



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

Fourth Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2012

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

SPEAKER'S RULING: Petitions - Format. Petitions have to ask for something, usually some sort of action by the House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine today I would like to read a ruling. Yesterday I advised the House that I wanted to look more closely at some of the petitions that were presented, as I thought they didn't sound like they were in proper form.

There were five petitions tabled. Three were in order as they were requesting various things - one was a petition for the repaving of a road; the second asked the House of Assembly to use its powers with respect to the URB; and the third was a petition to have a road paved. The other two, however, were not proper petitions to the House of Assembly. The first was entitled "Petition to the Electoral Boundaries Commission" and in the body of the petition it urged the Electoral Boundaries Commission to take certain action. It was not addressed to the House of Assembly. It did not request anything from the House of Assembly.

The second one was set out as a petition opposing the Electoral Boundaries Commission's recommendation. It was a statement of opposition to the commission, not a request to the House to take action. Petitions have to ask for something, usually some sort of action by the House of Assembly. I have made this clear on a number of occasions. These two petitions are out of order and I will have the Clerk return them to the members who tabled them. I want to repeat that there is a Web page on the Legislature Web site that clearly sets out the requirements for petitions. If improper petitions continue to be tabled, I will ask the Clerk to prepare and circulate a more detailed procedural note like the ones that I circulated on several issues last year.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. I wonder if you could look into the matter of a ruling on the propriety of a letter written by the honourable Minister of Justice on June 14, 2012, which I believe violates the privileges of the members of this House. The letter as discussed in Question Period - and I will table another copy - was written to the Electoral Boundaries Commission and gives firm direction. The minister neither sought nor received any direction from this House of Assembly in advance of sending the letter.

You, sir, advised the Electoral Boundaries Commission, on February 28, 2012, that they could accept no direction from anyone unless it came from the House itself. The commission is vested with authority by this Legislature but its principal mandate is established by the House of Assembly Act, it must be independent. Independence of such a body is a hallmark of modern democracy and is supposed to prevent political considerations from entering into the setting of boundaries. It is immaterial whether one agrees with the position of the minister as expressed in the letter; he simply had no right to send such a letter, as your own letter to the commission makes clear.

The law of the province and the enabling resolutions of this House and select committee of this House were violated by the letter issuing directions to the independent commission. Because the minister chose not to follow the rules and bypass the House, my privileges, and those of all members of this House, were breached. If members can do that, it's a horrible precedent, Mr. Speaker. It will be said that it will gut the concept of independence and usurp the role of the House. If Ministers of the Crown can instruct an independent body, where does it stop? What independent bodies will be next - other commissions, tribunals, adjudicative boards, courts?

If we allow it in this case, we open the door to future ministers saying whatever their opinion might be, right or wrong, in law or in fact, to whatever independent body and regardless of whether the House would share such a view. I, therefore, respectfully request that you find the minister breached my privileges as a member by taking it upon himself to give direction to a body of the House established to be independent of anyone's direction.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I know you will judge wisely and fairly. Quite simply put, the Minister of Justice acted well within the bounds of his office, within the direction that was given to the committee, and everything else, I would assert, put forward by the Progressive Conservative House Leader was just a bit of fluff to make it a little longer than what it should be. But I think when you look at it in its entirety, you will find out that the Minister of Justice acted well within the bounds of his office and nobody's privilege was violated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I would disagree, respectfully, with the Deputy Premier and agree with the member for Argyle. I think he has made a very strong case. I was a member of that select committee, with the member for Argyle, and your direction was very clear to the commission. I think that the most important part of this is not only for this boundary group going forward but, as well, as the member for Argyle has pointed out, it's for what happens with other similar independent committees. I think that your ruling is extremely important in this case and I know you will look into this very thoughtfully.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I will take the matter under advisement today and I will report back to the House as early as I can. I'll have my staff look into the matter. Thank you very much.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, of which the operating clause reads:

“The Nova Scotia Government is committed to protect 12% of crown land in Nova Scotia by 2015. At present approximately 38% of crown land in Southwest Nova is already under protection. (re: Tobetic Wilderness Area plus some others) The government is now proposing that another 100,000+ acres in Southwest Nova be protected.

We are asking the government for a moratorium on any further protected area in Southwest Nova as we feel we have already given our share.”

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature and there are 2,631 signatories on this petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause:

“WE, the undersigned electors, citizens and residents of the Province of Nova Scotia, draw the attention of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities to the following:

THAT: We are adamantly against any increase in the existing residential rate structure for Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI) and that we feel with the huge net profits collected by NSPI under existing rates, and the protection of the Fuel Adjustment Mechanism that NSPI currently enjoys, any increase to current residential rates is pure greed and usury on the part of NSPI and its shareholders.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 104 names on this part of the petition and I have affixed my signature.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Can I please see a copy of that? I just want to know if there's an ask of the House of Assembly on that petition.

I think there is an ask of the House of Assembly on this petition, but it wasn't said by the honourable member when he read the petition. I would ask the honourable member, is this a part of the petition that was read yesterday in the House of Assembly?

MR. GLAVINE: Yes, it is.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. I think there's a precedent-setting case here. I looked into this last night, at tabling parts of a petition. I think I'll ask my staff to look into tabling parts of petitions in the House of Assembly, and I will report back to the House as early as next week on this issue, okay? Thank you.

I would ask all the honourable members if I could have a little bit of silence when they are reading petitions. It's very difficult to hear the operative clause and hear what the ask of the House of Assembly is with all the chatter going on.

The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition. The operative clause reads as follows:

“The undersigned use Weaver Road extension, consider the road to be in extremely poor condition, and call on the Provincial Government to repair and repave the street.”

It has been signed by 34 citizens of the area, and I have added my signature to the document.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1449

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

Whereas Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day, or BRA Day, is an initiative designed to promote education, awareness, and access for women who may wish to consider post-mastectomy breast reconstruction; and

Whereas this decision to have breast reconstruction surgery is extremely personal and is about helping women heal from the emotional and physical scars of breast cancer; and

Whereas BRA Day was first celebrated in Canada, and now in America, every October 17th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in acknowledging every October 17th as Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day and continue to spread awareness about this important date.

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. 100 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Review of the Green Energy Equipment Tax Credit in Manitoba for Implementation in Nova Scotia. (Mr. Andrew Younger)

Bill No. 101 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Public Utilities Act. (Mr. Andrew Younger)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1450

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 Scotians are struggling under this NDP Government and are facing layoffs and job insecurity due to the mismanagement of the economy; and

Whereas the NDP Government seems only able to write big cheques to big companies, with \$590 million handed out to six companies alone; and

Whereas in total, those companies laid off over 1,300 Nova Scotians after cashing the cheques handed to them by the Premier;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Sackville-Cobequid urge the Premier to rethink his failed model of corporate handouts and work to diversify the provincial economy, and remind him that a strong economy is a diversified economy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1451

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

Whereas October is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the valuable contributions made by women and girls throughout our history; and

Whereas the theme of this year's celebration is centred around the important roles that Canadian women have played as innovators throughout our history; and

Whereas October 11th marked the world's first International Day of the Girl, declared by the United Nations in an effort to give a powerful voice to girls and young women to make changes in their families, communities, and others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Women's History Month and International Day of the Girl, and encourage women everywhere to make a difference and add to the invaluable contributions made by women before them.

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. 1452

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

Whereas Custio Clayton, a 24-year-old boxer from the community of North Preston began his boxing career at the age of nine, having his first amateur bout at the age of 11, and winning his first of three national championships at the age of 13 years; and

Whereas he qualified for the Olympics this past May, with a fifth-place finish in the 69-kilogram class at the American zone qualifiers in Brazil; and

Whereas he earned the right to represent Canada in the London Olympics and won his first bout against Mexico, his second bout against Australia, and lost the decision to Great Britain in his third bout, after ending up even on the judges' point counts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in recognizing the excellent contribution that Custio Clayton made to boxing for Canada and for his home Province of Nova Scotia.

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

I would like to say one other thing about this young gentleman if I could. He's an incredible sportsman, his reaction at the Olympics when he lost - and it was in the paper - the whole story about it is incredible. When you sit down and talk to him you realize what kind of a quality representative he is for our community, for the province, and indeed for Canada. We don't often see individuals of his character and calibre at any level, at any professional situation we see, so I would like to personally thank him - and I know the members of the Legislature would - for the excellent job he has done representing our province and our country.

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.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président - thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce a number of people in the gallery today - j'aimerais faire une introduction de quelques membres dans l'Assemblée aujourd'hui. I'll ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. Justin Mury, président or president of the Acadian Federation, président de la FANE; Marie-Claude Rioux, directrice générale de la FANE; Cyrilda Poirier, Fédération des

francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador - from Newfoundland and Labrador; Brigitte Schmit, Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Ecosse; Karine LaHaie, Fédération des Femmes; et Lorraine Plourde, Réseau acadien des sites PAC. I'd like to give them the warm welcome of the House and thank them for being here. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1453

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

Attendu que le 16 septembre à Greenwood, Paul Moulaison de la Rivière-Abram a été officiellement admis au Temple de la renommée de la musique country de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que il y a presque 60 ans que Paul joue de la musique et continue encore autant qu'il peut aujourd'hui pour des prélèvements de fonds pour ceux et celles en besoin; et

Attendu que Paul a travaillé pour 41 ans à bord du MV Bluenose comme un cuisinier et continue aujourd'hui à travailler à temps partiel dans un restaurant local;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent Paul Moulaison pour avoir été admis au Temple de la renommée de la musique country de la Nouvelle-Écosse et souhaite le succès continu et la bonne santé à l'avenir.

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

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

Whereas on September 16th in Greenwood, Paul Moulaison, from Abram's River was officially inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Paul has been playing music for almost 60 years and continues to do so as often as he can but usually for benefits to assist people in need; and

Whereas Paul worked for 41 years aboard the MV Bluenose as a cook, and continues to work part-time as a cook at a local restaurant;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Paul Moulaison on his induction into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame, and wish him continued good health and success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1454

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

Whereas Gloria McCluskey has a distinguished history representing the citizens of Dartmouth, first as an alderman, the Deputy Mayor, and currently serves as councillor for District 5 Dartmouth Centre; and

Whereas before entering politics Gloria McCluskey was appointed as the first female accredited appraiser in Nova Scotia by the Appraisal Institute of Canada in 1972; and

Whereas on October 14, 2012, Ms. McCluskey was awarded an honorary degree by Saint Mary's University for her contribution to public service as both a politician and her work in the community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Gloria McCluskey for her continued commitment and dedication to the people of Dartmouth, and join me in congratulating her on this well-deserved 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.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1455

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

Whereas Kenneth Carmichael from Sydney River placed eighth in the Great Canadian Geography Challenge; and

Whereas Kenneth is a student at Malcolm Munroe Junior High School, with an avid interest in geography; and

Whereas this is Kenneth's second consecutive top-10 finish in the Great Canadian Geography Challenge;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kenneth Carmichael and wish him well with his future education.

