning, Halifax-based filmmaker, writer, editor, and educator known for her documentaries exploring the history and experience of African Canadians; and

Whereas Dr. Hamilton holds the Rogers Chair in Communications at University of King's College and previously held the distinguished Chair in Women's Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University and also co-created new initiatives in film, a program for women of colour and First Nations women when she worked with the National Film Board's Studio D;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sylvia Hamilton on her latest award for her creativity and leadership and encourage her continued contribution to the film, television and digital media industry.

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. 803

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

Whereas 9-year-old Digby resident Lewis Riley is Nova Scotia's second-best free thrower; and

Whereas Lewis earned his title at the Knights of Columbus Provincial Free Throw Championships held in Truro on March 17th; and

Whereas this free throw event challenge requires both focus and discipline, something that Lewis has proven he possesses;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Lewis Riley on his impressive title and wish him all the best in future challenges.

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. 804

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

Whereas since arriving in Halifax 23 years ago, Felicia Eghan has made tremendous contributions to the Clayton Park and HRM communities as a passionate volunteer and respected community leader; and

Whereas Ms. Eghan founded the African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes in 2005, an organization that developed out of Ms. Eghan's important work in the community as a mentor for immigrant parents; and

Whereas Ms. Eghan's volunteerism and passion for issues relating to health and immigration goes beyond her essential work with ADAM, including work with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Council of African Canadian Educators, the HIV/AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, the Health Association of African Canadians, Mount Saint Vincent University and many others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Felicia Eghan as a respected and significant pillar of the Halifax community and applaud her work in these important areas.

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. 805

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

Whereas Katelyn Morton of Berwick was recently named Mount Allison's Top Student Athlete; and

Whereas Katelyn has wrapped up four years as a student and women's hockey player and is planning to attend law school; and

Whereas Katelyn is proud to have been recognized for both her athletic and academic achievements while at Mount A;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Katelyn Morton of Berwick and wish her every success 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 member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 806

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

Whereas Glen Haven resident Jan Miller was named a WAVE award winner at Women Making Waves 2012, the second annual Women in Film and Television Atlantic conference in March 2012; and

Whereas Jan Miller is president of Lowenbe Holdings, director of Strategic Partners, the co-production market of the Atlantic Film Festival and chair of Women in Film and Television (WIFT) Atlantic to name but a few of her accomplishments; and

Whereas Ms. Miller is an internationally renowned pitching consultant who has taught writers and producers around the world how to develop and market their projects, thus opening the doors for many new producers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jan Miller on her latest award for her creativity and leadership and encourage her continued contribution to the film, television and digital media industry.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Before we go to the Oral Question Period, I don't think I have to remind anybody today about the use of BlackBerrys or laptops.

The time now is 1:06 p.m. and Oral Question Period will begin.

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

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

EAST COAST FORENSIC CTR.: DENNY CASE - ASSESSMENT DETAILS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, a conflict of interest occurs when your obligations to a party or the greater public could be influenced or compromised by self-interests or prior commitment, competing loyalties, or your inability to be objective. Recently officials at the East Coast Forensic Centre declared a conflict of interest when it came to conducting an assessment of their patient, Mr. Denny. As a result, a professional outside our province has been tasked with the important responsibility of doing that assessment.

My question to the Premier is, did the Premier think the officials at the East Coast Forensic Centre did the right thing?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, yes, I do.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are still wondering what happened in the case of the death of Raymond Taavel. They believe there was a breakdown somewhere, and they would like to have answers and assurances that it won't happen again. However, the actions of this government placed hard-working DHA and government officials in a difficult position to investigate their own protocols and whether they were followed, and to assess whether they were sufficient.

My question to the Premier is, if the Premier believes the officials at the East Coast Forensic Centre did the right thing, then why is it appropriate for the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Wellness to investigate themselves?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition. What I'll do is ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to address it specifically.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Ministers of Health and Wellness, and Justice, are proceeding to develop the review process and they are looking to external, outside-of-the province psychiatrists to conduct the review.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the more questions you ask this government, the more different answers you get as you go along.

The people at the East Coast Forensic unit knew at the very beginning they should be calling in outside help to investigate what had happened with this particular client. The Departments of Health and Wellness, and Justice, deemed it fit that they investigate themselves. We're not looking for them to go on the outside, what we're asking of the Departments of Health and Wellness, and Justice, is to step back completely and allow someone from the outside to come in and investigate this on their own and then report back to this House in an independent fashion.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing, just like the officials at the East Coast Forensic unit did, and ask for an independent review so that Nova Scotians can have faith in the results of this review?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Health and Wellness just answered that question. I realize it was written before he got the answer that he didn't expect in the second supplementary, but I'll reiterate it for him - the minister says they are looking to ensure that there is a broad review and they're looking for a psychiatrist (Interruptions) No, that's not - Mr. Speaker, with all respect, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked a question, he asked me to give him an answer and that's what I'm attempting to do, but it's difficult to answer over him yelling.

So what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister of Health and Wellness has just said that there will be a psychiatrist from outside . . .

MR. MACNEIL: Your nose is growing, Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. That is an unparliamentary remark, please, and I would ask the honourable member to stand up and withdraw that remark.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw that remark.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Now I will go back to the honourable Premier for his answer, a shortened answer.

THE PREMIER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health and Wellness has just said there will be a psychiatrist employed from outside the jurisdiction to do the review.

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

PREM.: HEALTH CARE SYSTEM - DISRUPTIONS: AVOIDANCE - ASSURE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We are only one week from the last-minute settlement with the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union Local 42 and already our health system is at risk of being thrown into chaos again. The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, which bargains for 6,000 registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse practitioners, will be back at the bargaining table this very month.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, can he assure Nova Scotians today that there will be no disruption in their health service, no cancelled surgeries or other procedures, as a result of this next round of bargaining?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell Nova Scotians and the member opposite is that we will conduct negotiations in good faith, as we always do, and we will seek to have a resolve that meets all of those criteria. Of course, we don't want disruptions in the health care system and that is the focus of our efforts.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that nurses feel that when they're told they can always fire some of their fellow employees if their settlement is too high is negotiating in good faith but, in any event, the fact of the matter is that the Nurses' Union wants wage parity with the nurses of the NSGEU who, as we know, got an arbitrated settlement last month of 5.1 per cent. District health authorities have already filed their business plans which include provision for a 1 per cent increase. Clearly the government is on a new collision course with the Nurses' Union in their negotiations like they were on with the NSGEU nurses.

So my question to the Premier, since he's going down the same road, how many surgeries and diagnostic tests will be allowed to be cancelled this time before he comes to some last-minute deal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the negotiations that took place recently were done under good management. They were purposeful and predictable. They yielded a result that

allows for a settlement without what we have seen in the past in the way of huge labour disruptions. That I believe has always been the intention of government of any stripe unless the member of the Progressive Conservative Party is of the opinion that the job of government is to provoke unnecessary strikes.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier may have as an objective that there's no labour disruption but the fact of the matter is under his approach last week, last month there were 500 surgeries cancelled. There were many thousands of procedures cancelled. There was a real disruption among the health services of people who were not at the table. In my view, the job of a government is to look after those people first and that is what the Premier failed to do and in order to avoid labour disruption he agreed to a last-minute deal that he doesn't even know how much it's going to cost in the end to implement. Instead, he tells nurses that if it's too much, they can always lay off some of the nurses which would not only be cruel to the nurses who think they're about to get a raise and instead get a pink slip from his government, but also cruel to the people who rely on those nurses for important health services.

So my final question to the Premier is, how many nurses will lose their job to pay for the Premier's next deal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have never addressed the Nurses' Union in any regard in this respect and we want, of course, our nurses to have a good working environment. That's important to us. They are the ones who deliver the front-line health care services to patients.

Mr. Speaker, the objective for this government is always to ensure that the services are there when and where people need them. I was in this House when the Progressive Conservative Government forced out onto the streets thousands of nurses, who tried to impose a contract and brought forward a bill that even after sitting 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and finally getting passed after some extraordinary demonstrations and difficulty, never could implement, and they couldn't implement it because the terms were so draconian that the nurses literally said that they were going to resign. They were going to replace, completely, the collective bargaining process and dictate the terms of the contract. That is not a path that we chose to go down.

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

PREM. - NSGEU NEGOTIATIONS: ARBITRATION - SUPPORT EXPLAIN

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the government embraced the decision to send the NSGEU negotiations to arbitration. Despite this, the Premier began issuing threats to nurses through the media.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote the Premier; "You have a finite amount of money. If you have increases that are not supportable, then you have very few choices."

My question to the Premier is, why did the government support arbitration if it knew it would have to lay off nurses?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the point of the question is. The simple fact of the matter is, I think if there's anything - the Opposition knows that what I said is correct, the people of Nova Scotia know that what I said is correct, the Nurses' Union knows that what I said was correct. The only complaint they have about it is that I said it. They know it's correct; they just don't want you to say it.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, what is correct is that this government's figures cut more than \$60 million from health care. They've set records for ER closures and they've failed to adequately address wait times, and lo and behold they've entered into arbitration with health workers without telling them that they were going to lay them off. That's the only thing that is correct.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, since he didn't tell the health care workers they were going to be laid off, I want to know, did the Premier tell the Capital District Health Authority that if they entered into arbitration they would be forced to lay off health care workers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday - I mean the member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, likes to kind of cherry-pick among the things that I said because, of course, I said a lot of things with respect to this. In addition to what he quoted, what I said was that we would support the budgets of the DHAs and that we would work with front-line health care workers in order to ensure that we got the savings we required in the system, and if we could do that without staff layoffs, of course that would be the best of all possible options.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said there was a finite amount of money. He's now saying (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, now that the Premier has changed his mind once again - yesterday he said there was a finite amount of money; now, today, he is saying the possibility of more money. What I think all Nova Scotians would like to know, particularly the Capital District health care workers would like to know, is the Premier prepared to add more money to the Capital Health budget to pay for the obligations that were decided by the arbitrator?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the only incoherence here is with the Leader of the Opposition's seeming belief that there is an infinite amount of money. Every time he turns around he's going to put another \$65 million into health care, he's going to put another \$60 million into health. Apparently he thinks there are hundreds of millions of dollars floating around that he can just distribute for free.

The simple fact of the matter is there is a finite amount of money. We are trying to prevent what happened under the Progressive Conservative Government, where we have seen the generations to come chained with debt as a result of bad decision making.

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

PREM. - JOBS RELOCATION: KINGS NORTH MLA - RESPONSE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the beginning of this week we heard the government announce they were going to be moving jobs out of HRM, across rural Nova Scotia. One of those consolidations of jobs would happen in New Waterford and I think all of us, by and large, agreed with the decision, we should be moving services closer to Nova Scotians who were going to be receiving those services. But on a question coming from the Progressive Conservative caucus yesterday, it turns out that not all those jobs are leaving HRM. Some of them are coming from rural Nova Scotia, and as you would know from yesterday, some of those are coming from Kentville, in the riding of Kings North.

As you well know there is double-digit unemployment in the Valley so I want to ask the Premier, I wonder if the Premier could tell me, what did the member for Kings North say to him after he found out he was moving jobs from his riding to the Deputy Premier's riding?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will table, for the information of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the press release that went out with respect to that. It shows exactly where the jobs were coming from and exactly how it was that these jobs were to be consolidated. Instead of consolidating them in Halifax, they went to Cape Breton, which I think is still a very good decision.

The member for Kings North, of course, is very happy with the great number of investments that we have made in the Kentville area and we are going to continue to grow the economy of the Valley.

MR. MCNEIL: It's good to hear that the member for Kings North is happy the Premier is taking jobs from his riding and putting them in the Deputy Premier's riding. As part of that also, that consolidation, there are jobs leaving from Amherst. As you know, the unemployment rate in Cumberland County is in double digits. Mr. Speaker, as you would

know, in case no one heard, the unemployment rate in Cumberland County is in double digits. I'm wondering, could the Premier tell this House what the member for Cumberland North said to him when he discovered that he was actually taking jobs from Amherst, in his riding, and moving them to the Deputy Premier's riding?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, just so I can correct the member of the Opposition. The member for Kings North said no such thing with respect to any particular jobs. What he recognizes, and all members of this team recognize, is ensuring that systems change in order to keep pace with the needs of the clients of the system is an important thing to happen. That meant consolidation of those services was going to take place, as it has in seven other provinces.

The question was, where does that consolidation take place? When the Liberals were in power, they chose to put the consolidations in Halifax and we chose to put that consolidation in New Waterford.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, all Nova Scotians are asking for is the Premier to be up front in the very beginning. As a matter of fact, if he reads Hansard from yesterday, even his first answer said all the jobs were coming from Dartmouth when in fact that's wrong. As a matter of fact, jobs are coming from backbenchers' ridings. As you know, on this side of the House I've said many times that the Industrial Expansion Fund provides the government an opportunity to pick winners and losers. I want to know what the Premier says to the members of his backbenches when he's now telling them he's going to pick winners and losers among the NDP members in this House.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the job of the government is to ensure that services are delivered in the most effective way to the people of Nova Scotia. There were numerous newspaper articles following this that demonstrated - I'll table just one of them - that the consolidation of the Maintenance Enforcement Program was going to take place, that it was coming from various places around the province and that those were going to go to Cape Breton.

The most interesting article that appeared in the paper recently with respect to that was about the member for Cape Breton South who said for 20 years he has campaigned to have the provincial government put jobs in Cape Breton. He was overruled by his own caucus and it took this government to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - CECS: STAFFING REVIEW - RESPONSE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union is speaking out against what they consider to be unsafe staffing models for collaborative emergency centres across the province. This week government announced

that Twin Oaks CEC in Musquodoboit Harbour will staff their centre with a primary care paramedic and one registered nurse, something the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union says is unsafe. According to the Nurses' Union, a two-nurse/one-paramedic staffing model would be safer and more appropriate. In a press release this morning, the union said - NSNU President Janet Hazelton said - "I asked the minister and deputy minister to review the staffing model established for these CECs."

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, what response did the minister offer the NSNU? Did she commit to carrying out such a review, and on what timeline?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard to get the CECs opened. We've developed good standards. We've worked closely with the Nurses' Union and with other bodies in doing this, including the College of Registered Nurses; our emergency care adviser, Dr. John Ross; and the EHS medical oversight physician, Dr. Andrew Travers. There have been many, many meetings and there has been a lot of excellent work done. Patient care is always our number-one concern, and I am satisfied that all of the steps that needed to be taken have been taken. We will continue to work with those bodies as we open more CECs around the province.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness has a duty and a responsibility to ensure the highest standard of safety and care for patients in the health care system. Today in the press release that Ms. Hazelton put forward, it made it clear that she advised the nurses she represents working in CECs that if the workplaces do not meet safe standards they should refuse to work in the area. This can mean patients at Musquodoboit Harbour and potentially all over Nova Scotia could be forced to go without the care they need.