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. 1456

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

Whereas Jason McCoombs is a Canadian sprint canoeist who races at the Banook Canoe Club in Dartmouth; and

Whereas Jason represented Canada this past summer at the 2012 Olympic Games held in London, England; and

Whereas Jason competed in the C-1 200 metres at Eton Dorney and finished fifth in the B Final;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jason on his outstanding achievements in London and wish him all the best as he prepares for Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

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. 1457

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

Whereas Denise Joyce organized an event called Love Yourself this past summer in Sydney Mines, after she encountered many women who had a bad self-image of themselves; and

Whereas Denise organized a special photo and video shoot at the Pitt Street ball field, with Life and Healing Energy Coach Denise Pilon-Morrison as guest speaker; and

Whereas close to 500 women attended and left feeling empowered, and increased their self-esteem and self-awareness at this event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the 500 women that Denise Joyce was able to empower and hope that her event will become an annual tradition in Sydney Mines.

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. 1458

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

Whereas Clarence Bentley Sutherland applied to the Royal Canadian Air Force seven times before being accepted because of an eye defect; and

Whereas Larry Sutherland flew 35 missions during the Second World War as a rear gunner in a Lancaster heavy bomber, flying all but one mission at night, participated in nine of the 19 infamous Berlin raids, became known as Canada's heavy-bomber air-gunner ace, and received two Distinguished Flying Medals for service to his country; and

Whereas Sutherland, at age 89, was given a final salute at his burial service at the Crossroads Cemetery in Valley, Colchester North, this summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express our sorrow at the death of this World War II hero, who performed so many amazing and dangerous feats in the service of his country.

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. 1459

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

Whereas each year the flu affects between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of Canadians and results in an average of 20,000 hospitalizations each year; and

Whereas Nova Scotians recognize October as Influenza Immunization Awareness Month, to remind Nova Scotians to take preventive measures and protect themselves by getting a flu shot; and

Whereas more Nova Scotians would have access to life-saving flu shots if the NDP Government followed through on their commitment to allow pharmacists to administer the flu shot;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage Nova Scotians to get their flu shot and encourage the NDP Government to follow through on a commitment that could help save lives.

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. 1460

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

Whereas the Coal Shed Music Festival took place from August 16th to 19th and August 23rd to 26th in Yarmouth; and

Whereas this year's Coal Shed Music Festival was the largest one to date, featuring over 100 musical acts over an eight-day period on the Coal Shed stage at the Killam Brothers Wharf on Yarmouth's beautiful waterfront; and

Whereas Phil DeMille created the event as a fundraiser for the Yarmouth Food Bank and dedicates so much of his time and energy to organizing the festival, which last year raised almost \$10,000 for the Yarmouth Food Bank and local school breakfast programs;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize Phil DeMille for his tireless efforts in organizing the Coal Shed Music Festival and thank him for his dedication to his community, especially to those in need.

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. 1461

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

Whereas Wayne Folker first ran for a seat on Hantsport Town Council in 1972, at the tender age of 38; and

Whereas Folker served his initial 13 years as a councillor and deputy mayor before leaving for six years, between 1985 and 1991; and

Whereas Folker then returned to active municipal politics in Hantsport in 1991, when he began serving as the town's mayor, a position he held for the next 21 years before deciding not to reoffer this Fall;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Wayne Folker of Hantsport for his distinguished leadership over the course of 34 years of municipal politics in Hantsport, while wishing him and his wife Carolyn the very best in their retirement years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1462

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

Whereas on Tuesday, June 26, 2012, a ceremony was held on the Digby waterfront to honour retired judge John R. Nichols; and

Whereas the 2012 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award was presented to Nichols for his contributions to the community in both organizations and career; and

Whereas Nichols continues to be active in many organizations, confirming that he indeed deserves the 2012 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating John R. Nichols on this award and wish him all the best in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1463

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

Whereas 22 Nova Scotia students have been chosen to receive the 2012 Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarships; and

Whereas the scholarship is designed to develop home-grown expertise by encouraging Nova Scotia students to pursue careers in the energy sector; and

Whereas Katherine Kaiser, a graduate of Baddeck Academy presently enrolled in Dalhousie University, is one of the proud recipients of this award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Katherine and all recipients of the Pengrowth scholarships and wish them the best in 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 member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1464

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

Whereas yesterday's decision by the National Research Council, the Government of Canada's premier organization for research and development, to close the NRC's medical device lab in Halifax came as a shock to our province; and

Whereas the loss of this lab will hurt medical school training, will result in the loss of expertise and leading-edge technology, and will have a significant impact on those life sciences companies that are truly making a difference in the health and well-being of not only Nova Scotians but of people all over the world; and

Whereas the life sciences industry in Nova Scotia is a significant contributor to our economy, with the research component of the industry employing 2,365 employees with a total payroll of over \$135 million;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature acknowledge the importance of this critical piece of research infrastructure to our province by putting pen to paper and writing both the National Research Council and the Prime Minister outlining both our disappointment of this decision and requesting reconsideration of this short-sighted decision.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1465

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

Whereas in the past year Nova Scotia has shed 8,600 full-time jobs and some areas of the province have unemployment rates of 15 per cent; and

Whereas the Extended Employment Insurance Benefits pilot project increased income support by providing an additional five weeks of benefits to a maximum of 45 weeks in 21 economic regions across Canada; and

Whereas the federal government concluded this program in mid-September;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House call on the federal government to reconsider the conclusion of the Extended Employment Insurance Benefits program, especially in regions that continue to suffer from high unemployment, as many in NDP-led provinces do.

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. 1466

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

Whereas the Premier has handed out over \$0.5 billion in taxpayer money to six companies with no job guarantees and with no assurance that taxpayers will ever see this money again; and

Whereas the Premier has written these multi-million dollar cheques to big corporations at the same time as he has hiked fees and taxes and gutted essential programs such as education; and

Whereas after receiving over \$0.5 billion in taxpayers' money, three of these companies shut down or went bankrupt, one of them is on the brink of closure, and all six laid off employees;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage remind the Premier that he cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations and that he must end his corporate handouts and begin work on growing the economies of this province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1467

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

Whereas October is Lupus Awareness Month; and

Whereas lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that affects more than one in 1,000 Canadians; and

Whereas while no cure for lupus yet exists, research has come a long way in providing proper treatment and helping individuals affected by this disease live healthier lives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend those working hard to uncover a cure for this disease and thank the many volunteers with Lupus Canada for raising awareness.

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. 1468

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

Whereas throughout the years, family-operated businesses have become a tradition in Nova Scotia and have served the needs of community residents; and

Whereas Homer Barnhill purchased what became Barnhill's General Store in Debert, Colchester North, in 1921, his son Wendell took over the store in 1961, and then his son Randy in 1983; and

Whereas the building of the military base at Camp Debert kept the business busy, especially during World War II, and by diversifying services the business continues to prosper;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Barnhill family for their service to the community and for carrying on the tradition of the family-run local business.

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. 1469

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

Whereas Scouts Apple Day is a traditional fundraising event that began in Canada;
and

Whereas Apple Day is an annual event that provides scouting youth with an opportunity to show their appreciation to the general public for their support throughout the year; and

Whereas any money raised during Apple Day goes towards improving the scouting program through registration fee subsidies, outings, camping equipment, training and many other endeavours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly support the scouting movement in Nova Scotia by enjoying an apple and giving generously to the hundreds of scouting youth who are taking part in Apple Day efforts.

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. 1470

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

Whereas Lionel Landry has been a dedicated supporter and volunteer of the Yarmouth Liberal Association and has been a proud Liberal for over 50 years; and

Whereas Mr. Landry always arrives at meetings and events, happy to lend a kind word and a helping hand; and

Whereas Mr. Landry's dedication to his Party has been the source of inspiration and support to many candidates as they seek office and those who have held office;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Lionel Landry for his dedication and commitment to the Yarmouth Liberal Association, the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, the Liberal Party of Canada, and his devotion to the welfare of his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1471

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 dedication and official return of the St. Paul Island Southwest Light took place on August 4, 2012; and

Whereas the original St. Paul Island Southwest Lighthouse was erected in 1839 and after a fire, was later replaced in 1917 with a steel cylindrical lighthouse; and

Whereas St. Paul Island Southwest Lighthouse now stands in its home port overlooking St. Paul Island, known as the Graveyard of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as Canada's first heritage lighthouse;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the St. Paul Island Heritage Society Board for their dedication and commitment to preserving and safeguarding Canada's first heritage lighthouse and having it in its rightful place.

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. 1472

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 Premier has handed out over \$500 million in taxpayers money to six companies, with no job guarantees, with no assurance that taxpayers will ever see this money again; and

Whereas the Premier has written multi-million dollar cheques to big corporations at the same time he has hiked taxes and fees and gutted essential programs such as education; and

Whereas after receiving \$500 million in taxpayers money, three of them shut down or went bankrupt, one of them is on the brink of closure and all six have laid off employees;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Chester-St. Margaret's still supports the Premier even though the Premier has proven he cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations, he must end his corporate handouts and begin to work on growing the economy in communities across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1473

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

Whereas the Rotary Club of North Sydney celebrated 75 years of service this summer, highlighted by a number of fun filled days at the annual regatta; and

Whereas all funds that were raised go to a number of community projects like the local hospital foundation, Project Overseas, and Camp Tidnish in Amherst that is available to any Nova Scotian with physical disability over the age of six; and

Whereas a multitude of events of North Sydney Yacht Club and copious amounts of food were enjoyed by all who attended;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly salute the North Sydney Rotary Club for its years of community service.

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. 1474

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

Whereas the Premier has handed out over \$0.5 billion in taxpayer money to six companies, with no job guarantees and no assurance that taxpayers will ever see this money again; and

Whereas the Premier has written these multi-million dollar cheques to big corporations at the same time that he has hiked taxes and fees and gutted essential programs such as education; and

Whereas after receiving over \$0.5 billion in taxpayers' money, three of them shut down or went bankrupt, one of them is on the brink of closure, and all six laid off employees;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Dartmouth South-Portland Valley remind the Premier that he cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations and that he must end his corporate handouts and begin working on growing the economies in communities across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1475

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

Whereas each year the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment gives several awards to individuals, businesses, and organizations within three states and two provinces that border the gulf; and

Whereas the council is a partnership of American and Canadian governmental and non-government organizations working to maintain and enhance the environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine; and

Whereas with the Bay of Fundy being part of the gulf, Roger Outhouse of Freeport received a Visionary Award from the council for his role in maintaining and enhancing environmental quality;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Roger Outhouse on his impressive award and wish him all the best in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1476

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

On a tha, dualchas agus canan nan Gaidheal a' toirt trichead muileann dolaires do'n eaconomaidh Albainn Nuaidh; agus

On is e, gnìomhan na seann riaghaltasain a rinn gainnead ann an aireamh nan Gaidheal; agus

On a tha buaidh neo-thriseil ann an gleidheadh canan a bh'anns ar duthaich bho thus mar a bhruidhneadh le a' cheud prìomh ministear Sir Iain A. Domhnallach, agus fear a bha na Thriomhair ann an Alba Nuaidh Aonghas L. Domhnallach;

Mar sin cuireamaid romhinn, gur aithne do'n riaghaltas naiseanta an fhiach a bheir gaidhlig agus dualchasan eile do Chanada agus d'a muinntir.

Whereas the Gaelic language and culture contribute \$32 million each year to the Nova Scotia economy; and

Whereas the decline of the Gaelic language came as a result of policies of previous government agencies; and

Whereas there is priceless value in maintaining a founding language of our country, spoken by our Father of Confederation and Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, and former Nova Scotia Premier Angus L. Macdonald;

Therefore be it resolved that the federal government recognize the value Gaelic and other ethnic languages bring to Canada and her people.

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. 1477

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

Whereas Bob Beattie of Aylesford was recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Lieutenant Governor; and

Whereas Bob has been serving as an RCMP auxiliary constable for over 10 years, first in Berwick and then at the Kingston RCMP detachment; and

Whereas Bob has served in a volunteer capacity for the Apple Blossom Festival, Gala Days, and also Remembrance Day, and amasses 400 to 500 hours per year;

Therefore be it resolved the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Auxiliary Constable Bob Beattie for his dedication to the Valley community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1478

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

Whereas October 18th is commemorated as Persons Day to remember the famous case where women were finally recognized as persons under Canadian law in 1929; and

Whereas this case challenged the definition of “persons,” which had been used to bar women from appointment to the Senate; and

Whereas women across Canada owe a tremendous debt to the five Albertan women known as the Famous Five, who had the courage and determination to take this case to the highest court of appeal and establish the rights of women in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House, and especially the women of this Assembly, acknowledge the huge contribution of the Famous Five - Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy, and Henrietta Edwards - to the rights and privileges of women in Canada.

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.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 94.

Bill No. 94 - House of Assembly Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Attorney General.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 94 be now read for a second time. It is my pleasure today to talk to an amendment to the House of Assembly Act. The changes I am introducing today implement changes recommended by the department's Electoral Boundaries Commission.

This is the third time since 1991 that such a commission has been established to review and provide recommendations to the House of Assembly on Nova Scotia's electoral boundaries. Mr. Speaker, this independent review is required under legislation. The House of Assembly Act requires that a review be conducted every 10 years to ensure that legislative representation keeps pace with population growth and movement.

The most recent Electoral Boundaries Commission was appointed in December 2011. Its mandate was to establish no more than 52 seats that would allow each voter in the province to enjoy the same relative voting power to the greatest extent possible. The commission was directed to ensure all constituencies fall within 25 per cent of the average number of electors. There is no doubt that this was a difficult job, and on behalf of all the members of this House I thank the commission for its work completing its report.

Nova Scotians have strong feelings about their communities, and that's a good thing. The commission gave Nova Scotians the opportunity to share their views on electoral boundaries. The feedback was mixed. The very reactions and opinions of communities and individuals certainly made the commission's work even more challenging. Despite these challenges, the commission delivered a final report that met the legally-binding terms of reference set by the all-Party legislative committee.

Again, I want to thank the commission. This was important work that directly impacts Nova Scotia's democratic process. The final report made recommendations on which these legislative changes are based, and included reducing the number of seats in the Legislature by one to 51, removing one constituency from Cape Breton and two from mainland Nova Scotia, establishing two new constituencies for the Halifax area, and adjusting the boundaries in all remaining constituencies.

I don't think I need to go into these changes in any more detail than I have, as I'm sure every member of this House has already reviewed the commission report in full. I will say that this government believes in the values of relative voting parity and effective representation. We believe that every Nova Scotian's vote, regardless where he or she lives, should be worth roughly the same, recognizing that minor deviations may be necessary to allow for effective representation.

The Nova Scotia before us today and the one to come looks much different than it looked 10 years ago when the last Boundaries Commission was doing its work. Changes in population call for shifts in legislative representation. The existing electoral boundaries maintain seats that are much smaller than the provincial average. Some would say this isn't fair, and that's one of the reasons that legislation requires an independent review every 10 years.

Every Nova Scotian deserves to be fairly and equitably represented in the House of Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with mixed feelings that I rise in my place as the member for Richmond and the House Leader of the Liberal caucus to speak on Bill No. 94.

Before I get into my comments I want to start with some of the reactions that I received in my riding of Richmond County which, as you know, in 1992 was established as one of the protected ridings due to its Acadian culture and to encourage Acadian representation in the House of Assembly.

When my constituents saw how this process was unfolding and this government's attack on the Acadian communities by wanting to get rid of our voice here in the Legislature their reaction was: What did we do? What did we do to Premier Dexter? What did we do to this NDP Government? How did we make them mad? Why did we upset them? Tell us, what was it we did? Because, as I will point out in my remarks, and anyone who has looked at the statistics of the last number of provincial elections, myself being quite familiar with the last five elections which I've participated in, but other than one election, the top three ridings with voter turnout in participation have been Clare, Argyle, and Richmond.

Out of 52 ridings in the Province of Nova Scotia the top three which has changed amongst the three of us as to who had the highest voter turnout, was Clare, Argyle and Richmond - the protected Acadian constituencies.

The Acadian people are saying why are we under attack in a time when voter turnout is low throughout the province, especially in the metropolitan areas. We've been going out 70 per cent, 75 per cent - in one election I believe Clare had 87 per cent voter turnout - something to be celebrated, an example for the rest of the province. (Applause) Yet this government turns around and somehow says that's not fair. Voter participation - in fact, some of the members on the government side were elected with 46 per cent and 47 per cent voter turnout and I have never been elected with less than 70 per cent voter turnout in Richmond County. Somehow a 46 per cent, or 49 per cent, or 50 per cent voter turnout is equal to the 87 per cent voter turnout. How can the Minister of Justice stand in his place

and somehow try to convince Nova Scotians that he's the new, self-proclaimed, patron saint of voter equality in Nova Scotia? Mr. Speaker, it's ridiculous.

I had an opportunity to chair the Select Committee on Participation in the Democratic Process, where we went around the province to try to find ways of encouraging Nova Scotians to vote and, again, the Acadian example was set out and said why is it that Acadians are going out to vote in such high numbers? Well I submit to you why I think they do that, Mr. Speaker - because the Acadians see the protected ridings not as a privilege, but as a right and a right that is not to be abused or neglected, but a right that is to be preserved. And there is no better way to preserve that than to turn out at election time and send a clear message that Acadians don't take these protected ridings for granted. Instead, we're going to go out and vote in large numbers and send a clear signal that this is an important part of our culture, it's an important part of our heritage, it's an important part of our identity and, more importantly, it's an important part of our future. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, let me start - let me continue, I should say, by going to a bit of the history of what brought us here today. Nova Scotia, as a province, does not have a glowing history when it comes to drawing electoral boundaries in the past. The term "gerrymandering" is one that has been thrown around in this Legislature in years gone by because of the fact that the government of the day would in essence decide what electoral boundaries were going to look like. To their credit, in 1992 the government of the day in Nova Scotia said, we need to change the way we draw electoral boundaries. We need to take this out of the hands of the elected officials and put it in the hands of independent Nova Scotians to redraw the boundaries, which is in the best interests of communities, not in the best interests of politicians.

Mr. Speaker, that was an historic day for our province. In 1992, a Select Committee of this House was struck, terms of reference were put in place, and the committee went to do its work. What was unique in the terms of reference in 1992 was that the Legislature unanimously said, the select committee at the time said we want to put in a special clause. We want to put in a clause that says that while we expect relative parity of voting power, which means that for the most part you try to make ridings of equal size in voters, they said we want to go a step further because in Nova Scotia we're proud of our history, we're proud of our cultures, we're proud of our identity.

At the time, the Select Committee decided that they wanted to try to encourage representation by Acadians, by African Nova Scotians, and by our First Nations' communities. So as part of that they said, while we expect no ridings will go beyond a 25 per cent variance in size, they added an extraordinary circumstance clause that said to the independent commission, you can establish ridings that are beyond the 25 per cent - mostly below the 25 per cent - if it is to help encourage Acadian representation, African Nova Scotian representation, or First Nations' representation.

In 1992 the independent commission which was supported by all the Parties of the day came back with the recommendation that the ridings of Clare, Argyle and Richmond should be given protected status for the encouragement of Acadian representation in the House of Assembly. The riding of Preston was created for the encouragement of the representation of African Nova Scotians in the House of Assembly and at that time, it was decided that a seat would be set aside for the First Nations' community to decide whether they wanted to have a representative from the First Nations' community here in the House of Assembly. Now, we know that the First Nations' community to date have decided not to exercise that right of having a designated seat here in the House of Assembly. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, I hear the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism over there and I want to touch on what he's saying. When that commission decided to protect Clare, Argyle, Richmond and Preston, at no point did that commission say this is a guarantee that you're going to have Acadians in the Legislature and you're going to have members of the African Nova Scotian community. It's impossible. In a free and democratic society, you can't guarantee who is going to be elected by the population and we would never want to see the day where that is the case. Yet what it allowed was for those minority communities within those ridings to strengthen their voting power so that they had the choice of whether they wanted to elect an Acadian or an African Nova Scotian but if they did not, they still knew that they had voting power. So regardless of who they elected, that minority would have the voting power to hold their member accountable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you . . .

AN. HON. MEMBER: He speaks up then he leaves the room, that's nice.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It is unparliamentary for members to be hollering out whether a member is in the Chamber or outside of the Chamber - the member for Richmond did not say that, the other members in the caucus. I would remind all members that you cannot say whether a member is in the Chamber or outside of the Chamber.

The honourable member for Richmond.

MR. SAMSON: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that clarification for all of my colleagues, I can't imagine who they were referring to.

Let me address the comments made by the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, who I am sure is listening very attentively. For the government today to suggest that the riding of Preston is not working, I believe is offensive. To say that the riding of Preston would only work if there was an African-Nova Scotian elected, is not what the commission ever intended. To tell the people of Preston that they're not getting proper representation because they do not have someone from the African-Nova Scotian community as their MLA, I think, is a disservice to that community. It's a disservice to all

Nova Scotians for the government, the Premier, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism or anyone else over there to make that claim.

Mr. Speaker, when Richmond was first put as a protected riding in 1992, at the time we were represented by the Honourable Richie Mann. Richie Mann was not an Acadian but I'll tell you this, Richie Mann was probably one of the strongest defenders of the Acadian culture who stood in this House of Assembly. One of the main reasons why - I'm sure personally he had that commitment to the Acadian community - he also knew the voting power that existed within the confines of Richmond County within the Acadian community. That was part of the voting power.

I don't think any Acadian would have said at the time that we're not getting good representation because we're a protected riding and we don't have an Acadian representing us. No one ever said that and I'd never stand in my place to say it because Acadians had a great amount of respect for the work that Richie Mann did, the work that he did in supporting cultural centres such as Centre La Picasse, which could not have been done without his support. So to suggest today that Preston is not working is to say that Richmond didn't work from 1993 to 1998 because it didn't have an Acadian representing it. That is offensive to me, it is offensive to the people of Richmond County, just as it should be offensive and it is offensive to the people of Preston to make that type of suggestion.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a free and democratic society where people are free to choose who they vote for. For the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to say, well, each Party should make sure their candidate comes from a certain culture or a certain background, what does that say for our free and democratic process, where we tell our Party members that if you want to stand for office to represent our Party, here are the rules?