Given the fact that the NDP Government's CEC staffing decision and misplaced priorities may now be putting patients at risk, will the minister commit to resolving the issue at the Twin Oaks centre today?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, no patient in Nova Scotia will be put at risk, particularly when we have such a strong group of health care providers working collaboratively in this province, such as paramedics, emergency room physicians, and nurses. We do ensure that the highest safety standards are in place for patient care. The CEC models are an excellent model - a new, collaborative kind of practice with all of our health care providers working in unison - and they are working.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the concern is still that in this press release today the Nurses' Union was very clear that they feel that the situation is not a safe one and that they will maybe basically ask their members not to show up to work, or if they don't feel that they're in a safe condition that they would not work in that area. I'm just wondering what the minister is going to do if she does move on with this and whether she'll

be speaking to the president of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union in order to come up with some kind of resolve?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I've had many meetings and staff in our department have had many meetings with regard to the CEC model, the development of the standards of care, the protocols that need to be put in place, the training that's required, and the evaluation that will be ongoing in the CECs. We have two CECs up and running right now. They are providing excellent care to the residents of those communities.

In fact, I'm told that the nurses who work in these models are so pleased with the model of care that they can't imagine that they hadn't been doing this before. They get to use the full scope of their practice and they get to provide better care to their patients. We will continue to open CECs around the province that are collaborative in nature, that draw on the very important skills of all of our health care providers, and as I said, that includes the paramedics of this province, the nurses of this province, and the emergency room physicians of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

NAT. RES. - RESOLUTE: GOV'T. ASSISTANCE - GUARANTEES

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. I'm sure he's aware that yesterday, Resolute Forest Products share price dropped by 23 per cent, largely as a result of a significant further collapse in the demand for pulp and paper, particularly newsprint, around the world.

Just over six months ago the NDP handed \$50 million to Resolute, without conditions, to guarantee the long-term viability of the mill, without protecting pensions of workers and without even a guarantee to use Nova Scotia labour in the forests. None of that is in that deal.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, why did the NDP hand over \$50 million to the corporation, without guarantees for the pensions and the use of Nova Scotia labour in the forests?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly the forest industry has gone through some challenging times but this government has stepped up to the plate and assisted where necessary, including with Resolute. We're certainly working with the workers and the families and the industry and the investment there is in the capital improvements for the company; it is in the energy efficiencies, and certainly an investment in the workers and in the 2,000 jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia that are saved in that area.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, those investments to improve the mill are improving a mill that by the end of July will have been closed for 11 of the 30 weeks since the government handed them \$50 million. The fact is that those employees there aren't getting paid when the mill isn't working, so they've handed out \$50 million without protecting the jobs, without protecting the pensions, and without ensuring that Nova Scotians work in the forests.

It was brought up to members of this caucus when we toured the mill, by workers in that mill who are concerned about that issue. Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows, the deal also includes the potential of another \$40 million, so can the Minister of Natural Resources tell us whether Resolute has approached the province about triggering the additional money in the deal?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to work with the company and with the forestry contractors in southwestern Nova Scotia. Certainly downtime is not something that we want to see but it's certainly not unusual in the industry across Canada at this time. There are a number of mills that, actually, have closed or are not open at all; there are others that have taken downtime. We're going to continue to work in the best interests of the forest industry and of Resolute and the workers and their families in that area of our province.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the jobs they've protected are largely in position only because when they're not working, they're not getting paid. It's as simple as that. The deal did not protect the pensions; it didn't ensure that people work in the forests. The other thing that this deal did not do is it did nothing to diversify the Liverpool economy, to help grow the region and protect the region. So, Mr. Speaker, since the government was so focused on newsprint and its continued demand, could the minister please tell me what he's done to increase the demand for newsprint in the world?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Resolute facility in southwestern Nova Scotia, in the Liverpool area, is an important component of our economy in that area. My understanding is that the pensions that the honourable member speaks about are fully funded, so I'm not sure where he's getting that information from. Anyway, the forest industry is important to our economy, it's important to southwestern Nova Scotia and we're going to continue to work with the industry and the workers, to make sure it's sustainable well into the future.

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

COM. SERV. - TALBOT HOUSE: FOIPOP - DEPT. DISCUSSIONS

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister of Community Services. Time and time again, the minister has told members of this House that she posted a review of Talbot House on her department's Web site because

she received a FOIPOP from the media. From April 24th, I quote: ". . . we were requested through a FOIPOP which gives us an obligation because we knew that it was FOIPOP through media . . ." On April 26th, the FOIPOP request was through the media.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the minister was well aware of the origin of this freedom of information request. So my question through you to the minister is this: it is customary that the minister be given the identities of those submitting FOIPOP requests and their contents, so what exactly were the discussions in her office around this request?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the first time that I mentioned this in the House, I said it was a FOIPOP request and a media request. The second time, I ran those two words together and that's why he has that impression. However in Budget Estimates, I very clearly said it was a FOIPOP request and separately there were media requests, and he knows that.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on April 26th, the same day that the minister told us that the media had sent her a FOIPOP, she told the House that her department discussed posting a review and concluded that, ". . . because it was a public document and there was a request to see it, it would have been made public anyway . . ." I have the Hansard here to back that up and I'll table that.

The minister knows full well that this was not a public document. I read the disclaimer from the review into the record a number of times proving that she is wrong. Yesterday she told us that she put it on the department Web site on the advice of another individual, and that's in the Hansard I just tabled as well. Mr. Speaker, the question is this, as the minister appears to be passing the buck, will the minister accept responsibility for violating Section 20 of the FOIPOP Act?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the member for Argyle posted a review and also had a disclaimer. The disclaimers are standard disclaimers they may have a little difference in them but they are disclaimers, they know that. We know that the review is an organizational review and they just continually want to fabricate this entire story. Beyond that, I don't know what their minds are thinking.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if the minister had been listening yesterday, the disclaimers of those three different reports were read into the record of the House and they are very different. The minister is placing the blame for publishing the review of Talbot House onto one of her advisers. She is clearly not familiar with the concept of ministerial responsibility. Perhaps the minister is creating a scapegoat because she knows that what she did was wrong but she can't admit it.

There are just too many examples of this minister's poor judgment and now she's broken the law. Enough is enough. Will this minister finally accept the responsibility for her actions and step down?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Absolutely not because I've done the right thing.

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

COM. SERV.: TALBOT HOUSE REVIEW - REASONS

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Community Services and it also involves Talbot House. For 53 years Talbot House provided critical residential addiction treatment services. Talbot House was an important resource for Cape Breton until the Minister of Community Services and her department decided that it needed to close its doors.

The Minister of Community Services forced the board of directors to go to the police with an anonymous, unspecified complaint. A man's reputation has been dragged through the mud and to top it off, the Department of Community Services made public their internal, biased, non-evidence-based report vilifying Talbot House and its staff. My question to the minister, will the Minister of Community Services tell the members of this House why the Department of Community Services targeted Talbot House for review?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, number one we did not close Talbot House, as has been explained in this House over and over. The board made that decision, the board sent out a press release on February 16th indicating that, and we did a review because we have done reviews on other recovery houses, and that's what happens. The department does reviews often, in a lot of situations. When you receive any kind of concern, it's our public duty to go forward and do a review.

If you read the review - and I invite every person in Nova Scotia to read it - you will see that there is nothing personal in there. It talks about policies, it talks about staffing, and it talks about professional development. That's all policies. That's not personal whatsoever.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, with that answer, it doesn't alter the fact that Talbot House is closed. Many people agree that the Minister of Community Services' attack on Talbot House was based on ideology and that the Department of Community Services targeted Talbot House because it did not treat addictions the way the department thought it should.

Mr. Speaker, you'll remember Father John Webb, who founded Talbot House some 53 years ago. He must be rolling over in his grave today to see the way this NDP Government is handling Talbot House in Cape Breton. The community has seen the successes of Talbot House. The many recovering addicts who have benefited from care at Talbot House can attest to the success of the Talbot House model of treatment. The community does not want to see just the funding restored. They want to see Talbot House restored.

My question to the minister is, will the Minister of Community Services restore funding to Talbot House, accept that their model of treatment works for their patients, and take steps to reopen Talbot House?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is table this. This is the press release from Talbot House and it is expressed from the board of directors that they've made the decision to close Talbot House. We did not do that. It was their board's decision. (Interruptions)

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: The fact of the matter is that Talbot House is closed, Mr. Speaker. I can't emphasize that strongly enough. The people of the area are left without an addiction centre that was very important to the people of my area and to all Nova Scotia.

The department and the minister made serious mistakes in the handling of Talbot House, and as a result we have lost a successful treatment centre. Talbot House can still be reopened. The community wants to see it reopen. People relying on its services want to see it reopen. Will the Minister of Community Services fund Talbot House so it can continue the proven good work it has been doing for 53 years in our community?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, myself or the department have never denied the importance of the recovery services in Cape Breton. So we have already had discussions with the board and we're waiting for a meeting. (Interruption) Once again, the fact is that the board closed it. All they have to do is read the press release. They said they decided to close it on their own.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LONG-TERM CARE - WAIT LISTS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, during Budget Estimates, the Minister of Health and Wellness reported that the wait list for long-term care beds now exceeds 1,800 people. The wait list has doubled since the introduction of the Continuing Care Strategy and increased by nearly 400 since this government took power. Investing in home care is a good thing, but not every senior in this province can take advantage of those services. An internal report by the department, entitled *Removing Barriers in Accessing Long Term Care*, shows that 1,162 of the people added to the wait list in 2009-10 lived in areas with no publicly-funded home care available.

So my question to the minister is, what can the minister say to the more than 1,800 families who are struggling to care for their loved ones and get them into a long-term care facility? After working and contributing to our province their whole lives, don't these 1,800 seniors deserve better?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I know that seniors and their families want the best home care and long-term care available to them in their communities. That's why we've opened 1,000 new long-term care beds and that's why we are putting \$20 million into home care this year to help seniors stay in their home for as long as they wish.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the Continuing Care Strategy called for 832 new beds to be built by 2010. It is now 2012 and the latest accountability from the Department of Health and Wellness shows that only 618 strategy beds have been completed. In Budget Estimates the minister indicated that no new beds would be tendered this year and likely none next year. People in areas of this province are waiting up to 400 days to be placed in a nursing home and up to four months for home care, this puts incredible stress on family members. My question to the minister is, how long does the Minister of Health and Wellness think it's appropriate for a family to wait and can she tell Nova Scotians 400 days is okay?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. I was in Cape Breton not that long ago and I had an opportunity to speak with John Malcom, the CEO of the district health authority. He was telling me that the devolution of long-term care to the DHAs has resulted in much faster placement for people from the district health authority into long-term care. We're seeing great improvements. I want to tell the members that the long-term care sector has signed service agreements with all the DHAs all over the province. This is something that governments in this province have been working for, for more than 10 years, but unable to achieve. Our government has been able to achieve that.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has the oldest population in Canada and the number of seniors in Nova Scotia is growing. By 2036 the number of Nova Scotians over 85 is expected to have doubled, but this government is doing very little to prepare. They have done a lot of ribbon-cutting of new beds and facilities tendered before they came to power. They haven't finished the beds that are already two years late and they haven't released any plans for the second phase of the strategy.

My question is, this government has given us no confidence that they intend to look out for seniors. They are dragging their feet and it's not only affecting seniors, but entire families. When will they commit to tendering new beds and put families at ease?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this government has done more for seniors in the three short years we have been in government. If that member would like a litany of what the programs are that we've introduced, I'll take him through that litany very easily. We've put paramedics into long-term care so that seniors don't have to go to the emergency department and we're recognized across Canada as being a leader in the best practices in that regard. We introduced a Caregiver Benefit that ensures that seniors' caregivers, taking care of seniors at home, have some small respite for that. We have frozen

the Pharmacare premiums for seniors in their drug plans and we've lowered the cost of generic drugs for seniors. We have done, in three short years, more than that government did in the 10 years that they were in power.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

EDUC. - TRI-CO. REG. SCH. BD.: TEACHER LOSSES - EFFECT

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education stood up in this House and when asked about teachers being cut from Tri-County Regional School Board she said that no teachers will be lost because this was attrition. If a teacher retires and is not replaced that is a position lost from the classroom. On Tuesday night, Tri-County Regional School Board was forced to eliminate 22 teaching positions because of this NDP Government's \$65 million in cuts to our education system. Will the minister please tell this House how losing 22 positions out of the classroom doesn't affect the quality of education for our kids in this province?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to share some statistics that over the last three years the enrolment decline in Tri-County was 9.3, a significant drop in enrolment. We are investing appropriately for the services and the programs the students in Tri-County need.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this minister doesn't know what the cost of educating our students with special needs is, she doesn't know what the fixed cost of our education system is, yet she stands in this House and says that because enrolment is declining that somehow that means funding should decline as well.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at specifically what happened with the Tri-County Regional School Board - they had to cut a learning disability specialist and a school psychologist position. It is the students who need the most support who are the most vulnerable to this government's cuts in our education system. Boards have raised concerns about the funding gap for students with special needs. The minister seems to think it is okay to have less support for students with special needs or at-risk children because of declining enrolment - I think that's completely unacceptable.

Will the minister stand in this House and say that services for students with special needs are not affected when boards are forced to eliminate school psychologists and severe learning disability specialists?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question. School boards make decisions in the best interests of their students, and sometimes what we see on paper, we don't know the background information, so I'd like to share. The member mentioned one of the specialists - actually I felt that it was better to move that position into

direct servicing, so they've actually moved that position to resource in the schools because it better serves our students.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, school boards are forced to make decisions with the funding that they have, and this government can't continue to push off the responsibility on the school boards. This government has the money to invest in our education system and they need to do it - Nova Scotia has the second lowest per-student funding in the country. Class sizes are growing, students are losing supports under this government.

The Tri-County Regional School Board had to cut supports for special needs and at-risk students to reach this minister's unrealistic and unfair budget targets, and Nova Scotians are left to wonder how committed this minister is to the classroom and students with special needs if she allows these critical positions to be eliminated.

Will the minister stand in this House, today, and commit to restore the funding to public education so that boards aren't forced to cut supports for at-risk students and students with special needs?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we are investing in our students - we've increased our per-student funding; we have 361 more teachers teaching today than we did 10 years ago, when there were 30,000 fewer students; and we are making sure that we are providing the appropriate financing for each one of our boards across Nova Scotia.

We are in a challenging time and we are re-balancing things. I will assure every member here that the investment we are making in our students is meeting the needs of our students - and we're also strategically investing by adding extra programs with skills trades; we're making sure we have more school sites open; we're making sure that we're able to collect our data and reach the needs of our students through iNSchool.

We are investing in our students and the students in Tri-County have the appropriate investments, so that they are all going to be successful.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: C.B. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK - MIN. INVOLVEMENT

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on April 20th the NDP announced funding for a new Cape Breton Strategic Framework Advancement project. This was a \$198,000 investment that will help map out a path for jobs and economic development growth in Cape Breton.

I was proud to have been part of the consultation process, which played a role in a formalized plan for cohesiveness among the various organizations and stakeholders involved. So my question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and

Tourism is, was the minister himself directly involved in this process and, if so, in what capacity?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, in the world of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, as with anything, I have appropriate staff who do the leg work, who are in the trenches. They come to me to seek approval of how we advance things or how we don't advance things. So I am always involved at some degree with everything that goes through the department. Obviously, I'm one person, I cannot be 100 per cent involved in every little nook and cranny within the department. That's what we have staff for.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the reality is this plan and the idea around this framework is to set the priorities in terms of what the development opportunities are in Cape Breton so I certainly wouldn't consider a road map to get to lower unemployment, better workforce participation, bringing families home - I wouldn't consider that to be a nook and cranny part of the economic development. I think it is important and this is something the minister often uses, staff statistics, when I ask him questions about Cape Breton. If he's going to use that kind of detail I think that he would understand the importance of this strategic framework.

Cape Breton is suffering under the weight of 16 per cent unemployment, out-migration and of course a shrinking labour force. Unlike the province's job creation strategy, the framework has set concrete goals and timelines. The framework sets out goals for employment growth, population growth, and labour market participation. My question for the minister is, does the minister agree with the targets set by the framework for employment, population and labour force development?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the workforce strategy, we take a lot of things into account. We base some things on projections that we have to make some calculated estimates as to what the future is going to hold. We map out a strategy according to that.

One of the things that we've done, which I know is foreign to a lot of members on the opposite side of the House, is that we've developed plans, we've developed strategies. They're not short-term, they are long-term strategies. Do you know what? I can appreciate when we talk about plans - I can appreciate the lack of comprehension on the other side because this is something new for them.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, just to inform the minister, the framework looks to attain these following statistics: employment increase of 6 per cent, population growth of 2 per cent and labour force participation increase of 4 per cent, which I think are very important statistics in terms of where this money and this investment's going to be utilized. In addition, the framework identifies target sectors for development, which obviously are those priorities for the Island's economy and the best possible chances to create jobs and bring families home and prop up our economic development initiatives.

Last year the minister's department spent \$1.7 million on sector developments. The minister just talked about how his department and his government are mapping out these strategies, well if you spent \$2 million on a line called Sector Development, then obviously you're putting some kind of focus on what sectors are going to be important, as the framework is doing the same thing in Cape Breton. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, what are the specific sectors the framework plans to target and are these sectors aligned with the department's priorities as identified in this Sector Development Process under ERDT?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we have developed a strategy for all of Nova Scotia. That strategy is very adaptable depending on where you are. There are some things that are very sensitive because I'm sure, as you can understand, we are in negotiations with some potential employers, not only just with Cape Breton but also mainland Nova Scotia that at this point in time, because of the confidentiality, I'm not in a position to comment. Hopefully in the weeks and in the months ahead we will have more announcements. We've already made some announcements and we will continue to make those solid investments not only in Cape Breton but all of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - LOBSTER FISHERMEN: STRIKE - MIN. ROLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, presently lobster is selling for approximately \$5 a pound in LFA 34. The lobster fishers are very upset, they'd like to have at least \$5.50 and now there's a strike, we talked about the 1688 Professional Lobster Fishers Association. Of course that support is beginning to soften. Yesterday in the minister's own constituency close to his home town, there was a little bit of a showdown. The RCMP ended up being on scene, so there are a lot of things going on. My question to the minister is, what role is he playing to try to get tempers in this issue to calm down just a little bit?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, this is certainly a timely question. I want to tell you what we are doing. First of all, I can tell you within, almost to the minute, that all the parties are meeting as we speak in southwest Nova Scotia. This is a very interesting issue that has to be dealt with, and I encourage the meetings to continue. They've been going on for the last 72 hours, on the following days.

I want to tell the member opposite what we have been doing, not only as a minister but as a government. We are there standing up for independent fishers. We have improved the Fisheries Loan Board. We have put investments into the Lobster Council, who are going across the Atlantic Provinces and conducting a consultation process. That information will be coming back at the end of this month. We have moved jobs from Halifax to rural Nova Scotia, and I think that if Shelburne and Digby were goal posts we just scored into an empty net.

Mr. Speaker, all of the above - this similar situation that the member for Argyle brings forward - happened in 1991, and the members opposite could only wish that they did any of the above. Thank you very much.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, what we've seen from this minister is pretty much nothing when it comes to this issue over the last few days. They've been on strike since Thursday, and I haven't heard a word come out of the department. I haven't heard a word of how they are going to address the issue of pricing.

All of a sudden the fishermen - you know, they didn't close ranks on this, so all of a sudden we've got half the fishermen who want to go fishing. You have the other half of the fishermen who want to hold on for the strike. They had baseball bats and sticks on the wharf yesterday morning and the RCMP were on scene. We apparently have a director of the 1688 who doesn't want to talk to the minister, and the minister doesn't want to talk to the director of the folks of 1688. So what is he doing? There is a meeting at four o'clock in his own constituency, so I'm wondering, is he going to be going to it or not?

MR. BELLIVEAU: To the member opposite, you made reference to 1688, and not speaking to it I can tell you that less than a few minutes ago I was speaking to the head of that association, so the member opposite needs to get his facts straight. I ask him to review Hansard. We have done more in 36 months for the inshore fishery than the members opposite have done since their golden age of sail.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I can't take what comes out of that guy's mouth. I tell you, it needs a little salt bait, or maybe we should put it in a pot and use it for bait for the next fishing season.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you there are people in our communities and in his community and in my community of Argyle who are very upset with the absolute inaction of this government. The price is too low and they have almost done nothing in order to fix that. There are meetings that are going on that the minister doesn't feel he should attend, so I'm going to ask him: there is one at 4:00 o'clock on Wednesday, I think (Interruption) I can't get that far, anyway. I tried.

Ultimately, there's a meeting on Friday night. I'm wondering if the minister will be attending or not, but I can tell you that this member will be attending that meeting at the Mariners Centre in Yarmouth on Friday.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, he forget to mention his cousins in Ottawa, the federal Conservatives. The federal government has taken jobs away from rural Nova Scotia, and we're the government . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: If people are going to get hurt, it's your fault because you're not doing anything to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

AN HON. MEMBER: I just can't believe he's doing that. People are going to get hurt.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

AN HON. MEMBER: If people get hurt, it's his fault.

MR. SPEAKER: I said order. It's the last time I'm going to say order. I'll remove you from the Chamber if you disobey the Chair. Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the member opposite that his federal cousin has taken jobs out of rural Nova Scotia in the last weeks. This government has put jobs back. (Interruptions) We'll stand by our independent fishermen and we have been talking with this group, and I encourage that consultation to go on, and they are meeting as we are meeting here today. Thank you very much for the question.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row this NDP Government has cut funding to Legal Aid. This year the Minister of Justice has allotted \$184,000 less for Legal Aid than last year. Last year there was a cut to Legal Aid of \$553,000. Access to legal services for low-income Nova Scotians is a challenge but for this minister to cut supports to Nova Scotia Legal Aid for a second year in a row only makes things more difficult.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 57.

Bill No. 57 - Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand to move second reading of Bill No. 57 - an Act to amend the Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act. I'm particularly pleased to do that because I have some personal history that relates to that Act. It was created by members of this House in 2003, or the original Act was, and its purpose at the time was to manage the funds which had accumulated to about \$0.25 million.

The trust fund that was created had been organized by the various programs that eventually became Addiction Services, probably beginning in the late 1970s and by 2003, as I've said, the amount of money in that fund had grown to quite a substantial size and it was built bits and pieces at a time. It was built actually by the payments of fines that might have been imposed by judges on people who had committed offences and they were ordered to pay restitution to Addiction Services, perhaps because alcohol or a drug use had figured in their crime.

It was built by donations to the program by grateful clients who had found a better future after having used the services of the program. It was built by contributions from grateful family members who had been relieved that changes that had occurred in their own lives as a result of treatment that had been received by that program and it was built by sometimes rather significant bequests from family members who had written the welfare of the program into their wills.

I think all of that work over quite a considerable amount of time and the growth of the fund speaks both to the problem of addictions in our community, to the problems related to alcohol and other drugs and gambling, but also speaks to the amount of hope that's possible because it's very clear that when treated, addictions can be treated quite successfully. In 2003 there were some significant changes that were made to the Addiction Services program in the Annapolis Valley, all of which had been housed until that date, with some very minor exceptions, in one location on the grounds of what's now known as Valley Regional Hospital.

Also, one of the things that led to that change was that the detox program that was located there had been staffed in part with supervisory services provided by the hospital and those were withdrawn because of budget concerns at that point. I was the manager of the program at that stage and as we looked at what was happening in the program, we decided that it was necessary to rethink and to be more imaginative in how we used our own resources and we took the decision to move the Addiction Services program from that one location to several locations throughout the Annapolis Valley.

The result of that action, Mr. Speaker, was to create resources that now exist not only in Kentville but in Wolfville, in Berwick, in Middleton, in Annapolis Royal. There are

now services for our youth that exist in every junior and senior high school in Kings and Annapolis Counties. All of those things I think have made the services more accessible to people who live in the Annapolis Valley. It also led to a professionally-staffed, 24-hour detoxification program, something that had not existed before, that put our program on a footing that it needed to be on and it created the opportunity to build an evidence-based, structured residential treatment program house in a purpose-built facility, something that we had never had before.

Apart from those positive things a question arose as to who had ownership of that \$0.25 million fund. The answer to that question became the creation of the Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act and an Act of this legislative session in 2003. In that initial decision the purpose of the Act was to allow funds that had been accumulated to be administered by a board of directors in the form of a trust and to be disbursed through decisions of the board in a particular way for purposes of meeting the needs of addictions treatment throughout the Annapolis Valley. The board was created for that purpose and acted for that purpose for several years.

In 2008, in an initial amendment to the Act, this Legislature agreed that the Act should be modified to require the board of directors to use all of the funds in the Act for the purpose of the non-profit society that's known as the Crosbie House Society, a non-profit treatment program that was created and now exists in New Minas.

The board of the trust a couple of years, three or four years now since that decision was reached, has determined that if, in fact, they need to use all of the funds for the purpose of the Crosbie House Society, it might be beneficial to turn the remaining funds, which are in the vicinity of about \$100,000 over to the use of the Crosbie House Society board, who will be in a position to use that many, in any case. I think that's a reasonable decision, a decision that will in essence allow the Crosbie House Society to use the funds as it can best see fit, using a timetable that meets its own needs. It will relieve those people who serve as members of the Crosbie House Trust board of the responsibility to simply meet to rubberstamp the transfers of bits of money from agency, one body to another.

I think this is a reasonable amendment, it will allow the Crosbie House Society to, in a sense, finish up its work. It will leave enough money in the Trust to get a final financial statement so that it can wrap up its business. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say those few words, wanted to recount a little bit of the history of that work and wanted to end by moving second reading of Bill No. 57.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place today and speak for a few minutes about the Crosbie Society and its place in addictions treatment in our province.

The Crosbie centre was founded by Dr. Jack Crosbie and was a fixture, of course, in the Valley probably now for about 30 years. It was associated with the Miller Hospital and was located on the grounds and publicly funded.

The 28-day treatment program became established both in the province and outside as, in fact, one of the really fine, small institutions in terms of treatment centres. We know that the model changed and the Crosbie House and Crosbie Society became defunct for a period of time. Really, it had very little to do with the great work that was carried on by the Crosbie centre and the staff there. In fact, I know many people in my community who talk about the lifelong benefits of the Crosbie program because one of the, I think, real hallmarks of the works of the Crosbie centre is that after you go there for your 28-day treatment program - and this was historically, and carries on today - you are not lost from the availability of the professional staff and the resources that Crosbie House continues to offer.

Just recently, on a visit to Crosbie House, I was chatting with one of the staff members who wasn't available when I first arrived there, didn't know they were around the facility, and they in fact had been working to track a client who had been there some months earlier whom they hadn't heard from for a period of time. They were wanting to do, again, that kind of preventive measures just to see how their adjustment back into the community and if they needed any ongoing supports.

To see a program that, in fact, doesn't end when you leave their doors, is not really part of many programs that exist; in fact, in many programs you are left on your own. You may be given the name of a counsellor who you could possibly go to, but the Crosbie House program guarantees you access to their facility to talk to a person 24/7. I think that's really what has been so wonderful and so advantageous about that program.

We lost it for a number of years and it really came, it did come back, in part, because some of the staff, former staff members like George Libby and again, doctors who had been associated with the program found the new program to be wanting. There were many aspects of it in fact that were called into question, again by professionals. This is not hearsay; these are professionals who found some aspects of the 21-day program insufficient in the treatment required.

Also, there were people who went through the program, the 21-day program, or especially, of course, a number of our government and large businesses that wanted something other than the 21-day program - they wanted an in-house, residential program. So government agencies, the RCMP, the Canadian Forces, Michelin, many of these said look, we will secure places at the 28-day treatment centre. So in 2003, maybe a little bit before, there was a movement to start to bring the Crosbie centre back and, of course, it was successful. However, it had to become a privately funded institution, so every person who goes there now has to pay their way, or the company they work for pays for their program.

Once again, the Crosbie centre is, in fact, very often asked to be at more than 100 per cent capacity. They've had to rent some rooms in another part of the community in order to accommodate their programs.

This bill, I think, is a good bill to help the society clean up the books and allow them to take the monies available that were donated for the work of the Crosbie centre and see them available to assist their program. As this bill moves on to the Law Amendments Committee, or it may just actually move through the House in a speedy manner, I think that will be a positive thing. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity for a few words on the bill.

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

The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 57.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 57. 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: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 71.

Bill No. 71 - Assessment Act.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 71. As Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, I'm pleased to speak to the amendments to the Assessment Act that will improve the property assessment system. These changes are expected to bring more clarity, improved efficiency and greater

transparency to the appeal process. The amendments deal with extensions to the appeal periods; they also include some administrative changes dealing with the Regional Assessment Appeal Court.

First, I would like to speak to the change around the time frames for property assessment appeals. Essentially it would extend the appeal period by an additional 10 days. There are four levels of appeal in Nova Scotia: the first is an assessor review by the Property Valuation Services Corporation, a fairly informal process; the second is an appeal that goes to the Regional Assessment Appeal Court; the third level is the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board; and the fourth and highest level is the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, which hears questions of law only, not assessed value.

Fortunately the number of assessment appeals is very low and I think it speaks well of a system that less than 2 per cent of assessments are appealed. For those who do appeal, a common problem is the very short period to prepare for and file an appeal.

Currently Nova Scotia property owners have 21 days to appeal their assessments from the date the assessment notices from the Property Valuation Services Corporation are mailed. That is the shortest property assessment appeal period in Canada. We are proposing that the appeal period would be extended to 31 days. The additional 10 days would benefit ratepayers in two ways: it would give them more time to determine whether to proceed with an appeal or not, and it would give them more time to research and properly prepare an appeal should they decide to proceed.