Now maybe the NDP have different rules that they are prepared to share with us as to their candidate process and what the rules are for their candidates in Preston or in Richmond or in Argyle. What is interesting, when I hear the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism - who I am sure is listening very attentively after his earlier remarks - I ran in five elections in Richmond County and the candidate for the NDP in those five elections never once was an Acadian, never once was it someone who could speak French. That is who the NDP put as their candidate.

Now, did anyone in Richmond say, that's terrible, they should be putting an Acadian? The people of Richmond County never said that because whoever wanted to run for the NDP had a process to follow and were free to do so. So it's hypocritical to turn around and say that the Liberals and the Tories should make sure their candidate meets a certain criteria when the government has not done it themselves, and I've never suggested that they should. It's a hollow argument, it's an unfortunate argument and I think it does nothing to strengthen our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, that was in 1992. In 2002, 10 years later, an independent commission was struck. The terms of reference were, in essence, identical to what was done in 1992. Again, the goal was that all ridings should be within 25 per cent but there was a clause that said extraordinary circumstances could exist to go beyond that 25 per cent. What are those extraordinary circumstances? They were representation for the Acadian community, for the African-Nova Scotian community, for geographical size, communities of interest. Ironically, geographical size was applied to the riding of Guysborough, which is a massive riding, and they looked at that as a special consideration.

During that process, while I was not named as a member of that committee, I had the opportunity to attend many of its meetings because at the time our Government House Leader was a member of the committee and the House was sitting and due to his schedule I was asked to participate, so I had the opportunity to attend most of the public meetings that took place, the work of the select committee itself, and to follow through on what the independent boundaries commission did.

During their interim report, the commission had recommended that the riding of Richmond lose its protected status and that the Town of Port Hawkesbury be added to the riding of Richmond. This question was looked at and what happened was that residents of Richmond County, representatives of the Acadian Federation, had the opportunity to come forward and make their arguments. At the end of the day the commission looked, and I believe it had its eyes opened as to how important these ridings were to the Acadian culture, the Acadian identity, and in their final report they said keep Richmond as it is. So we still have the protected ridings of Clare, Argyle, Richmond and Preston.

At the time, the amount of voters in those four protected ridings was less than it was back in 1992. Unfortunately that's a trend that continues to this day. At the time it again received unanimous approval of the House. You can check media reports, I don't believe you'll ever find where any member of the House would say there was political interference in 1992 or in 2002.

That brings us 10 years later, 2011; we have to prepare for the review that will take place in 2012. Looking back, it's almost as if this government got caught by surprise. That even though it's mandated to take place every 10 years, which should be of no surprise to anyone, the way they came about doing this almost seemed as though they were caught off guard and they were rushing to get it done.

I was named as a member of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly. My colleague for Dartmouth East was also a member of the Select Committee. I believe the Government House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party, the honourable member for Argyle, and the member for Victoria-The Lakes were also part of that Select Committee.

It was ironic that when we first met, I was actually the only member who had been involved in the process 10 years previously so I had the opportunity to provide what I like to think of as a bit of guidance to the Chair, who was new to this whole process, to ensure we were able to do this in a fair, impartial manner, as was done the previous two times.

One of the first mandates we had was to draft the terms of reference. This is what would guide the independent commission. That's the language that's used, that they are to be guided by the terms of reference. That's an argument we'll come back to. I think you're going to hear that quite a few times in this Chamber.

What we went through was a series of draft reports and through those draft reports there were some minor changes made. When we started, the government's position was they wanted the variance to be 20 per cent. Well, 20 per cent is a change from the two previous commissions, which used 25 per cent. You might ask, what's the difference of 5 per cent? I can tell you, if you represent rural Nova Scotia that 5 per cent makes a big difference. If you represent a riding like Guysborough, 5 per cent makes a big difference. If you represent Victoria-The Lakes, 5 per cent makes a big difference. If you represent Queens or Shelburne, 5 per cent makes a big difference.

Both our caucus and the Progressive Conservative caucus said we feel it should stay at the 25 per cent. To their credit, the government agreed. So we went through draft one; then we went through draft two, and then draft three. The government changed from the 20 per cent to 25 per cent based on what we had agreed. Draft four - I'll give you a sense of the language used, allow me to assist - this is draft four that we went through in determining the terms of reference.

The way it is written is - I'll give an example. In Clause 2(f) under the terms of reference, it says, "A constituency may not deviate by a variance greater or less than 20 per cent from the average number of electors per constituency." That 20 per cent eventually got changed to 25 per cent, so it says right there, you can't go beyond the variance.

In the next Clause, 2(g) says "Deviations from parity of voting power are only justified on the grounds they contribute to better governance." That is the extraordinary circumstances clause, that's the clause that was in in 2002 and that's the clause that was in in 1992. So, as we were going along, we had agreed to change the 20 per cent to 25 per cent, we had the same extraordinary circumstances clause, looking at communities of interest, linguistic, culture, geography; that was all in there. To our surprise, Draft 5 showed up.

Based on the discussions we have had, the only change that had been agreed to was to move the 20 per cent to 25 per cent. So we looked at Draft 5, there didn't appear to be any difference, this is all fairly technical language, then we had Draft 6, Draft 7 and I believe it said Draft 8. When we got to Draft 8 and came to look at it a bit closer we said, wait a minute, what happened to Clause 2(g) that allows the deviation based on culture,

language, geography, communities of interest? It had disappeared. There had been no discussion at the committee stage, where representatives are there for all of the caucuses, so maybe it was a typographical error, maybe the Clerk's Office had made an error, human error is acceptable, it happens. The question became, who gave the instructions to remove that clause from the terms of reference?

Yesterday, the Premier, in his response to the member for Argyle pretty much said, we caught you sleeping, yeah, you didn't notice. We put that there, it was right under your nose and you didn't notice. That reminded me when I was thinking this morning, I remember one of the first budgets that the Hamm Government brought in and they had made a number of cuts throughout government. When it came time for the budget debate, they refused to tell anyone where they had cut. The Premier famously said, it's up to the Opposition to ferret it out, to go line by line and try to figure out where we had made the cuts. The NDP, who were the Official Opposition of the day, railed against that, it's terrible that a government would try to do this, to try to pass something through the House without openly telling the elected members exactly what was going on. Yet yesterday to hear the Premier say, well we caught you napping and it was right there and you didn't notice. What kind of way is that to govern? What kind of a way is that to tell Nova Scotians that we take this democracy seriously, we take the process of drawing electoral boundaries seriously?

I was trying to think this morning of what language would be parliamentary or unparliamentary and you'll guide me through this, but basically the message yesterday from the Premier in all essence was, we tricked you, it was right there under your nose. So two things, I immediately said: Who gave the instructions, because we didn't have any discussion here, the notes will reflect there were no discussions, who gave the instructions? The chairman was not available at the time, so we had an acting chairman and that acting chairman is the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

The acting chairman sent an e-mail to the Clerks, instructing them to make those changes and to remove that clause from the terms of reference. There was absolutely no debate on it, instead there were instructions coming from the government caucus. Mr. Speaker, that is not a way to govern. It's not a way to do boundaries in an independent and impartial process, but that's how it happened. So you had the acting chairman send instructions with absolutely no authority to make those changes.

Let's look at the time frame of when these meetings were taking place. When the Premier says, you guys should have noticed, you should have raised it earlier, keep in mind the government has a majority on this committee, so whether we noticed it early or not really was irrelevant. But when were these meetings taking place? I'm just going to highlight the last three, to give you a sense: Wednesday, December 14th, well I can't imagine what else somebody would be doing on that day other than focusing on terms of reference for a Boundaries Commission; Friday, December 23rd, again, can't see how any members of the House would be distracted by anything other than the terms of reference

for the Boundaries Commission. What else would you be doing on Friday, December 23rd than focusing on the terms of reference for the Electoral Boundaries Commission?

Now we'll have more debate on this, but our meetings were in camera, but they were transcribed, Hansard was there. I learned this morning that apparently we can't get copies of those transcripts, which I believe, Mr. Speaker, will be a question we'll be putting to you to do a ruling on, as to why, when it was agreed by all of us that these meetings should be transcribed, we're now being told you can't get access and Nova Scotians can't get access.

Mr. Speaker, the only reason we did meetings in camera was because we were talking about individuals who might be appointed to the commission, in order to protect their privacy. But the rest, the terms of reference and everything else, certainly I see no reason why they should be held in secret.

So here we are on Friday, December 23rd, and we're looking at the draft and saying, well wait a minute, the extraordinary circumstances clause is gone - who gave the authority to do this?

So, Mr. Speaker, during the discussion, to give you a sense of what was going on - this is the morning of Friday, December 23rd, the government closes at noon on Friday, December 23rd. I remember while we're having this debate, myself, the member for Argyle, the member for Dartmouth East, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, who can't understand how such a change was made when no debate took place in a parliamentary democracy - the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour was very helpful in saying, look, why don't you guys hurry it up there because the civil servants have to go home, this government closes at noon so why don't you hurry this up? Maybe that's why they don't want the transcripts to be released, because that was the government response - from Acadian members, from elected members who say this isn't fair the way this was done - hurry it up, guys, hurry it up, staff has to go home. That's how this came about.

When does the final meeting take place? Again, a very convenient date - Friday, December 30th. I can't imagine what else people would want to be doing on Friday, December 30th, other than dealing with terms of reference for the Electoral Boundaries Commission. But there we were, every one of us in the Opposition. The chairman himself can respond to where he was, but I can tell you where I was - I was at that meeting. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more that I wish I would have been doing on Friday, December 30th, than sitting in the Committees Office trying to determine boundaries and terms of reference for the Province of Nova Scotia. But here we were and that's exactly what we were trying to accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, at the time we had different choices as to what we could do. We said we're not signing off on these terms of reference, this is not what we agreed to, this is not

the discussions that we had. This was the government using its majority to change the terms of reference without debate, and it was unacceptable.

So what we did for the first time in the three different occasions we've had to do an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission with a select committee, we issued a dissenting opinion. Mr. Speaker, from that point this process was tainted, this process was tainted by the political interference of the NDP Government who used its majority to interfere directly in this process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is suggested by the Minister of Justice - whom I earlier anointed as the self-proclaimed patron saint of voter equality - to say that we need all the ridings to be equal. This is not about politics.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts: The NDP have never won Clare; they have never held Argyle; they've never held Richmond; and, other than for a brief period, they haven't held Preston. I would submit to you that is why this government wanted to get rid of the extraordinary circumstances clause. (Applause) If you look at the reaction of this government to the thought of losing their Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Shelburne, all of a sudden it's wait a minute, Shelburne, it wasn't fair, they weren't treated fairly.

I don't disagree, but I can tell you that Richmond wasn't treated fairly, nor was Clare, nor was Argyle, nor was Preston, because I'll put up my numbers for voter participation in Richmond and the numbers for Clare, the numbers for Argyle, up against any other riding. Voters in our ridings voted, they respected what they had been given by the Legislature and that they had an opportunity to have their voices heard here in the House of Assembly, yet this government has taken the steps to eliminate those voices and I would submit to you that if the government held Richmond, Clare, Argyle or Preston, we would not be having this debate today.