Under the current legislation, after an appeal is filed by the PVSC, property owners who disagree with an amended or confirmed assessment have only seven days to appeal that decision. With this amendment that period would extend to 14 days. Again, this would give ratepayers more time to prepare their cases. If an appeal is taken further, to the Regional Assessment Appeal Court, the PVSC is currently required to give six days notice of a court hearing. Mr. Speaker, with the amendment now before the House, we are proposing that the time be extended to 14 days, again allowing appellants more time to prepare for the court hearing.

We have consulted with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities on these extensions and they are supportive. There was also consultation with the interested stakeholders in the form of meetings and the invitation of written comments in February of this year. It included representatives of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Nova Scotia Real Estate Appraisers Association, the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors, the UNSM, private sector appraisal firms, ViewPoint Realty, and others.

In keeping with our government's commitment to make the assessment appeal process easier for Nova Scotians, the proposed changes are designed to provide greater flexibility for those who may consider appealing a property assessment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak to an amendment to change the name of the Regional Assessment Appeal Court and clarify its authority. This appeal body is in fact an administrative tribunal, not a court. We are proposing that the name be changed to the Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal. For many people the word "court" can be intimidating. It carries with it connotations of authority and formality.

On the other hand, the word "tribunal" makes it clear that the appeal process is less formal and more user friendly than court proceedings. We want Nova Scotians who choose to appeal their assessments, often acting on their own behalf, to feel comfortable and not be intimidated by the appeal proceedings.

The name change also addresses the fact that a regional court system no longer exists. The appeal system works on a province-wide basis. Property owners are still assured by the Act that their appeal can be heard in the municipality where their property is located.

As a result of the change away from the regional courts, some administrative changes to the Act are required to better clarify the role and the authority of the tribunal. Currently the tribunal does not have clear authority to require disclosure of information from appellants or from assessors when conducting hearings. Tribunal members need that authority so they can have access to the information they require in order to make informed decisions.

This will increase the efficiency, and most importantly, the transparency of the assessment appeal process. Administrative changes included in the amendment will provide flexibility as the appeals process continues to be reviewed. For instance, the minister will have the ability to set terms for tribunal members, designate tribunal chair and vice-chair, and if required, to assign them additional duties. Cabinet will be given authority to make regulations with respect to the powers, structure, administration, or procedures of the tribunal.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are also repealing one section of the Assessment Act to provide consistency between the Act and a memorandum of understanding between the province and the PVSC. The MOU was signed in October 2007 and states that the PVSC will pay for staff and facilities related to the appeal court. Repealing this section of the Act clarifies that this process will continue as originally intended through the MOU.

In summary, I want to emphasize that these amendments are designed to provide flexibility, fairness, accessibility, and transparency as we work to improve the appeals process for the benefit of Nova Scotians. If approved, we hope to proclaim and implement this legislation in time for the 2013 assessment roll and appeals period, which begins in January 2013.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to any comments from my colleagues in the House. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with great interest to the minister describing what this bill covers. I think there are some good improvements in the bill - the minister must be shocked to hear that from me, but I believe there are some good improvements. The fact that people have a longer time to appeal is very positive. I would have liked to see the times that people have to appeal a little bit longer than what is proposed in the bill; however, what is proposed is an improvement. It's a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, a lot of times when people have their assessment notice come into their home they look at it and say I've got a few days to do this and they lay it aside and by the time they decide, it's too late. Indeed, they don't get to appeal. I personally feel that you should be able to appeal this any time through the year. You should be able to make an appeal on your property tax assessment any time, the only issue then would be when it becomes effective if you are successful and win.

It just puts a lot of restrictions on individuals who aren't really aware of what has to be done in an appeal process and with the higher and higher property taxes we're seeing in the municipalities, it becomes more and more important to keep an eye on your assessment, which ultimately affects your property taxes that you pay. I know on several occasions I've appealed mine with mixed results. Sometimes I win, sometimes I lose and sometimes the information that the tax department has isn't correct.

I remember years ago on a home I used to own, I appealed the taxes and we got it down slightly, and lo and behold the next year the assessor showed up and looked at the house and looked it all over and he said, have you got a basement under that house? I said, no. He said, here in the code - and I didn't understand what the code was because nobody would unless you're an assessor - you have a full basement under this property. I said, oh, that's interesting. He said your assessment will probably go down. I've never seen that happen before when a property tax assessor shows up to your property to look it over but I didn't understand what this code was, nobody explained it to me at the hearing. Indeed, my assessment did go down and I'd been paying taxes on something I didn't have for about 20 years. The process is not that good. It is not good.

Another thing that irritated me about the whole process when I went and made the appeal, I made the appeal before a lawyer appointed by the government under the process. I felt the lawyer was very competent but after I left, I got the impression that the assessor and the lawyer stayed behind to discuss my case. That really perturbed me a little bit considering that anything that should have been said about my property should have been

said in my presence. I think this system needs to be cleaned up and I think it needs to be cleaned up a lot more than the minister is proposing here.

Just a few extra days on when you can appeal it, changing it to a tribunal instead of a court - I guess that matters. Anyone who is going to be intimidated when they're talking about appealing their assessment doesn't care if it's a court or a tribunal. That doesn't really make a whole pile of difference. The fact is, people still do not have time when and if - and I know government will pass this bill without amendments, I'm sure - they don't have enough time to appeal their taxes. It takes a long time if you've never done it before and don't understand how the system is because most people don't, they really don't. They have no need to, until they get upset enough that they are paying too high taxes and they finally decide, we better appeal our tax assessment to ensure our taxes don't go up any higher.

They get mad, they get upset, and I'm seeing more and more of that as people over time start to realize just what they're paying for and how badly they're being charged for the services. The fact that this government cancelled the MOU with the municipalities, and indeed increased taxes in some areas, over the long run is going to increase taxes everywhere. It's going to become more and more important to appeal your assessment.

I like the bill in principle. I think it's a step forward. The step is not far enough. I believe the appeal process times for an individual to appeal, at least on the initial case, should be a lot longer. I believe they keep it very short so the municipalities can plan how much money they have to spend that year. I believe I remember from when I was minister, that was the case.

As the minister said there were only 50 appeals last year, that's not going to affect the cash flow of any municipality, absolutely zero. So I don't see the 30 days or 31 days they're proposing from the time it is mailed - that doesn't mean you get it in time, you might only have three or four days after you get it to appeal it - why that couldn't be extended to 90 days, 120 days, at least give people lots of time to realize what's going on and improve that. So with those few comments, I'll take my seat and it will be interesting to see what the minister wraps this up with and how this bill proceeds through the Law Amendments Committee. Hopefully, the amendment will be made to extend that - at least that one time.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the whole point of the change that I talked about was to make that process flow more easily. Something that the member may not recognize but certainly the cap on assessment has reduced the number of appeals that come forward. It's quite predictable, you know, people's assessments. Also, one of the

complaints I heard, and actually heard as an MLA from one of my constituents, was the issue - once he had heard back from PVSC and they denied his appeal, his ability to appeal that decision was seven days. If that happens over a weekend, then the days of the weekend are included in the seven and so we felt that additional time was necessary.

Now, I'm thinking that there is some onus on the homeowner to do their due diligence. I mean waiting for 90 days or anytime in the year to appeal and then the possibility I guess - are we assuming that there would have to be a rebate back to them or whatever? But this is fairly much in line with jurisdictions across the country. We were generally a little short on the appeal period and so I think for sure this brings us in line with other jurisdictions. Our desire is, because assessment is done through the municipalities, in other words PVSC is basically paid for by the municipalities, and so what the member is suggesting by keeping it more open-ended is really going to add an element of more cost by dragging - restarting that process. In other words, they can deal with the assessments they get. They know within a certain period of time that they can have them dealt with and then they're done for that year.

So the fact that there is only 2 per cent of assessments that are appealed indicates that the demand is not great, that Nova Scotians by and large are quite satisfied with their appeals, and then the question of how many of those that they see proceed further - because quite often if they appeal, then they quite often don't consider re-appealing that decision. What may happen in the next piece of legislation - Bill No. 73, when we get to it - is the one that allows for property sales information. Then once they can identify what homes are selling for or the market values in their immediate area, that will probably either make people decide that they're somewhere in the ballpark and that their assessment is appropriate, or it could have the opposite effect, and they may find out that their assessments are high compared to what they're selling. We think it will be more apt to be the former, that they'll see that they're somewhere in the range.

So I appreciate the comments of my colleague, the member for Preston. I look forward to the bill moving through the process and going to the Law Amendments Committee and I move second reading of Bill No. 71.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 71. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 73.

Bill No. 73 - Municipal Government Act.

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

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 73 now be read for a second time.

The proposed change is an important amendment to the Municipal Government Act. Simply stated, this amendment would allow for the disclosure and publication of property sales information. Currently Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada that does not disclose property sale prices to the public. The current practice is for the Property Valuation Services Corporation, the agency which assesses property in Nova Scotia, to release sales information upon request to property owners who appeal their assessments.

Mr. Speaker, this is problematic for several reasons. First, few who appeal know that they should ask for this information in order to properly prepare an appeal and the risk that PVSC could appear to be biased in deciding what information to release, rather than appellants assessing the information directly, and the information PVSC provides is not available on-line.

With this amendment, publishing real estate sales information as documented in deed transfer tax affidavits would be permitted. This would be the most accurate sources of information because deed transfer taxes are calculated on actual property sales prices. With this information property owners would be in a better position to determine whether or not to appeal their assessments. Madam Speaker, it would provide them with easier access to comparable real estate sales information in their neighbourhoods or communities.

Making this information available could help reduce the number of appeals and possibly help reduce the cost of appeals to the Property Valuation Services Corporation and the province. As you know, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations pays the per diems and travel expenses for Appeals Court members, so fewer appeals could help save more money.

In addition to the benefit to property owners the sales information would be useful to assessors and to real estate appraisers, as well as buyers and sellers. In order to implement this change in time for the 2013 assessment roll, and for it to benefit Nova Scotia property owners at that time, it will have to be retroactive to 2010, otherwise the benefit would be delayed until year 2015.

Madam Speaker, in summary, this amendment will make reliable information on real estate sales available to all Nova Scotians and provide easy access to information needed if appealing an assessment. It is good legislation for Nova Scotians and will make Nova Scotia practices consistent with the rest of the country. More important, it will

contribute to our ongoing effort to make the property assessment appeal process simpler, more efficient, and more transparent. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: This is another one of those bills, I think, that makes a lot of sense. It does provide the information that many people want for more reasons than just appealing your property taxes, and I would think that that would be quite useful information to be available in other cases as well. I was wondering, maybe the minister could answer this question when he closes debate on this bill - is this information going to be readily available to anyone that wants to see it? I would hope that's the case, and without having to go through a long litany of difficulties trying to find the information.

With that, the bill seems to be reasonably good. Not much substance to it, but it's there, and hopefully it will help some individuals. I doubt very much if it will save the province any money, but probably when people see what other houses are selling for and what theirs is appraised for, they might be quite interested to appeal their taxes and see just how things are happening and if the property values are increasing as much as the real estate people make them think they are.

Hopefully the minister will be able to comment on how this information is going to be made available to the general population as it goes on. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess the concern that we have is twofold: one is that we provide the best information we can to Nova Scotians, and the second one is that we're in line with what Canadians across the country can have access to - information that is similar. So if Canadians in all the other provinces have access to this information on sales data for their particular province, then we certainly think that the time is overdue for Nova Scotians to have access to the same thing.

I'm not sure to agree or disagree with my colleague opposite. I guess if you tax them based on their assessment, most people worry that their assessment is too high, but if you ask them, how much would you ask for if you were selling it, then you might get a different number. So having access to sales information of homes in your region or your immediate area certainly provides a good backdrop for people to determine whether or not they are interested in appealing. I think I'm more inclined to believe that it would probably reduce the number of appeals.

I'm thinking the cost to the province would go down since we pay for the members who are going to be on the tribunal - since we're changing the appeal court to a tribunal - so

it's only in those cases when appeals go to that extent that we incur a cost. I would expect that with this information, that will not be the case, Mr. Speaker.

One of the advantages - and this information, however it will be put out, is for all Nova Scotians to have access to, I want the member for Preston to know that - the whole purpose of this piece of legislation is to ensure that Nova Scotia property owners have access to what the market or sales values are in their particular area. You can get some of that information on ViewPoint Realty, a Web site that I think provides that information, but it doesn't provide information for private sales that don't occur through a realtor. So by using deed transfer tax, this information actually becomes public information, and that information will be put in one place so people can view it, if they have a question around whether or not their assessment is appropriate for what they deem to be a similar home to the one they live in.

Anyway, with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 73.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 73. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure and an honour and privilege to rise in my place to offer a response to the Speech from the Throne as presented by the former Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour Mayann Francis in this Fourth Session of the 61st General Assembly.

I want to take this time to congratulate her on her successful term. I had the pleasure on a number of occasions to speak to Her Honour during events and just some private times

when things were settled down. She was a very, very active and busy and engaged Lieutenant Governor. I was always so impressed by her dignified nature, her soft and gentle and very much a caring approach to (Interruptions) - and a Whitney Pier girl - everything she did in her delivering of messaging and just her general conversation. She was a tremendous role model and I appreciated that as a woman and I feel honoured to have served in this House of Assembly under her term. I wish her great success in everything she does and no doubt we will continue to hear about the great things Her Honour Mayann Francis, former Lieutenant Governor, will do.

I also want to take this moment before I move into some more relevant information and share my thoughts on our government and on the constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage to take the time to say to you, Mr. Speaker, how proud I am to be a deputy of yours. When I'm acting in that capacity I know that I have some really big shoes to fill. What I am enjoying most though is the opportunity to bring forward a female identity to this role. I know and you know all too well that I have been encouraging since my opportunity to play this role, to ask the members of this Legislature to be mindful of when they're addressing each of us in our different roles and certainly to encourage them to use the term, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to apologize now for any time that they might, in fact, call you Madam Speaker. I know that happened earlier today a couple of times and while I was kind of pleased and tickled that that happened, I was also a little embarrassed at the thought that they might confuse the two of us. Rest assured that I'll be trying to bring a little more femininity to my role and as you your male characteristics. But to be completely honest, I am very honoured to have this opportunity and I enjoy working with you as well as the other deputies and I appreciate the vote of confidence within the House of Assembly.

To be rising as a member of the first NDP Government caucus, for me in the caucus in Nova Scotia, is an especially great honour. After three years of having the governance of this great Province of Nova Scotia under our helm, I can tell you that I am more proud than ever to be part of that caucus. My role as a Member of the Legislative Assembly is one that I take very seriously and it's an experience that I value very much in my life. It's an experience, as all of us know as members of this House, that offers opportunities for personal growth for our own education, for friendships, for partnerships and compassion and of course the element of public service of the work that we do.

I don't have to spell out the details of the role to you or any of our colleagues in the House but we all know it comes with long hours, many challenging and sometimes disappointing experiences. I recall a friend of mine in Eastern Passage expressing concern to me when I first talked about running in the political realm of provincial politics, Party politics, having come from the municipal level of government which is supposed to be non-partisan. He talked of his experience in politics, not as an elected official, but as an active, engaged member of a political Party. He talked about how it could get ugly and mean-spirited, and sometimes just quite cruel. He expressed his concern for me, someone

who cared about my friends and family and community, someone he respected, and he had concern about being painted with a brush that I might not otherwise deserve. He talked of needing tough skin and broad shoulders.

At that time of course, Mr. Speaker, I thanked him for his insight and expression of care for me and protectiveness of me. I assured him that I believed I could handle it. Little did I know how much the test would be to that degree, particularly in this Chamber at times, but when I face something challenging in this role, I take comfort in his words and I draw strength from them, a strength in knowing that elected officials before me have been put to the test and they've been held accountable and democracy and responsible government stood fast, not only stood fast but evolved over 250 years. Positive changes evolve out of mistakes, errors in judgment and inadequate processes, and every level of government, every government that comes after the next, every MLA who steps into this Chamber, learns and grows from those and does their best to put new processes in place as our government did.

Mr. Speaker, despite these challenges, citizens of Nova Scotia, like you and I and other members of the House, have taken the steps of putting ourselves out there and accepting the responsibility of running for office, being a public servant, a target for public scrutiny at a level beyond what most Nova Scotians would experience. We do it because we truly want to make life better for others, for Nova Scotians. We want the citizens of our constituencies to thrive and prosper and have a quality of life that is second to none. We want healthy citizens, well-educated children, employed neighbours, well-nourished families and, above all, happy lives and we, the members sitting in this historic Chamber and all of those in our communities who voted for us, believe that we have the skills that could reach that goal. We believe in democracy and working collaboratively towards the common goals that will positively impact the lives of Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe for one minute that has changed as would sometimes probably be suggested here in the House of Assembly. In fact, I feel the true motivation and driving factors for each of us today are stronger than ever. Our citizens have elected this government because they felt we had the strength and endurance and the staying power not only for the good stuff but for the rougher moments as well. They elected a government, an NDP Government, that they felt would work diligently to improve the governance of this province. They elected an NDP Government that would work with them in their communities and work for them in this Chamber.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and every member of this House, during the difficult times and during the great and prosperous times that are before us in our futures, that we stay the course, we carry out our duties for the good citizens of the riding to the best of our abilities with honesty, integrity and the passion that we felt when we first put our name on the ballot, however many years ago that was for us all.

Sometimes I see the actions in this House that are not necessarily ways that I think members would act if they were outside of this Chamber. I think that's such a shame sometimes when attacks or suggestions of character, flaws in character, and just flat out accusations of inaccurate and erroneous calls would be hurled across the Chamber from the Opposition to let members of government - I'm not convinced that they would do that outside of this Chamber and I just hope that when they leave, they give some thought to the measures that they're taking and ask themselves, is there another way to achieve a goal here that is better for Nova Scotians and not necessarily for their moment in glory in time in the Chamber on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia will be a better place to live and grow and enjoy due to our efforts, through our NDP Government, under the leadership of our honourable Premier, a Leader whom I respect and admire more every day. His strength and commitment to what he knows is right, with the support of my colleagues and his Cabinet, is what this province needs and it's what we now have. That I'm sure of, Mr. Speaker, I'm more sure now than ever.

We're working every day to deliver a plan and we're continuing to stay the course on that plan, to bring vitality, prosperity and health to this province. What people should know is that our Premier and our Cabinet and our government are doing good business in this province, important, effective, positive, forward-moving business for Nova Scotians. That's evident in so many initiatives that have been brought forward since our election three years ago: the Irving Shipyard contract investments, Churchill Falls, the petroleum exploration, et cetera.

The people who elected us know that it is our government they are looking to, to address the challenges our province faces. Under the leadership of our Premier, we can and will make those tough decisions. We've proven that, even when they're unpopular to some. We're doing things differently, we're putting this province on a different path forward. We're on the right track as part of our four-year financial plan that will get Nova Scotia back to balance and make sure we live within our means; plans for a bright future for all Nova Scotians, not just a privileged few.

We're creating good jobs and growing the economy, we're educating students, we're making lives more affordable for our citizens, protecting our communities and the people at risk of violence in their lives, and making roads safer. We're also improving health care, addressing obesity in children, addressing issues with cyberbullying, promoting active and healthy lifestyles. We're working hard to make life better for Nova Scotians, especially those who are facing the most difficult challenges coming out of a recession.

Some of the things that we're investing in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, are potentially the most monumental changes that we've ever had in Nova Scotia. Our plan for better care sooner is addressing a health care system that took years and years under other

governments to create the deficits, the gaps, the shortfalls, the labour unrest, the loss of nursing capacity, the difficulties to attract doctors in our communities, but our plan is addressing that - for instance, our plan for addressing emergency room closures and the long waits that people have had, waiting for procedures and surgeries. This has plagued our Nova Scotia health care system for years but our plan is moving forward. It will take time but we're making progress, progress in ways like investing in collaborative emergency centres, working with our partners, our paramedics, our nurses, our communities and nurse practitioners, to bring collaborative efforts to help address all of the needs of our communities in a way that is not a silo, it's about working together.

We're investing in our seniors, Mr. Speaker, we've investing in the number of home visits that our seniors - we know our seniors want to continue to live in their own homes, we know that it can be challenging. We know that our constituents, their family, friends and loved ones are picking up some of the gaps that might be there to help support them in their own homes. As a government, we're seeing that and we're investing in that so more people can have access to supports and home visits. Also, in home nursing care, there are opportunities for us to be in that resident's home, to do the nursing care they need, that allows them to stay there a little bit longer.

Supportive home improvements, more support for home improvements. We know that as we age - I know at my age and I'm not quite as elderly as some of the members in this House, and I know I'm looking better, I know, I can tell, I can feel the change in me as I progress through my journey of life. I can't necessarily get up on the roof and repair it any more, as I used to do, before my darling husband came along. I cannot, and I know that as a senior citizen in their community who is living in their home, how particularly difficult that might be. Also to face the challenges of the change in their income of having left an enjoyable and a prosperous and a successful career, to be in their own home knowing they're not quite sure how they're going to fix those windows or how they're going to repair that roof. Well, we're helping them. Our NDP Government is investing in support for home improvements for accessibility, to help with their mobility issues and to help them deal and respond to their medication needs in a way that is safer and more financially accessible.

We're also increasing our investment in long-term care beds, and that is particularly relevant. Although we know that many of our families are facing that challenge, that decision, in their own lives, and as much as we would like our family members to be able to stay at home, there are times when it just isn't possible, and for the betterment of the entire family, through a tough decision, there is a decision to enter the long-term care industry, the long-term care home environment. We're investing in that.

Ocean View Continuing Care Centre, which used to be Ocean View Manor Society, is a beautiful example of that. They are doing such tremendous care. They have such a wonderful staff and administration and board of directors, and a volunteer team that is second to none, quite frankly. I would brag about them every chance I get. I had the

opportunity to be on that board. I continue to play a role as the MLA and as a resident of the area. I continue to encourage our young people to volunteer - they have a tremendous youth volunteer program at that centre. I know they're very proud of what they've done.

It's gone through an evolution of having been established many, many years ago, and now subsequently, with changes in amalgamation and such, it took on a not-for-profit designation. They're innovative. In fact, their administrator, Dion Mouland, is one of the leading industry spokespeople. He's innovative; he's got great ideas; he's at the table; and they are proving to be leaders in that long-term care industry. I'm very proud of having that in the community of Eastern Passage.

Back to what we're doing as a government, Mr. Speaker - we are creating jobs. I can't think of a better thing to be able to say. In Nova Scotia we're creating jobs, and we're doing that through our jobsHere plan. Over the next 30 years Nova Scotia will benefit from significant investments in the shipbuilding, in the Lower Churchill Falls hydroelectric power project, in the Shell Oil offshore exploration project - all of these things are about creating jobs, and good Nova Scotia money going into strong projects that will deliver the jobs that our Nova Scotians want and deserve.

These investments will boost our economy, Mr. Speaker. They are capital investments in machinery, technology, and equipment for businesses, and investment in workplaces for students. We know our students want to stay in Nova Scotia. We know that they need opportunities, and this kind of investment to help connect our students to the jobs that they need after their post-secondary education, or even after high school - that is what our government is doing. Our investments in productivity and innovation and skills incentive programs are also making a significant impact on the economy of Nova Scotia.

Another area that we are investing in is our education. Our Kids and Learning First plan is a serious plan to change the face of education in Nova Scotia. Again, we are not going to fix it all overnight. It takes time. There are incremental steps that we're making, but we are facing those serious challenges with specific strategies, with specific projects, specific investments, specific funding to address that downward trend, even though our student populations are going down. We hope that our measures are going to change that. We want to change that downward trend. We want our young people who are of child-bearing age - I'll say it out loud, our young members like Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville who has brought his beautiful daughter in the Legislature today - we want her to grow up and have the opportunity to fulfill her life here in Nova Scotia.

Our students are suffering because of the trends of the past in education. We're taking steps to change that. Our SchoolsPlus expansion, our investment in SchoolsPlus is a great example; our increased funding for students, which is the highest it's ever been before in Nova Scotia, another example. The increase of our number of schools offering skilled trades - again, this is going to come back to the prosperity that is on our horizon, is

continued to be moulded and massaged and worked on the shipbuilding contract - skilled trades are the future for our young people and it's on the horizon.

We need to do those investments now. We are making those steps. (Interruptions) Well, I'm going to get to some of that. Like what, a member has asked me, like building schools. Of course you know I would talk about that because it's an exciting opportunity, not only for the constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, but for all of Nova Scotia.

Our investment in the skilled trades - the announcement on April 2nd at Cole Harbour High School about a specified, state of the art, skilled trades centre at Cole Harbour High is an exciting and important element of the future of this province in shipbuilding and in those trades. I know the Opposition members, particularly the Progressive Conservative Party, are against these schools. I know that they're against it, they've always been, that's been evident in the 10 years they were in this Chamber when I and my predecessor Kevin Deveau came in here and our NDP supported that high school for Eastern Passage.

What's even better, what is more exciting now is that I knew in my conversations with the honourable Premier, because he is in the riding of Cole Harbour, we talked about how it didn't have to be a negative, which is what was being presented. It could be good. I can't think of a better way for us to invest in Nova Scotians at the same time as turning a page for Cole Harbour High School. I'm so excited that Cole Harbour High, which is a school - it's no surprise - that has had a stigma attached to it for many years. Right or wrong, whether they earned it or not, they ended up with people saying, I do not want my children to go there.

This changes the chapter. It takes it into a new chapter, it turns the page. This opportunity makes Cole Harbour the destination school for many students who would like to pursue that, in classroom, direct link to jobs and skills and training that would put them in the right place to take advantage of the jobs that are going to be associated with shipbuilding and any other trades that are in Nova Scotia. Of course, that connection, that link to the classroom will then evolve into other jobs.

Also, our launch of our cyberbullying, social marketing campaign - we've introduced legislation associated with that, it's in the Chamber, I won't speak too much about that, it's in the Committee on Law Amendments now. There were recommendations that came from the cyberbullying task force and while this is just attempting to address one element of it, it is the right step. Again, this phenomenon of cyberbullying - and bullying in general - is such a complicated and catastrophic phenomenon that is hurting so many of our citizens worldwide. This is not new. The solutions are not black and white. We are taking steps, we brought the experts together. We dialogued with those who are experiencing it.

If we could have had some ability to talk to every student in Nova Scotia, every young person in Nova Scotia who might have a phone or access to the Internet, if we could

have tapped into every one of them, I'm confident that we probably could have created a scenario that they would know the solution.

We had created a team of people, including police, educators, health and justice and then those in our communities who have unfortunately had the devastating effects of the ultimate cost associated with bullying and cyberbullying, which is a catastrophic loss in their own family. I had a member of our community of Eastern Passage, young Emily. I attended the funeral for her that no one should ever have to experience. I'm so proud that our government is taking steps and looking at this seriously.

Before I was an elected official I pursued an education for myself around bullying and cyberbullying. As a municipal councillor I attended a number of conferences and one of the things they regularly called for was changes to legislation, put it front and foremost on people's minds, and that is what our government is doing and I'm thankful for that.

Our government is also making life more affordable for Nova Scotians. The personal income tax reductions are an example of that. We have more relief for first-time home buyers and I can tell you, first-time home buyers are in Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour. As a designated growth area for HRM, we have a lot of homes being built and we are the place that our young people are choosing to plant their roots, live in a community that is so close to the heart of the capital of the province, but yet in an environment such as Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour, that still has that small-town unity, loyalty, co-operation. So that relief for first-time home buyers is evident in the riding of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

We're investing in more dollars for persons with disabilities. I had the pleasure of attending on behalf of the honourable Minister of Community Services the groundbreaking for DASC Industries, over in Burnside recently and what a pleasure that was. I have many constituents who have or continue to be engaged in the services provided there. We wore a pin that said DASC Industries. It made me think there's probably not a politician in Nova Scotia, certainly not in the local area, that hasn't had some form of pin from DASC Industries on their lapel in some campaign, whether it was their own or someone they were supporting at a different level of government. Those investments are counting, they count for something.

We're holding a line, as well, on user fees in this province. Our seniors are receiving return from their provincial income taxes, those who are receiving guaranteed income supplement are getting their income taxes returned to them, and that is helping our seniors in Nova Scotia.

Our increased investments in our students, as well as in student assistance, I can attest to that; again, I'm the mother of three young men now - I can't say young boys. I have three boys and my youngest is about to graduate from high school, my middle is attending university with the goal of being an anaesthesiologist, that's 11 years. So those

kinds of investments are allowing our Nova Scotian students, our Nova Scotia youth, or anyone who pursues post-secondary education, those opportunities when they may not have otherwise had them.

Our tax changes like the Nova Scotia Affordable Living Tax Credit and our Poverty Reduction Credit, those are all investments in Nova Scotia. Tax reduction for small businesses and prior to our reduction, small business taxes had not been done since 1992, but we did that. Our Graduate Retention Rebate, allowing our Nova Scotian graduates to stay here, open up shop or be gainfully employed here in our own communities in Nova Scotia, these are things that I'm very proud to be part of.

I'm going to get a little more personal at this stage just for a moment because I know - and you know many of my colleagues in the House from all Parties have spoken of the tremendous support that their family and friends have given them in their lives as we pursue and fulfill our roles in the Legislature. It's important to acknowledge them in our lives. My family is no different, in particular my mom and dad in Shelburne, Frank and Vivian Scott. They watch over me, they continue to watch for news, they're very proud of me. But just as important, Mr. Speaker, they are senior citizens in our province who are expecting us to do our jobs and make life better for them.

They challenge me, I can tell you - my biggest challenge is probably my dad. He and I are a bit alike, we're assertive, and we can hold our own in a conversation. One of my measures of when I first considered becoming an elected official was if I could get through a debate with my dad without throwing something at him, I was doing well. I did, but he continues to test me. I sound like a South Shore girl on that one, and I know, I heard it myself, and that is where I'm from, Shelburne, and I'm proud of that. But they do challenge me and they want us to make good decisions.