So then, Mr. Speaker, the other matter I should point out, for everyone's information, is that not only was it the terms of reference but it was deciding who would be the members of the commission. So, in looking through my notes this morning that I had, as far as who would be the members of the commission, I have written down that what we have been told by the acting chair, his suggestion was two members from HRM, two members from Cape Breton, two members from mainland Nova Scotia, an African Nova Scotian representative, an Acadian representative and then a chairman.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that Nova Scotians know that finding Nova Scotians to serve on this independent Electoral Boundaries Commission was an extremely difficult task. Even the government, with its majority, found it to be a difficult task. How difficult was it? It was so difficult that rather than going with nine members that was foreseen, we had to agree with only going with eight because we couldn't find the ninth person, in time. So the men and women who agreed to serve on this, we owe them a great deal of gratitude

and I'll get to the members of that commission a little bit further on and the government's reaction to them but keep in mind, even with a majority, this government could not find the ninth person. That's how difficult this process was.

So we put together the commission. Nominees came from all Parties. We didn't sit there and say that we're going to publicly attack our nominees based on previous voting patterns or anything else. We said these are good, competent, capable Nova Scotians but it should serve as no surprise to Nova Scotians that we expected that the individual named to be the African Nova Scotian representative would speak for African Nova Scotians, nor should Nova Scotians be shocked that the Acadian representative might stand up for the Acadian community. That was expected. It was expected back in 1992. It was expected in 2002. It was expected this time around as well. The only person who seems to have been shocked by that is the Premier of this province and I'll get to that a bit further in my comments, as I have quite a bit here to get through. So I'll try to do that as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: Maybe they'll give you two hours.

MR. SAMSON: Hopefully there might be unanimous support for that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. SAMSON: So out goes the commission and the commission has its public meetings. During these public meetings the commission is inundated with presentations from the Acadian community - inundated - something that has never been seen. In Richmond we had almost 80 people come out. Argyle had 200 and Clare, they had a parade. They had a parade of people marching the streets to come meet with the Electoral Boundaries Commission - 500 people showed up at that meeting - 500 people. When you look at the recent voter turnout here in HRM in the municipal election - 37 per cent - 500 people in Clare came out to meet with the Electoral Boundaries Commission and what did that commission say? It said we looked at the terms of reference and the language clearly says that the commission is to be guided by the following principles, and that commission said based on that, we feel that we have the ability to look at what we've been told by Nova Scotians, to actually listen to Nova Scotians, something that Nova Scotians tell us every day - I don't feel the government is listening to me. I don't believe the province is hearing what I have to say and here we had a commission that said: we hear you. We hear what you're saying.

When we had the presentations in Louisdale in Richmond County, we had two presenters who came from Pomquet. Now, Pomquet is in Antigonish County. That's not a protected seat but Pomquet is an Acadian community. They came in and they said to the commission, you need to understand, the member for Richmond, the member for Argyle, the member for Clare don't just represent Acadians in their constituencies, they represent all of us, throughout Nova Scotia. They are our voice in the Legislature. Even though the member is from Richmond, he speaks for Acadians in Pomquet; he speaks for us in

Cheticamp; he speaks for us in Sydney, in HRM, Greenwood, the South Shore and the entire French Shore. That was the message.

I believe at that point a light went off for the commission members and they said wait a minute, we hadn't really considered this. We thought these were just the areas that were being represented and that was the only voice the Acadians had, but they made it very clear. I believe those presentations, either in Clare or Argyle, had representatives from Greenwood that gave the same message. We realize we're too small of a community and we're geographically located where it's impossible to have our own riding but we look to the representatives from the Acadian communities in the Legislature to be there to defend our rights, to defend our interests and to support us.

We knew that. The member for Argyle knew that, the member for Clare knew that but the commission, I don't believe, understood that; I don't believe many Nova Scotians may have understood it either. So the commission came back and said, based on what we've heard, we're an independent commission; we believe that we should maintain the ridings of Argyle, Richmond, Clare and Preston. Mr. Speaker, that day was a victory for democracy. That day was a victory for the Nova Scotians who had taken the time to come out and to express their concerns to that independent commission.

Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things I wanted to highlight to members of the House, as well, is that one of the strongest reactions within the Acadian community to the thought of losing their ridings in the Legislature didn't come from seniors, wasn't from teachers, wasn't from those we would expect. In fact, it wasn't even from voters. The strongest reaction and the most passionate reaction came from the youth. It came from the students in the Acadian schools throughout the Province of Nova Scotia; 14-year-olds, 15-year-olds, 16-year-olds, 17-year-olds who don't even have the right to vote demanded meetings with the Minister of Acadian Affairs, came to the commission and made presentations. In my school, École Beaufort, they made a video that they put on YouTube, very respectful. The students there are holding messages in front of them conveying that they feel like they are being silenced and that this a part of their identity, it's a part of their culture.

We saw the same types of demonstrations down in the South Shore, in Clare and Argyle and the French Shore, where high school students - Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you, you would probably have to go back to the Vietnam War to see students have the type of reaction and the type of interest in an issue that we saw over these boundaries. That is something that we should be celebrating as a province. At a time when we can't get young people to vote, where the numbers are abysmal for voter participation from 18 to 25, it's now even growing probably up to 35, and here you have young people taking such an active interest in this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you I had shivers go through my body when I received the text from my niece who said, mon oncle, the principal just announced that the

boundaries commission is keeping the Acadian ridings; she said the school erupted in cheer. I dare any member of the government to tell us when the last time was that their students erupted in cheer over their ridings, over their boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, that happened in the Acadians schools across the province. What better way to send a message to this government that these are not just electoral boundaries? Again, let me say - I've said it many times and I'm going to say it again - this is not about the political future of myself, the member for Argyle or the member for Clare. This is part of the survival of a community, part of a survival of a culture, part of a survival of a language. It is part of a future.

When this whole process started, I said the government doesn't understand what they're doing because if they think they are only taking on Richmond, Clare, and Argyle, they're wrong, because Acadians are throughout the Province of Nova Scotia. In fact, the single largest population of Acadians right now is in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The other point that I've made, and I wish to reiterate again, is the success that the Acadian culture has had in Nova Scotia - success such as Université Sainte-Anne, the French-language university here in Nova Scotia; the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, the French-language school board - which, allow me to add, is the only school board that saw an increase in students in the Province of Nova Scotia. The Halifax Regional School Board didn't have it, and we certainly know the Cape Breton Regional School Board didn't have it, but the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial had it.

We look at the French-language Services law that we have here in this province. Mr. Speaker, Acadians will be the first to tell you that this could not have been achieved with only the support of Acadians, because at the end of the day, on the best day, we were three of 52 in the Legislature. Three of 52 doesn't win votes. Instead, it was the support of the majority, who are not Acadians, who said, we respect this culture, we respect these people, we respect their identity, we respect their future, and we're prepared to give our support. That's why we've had that success, and it couldn't have been done without the support of Nova Scotians.

When Nova Scotians saw this government attacking Acadians, they weren't happy. In fact, we even have scientific information to back that up. CRA did a poll and asked the question, should these protected ridings be maintained? To which 47 per cent said no, but 41 per cent said yes. As Don Mills said in his release, you can pretty much say that's even, but more importantly, what he said was that it's a no-win situation for the government.

It was a no-win situation from the start, and they should have known that, but when you put politics ahead of good public policy, this is what you get. In their obsession to get rid of seats they could not win, they were prepared to go down the road of bad public policy. It's coming back to haunt them today, because Nova Scotians are speaking loud and clear about this.

Let me add to that, Mr. Speaker. The process of reviewing boundaries is difficult, not only for Nova Scotians but especially for members here in the House. I'm not standing in my place to say I'm happy that the riding of Cape Breton Nova has disappeared. I'm saddened by that. I'm saddened at the possibility of losing a colleague. I'm saddened by a voice being lost from Cape Breton Island in this Legislature. I'm not happy about the prospect that Shelburne may be split in two and losing its representative. I wasn't pleased when the interim report came out to say that the member for Pictou East could be losing his riding. I was saddened because I think all of us are here with the best of interests. We all have a great attachment to our communities, and the thought of losing those voices and losing those ridings is an unfortunate one, but the reality is that every 10 years it's a process we have to go through, as difficult as that is.

We're at their interim report - as I said, a victory for democracy. So everyone is waiting to see what the government's reaction is going to be. Well, the select committee that created the Electoral Boundaries Commission no longer existed, so you couldn't go back to them to say, now what do we do with this interim report? So what happens is that the Minister of Justice comes out and says, I'm rejecting the interim report.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a point of privilege raised today, and I believe you'll see more where you'll be asked to judge: under what legislative authority did the Minister of Justice tell that independent commission that the report was being rejected and to go back and start again? Where in the House of Assembly Act does it give the Minister of Justice that authority?

Naturally, when the Minister of Justice said that, we looked, and he said, I've received a legal opinion telling me that the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission went beyond their mandate. So naturally, when you get a legal opinion, one questions, what opinion was given?

I wrote immediately to the Chief Legislative Counsel and said, who gave the Minister of Justice that opinion? I e-mailed him and said, I'd like to see that opinion, because we're members of the Opposition. We're members of this House. I think we all have a right to see that opinion, because a parliamentary democracy works when you have an Opposition that can question opinions that are given or that can seek alternative opinions, to see if they match up.

Here's the response that I received, dated Friday, June 15, 2012, from Mr. Gordon Hebb, Chief Legislative Counsel: Dear Mr. Samson, "My opinion respecting the interim report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission was an oral, not a written opinion, and therefore I obviously cannot provide a copy of it to you. I have a research memorandum prepared for me by my staff in preparation for a meeting with Justice. That memorandum constitutes only part of the basis for my opinion. I am not prepared to provide a copy of it to you because (1) it is not my complete opinion or the sole basis for it and (2) regardless, I

consider my advice to the Attorney General (or to any MLA) to be confidential.

Mr. Speaker, how are we, as members of the Opposition, to question that opinion when we can't see it, when we can't receive a copy of it? A Minister of Justice, under questionable authority - and we look forward to seeing your ruling on what authority he had to carry this out - based his decision on an oral opinion. How can we, as members of the Opposition, say, look, we agree with that opinion, that was a sound basis for making that decision on behalf of the House of Assembly, when we can't see it and we've never been given that opinion?

How can anyone say that that opinion given to the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice, on behalf of all members of this Legislature should be confidential and not provided to us? Our democracy is not working when that's the case, because this is not an issue with the Department of Justice, it's not an issue internally to his department. With all due respect, this is an issue under your jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this House of Assembly. I would submit to you and I would request of you that you demand a copy or you demand that something be put in writing as to what that opinion was and that it be shared with the members of this Legislature. If not, our House is not functioning the way it's supposed to function. (Applause)

Allow me to continue. The Minister of Justice comes out and says he rejects the report, never brought it back to the House of Assembly. I believe, in fact, Mr. Speaker, if I'm not mistaken, you sent a letter to the commission when they asked whether they should be given letters of appointment or not, and in your response it clearly stated that following their terms of reference being issued, no other person or body shall be providing them further direction. It's language along those lines.