More specifically, the support that I receive from my husband, Gerry. My husband - I don't think I've said that in this House yet - I've been blessed to find love again in my life, Mr. Speaker, and I married my true love, my rock, Gerry Goldsworthy, last year. He is my rock, he's my biggest fan, he's my protector, he brings the strength to my life that I need to do this role, and the grounding that I need - and I thank God every day for bringing him into my life.

My boys, Tyler and Isaac and Matthew, they're finding their own way, they're becoming young men and they put me to the test as a mother, but they're very proud of the work that I do, but they are also one of the driving forces that continues to push me to be an MLA or an elected official, be an advocate for my community, be an advocate for the voice of youth. They continue to remind me every day when I go to bed at night, when I'm tired and I get home and I'm wondering, have they been fed, did I get a chance to go out and get the groceries, how are they doing with their course selection, what are they doing to think about their future? They are my constant reminder that I'm doing something good for the province, good for our community, and good for humanity. So I'm thankful that they are

there, and they are supportive and I'm thankful that they challenge me as well - only don't tell them, that's all. Don't tell them that I like that.

It's important for me as well, Mr. Speaker, to thank a particular woman in my constituency, my constituency assistant, Margaret Keats-Logan for her outstanding performance and outstanding work that she does in the constituency office of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage. We all know in this House that that role is unlike any other that you probably find in most administrative roles. CAs - constituency assistants - are the extension of us in our absence in our constituencies, and Margaret offers the constituents of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage a compassionate, thoughtful, professional, and productive service when they come into our office looking for help or guidance or an ear to hear their concerns, and I am thankful for her.

My constituents, as well, take the time to tell me what a great job she is doing, Mr. Speaker, so I want to go on record as saying that I am thankful for the work she continues to do on my behalf and on behalf of the constituents of Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage.

At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea how much time I have left - could I ask?

MR. SPEAKER: About 30 minutes.

MS. KENT: Oh, perfect. I'd be remiss if I did not take some time to speak very deliberately about the constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage. My constituency is made up of roughly four communities: Cole Harbour, of which I have the pleasure of sharing the general community of Cole Harbour with the Premier; we have Shearwater, which is a community in and of itself; Eastern Passage; and then Cow Bay. Each of them have their own unique identities and I'd like to share a few comments about each of them.

The community of Cole Harbour, with its many great schools and trails and sports organizations and engaged citizens are connected to the Dartmouth-Cole Harbour area. Mr. Speaker, volunteerism is strong in that part of my riding, as it probably is in most, but it certainly is in the entire riding, but they are particularly strong out there because they, relative to some of the communities on the Dartmouth side of HRM, have a relatively large geographic area and to stay connected is often the result of a lot of volunteer hours by a lot of service groups and a lot of organizations that show community pride, community spirit, and community advocacy, and they're doing that.

Many of the activities in that part of the constituency focus around two elementary schools, Caldwell Road Elementary School and Astral Drive Elementary School, and as well, Astral Drive Junior High School. Millbrook First Nations community is also nestled centrally between Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and I share the absolutely magnificent provincial park on Bissett Road. Miles of trails connect the Shearwater Flyer Trail to the Salt Marsh Trail and

the Bissett Road trail system, which also continues to connect to Lawrencetown, which continues to connect down the Eastern Shore. Countless hours of volunteerism have created this hidden jewel, and I would invite every member of this Legislature, and anyone in Nova Scotia, to come and see the Salt Marsh Trail just off Bissett Road. There are parts of it that are in Cole Harbour and there are parts of it that are in Cow Bay, so it's a little hard to define, but come on out and see it. You will be amazed.

This is a provincial park, but it has been basically developed by the Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association, which is a volunteer organization under the helm of the chair, Holly Woodill, and under the tremendous activities and energy of Jim Tudor. There are other members - I can't remember all their names, but they know who they are - the countless hours of dedication, a gift that they have given Nova Scotia, a gift that they have given HRM, a gift that they have given to Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage through their dedication, their passion, their sweat equity, and their shared determination.

I know that the members in here know that their volunteer organizations sometimes face some of the most difficult challenges with partnerships and funding sources and such, but their determination - really, I can't stress that strongly enough, that you should come out and see what we've developed out there - what they've developed, I should say. I thank each and every one of them for their efforts and their commitments to not only Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage but to all of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, if you made your way out there these days, you would see what is now the remnants, maybe - there's very little left of what was a heritage, historic icon of the community in that area, which is the big red barn that burned to the ground last year. That barn was an icon of that era, and icon of that community, and while the province owns this land and the barn, there's work being done to resurrect some form of building, an infrastructure that will emulate and celebrate the heritage associated to that barn and what it stood for in that community.

A community that continues to offer a rural setting in the backyard of suburban HRM is Cow Bay. The protection of the rural lifestyle and environment continues to be at the forefront of the minds of the residents in that area. As a coastal community, Mother Nature offers particular challenges. Erosion and storm surges threaten to undermine the environment that many families have settled and built their lives on, but this very same rugged coastline offers some of the best surfing locations that Nova Scotia has to offer.

I don't know how many of you knew that, but we are one of the most popular destinations for surfing locations. In Cow Bay there are at least four surfs, I think they call them. It's the section of the ocean that creates particular kinds of waves that allow these surfers to do what they do best. We've had young people in our community who are now travelling to Australia; I know they've gone to New Zealand to compete in surfing championships because of their experience in their own backyard, in their own ocean, that their moms and dads probably said, be careful when you go down to the rocks, be careful

when you go along the beach, because of the tides. Rainbow Haven is down in that area. Rainbow Haven is a provincial park that's a lot like Lawrencetown Park, and the waves and the surge and the undertow, you have to be so careful of the actions of the ocean particularly when young people are not necessarily as cognizant and paying as much attention to what's going on around them, when they're laughing and having fun and probably flirting with a boy or a girl, but because of these surf locations our young people are learning an appreciation, a respect and a value in what they have.

I'm really pleased to see some development of some coastal access to these waters, the coastal access in these areas have been primarily through private property and it has been challenging. You would have visitors and locals alike wanting to access the shoreline, but they have to trespass to do it, which caused significant problems for the residents in the area. They didn't want to not have them access the water, but accessing it through private property left garbage and wear and tear and sometimes inappropriate changing on the side of the road trying to get into their surf gear and it was challenging. But the community came together, they worked together to form a coalition and a park in that area that is dedicated specifically, it's called the Cow Bay surf park and we're so pleased that turn of events, that initiative and project, is coming along so well.

The Cow Bay Moose park - I don't know how many of you are familiar with that - but the Cow Bay Moose continues to be there, a big statue of the Cow Bay Moose. Years and years ago, I don't know how many - Silver Sands Beach is there - there were a number of large statues built of animals and fish and things like that. Over the years they have deteriorated, but the Cow Bay Moose is still on the hill. That look off would probably be the start of the conception of many Nova Scotians, that particular park. I don't know if there's a better way to put it and it probably still does, although I'm hoping it's not too young. That's an icon of the community and an important aspect that I'm so pleased to have been part of while I was on council and since becoming a member of the Legislature and our government supporting the development of the park to recognize the heritage and the importance of that particular location.

Silver Sands Beach actually took a bit of a hit when they created Shearwater at the turn of the century, but this was a summer vacation destination. There are pictures of parasols, tents, the whole beach was "the place to visit", as was McNabs Island. The Coney Island of Halifax was McNabs Island. (Interruption) No, it's the truth. We have lots of details I could share with you on that, but I'll save that for another day. Silver Sands Conservation Society is made up of a group of people who want to protect and preserve the natural habitat of the Cow Bay area - Elizabeth Kwindt, Donald Hudak, Todd King, to name just a few - and I know there are many more who are really a driving force. They are the watchful eye and our communities all need that element. I'm so thankful for their contribution.

Another unique community that I talk about quite regularly is the community of Shearwater, made up families associated with the military, particularly to 12 Wing

Shearwater. It is a community that is used to the transient nature of the residents, where one might stay for one, two or three years at a time and then be posted to a new location. But ultimately it's not uncommon for them to eventually come back to Nova Scotia to settle, which is so nice, because they had such a tremendous experience. I think I did a resolution in the House not that long ago along that line, that people had left but they grew up here as a military child and they had such a great experience they wanted to come back.

The town council - it's interesting because it traditionally has always been sort of transient and people would come and leave they didn't always have the opportunity or even have sense that they could put down roots and really engage in a community, but a gentleman by the name of Glen Johnson - I know he's not a corporal, I think he is a sergeant - he's the town councillor. They created a town council of their own and now they actually received the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award. They participate in community cleanup, beautification projects and house decorating so they really have a sense of identity now which is so nice.

I can tell you I told them this story that when I was first elected, back on council, one of the things that was said to me was, don't spend a lot of time going up and knocking on the doors of the people at Shearwater because they don't really vote, they aren't really part of the community. Well that's changed. I didn't believe it, I went and knocked on the doors anyway. I believe they feel they are part of the community now; they are shaping their own community. They are certainly part of the greater community of the Dartmouth area - Woodside, Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage - and great efforts are going on down there.

Mr. Speaker, 12 Wing Shearwater is approaching a milestone and I know I've mentioned that in the House before. Probably the most renowned icon of Shearwater is the Sea King helicopter - the home of the Sea King helicopter for Nova Scotia. We, as residents of the area, have lived with and enjoyed the hover, the sound, the activity associated with Sea King despite popular belief, the criticisms that it's had. They are celebrating its 50th Anniversary; that's a lot of years to be a good, strong, productive air craft for our Canadian military. It is something that I believe we, as Nova Scotians, should be celebrating.

I hope that I can invite you all to future - the summer is when the anniversary will take place and the Sea King will be decommissioned and the new Sikorsky helicopters will be officially moved into that position. I know that the effort, the trades, the service of our men and women who have maintained and supported and developed that helicopter have done right by us here in Nova Scotia and the protection of our country. The long-standing service that helicopter has provided for the protection of our nation, I think it's important that we celebrate that when the opportunity comes along, so I look forward to that.

There are lots of other things going on in Eastern Passage around service clubs and festivals. Our community is the same as most across Nova Scotia, there are festivals and

activities, there's a summer carnival, there's a harvest festival, there's a Christmas festival. There are service clubs like the Lions Club, the Buffalo Club, the Legion, the Kiwanis. They're doing great things at the Buffalo Club, I'm so very proud of them, I'm so please to be a partner in so many things with them. Most recently they hosted Battle of the Bands; it's the third year for doing it and each year (Interruption) They're a service club that is meant to create opportunities and funds to give back to the community.

AN HON. MEMBER: Do they wear those hats and everything.

MS. KENT: No, that's the Fred Flintstone version of the buffalo club, the royal order of the lodge. No, they don't wear the big hats but they are so proud of what they do, I'm so proud of what they do and they most recently hosted the Battle of the Bands which gave an opportunity for young, new bands and entertainers to take to the stage and wow the judges and, wow, the audience there.

AN HON. MEMBER: Wedding reception.

MS. KENT: Yes, thank you. One of my colleagues reminded me that I had a beautiful wedding reception there as well. I couldn't think of a better place to have a reception. That's my kind of place, the Buffalo Club. I grew up in Shelburne where all of our events were at the Legions and the Lions Clubs, so when Gerry and I decided to have our wedding reception there I just can't think of a better place to have had it. The atmosphere, the decorating, the joy around us really started our life together off perfectly and I'm thankful that that's in our community.

We have a great connection and partnership with our policing services. The Cole Harbour Eastern Passage area is policed by the RCMP, there is some involvement in the HRP - Halifax Regional Police - because it is a collaborative policing service, but some areas are dedicated specifically to them, and Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the RCMP and they are doing great things to keep our community safe and proactively address crime prevention and youth initiatives to change and shape the lives of our young people in the way of crime prevention.

You know, we are developing a BMX track in Eastern Passage that will be the very first BMX racetrack in Nova Scotia - and it will be an Olympic-qualifying track, so some great things are happening in these communities.

I spoke briefly on Lawlor and Devils Islands and McNabs Island, they are part of the constituency. Great efforts are being done by the Friends of McNabs Island Society - they've been doing advocacy and efforts on the island for years - but there's also a new initiative through the Eastern Passage area called the Gateway to McNabs Island. They're looking at bringing more attention to the fact that access to the island has been historically through Eastern Passage; the connection to the islands has been through Eastern Passage.

People can access from Halifax, they can access from Dartmouth, but there is a definitive and very long-standing, historical connection between Eastern Passage and McNabs and Lawlor Islands and that is what this organization is dedicated to bringing to the forefront, and hopefully bring opportunities for the businesses that ferry people back and forth to the island - we have Taylor Made Tours! and Captain Red Beard, Mike Tilley's small craft that they use to get to the island, and that's only the beginning of things.

At this point, though, I don't want to use up all my time without talking about the Fisherman's Cove area. We're doing great things. That area took a bit of a hit over the downturn of tourism, the changes in capacity on boards, the changes in the level of input from volunteerism, but I am so proud to say that there is a new board developing at Fisherman's Cove, there are new strong leaders of the community who have come to the table, are redeveloping the board to create some new strategies, a new vision, and just new energy and prosperity - bringing prosperity back to Fisherman's Cove.

People have continued to visit Fisherman's Cove even though not all the shops were active and vibrant and had businesses in them, but those days are changing. Every day, I hear about a new shop that is opening, so come back and visit it.

Lastly, before I go too much further - and I know my time is running out - I cannot miss the opportunity to speak of the tremendous news of the \$15 million investment of a high school for Eastern Passage. Thirty years is a long time for a community to be advocating for keeping their students in their own community to be educated. They watched a number of opportunities come and go through other governments, where schools were somewhat promised to a community and then, at the eleventh hour, the political will of the time changed the dynamics and they continued to bus the Eastern Passage kids out of that community. When the ships contract came along, it was like the light turning on - here is an opportunity not only for Cole Harbour, but for Eastern Passage, and I'm so proud to have stood by the Premier on April 2nd and the honourable Minister of Education to announce to the families of Eastern Passage that they would, in fact, be getting their high school. I'm proud to have been part of a government that listened.

It was no surprise that our government would support that. It's no surprise because we spent close to 15 years in this House of Assembly, through myself and through my predecessor Kevin Deveaux, and I know support from colleagues - (Interruption) Don't forget him - talking about the need, the want, the desire. What I'm so proud of, though, is that we've done it in a way that is responsible to the financial pressures of the day, where we've done it in a way that is attentive to the needs of the areas affected in the general location in the Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage - that's the family of schools that is most affected.

The two announcements teamed up together was such a great day and such a positive step for both schools, and anyone who would argue with that I say shame on them.

I was so proud to be able to see and share that information and the news of that project with members of our community like Jeep Deveaux who was a founding father of advocacy for high schools in Eastern Passage. Dot White, Elsie Johnson, teachers who have taught the kids in our community who are now in their senior years, had heard the desire, the need, the want and the practical solutions and reasons why. It wasn't just because I want it because I want it. The community had put forward, so many times, the facts, the basis for why it made sense. So many times it was denied and tabled and shoved aside, but no longer. The community of Eastern Passage is engaged again. They feel good, they feel valued, they feel like they've been heard, they feel like (Interruptions) can I finish and then? Thank you. I'm almost done. (Interruptions) You know what? It's okay, I have that covered.

I know that the community is happy. There are people in the Opposition seats and I know there are still challenges with some of the dynamics on the school board that would tell you that this is a bad idea. But I can tell you, after three successful elections, three elections where I canvassed 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the homes in the riding of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, that a high school for Eastern Passage was the number one priority for that area and I'm proud to have stood by the Premier, proud to be part of a government that listened, supported and invested in this community. With that, I would take my place and thank you for this opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the House to the Speaker's Gallery where we have here before us the Member of Parliament for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour and I believe it would be a year ago yesterday that he was elected as that member. Also, we have Matthew Spurway, who is his constituency assistant. We know that Robert Chisholm is working very hard for his constituents and I believe he was just appointed as the Fisheries Critic for the Official Opposition in Ottawa. I ask the members to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move the House do now rise to meet again on the morrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. After the daily routine, the order of business will be bills for second reading, Bill Nos. 74, 76 and 77 and also Committee of the Whole House on Bills. If time permits we may do some Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I move the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Yarmouth:

“Therefore be it resolved that the NDP has repeatedly chosen Nova Scotia Power shareholders over ratepayers, supports ratepayers funding the bonuses of executives and have become the defenders of big business in Nova Scotia following the tradition of successive Progressive Conservative governments in Nova Scotia.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

NDP: BIG BUSINESS - DEFENDERS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in this continuing discussion on energy issues. You know, in the past week, and, in fact, in other sessions, we repeatedly asked the Minister of Energy very directly - the media also has asked the Minister of Energy and the Premier very directly - whether he supports the inclusion of bonuses in the rates paid by Nova Scotia Power's shareholders. Repeatedly he has refused to say that he does not think they should be included - refused. It's a simple thing and the only reason to avoid it, of course, is if the minister believes that ratepayers should be stuck with the costs of the bonuses of the executives of Nova Scotia Power, and that's a shame.

The NDP likes to make a lot of the fact that they took the HST off electricity, but let's not forget that that saving resulted in \$28 million and then they added a tax that took \$40 million. So in the end, while they certainly did what they said they would on the HST as it relates to those power bills, they did not tell Nova Scotians that they would actually add a new tax that takes more from Nova Scotians than the one that they were removing.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, what makes matters worse on that is the fact that six days before the election the Premier's chief of staff, writing on behalf of the NDP caucus, stated that he felt and the NDP caucus felt that shareholders of Nova Scotia Power should be the ones to pay for efficiency charges because I think everybody agrees that conservation is extremely important. Yet after getting elected, the NDP passed legislation which resulted directly in Nova Scotia Power ratepayers being forced to pay that fee.

Now, the Premier has stood up many times in this House and suggested that the URB made that decision and so I asked the URB chairman that question yesterday at the Public Accounts Committee meeting. He was very clear. He said, no, the Act which the government passed only gives the option to have that fee charged against ratepayers and, yes, certainly they set the ultimate rate, there's no question about that because the Act requires them to, but the URB was quite clear that they did not make that choice. In fact, they were stuck with only one choice and that was to charge ratepayers.

When the NDP were in Opposition, they didn't like the Utility and Review Board very much. We've tabled a number of quotes from a number of members, in fact, suggesting that the URB was in the pockets of Nova Scotia Power. That's what the members over there now in the Cabinet benches suggested when they were in Opposition. Yet now, one after another, they stand up and defend and say that the URB will decide in an impartial and independent way.

Yesterday we found out yet another fact, that all along the Premier has been suggesting that the Muskrat Falls project would certainly be reviewed by the Utility and Review Board of Nova Scotia, and the chairman said no. Unless it's under Section 35 which means that it would have to be a project being built by Nova Scotia Power, they will be unable to review it and that it will require a legislative amendment. He was quoted again in *The ChronicleHerald* today saying it will require a legislative amendment, not a regulatory change, a legislative amendment.

The Premier was given the option yesterday to admit his mistake - which, people make mistakes. The Premier could have said, listen, we recognize that, we thought we could do it, we'll bring in that amendment, but instead he said, no, no, no, the chairman of the board is wrong and there's the chairman of the board saying it in the media again this morning that the Premier is wrong. After all the broken promises of the NDP, I think I'm going to believe the chairman of the URB when he says that they've decided they don't have the power over the Premier.

You know, yesterday the NDP tried to say that the Liberal caucus was in favour of deregulation of the energy markets for supporting the exact thing that the member for Halifax Chebucto and the member for Cape Breton Centre had spoken in favour of repeatedly. Many, many times have they spoken in favour of that. Well that's really strange.

Then one of the members in the backbenches stood up yesterday and said, 20 years ago the NDP would have gotten us off coal. Well, that was funny for the member for Cape Breton Centre who was looking back in surprise, when he realized that he was one of the great champions of coal 20 years ago. The fact is that everybody, or many, many people, in Nova Scotia didn't recognize the impacts of things like global warming and so forth, so those have only come along in the past few years.

Even the last piece of legislation that the NDP brought in on renewable energy, they like to talk about how that legislation includes the 40 per cent target. Well, go back and check Hansard, Mr. Speaker, because that only includes 40 per cent in the legislation because the Liberals did an amendment that the government accepted, that made it part of the law. It actually wasn't in the law and whether that was an error that it wasn't in there, I'm not sure, but it wasn't in the law until the amendment and the government acknowledged that in the debate and accepted our amendment at the time. I think that's extremely important to remember.

Then we take a look at corporations and big business and the handing out of money without anything. It's all the things the NDP said they wouldn't do, that they were opposed to. So you hand out \$50 million to Resolute without protecting the pensions. The Premier said, well, the pension is fully funded. Well, no, it was backed up by the lands that the province just bought from them. Now that other \$40 million, which I understand from the Premier is also for a possible future land purchase, would mean that more of that pension, more of that asset base that is there to protect the pension, would be gone. So the more and more of that that is sold, the more and more that just isn't there.

All the things that the NDP sat there in Opposition and criticized the Progressive Conservatives for, they are now doing. In fact, one of my professors from King's, Bruce Wark - one of the most interesting things I heard him say, he said the NDP are more conservative than the Progressive Conservatives were. He was a long-time NDP supporter and he's sitting there going . . .

Of course we know it doesn't stop there. We know that when we look at the way the tax break for the Imperial Oil refinery in Dartmouth was structured, the NDP spoke against that in Opposition, the Premier voted against it in Opposition when the Tories introduced it. So the Premier stood up today or yesterday in Question Period and said - despite the fact that he voted against it when he was in Opposition and spoke out against it - he stood up and said, well we're not actually giving them a tax break. Well, that's right, you're forcing the municipality to do it and the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was quoted in the media recently - I don't remember the exact quote but it was something along the line of, well we couldn't reach an agreement with the municipalities so we had to go ahead with it.

If it was so important, why didn't the province use its own revenues? I guess it wasn't that important. Mr. Speaker, now we know from Larry Hughes, who has noted that actually that tax break may result in an increase in gas prices because of the way that refinery operates and is structured, and he said it probably will expedite the closure of that refinery because of the way that refinery is structured. Listen, there's a guy who knows those energy issues far better than probably anybody in this House.

So we have the Premier who voted against that tax break, in Opposition, and then defended it now. And he said, well, we didn't give them the money - no, you forced the municipality to give them the money. It makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, energy prices, electricity prices have increased by 20 per cent since the NDP took office and 40 per cent over the combined Tory and NDP Governments. Something has to be done about energy prices. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. BRIAN SKABAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and speak to the resolution that the NDP Government has repeatedly chosen Nova Scotia Power shareholders over ratepayers. I'm here to stand up to say that this government has never chosen Nova Scotia Power over ratepayers. Of all the things the Official Opposition has ever said about this government - be they based on fact or fiction - this is the lowest, most mean-spirited, hurtful statement, that we are following that tradition of the Progressive Conservatives in Nova Scotia.

The New Democratic Party represents new ideas and a new way of doing things, nothing at all like the tired old Parties of the past. The Progressive Conservatives sold Nova Scotia Power in 1992 - sold a valuable asset owned by the people of Nova Scotia, a short-term gain for long-term pain - pain to the ratepayers to this day, for that matter. Further to this, the contract with Nova Scotia Power makes provision for a reasonable rate of return on investment. This "reasonable rate of return" is determined by the Utility and Review Board under criteria established in the terms and conditions of the sale.

The URB, in a presentation to the Public Accounts Committee, determined that the appropriate rate of return to Nova Scotia Power was somewhere in the rate of 9 per cent. Let's make no mistake about this, Mr. Speaker, this was based on a bad decision by the Progressive Conservative Government of the day to sell Nova Scotia Power in the first place.

The Liberals are no better. Well, they may be a little bit better, because they haven't been in power lately or as long, so they've had less opportunity to do as much damage as the Progressive Conservatives, but past that the similarity ends. I speak in particular of the highway from Amherst to Truro. This highway is known as death valley, for a number of years, and instead of managing and prioritizing the highway construction, the Liberal Government of the day privatized the highway to a cost of \$4 for everyone that passes through - \$4 per trip from Cumberland County, be it north or south, for any trip from Halifax or Truro.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that the Liberals are the defenders of big business in Nova Scotia at the expense of everyday Nova Scotians. I, for one, still resent having to

stop and pay the toll for the toll highway - the only toll highway in the Maritimes. It was a Liberal Government that chose shareholders over ratepayers in this case as well.

When the Minister of Finance was on his Back to Balance tour, the highway toll, as you might imagine, was raised by a number of constituents - it may have been me among them, for that matter. The minister in his wisdom replied that the province is currently looking for ways to save \$175 million, thank you very much, not spend an extra \$175 million in buying back the highway. It will be 50 more years before Nova Scotians own this highway again, and by that time, of course, it will be very likely that the highway will have to be redone. In the case of Nova Scotia Power, not so much. We'll never be able to own that again, just for sheer cost.

In a fashion not dissimilar, selling Nova Scotia Power as a business - I can't read my own writing here either - was of consequence, yet borne by Nova Scotians. The rate of return to Nova Scotia Power investors is determined by the URB, as stated in Public Accounts. It is what it is. The Government of Nova Scotia has been and continues to be proactive in stabilizing power rates - stabilizing power rates in the long term by taking action to increase renewable energy sources, wind energy, tidal power, hydro from Newfoundland and Labrador.

I miss few opportunities, public or private, to remind Nova Scotians that these initiatives were cited by the David Suzuki Foundation as one of the five destinations in Canada for the reduction of greenhouse gases, as well as stabilizing power rates for the long term.

Other initiatives this government has taken to benefit all Nova Scotians is to legislate the use of energy-efficient street lighting. Utilization of energy for street lighting will be reduced by 60 per cent by taking these actions. It just so happens that the best quality product for energy-efficient street lighting happens to be made right here in Nova Scotia as well, at LED Roadway Lighting in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Thank you very much.

Just getting back to the bonuses paid by Nova Scotia Power. The member opposite seems to believe that our government supports ratepayers funding bonuses. This is not correct. In a recent rate application hearing process there was no greater advocate for vigilance over the process that sets rates than our Premier. He called executive bonuses to be not included in the rate base. With respect to these incentives for its executives, since at least 1996, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board has allowed NSPI to recover half of these costs in its rates.

Under the settlement agreement, NSPI has agreed and removed these costs entirely from its requested 2012 revenue requirement. The settlement agreement removes \$250,000 ratepayer portion of the executive bonuses from being part of the company's 2012 rate increase. It is true and it has been a long-standing practice that half the bonuses paid to executives at NSPI be recovered from the ratepayers and half from the shareholders. Our

Premier came out against this at the most recent hearing. In the case of the 2012 general rate application hearing, the settlement reached during a Utility and Review Board process removes executive bonuses from being charged to the taxpayers.

It also reduces NSPI's allowable rate of return and cuts \$27 million from the company's increased revenue application. Our vision for Nova Scotia's energy future is no secret, it's outlined in the renewable energy plan which was released in April 2010. It clearly states that there are upfront costs associated with developing more renewable sources of energy. Possibly an average of 1 per cent or 2 per cent per year on electricity built in the short term, but this is an investment we can't afford not to make.

Our plan is about making life more affordable in the long run - doing nothing would cost us far more. Renewable energy prices do not go up over time the same way that carbon based fuels will. Moving towards local renewable energy sources will help stabilize energy prices in the future and protect consumers from the volatility of world markets and energy supply shortages.

Our plan will also support as much as \$1.5 billion in green investments and create an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 jobs in this province. We are taking a balanced approach to transforming our electricity system in the best interests of Nova Scotians. Our plan is based on incentive process and our approach will create jobs, stabilize electricity prices and reduce our environmental footprint. We have a plan and we are implementing it. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise tonight to talk about the affordability of electricity rates. The rates as we have seen in this province over the last couple of years are on the rise. It seems to us like the government is taking the side of Nova Scotia Power over the ratepayers. If they were taking their side over the ratepayers, they would look at more stability in the rates now instead of being worried about what's going to happen in the future at the cost of development now.

Mr. Speaker, we're putting money into renewable energy and we're setting targets that aren't realistic and people can't afford to pay for these targets now. In today's world electricity is essential. It's vital for families, our hospitals, our schools, our businesses of all sizes, and many other institutions throughout this province. Without this there would be no lights, there would be no heat, there would be no computers and no cellphones as we see used here in the House. (Interruptions)

I hear the members opposite talking about the number of jobs, all the jobs they've created since they've been in power, and we asked for numbers, Mr. Speaker, and we don't get numbers. We asked what the plans are, we don't get targets. We know there were over 7,800 jobs lost in the province since this government came into power and this renewable

energy that we're talking about is a great plan. We're all for renewable energy but at a rate that the province can handle. The continuous jumps in our electricity costs is a struggle for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, just imagine those on a fixed income who have seen their electricity rates jump over the last number of years. They feel that struggle. They have to make a choice - is it heat or is it food? Is it a child's activity or is it heat? Do we keep the lights on or do we turn the heat up? We all know our winters here can be a struggle. It can get cold in Nova Scotia, especially in Cape Breton where I'm from, and I know when I get cold, I like to turn the heat up. I know the pipes in my house, they like to have the heat on or they break and a lot of people can't afford that now because of the continuous jumps in our electricity costs. Families are struggling to cover their bills. They have less disposable income under this government. They are having to make those difficult decisions to meet the high costs of this government's policies.

Mr. Speaker, the charities are struggling as well. They're scaling back on their services and programs because they don't have the money to provide those programs because their power bills keep continuing to rise at unpredictable rates. People in businesses have less money to donate to them and the coffers just keep shrinking. They can't make ends meet. The government has made it increasingly difficult for seniors, as I said, to choose to put food on the table, pay for their prescriptions, or cover the costs of their electricity bills. The successive jumps and lack of clarity about what is truly driving up these costs remain a sticking point and considerable frustration for many in our society. People understand the increased costs on their bill but the government remains keen on keeping the true costs as murky as possible in an effort to hide their expensive policies. They hide behind the URB rather than stand behind families and seniors, charities and businesses in our province.