The commission, they said wait a minute, the Speaker is telling us no one else is supposed to tell us what to do, but the Minister of Justice rejected our report and now he tells us to go back and do it again and don't come back - I dare you not to come back - with protecting the ridings of Richmond, Clare, Argyle or Preston. Get rid of them. That is what our instructions were.

The commission had two options. They could have resigned en masse, they could have walked away. To their credit, they decided that they would try again. Ironically - and I'll tie this back in further in my remarks - one of the commission members, when the independent commission came back and said we should keep the protected ridings, one of the commission members resigned. Dr. Jill Grant resigned. She had her reasons, she provided a dissenting opinion and we respected that. I didn't hear one member of this House say anything negative about her decision to resign. Not one, no one questioned her dissenting opinion, she was entitled to that and she was given the due respect that she deserved as a hard-working Nova Scotian that we asked to serve on the independent commission.

So the commission goes back, round two. In round two, there are others who will speak as to what was suggested regarding Yarmouth, what was suggested regarding Pictou, what was suggested regarding other areas of the province. I'm not going to bother getting into that detail. When their final report came in Paul Gaudet, who was the representative who was asked to be there for the Acadians, gave a dissenting opinion. He had every right to give a dissenting opinion. He was there to represent Acadians. The first report had recommended keeping the Acadian ridings. The final report, at the end of the day, after government interference, suggested getting rid of them. So he provided a dissenting opinion, which he was entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, the vicious, personal attack that followed by the Premier of Nova Scotia against another Nova Scotian - who we asked to come serve on that commission - was unprecedented. It was an embarrassment. I can tell you I was personally embarrassed as a member of this House to watch our Premier go out and make such a vicious attack. Whether it is Paul Gaudet or whether it be any other Nova Scotian, no one deserves the attack that took place by the Premier of this province against Mr. Gaudet.

Mr. Speaker, we'll have the opportunity to question further some of the comments that were made by the Premier regarding Mr. Gaudet and the language that was used, but I believe Nova Scotians were horrified. I think the editorial cartoon in *The ChronicleHerald* the day after was proof of Nova Scotians' reaction. I believe they had poor Mr. Gaudet tied up and gagged by the Premier. Imagine, such a public attack by the top official in the Province of Nova Scotia and for Nova Scotians, they should be asking themselves who's next?

I can tell you back home people were like, who is this Premier, because that's not the same person who led the NDP in Opposition for all those years. Who is this person? How did he change in three years in government, that now politics is the driving force and not the best interest of Nova Scotians? Surviving his majority government and getting re-elected is the driving mandate, not the best interests of Nova Scotians, and when you see a Premier make such a personal and vicious attack against a fellow Nova Scotian, you know that it's a Premier who has reached the point of desperation. All Nova Scotians should be asking who's next that will be attacked by this Premier?

Yesterday in this House I had the opportunity to ask a question to the new Minister of Acadian Affairs. I asked the question in French, my first language and the first language of Acadians, the first language of Francophones. I did not do so, so that other members would not be able to understand what I was asking. I did so because I was speaking in the language of those who were affected by the question I was asking and I want to thank you for allowing me, Mr. Speaker, to put the question in French.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say as well - and I told him personally, and I'll say it again - afterwards, when the minister responded in French, it was a very good effort on his part. As I told him personally, I'm not going to say I liked your answer but I liked the way

you delivered your answer. And I can tell you that Acadians who were watching - and I'm sure the representatives of the Acadian Federation who may not have liked the minister's answer, as Acadians in many ways we want to applaud the minister and say thank you for speaking to us in our first language. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Acadians again are asking the question, what did we do? What did we do wrong? Tell us. Tell us how we can make things better? What is it that the NDP feel we should have done that we didn't do? Well, there's only one conclusion. The Acadians don't vote NDP and that's why they got what they got from this government and what a sad day. What a sad day again that three ridings that have the highest voter turnout every election, something that should be celebrated, and something that should be bragged about by the Premier and the members of this government. Instead the Acadians have become a political nuisance because they haven't elected an NDP - and God willing it will never happen either, but that is their choice and they should not be being punished today for having made that choice.

Mr. Speaker, this is a process that Nova Scotians should be able to say - it's a difficult process redrawing boundaries but we can at least rest assured it was done on an independent, impartial basis to no particular benefit of any political Party. No Nova Scotian can say this about this report; no Nova Scotian can say this about Bill No. 94. In fact, at the press conference announcing the final report, when Jim Bickerton, a well-respected professor at St. FX was asked, do you feel that this report was impartial and was done in a fair manner? He said no - and he said I don't expect any Nova Scotian to see it that way either.

Mr. Speaker, what a sad day. A sad day for the Premier, a sad day for the Government of Nova Scotia to have such a respected Nova Scotian say Nova Scotians really have no reason to have confidence in this report having been done in an impartial manner because of the repeated interference that took place by this government, from day one.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to again reiterate the abilities of members of this House to be able to stand in their place and speak in their mother tongue. To speak French, I think, is something for us to celebrate. Again, I reiterate, I find it unfortunate we do not have simultaneous translation in this House because there is nothing I would like more than all of my colleagues could understand, and yourself, Mr. Speaker, could understand, when we are speaking French.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that I like hearing more than when the member from Inverness stands up and speaks Gaelic. That is something that we should be cherishing here in this province. It is part of our identity, it is something to be proud of. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the thought that any government in Nova Scotia would want to silence the voices of Acadians, the voices of Gaelic Nova Scotians, or the voices of any other Nova Scotian cultural community is absolutely embarrassing; yet that is, in essence, what has been done by this government. It has been a deliberate attempt to silence Acadians, and the question is: who is next?

I would say that the recent numbers that have come out regarding languages spoken - I believe it's only a matter of time before we see even more languages spoken in the House of Assembly, which I believe is a wonderful thing and look forward to seeing debate taking place and speeches taking place in various other languages, here in this Assembly.

As I said it's with mixed feelings that I spoke on Bill No. 94. I was proud to have been asked by our Leader to be part of this process again, but at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I have to say it's absolutely embarrassing to see what was done by this government and, again, done on the basis of pure politics.

M. le Président, je veux prendre cette occasion, aussi, pour remercier tous les membres de la communauté acadienne à travers la Nouvelle-Écosse, pour leur intérêt, pour leur appui, pour les présentations qui ont été faites à la commission, les deux - trois fois que la commission s'est rencontrée. Ceux qui vont venir au Comité sur les amendements aussi, et, je veux certainement remercier la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse et toutes les autres organisations, particulièrement, Ron Robichaud, l'ancien président de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour tout son travail; Jean Leger, ancien Directeur général de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et maintenant, le nouveau Président, Justin Mury, qui vient de chez nous; et Marie-Claude Rioux qui est la nouvelle Directrice générale de Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

M. le Président, les acadiens sont un peuple fier. Les acadiens sont un peuple qui cherche au futur. On se trouve dans une mer anglaise. On se trouve dans une mer qui devient de plus en plus difficile de maintenir notre langue, de maintenir notre culture. Mais nous sommes un peuple qui a eu beaucoup de succès ici en Nouvelle-Écosse. C'est un succès qui a venu avec l'appui de la majorité des gens en Nouvelle-Écosse qui ne sont pas acadiens et on apprécie l'appui qu'ils nous ont donné. Mais aujourd'hui, la communauté acadienne, il faut se demander la question : le gouvernement de Premier Dexter est prêt de s'en débarrasser des circonscriptions protégées pour la communauté acadienne. Qu'est-ce qui est la prochaine chose qu'ils vont vouloir nous arracher? Est-ce que c'est l'Université Sainte-Anne? Est-ce que ce sont les écoles du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial? Est-ce que c'est la loi sur les services en langue français de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse?

Je veux vous dire, M. le Président, que je vais continuer de faire tout ce que je peux, comme député de Richmond, comme acadien, pour défendre notre langue, défendre notre culture, et plus important, défendre la voix des acadiens élus, ici, dans la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, pour s'asseoir ici, dans l'Assemblée législative, pour défendre les droits

de la communauté acadienne et de travailler avec tous les députés, au nom du meilleur et le bien intérêt de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de la culture acadienne et toutes les autres cultures, ici, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Merci, M. le Président. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I would remind the honourable member that there was some correspondence he read from, from his speech, that I would like to see tabled. There was an e-mail that you read from there during the speech.

Also, you asked about un-parliamentary language. I would say that during that speech I had an opportunity to look at Beauchesne. “Trickery” is an un-parliamentary word, so “tricked” would also be an un-parliamentary word.

I would like to thank the honourable member for a passionate speech.

The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. C’est une question intéressante qu’on va discuter pendant les prochaines quelques personnes qui vont parler des frontières électorales en Nouvelle-Écosse, et, vraiment de dire, c’est un processus qui a été assez - disappointing. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that over the next number of speakers, you will be hearing a very common theme, of a very disappointing process.

Je suis très fier que je suis ici et que j’ai l’opportunité de présenter des idées, des questions, des choses qui sont importantes à la communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse et, vraiment, ce qu’on voit devant nous, la question de frontières, c’est une qui frappe les acadiens d’une façon très dure et comme mon collègue de Richmond vient de dire, c’est quelque chose de vraiment gênant, c’est quelque chose que la communauté acadienne demande la question, qu’est-ce qu’on a fait de mal?

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Richmond has said it very well, of when we go out to our communities and talk to lots of people. Now we’re hearing it from different places as well, as this process continues to roll along - the disappointment in the process. When you’re on the receiving end of these cuts and changes, people ask themselves, really, what they’ve done wrong.

I don’t think that’s right - that we, as elected officials, should set up processes that do wrong upon people. We’re here and I’m here and I know all my friends here are here to do the best for their communities, to bring their issues and wants and dreams forward to this floor of the Legislature, to try to make them realities. As much as over the last number of months I would say that I wish I was working on a regular file - a file that is talking about getting the alders cut on the side of the road and getting roads graded and getting my bridge built - on top of this has been the boundaries file that is taking up an enormous amount of

time of myself and my community, and one that I think and I hope they believe that you should be here representing and fighting in this at all costs.

Mr. Speaker, I can say this has been an absolutely disappointing process, starting from the resolution on October 31, 2011. What is important about that date, outside of it being Halloween? Well, that's my birthday. So this is the birthday present that I received last year - a process that ended up being fraught with disappointment, unfairness, and absolute displeasure amongst many people in our communities.

Now I was very happy, though, at that time, because I didn't know how it was all going to come forward. We had sort of said, at that point, the resolution seemed awful empty of directives, compared to the resolutions that had come before us before, before this Legislature, over the last 30 years. So after the last three processes, there were a number of directives that always seemed to follow along that were agreed upon by a number of the MLAs that would bring the resolution forward by government and set the process forth.

In those processes, in those resolutions, there was always an appreciation of minority linguistic rights, geography. In some cases it talked about trying to maintain the boundaries along municipal or county lines, to try to bring some semblance of normality or trying to keep communities together as best as possible. There was always the overarching idea of trying to make the constituencies as equal in size as possible but also the underlying issue of those cultural sensitivities that we have in Nova Scotia and recognizing those groups who have given so much to the cultural fabric of this province; whether it was the Acadian community, whether it was the African Nova Scotian community, whether it was the Aboriginal community across Nova Scotia. Those were things that, not only were in the resolution but, of course, were followed and, you know, were found out to be a little more important than the whole issue of parity.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution that was brought forward by the NDP Government last year was one that was absent of that detail. That's why our Party voted against that resolution at that time, because we felt that there should have been more to it. Knowing full well that this is a majority government, that they can pretty much do what they want, but because of the importance of a boundary review, that there would be a collaborative process put in place amongst the three Parties and then roll that out to Nova Scotians; that they feel that they're a part of a process and that they have results that make sense for them.