These businesses are struggling greatly, especially in rural Nova Scotia. The government continues to take away their ability to have additional money to hire more staff, make improvements in their business, increase their salaries and benefits, and/or expand their business. As far as electricity rates go, it was our caucus that sat at the table with the interveners and lobbied hard on behalf of Nova Scotians to have the executive bonuses removed from the rates and to have the power company's profits decreased. No other Party came to that table. We fought hard and were successful and these actions actually saved ratepayers over \$7 million this year.

Just the threat of that, Mr. Speaker, has saved the ratepayers over \$7 million. We were the first to present the idea to Nova Scotians of a law to permanently take executive bonuses out of your rates paid, even though the Liberals have tried to steal credit for that and copy our lead. We were the only Party to introduce legislation that would require all mega projects impacting power rates to go through a cost-benefit analysis and be properly scrutinized and compared against the alternatives.

We can talk about the coal mines, if you'd like, member for Glace Bay. We need to know the costs of these mega projects, how much it will cost and how much it will cause our rates to go up, or down, if that be the case. Then and only then can we talk about this in our deliberations here in this House and make informed decisions on what will be best for Nova Scotians.

The ideas being proposed here on renewable energy are driving our power rates up. It may, in the future, stabilize our power rates, but at what cost? Stable power is something we are looking for, but if Nova Scotians can afford it, it's no good to have it stable.

We want to make life more affordable for the residents or the people in our communities and those more expensive renewables right now are not doing that, Mr. Speaker. The PC caucus supports, and always supported, diversifying our energy portfolio and increasing clean, green technology at a rate Nova Scotians can afford.

There are just too many ways that this government has taken a little more money from our families and it is really causing some serious hardships and driving our young people away. We need our young people in this province. We need the skills they provide in order to make this province survive. For educating our people and sending them out West, we're helping the economy of Alberta but not doing anything for the economy of Nova Scotia.

We need people to stay here to buy homes, to buy cars, to spend their money in this province so that taxes can stay here and we can afford to raise our children here. Nova Scotia families and businesses have had to endure an NDP Government that is driving our power rates up with its "bite the bullet" electricity plan. They've raised our HST to the highest in the country and they've taken over \$1,000 more per person, from every single Nova Scotian, so a family of four is paying \$4,000 more since the HST has been raised. That's \$4,000 that could have gone into home renovations, could have gone into diversifying the family, or could have gone into making life a lot easier on Nova Scotia families. That \$1,000 per person is not making life more affordable for Nova Scotians, it is exactly the opposite.

We heard yesterday at the Public Accounts Committee from the Utility and Review Board that they have not studied the socio-economic impacts on the thresholds that Nova Scotia families and businesses can afford. They don't have evidence about this and, Mr. Speaker, that's just not right. The government should have that information and it should be provided to the URB for them to help make informed decisions.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus will continue to take part in every step of the electricity rate hearing process and fight for affordable power rates for Nova Scotians. If power rates are affordable, businesses will more likely come and set up here, employ more Nova Scotians, pay more Nova Scotian tax, and make life better for all Nova Scotians.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank all members for their participation in late debate and its importance for our province. We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 4:20 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 807**

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 Phoenix Christmas is a Grade 6 student at the Shambhala School here in Halifax; and

Whereas Phoenix and his classmates have dedicated much of their school year to learning about provincial and municipal government; and

Whereas Phoenix will be graduating from elementary this year and will be entering Grade 7 in September;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Phoenix on his hard work and successes throughout the school year and wish him well in his transition from elementary to junior high school.

RESOLUTION NO. 808

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 Emerson Hotson is a Grade 6 student at the Shambhala School here in Halifax; and

Whereas Emerson and his classmates have dedicated much of their school year to learning about provincial and municipal government; and

Whereas Emerson will be graduating from elementary this year and will be entering Grade 7 in September;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emerson on his hard work and successes throughout the school year and wish him well in his transition from elementary to junior high school.

RESOLUTION NO. 809

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 Samuel Brownstone is a Grade 6 student at the Shambhala School here in Halifax; and

Whereas Samuel and his classmates have dedicated much of their school year to learning about provincial and municipal government; and

Whereas Samuel will be graduating from elementary this year and will be entering Grade 7 in September;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Samuel on his hard work and successes throughout the school year and wish him well in his transition from elementary to junior high school.

RESOLUTION NO. 810

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 Jim Franey has dedicated 50 years to the Aylesford and District Fire Department and continues to be an active firefighter; and

Whereas Jim has been an excellent example and mentor to many firefighters in successfully merging fire department life and home life; and

Whereas Jim has performed a key role in the construction of a modern fire hall and securing first-class equipment and the commitment to make his department the best;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly commend Jim Franey for 50 years of faithful service and recognize that it takes a supportive family to achieve this milestone.

RESOLUTION NO. 811

By: Hon. Darrell Dexter (The Premier)

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

Whereas it is widely known that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, helping children get the nutrition and energy they need to take on their schoolwork and activities; and

Whereas for the past five years, Marg Bowlen and Jim Bent of Century 21 Trident Realty in Cole Harbour have spent their Friday mornings preparing breakfast for the young students at Colonel John Stewart Elementary School to ensure the kids get a proper morning meal; and

Whereas Ms. Bowlen's realty company also hosts an annual golf tournament in August to help raise money for the breakfast program;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize the significant volunteer efforts of Marg Bowlen and Jim Bent to make sure our young people start the day off on the right foot and thank them for taking an interest in the betterment of their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 812

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Provincial Volunteer Awards thank and honour people who donate their time to help others by supporting the causes in which they believe and serves to reinforce the human values that volunteering represents and increase awareness of the vital importance of volunteerism to our communities; and

Whereas Dr. Charles Uhlman of Mahone Bay spent many years coaching and mentoring students at Mahone Bay Consolidated School, is a long time member of Lions International, raising thousands of dollars for The Lion's Foundation of Canada and organizes "Meals on Wheels" services in the Mahone Bay area; and

Whereas Dr. Charles Uhlman was honoured for his contributions at this year's awards ceremony in Halifax on April 2nd;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the volunteer efforts and commitment to community displayed by Dr. Charles Uhlman of Mahone Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 813

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Recycles Contest aims to encourage participation in recycling and composting programs and to celebrate the ongoing role of Nova Scotia youth in making this province a recognized leader in waste reduction; and

Whereas the contest, which is open to all Nova Scotian students in Grades Primary to 12, awards cash prizes to the schools of winners in each region, ranging from \$750 to \$1,500 and also sees participants recognized during an Honorarium Dinner; and

Whereas Lacey Acker, a Grade 7 student at the Bluenose Academy, formerly of Centre Consolidated School, will be recognized as a runner-up for her entry to the contest, winning \$750 for her school on April 18, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lacey Acker of the Bluenose Academy for being recognized by the Nova Scotia Recycles Contest and contributing to environmental awareness in the Province of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 814

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Lighthouse Media Group, responsible for the publication of the Progress Bulletin, has been recognized in the latest annual competition held by Newspapers Canada and its regional counterpart, Newspapers Atlantic, with multiple nominations; and

Whereas Lighthouse Media Group has been nominated regionally for best overall newspaper in its circulation class, best circulation promotion, along with multiple nominations for sales and advertising, editorial content and graphic design; and

Whereas Lighthouse Media Group also garnered nominations at the National level, with staff members Stacey Colwell receiving nomination for Outstanding Reporter

Initiative, Paula Levy receiving nomination for best Holiday Edition and the southshorenova.ca Web site receiving nomination for best Web site in its circulation class;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lighthouse Media Group and its staff for producing nationally recognized news content and for providing comprehensive news, features and advertising for its readership.

RESOLUTION NO. 815

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Recycles Contest aims to encourage participation in recycling and composting programs and to celebrate the ongoing role of Nova Scotia youth in making this province a recognized leader in waste reduction; and

Whereas the contest, which is open to all Nova Scotian students in Grades Primary to 12, awards cash prizes to the schools of winners in each region, ranging from \$750 to \$1,500 and also sees participants recognized during an Honorarium Dinner; and

Whereas Lily Grace Street, a Grade 3 student at Bayview Academy, will be recognized as a runner-up for her entry to the contest, winning \$750 for her school on April 18, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lily Grace Street of Bayview Academy for being recognized by the Nova Scotia Recycles Contest and contributing to environmental awareness in the Province of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 816

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

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

Whereas Anna Anderson and Carol Inskip co-organize a free Christmas dinner for people in the Wolfville area; and

Whereas other volunteers offer time and baked goods to help make these free Christmas dinners at the Wolfville Lions Hall, which is served at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Day, a success; and

Whereas this year's dinner served 120 people and funds raised over and above the cost of the third annual dinner were donated to the food bank in Wolfville;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the efforts of Anna Anderson and Carol Inskip for providing a meal and fellowship and congratulate them for their community spirit.

RESOLUTION NO. 817

By Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Work Centre, located in Coldbrook, Nova Scotia, held its 100th Completion Ceremony on Friday, March 9, 2012; and

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Work Centre has offered basic training to adult learners in the areas of food services, office skills, retail, shop, janitorial, upgrading, literacy skills, and personal development for over 25 years; and

Whereas the programs offered by the Annapolis Valley Work Centre have allowed thousands of people to make positive changes in their quality of life, as well as that of their families;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Annapolis Valley Work Centre for being a valued resource in Kings County for adults who wish to better their lives through education, personal development, and work experience.

RESOLUTION NO. 818

By Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival will celebrate its 80th Anniversary with the theme Growing Together for 80 Years on the weekend of May 30 to June 4, 2012; and

Whereas the original objectives of the festival was to make the Valley's apple industry better known throughout North America and Europe, to publicize the scenic beauty of the area and the historic background of Longfellow's Land of Evangeline, and to

provide an opportunity to foster and develop local talent through participation in festival events; and

Whereas in 1935, the festival was incorporated by the Provincial Legislature and is to this day the only festival that holds this status in the province and annually opens Nova Scotia's tourist season, and continues to enjoy national and international recognition;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival for Growing Together for 80 Years and wish them much success with future festivals.

RESOLUTION NO. 819

By Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

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

Whereas Cadance Academy is a dance school located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, and was founded by Linda Jess in 1979; and

Whereas today, owned by daughter Gaea Jess, Cadance Academy offers many different styles of dance, including ballet, jazz, modern, hip hop, zumba, and yoga; and

Whereas Cadance Academy is a performance school that encourages not only the creative development of all its students but the development of a strong technical foundation from which they are able to reach new heights;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Cadance Academy for allowing students of many ages to participate in many forms of dance, allowing the opportunity for physical activity, creativity, and a sense of pride and accomplishment.

RESOLUTION NO. 820

By Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

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

Whereas Denim Homes, located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, was named the Best Building/Renovation/Repair at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings Awards held on February 23, 2012, at Acadia University; and

Whereas Denim Homes, New Minas, produces award-winning homes that exhibit attention to detail and environmental consciousness; and

Whereas Denim Homes is also known for its outstanding customer service and is well respected for excellence and integrity;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Denim Homes for being named the Best Building/Renovations/Repair at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 821

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas Innovative Systems, located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, is a computer and phone solutions private company that services Atlantic Canada with three employees; and

Whereas Innovative Systems began a voluntary electronic recycling program before the Aces program officially started and joined Aces in 2006; and

Whereas the Aces program is supported very well by the community at large, resulting in the diversion of millions of kgs of electronic waste from landfills and prevents it from being shipped outside of Canada to be recycled, with twice-weekly pickups of electronic waste at Innovative Systems, generating 13,500 kg of electronic waste each month;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Innovative Systems for their initial voluntary electronic recycling program and for their important contribution in maintaining a clean environment for a better future.

RESOLUTION NO. 822

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas Jan Coates is a Wolfville author and teacher who was nominated for a Governor General's Literacy Award for her book *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk*; and

Whereas *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* is the story of Jacob Deng's journey as one of the lost boys of the Sudan; and

Whereas a percentage of the proceeds from this book go to support Wadeng Wings of Hope, a registered Canadian society dedicated to raising funds for children's education in the Southern Sudan;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Jan Coates for her nomination and for her efforts to help Jacob Deng and his organization raise funds for children's education in the Southern Sudan.

RESOLUTION NO. 823

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas the Women of Wolfville (WOW) presented their 11th annual production *More Than Words* the weekend of March 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2012, at the Atlantic Theatre Festival in Wolfville; and

Whereas this year's production explored the world of communication in all of its colours, quirks and contradictions; and

Whereas the Woman of Wolfville is a network of more than 350 women who, through their annual theatrical adventures since 2001, have raised close to \$200,000 for charities both locally and worldwide whose mandate is related to each production;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates the Women of Wolfville for their entertaining theatrical productions and their willingness to help charitable organizations locally and around the world.

RESOLUTION NO. 824

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas Jordan's Home Furnishing, located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, was named The Best Home Decor/Furniture Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings Awards held on February 23rd, 2012, at Acadia University; and

Whereas Jordan's Home Furnishings is a wonderful example of a small local family business that has grown and expanded over the 43 years that they have been in business; and

Whereas Jordan's Home Furnishing customer service and accommodations for their clients with disabilities place them above the rest;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Jordan's Home Furnishings for being named The Best Home Decor/Furniture Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 825

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas K-Rock was named The Best Media at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards evening held at the Fountain Commons, Acadia University, on February 23rd; and

Whereas K-Rock gives its listeners a choice in the type of music they can listen to and are very community-minded, especially with their annual food drive for local food banks; and

Whereas K-Rock has a very friendly and helpful staff that is willing to go the extra mile to help their clients;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates K-Rock for being named The Best Media at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 826

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas L'Arche, located in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, was named The Best Non-Profit Organization at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings Awards held on February 23, 2012, at Acadia University; and

Whereas L'Arche offers their clients a safe and secure environment in which they can be themselves; and

Whereas L'Arche clients are given the chance to learn and to grow and become the best they can be;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates L'Arche for being named The Best Non-Profit Organization at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 827

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas Sobeys, located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, was named The Best Grocery Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings Awards held on February 23, 2012, at Acadia University; and

Whereas Sobeys, New Minas, has grown and expanded to include locally grown produce, which supports our agricultural base in Kings County; and

Whereas Sobeys offers their customers a wide variety of products and services and the ability to request specific foods which allows them to make healthy food choices, based on their family's needs;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates Sobeys for being named The Best Grocery Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 828

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education)

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

Whereas The Swimwear Hut, located in New Minas, Nova Scotia, was recently named The Best Clothing Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings Awards held on February 23, 2012, at Acadia University; and

Whereas The Swimwear Hut offers its customers a variety of products in a variety of sizes, which allows the Swimwear Hut to be inclusive to all residents of Kings County and surrounding areas; and

Whereas the number one priority of The Swimwear Hut is excellent customer service, which results in many satisfied customers;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulates The Swimwear Hut for being named The Best Clothing Store at the Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce Best of Kings 2012 Awards.