Mr. Speaker, why I find this difficult, let me bring a little quick story of myself. I mean, as much as I've been here for the last 10 years, I know many of the members in this House, but the personal connection to the Acadian community is not necessarily as connected as many may think. I come from a beautiful village in southwest Nova Scotia called Middle West Pubnico - Pubnico Ouest le centre. My dad, of course, is a d'Entremont, of French-speaking origin. He spoke French until probably he was at the age of 15 or 16, when he had to go off to work. My mom is an anglophone. She's from Yarmouth. Her parents are from Pictou County. She spoke English and it wasn't until, you

know, we would be playing around and my grandmother, God bless her soul, she's still running around at 99 years old, almost ready to turn 100, but she made sure, and I remember this very, very vividly, that when we were out playing with the kids, even though I probably spoke a lot of English at home because that's how I communicated with my mom, but when we would go out and play with the other kids, the kids kind of thought it was cool to talk English because, you know, they spoke all that French at home so why not, you know, Chris is here, we'll speak his mom's English, so we'll speak English to him, but my grandmother would always say – non, parles en français quand-ce vous jouez dehors – speak French when you're outside because you never know when that language is going to do you well. It's important. It's your mother tongue. That's the language you should be speaking. So I come from a mixed lineage.

As I moved on through my education, of course I went to Saint Mary's, I went off to broadcast college. Broadcast college tried to beat out as much of my accent as they possibly could and my life went down the English way because that's the communities that I ended up working in, the ones I ended up seeing. It wasn't until, really, that I got married to my wife - of course from a French community, from a French family as well - that we sat down and I remember the words of my grandmother, that it's important to speak in your mother tongue and that I wanted my children to be Acadian francophones. I wanted, myself, to live the life of an Acadian and to speak French at home as much as we possibly can. I mean, we are in a sea of English, but to try our best to make sure our children are going to school in the Acadian school board, to make sure that they get every opportunity they possibly can.

I can say that I almost got trapped into the assimilation of the world. I can say that for a number of years, I was assimilated into the larger culture, our larger anglophone culture here in Nova Scotia. I'm proud that I've been able to go back to my roots. I'm proud to celebrate who I am and who my community is, as Acadians, which is probably why I feel that this is so important for us.

Listen, when we sat down with the standing committee, things started off okay and I know the member for Richmond talked about this as well. We brought a number of issues forward saying that we wanted simultaneous translation at all the spots. I have to say that the Attorney General was quick to agree with us and to make sure that those things were put in place.

The committee was working on a consensus and I thought well, maybe those things I worried about when the resolution was put forward may have been a little premature, maybe things will work out okay here because of the collaborative approach of the government members and of all the committee members who were so honoured to be named to that select committee.

We went off and had some great meetings. We heard some differing opinions in some cases but we also heard an overarching message coming from the French community,

the Acadian community at that time, whether we were in Port Hawkesbury, even on that really snowy night, for those of you who were part of the committee, there was actually a snowstorm that night and we did get a number of people to come out and present to the committee at the time. In Sydney the next day, I guess Truro was the day before that, where we heard from the President of la FANE, Ron Robichaud. We heard from the school community centre in Truro.

We went to our area. We decided we would do a meeting in between Argyle and Clare so we had one in Yarmouth. We had a number of presentations at that time, all of them, every single one of them said the same thing, to recognize the importance of the Acadian community, to recognize what the Acadian members of the House of Assembly have been able to bring to the community over the last 30 years, to make sure that when the commission was constituted, that they would make sure that they would have French translation at all those sites, et cetera, et cetera.

I want to read a little piece and I'll table this as well, from the committee's meeting in Yarmouth. I know I made a copy here and I'll find it in a second when I get moving. I'll try to translate it as I move it along. I didn't make a copy of it: I'll make a copy after. This one came from the presentation of the select committee. This one is from le CAPEB, which is a member association of the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia, by Mr. Norbert LeBlanc, who is the president. I thought this was interesting because it really talks to the importance of having strong representation in the House of Assembly that understands and represents those communities.

“La communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse s'est beaucoup développée pendant les dernières années. Au niveau provincial, notons la création du CSAP, le seul conseil scolaire en Nouvelle-Écosse à connaître une augmentation du nombre d'élèves.”

I'll try to translate that as I go. The Acadian community has developed itself over the last 30 years; more specifically, the creation of the CSAP - I know the member for Richmond mentioned this as well - the only school board in Nova Scotia that actually saw an increase in students. “La création d'associations dévouées à l'avancement de la communauté acadienne, telle que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse et j'en passe.”

Talks to the various organizations that have been created over the last number of years, to represent the different sectors in the Acadian community. You've heard them, but I'll go quickly: the Cultural Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia; the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse - the Economic Development Agency of Nova Scotia; the Réseau Santé, or health group of Nova Scotia; and the Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse, of course, the seniors' organization in Nova Scotia. Of course, the other important thing that it underlines is the fusionnement entre l'Université

Sainte-Anne et le Collège de l'Acadie avec des campus dans cinq régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse - of course, the merger between Université Sainte-Anne and the Collège de l'Acadie at the time, or the Acadian College - to provide university programs to all regions in Nova Scotia. Don't forget, we're not everywhere: we're in five specific regions and a couple of other little spots that make up our community.

La création de l'Office des affaires acadiennes par le gouvernement, one that I was very proud to have worked on through a number of supports through my colleagues here in the House. Au niveau local, la région d'Argyle a vu la construction du Centre communautaire de Par-en-Bas. In Argyle they saw the construction of a school community centre, qui comprends, entre autres, une salle de spectacles, which not only includes a theatre but it also has, et la première garderie française dans l'histoire de la région, it has the first French-speaking preschool in the region. You'd think after so many years of being an Acadian region you would have had a preschool, but it took the interventions and the work together, of that community, to bring forward that first preschool in my area.

Le Village historique de la Nouvelle-Écosse à Pubnico ouest, le Musée de Wedgeport, l'expansion du Musée des acadiens de Pubnico - and there is a lot more. Ces développements sont grâce en partie - these happened because - on a une meilleure politique des acadiens à la Législature depuis les derniers 30 ans. This happened because of the better Acadian representation in this House of Assembly over the last 30 years. Au niveau de la circonscription d'Argyle, je vous donne un statistique important. When it comes to the constituency of Argyle it has an interesting statistic. Entre 1957 et 1984 - between 1957 and 1984, la circonscription jumelée de Yarmouth, the dual constituency of Yarmouth - n'a été représenté par un acadien sauf une seule fois. La circonscription - the constituency of Yarmouth had only been represented by an Acadian once from 1957 to 1984. Depuis 1984, Argyle a toujours été représenté par un acadien - since 1984, the constituency of Argyle has always been represented by an Acadian.

So that's the quality of presentations that we received at the select committee. As members of that committee, we can say things are going in the right direction. The worry that I would have had in the original resolution to the House - I would have said things aren't looking so good here - things started to roll pretty good, good presentations, communities coming out. Well, we should be getting a good discussion on what the terms of reference should be and have a good idea of how the boundary commission is going to be able to proceed.

Then we got into the subcommittee questions. A subcommittee is made up with the member for Richmond, myself, and the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. I found it interesting yesterday when the Premier brought out a letter and of course read it completely out of context, so I thought I would put some context on what the Premier was trying to say yesterday.

We had been provided with a number of draft terms of reference so I'm going to quote from draft three and I'm going to read the terms of reference of the time, which I thought were interesting, and then I'll read my letter and it is complete so we all understand where we were working from:

“In keeping with the constitutional right of Nova Scotians to fair and effective representation, the committee directs Provincial Boundaries Commission be guided by the following:

2(a) Of paramount importance, relative parity of voting power achieved through constituencies of equal electoral population to the extent possible;” - that sounds pretty good.

“2(b) Geography, in particular, the difficulty in effectively representing a large physical area;

2(c) Community history and interests;

2(d) Minority representation that reflects Nova Scotia's linguistic and cultural diversity, in particular, Acadian and African Nova Scotians.” - sounded pretty good so far.

“2(e) Based on the most recent demographic data and electoral statistics available, the Commission delineate electoral boundaries to achieve an Assembly of not more than 52 seats, not counting any additional Member authorized pursuant to Section 6 of the House of Assembly Act.

2(f) A constituency shall not deviate by a variance greater or less than 20 per cent from the average number of electors per constituency.

2(g) Deviations of parity of voting power are only justified on the grounds they contribute to better governance.

2(h) In considering minority representation, the Commission be mindful of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Nova Scotia and it shall seek the advice, support and cooperation of, in particular, Mi'kmaq, Acadian and African Nova Scotians.”

I will table that one, Mr. Speaker. I can say that's what we were working from. All of those things seem relatively reasonable. All things seem that the wishes and the needs of the community that we had consulted were being echoed in those terms of reference. The only thing that concerned us a little bit at that time was the 20 per cent issue. Not the greater overarching issue of protecting Acadian communities because I think it was pretty understanding in those terms of reference. So I wrote this letter:

“We had a closer look at your draft proposal for the terms of reference for the Electoral Boundaries Commission. In regards to the plus or minus 20 %, we will have to disagree with you on this point. It is our feeling that plus or minus 25% needs to stay in the 2012 terms of reference. Our thoughts are outlined below;

Parity of voting power and the right to effective representation seems paramount when one is framing the terms for the commission. Before and after the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Supreme Court of Canada (Carter) ruling, relative parity of voting power has been to use a plus or minus factor as a way of putting in practice the idea of relative parity. In order to recognize factors such as geography, communities of interest and community history, this number must remain relatively broad.

Deviation from the parity of voting power can only be justified on the grounds that the result will be better government. It is our contention that the factor of geography has never been properly presented. Geography is not simply land mass; rather it is a ribbon of individual communities whether they be towns, villages or small rural communities. Most have core services, municipal governments, social clubs and groups, fire departments, Chambers of Commerce and the list goes on.

These organizations all place demands on their elected members from time to time, not just in one community, but many communities. These place a huge workload on the rural MLAs, more so than an urban member's.

Without seriously considering geography and community interest, we are denying effective representation to the rural constituencies throughout our province. Urban ridings are compact and there is a vein of issues that are common or shared by most, if not all, a consensus of thought. This is not the case in rural sprawling ridings.

Again, the PC members believe that constituencies shall not deviate by greater or lesser than 25 per cent from the average number of electors.”

This was speaking to the issue of 20 per cent that was held in that draft, and for the Premier to sort of just throw that up in Question Period and accuse somebody else of coming up with the idea, it's typical, but it's not right - it's disingenuous. So that clears that one up maybe just a little bit.

As my colleague from Richmond also brought up, there were a number of discussions throughout the time and the draft proposal went from draft three to draft four to draft five, to God knows what by the time we were done with it. It was sort of somewhere in between, somewhere in there where the Clause 2(d) ended up changing, unbeknownst to us. I can remember sitting outside the committee meeting with my colleague from Richmond and saying, what the heck does this mean, where did this come from? Do you remember having a discussion about this one? Do you remember it being approved? Do you remember seeing it?

We didn't even remember seeing it. It was an interesting discussion. We never got an answer where it really came from. At that time, as I've said to the Minister of Justice before - he had to go on and do a couple of other things and so he left the chairmanship of that committee to someone else, and I wish he had stuck around because things went haywire after that. I appreciated the consensus base that we did have in the original committee; that did not continue along after your absence. It became a very political majority committee of the House of Assembly, where it was their way or the highway.

We then moved into some interesting timing where we were being tried - I think the government and, of course, the NDP members of the committee were trying to jam us on forcing committee meetings up against some holidays. I mean December 23rd - gosh, I don't know what else any of us were going to be doing. Being a man, I probably should have been out shopping for my family as Christmas was looming and there were only a couple of days to go. As a last-minute shopper, that would have been a great day to do that but, no, we were in committee, discussing the terms of reference as we had found them.

It was a lively debate. We decided at that point, as Opposition members, that we really couldn't conceivably sign a document that would see the elimination of minority representation in the province. We had a subsequent meeting - I think it was the 30th, right up against New Year's Eve - and what I found interesting that day is that we were being rushed along because of course the civil service was finishing up at noon that day, so of course they were trying to get us to move along, make our decision and figure out what we were going to do. Of course we made our decision that we could not sign the document. There would be no way in conscience that I could sign off Acadian communities across Nova Scotia. I just can't.

We put out a dissenting opinion. All of us have had the opportunity to read it, I hope, to understand that we didn't feel that the conduct of the chairman and the NDP members of the subcommittee was justified, that it was a little underhanded. We felt that the issue of parity was one that needed to be adjusted, or the addition of that Clause 2(d) which was the notwithstanding clause. It was one that was not discussed with the committee - and what was the third point? There was a third point on there and I can't remember exactly what it was, but those were the two overriding things. So that's the document we signed. So we felt that when we sort of got the commission in place, they

would go off and at least they would have an idea of what the discussions in the subcommittee or in the standing committee would be.

I need to thank the commission members for letting their names stand to take on a very difficult process - Dr. Teresa MacNeil, Dr. Colin Dodds, Dr. Jill Grant, Dr. Jim Bickerton, Rustum Southwell, Paul Gaudet, Doug Peach, and I think that was all of them - they embarked upon a process that was difficult to begin with. Never had a commission been sort of sent down the road with not just one directive but actually two, because really that's what happened. The dissenting opinion we hoped would be a balance to the discussion. They went out and had their consultations and, you know, again I thank them, kudos to them, they went to every community they possibly could with French translation at the ones of course that needed it.

The presentation in Argyle - I've got to say I've never been more proud of my community. I've never been more proud of it - to see over 200 people show up for a political meeting is unheard of, but that's the importance of this issue. It transcends the issue of politics. It's about the community and about the culture of the area that's being threatened - 200 people showed up. And we had what? Twenty-eight or 32 presentations from the community at the time - every single one of them talked about the protection of those communities: Clare, Argyle, Richmond, and Preston.

We had people from Clare present because they couldn't make their meeting the next night. We had youth - you know, the member for Richmond speaks very well of the youth who came. You know, all of us talk about how do we get youth involved, how do we get youth to vote? On many of the occasions this happens that we have this discussion. Well, get them upset, they come out. They were upset, this was not right, and what we heard from the youth every time that they came to us, they said, listen, it's not about the current MLAs, it's about a dream of a young person as they look at the world that they have the opportunity to represent their community as well in the future, not only about the things that the Acadian members in the House have been able to do for us in concert with the Legislature, but also to give them the opportunity to become members of this House of Assembly.

To hear that from youth is tremendous because, again, how many times do we sit around as political Parties and ask, how do we get the youth involved? They came out in droves to talk about this issue.

The next night, or the night after, anyway it was a few nights after, we went to Clare. Dans la région de Clare, on a vu plus de 500 personnes aligner les bords du chemin en allant au gymnase de l'Université Sainte-Anne, dans un plein tintamarre.

I'm being Acadian; I'm moving my hands. They were parading beside the road to welcome the members of the commission in a full tintamarre. I don't know if you've had an opportunity to participate in a tintamarre - I would say if anyone has the opportunity to

be in one, it's a real fun time, but why do we have tintamarres? It's because after so much oppression, after being expelled from a province and from their motherland, that Acadians can get together and loudly proclaim we are here, we are proud and we are important. That is what a Tintamarre is all about, and to go to Clare and see them all lined up on the sides of the roads, I can tell you again, I've never been more proud.

We went into the gymnase, and as noisy as it could get at times, the groups were very, very respectful to the commission and to the presentations that were heard at that meeting. There would be a presentation and you could hear a pin drop, and then when it was all done there would be some flag waving, some clapping, and just a whole bunch of noise celebrating the fact that we'd had people come out and speak to it.

One gentleman who had the opportunity to present is one who I will always have in my heart: Paul Comeau. Paul Comeau was - he's passed away since - a tremendous Acadian, one who defended to his final day the rights of Acadians. At that meeting he had rested for days, because he was in cancer treatment. He was not feeling well, but he tried to get his strength up as much as he could, and he went and presented to that meeting. It was a heartfelt discussion, a heartfelt presentation. The theme was as common as everyone else's. It was because of our history, because of our difference, because of all these things that we deserve to have our representation in the House of Assembly. I remember his tears. I remember the look of exhaustion after he was done, but also the sense of accomplishment that we were able to make a difference.

Paul Comeau will be remembered as a great Acadian. He did have one flaw, though, and I said this to him on many occasions: for some time he supported a Party that I don't agree with. He ran for the NDP, I think, on three occasions. He was a very good man, and as he finished up, he had very little good to say about his Party of choice.

Mr. Speaker, Paul was an exceptional fellow, and one who, I would think - I would hope - the members opposite would listen to. I would hope that there's still a chance, through his writings, through his letters, through his presentations, that maybe you can at least take those ones and look at them closely and consider them as we move down this process.

After all those presentations happened, the interim report comes out. Merry Christmas. Holy cow. None of us could believe it. I mean, we sat there that day when the presentation of the interim report was there. We should have had a party. It was amazing, because what they had done is actually gone out and listened to Nova Scotians. They actually went and listened. How often do we as politicians, as government officials, get accused of not listening? All the time. Finally, a government organization, an independent process, went out there and listened to Nova Scotians - to get it pushed back in their face.

Anyway, that day was amazing. It was an absolutely amazing day because all of us - I know the Liberal Party was there - we were there, we were ready to go, oh my God, this

is bad, this is going to be bad - you know, all the messages that we'd been presenting up to that point. The interim report made sense. Yes, there were a couple of adjustments that needed to be made, and I don't dispute that. The people of Pictou County, they could deserve a bit of a change in that first report. The member for Pictou East found himself in a bit of a pickle there, but I know if it wasn't for the heavy-handedness of the Minister of Justice, maybe we could have made the adjustment and we all could have lived with it.

The member for Cape Breton Nova saw his constituency moved into another one. I'm sure there would have been some adjustments made to fix that, but no, what happened that same day - an intervention by the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice, supported by his Premier. It didn't stick to the terms of reference - go back and do it again - after they presented a document that many of the communities could accept. The people of Shelburne could accept it. The people of Yarmouth could accept it and communities all across Nova Scotia could accept it, beyond the issue of minority representation - go back and do it again, that's the letter. That's the letter I have had problems with for the last however many months it has been since that was brought up. That's why I brought it to the floor of this House today, because it was wrong and it impinged my rights, as a member of this House, but it also cascaded a number of events that I don't think anyone would have guessed.

All right, revised interim report - revised. So instead of resigning - and you know, I think we can all look back and say, well maybe it would have been better had they resigned. Well, they came and brought us an interim report. The interim report strictly adhered to - as the letter from the minister stated - to simply look at parity, don't look at anything else. Look at plus or minus 25 per cent; don't care what happens anywhere else.

What does the commission do? Well, they start making adjustments here, there and everywhere. So in order to try to maintain some kind of opportunity for the Acadian communities, let's try to maintain Clare and Argyle as we could but let's take Yarmouth and split it up the middle and see how that works. There were a number of other recommendations in it but that's the one that got the most news; that's the one that created the most dissention in a community.

The second round of consultations go on, Yarmouth did a phenomenal job of representing itself. They said, listen, you're taking this and splitting us up. You're taking the town, you're taking the county and you're running a line - forget it. So never mind all the things that we've done together over the years, you go to Clare, you go to Argyle.

No wonder they're upset; 2,500 people showed up at the Mariners Centre that day to discuss a political issue - you're kidding. I mean if it wasn't so important and we really don't matter and all this other stuff, 2,500 people came to support the connection of their community. Great presentations were held, great support from the community. I mean I thought it was going to turn out badly, I mean 2,500 people sitting in the Mariners Centre all riled up about something, but everybody was very respectful to the commission

members who were there. (Interruption) They wanted their voices to be heard and they were.

So there were a number of other meetings, I know there were a couple of meetings, one in Bridgewater and then the following night there was one in Clare. In Clare the same gang showed up, 500 people showed up to a boundaries meeting in Clare. So there are 2,500 in Yarmouth, 500 showed up in Clare, the same kind of presentations that they had before except this time our friend Paul wasn't there. He didn't make it between that time.

There were three presentations held there, because they're all the same. Why would you beat the drum? We have one message, leave us alone. That's what they did. Tick tock along the way, time is starting to run out for the commission. So one minute the Minister of Justice is saying you must adhere to the terms of reference, and when it came time to run out of time he didn't make them present it on August 30th, he let them go three weeks later. That's fine, but on one hand he was saying you can't change the terms of reference, which the date was in the terms of reference, but because they were going to be late - there's nothing I can do; sorry, there's nothing I can do.

Well, the final report - holy mackerel - the final report splits up another community. Sorry, Yarmouth, we didn't mean to do that to you, we'll go and split someone else up. That's what plus or minus 25 per cent does - it takes communities and splits them up, because at some point in order to try to find that number of electors you have to take them from somewhere else. Shelburne County got split up - half went off to Queens, half of it came west to Argyle.

What was even worse about this injustice was Shelburne never had a chance to make a presentation - ever. In subsequent reports they were told a merger of Shelburne and other constituencies didn't make any sense, so why would we do it? So if the Minister of Fisheries says he was blindsided, well, yes, I guess he was - but, it's also his Minister of Justice who has started to create some of this mess.

What are their opportunities now? Well, I thank the government for taking our suggestion from the other night. There was a really good meeting in Shelburne the other night, in Barrington Municipal High School, where we had 300 or 400 people show up to talk about boundaries. Again, here we are, a political discussion, a political issue, and that many people show up. You can't sweep these things under the table - these are just things, these aren't important, we need to stick to relative voter parity.

I thank the government for seeing it, to ship down the Committee on Law Amendments to go and listen to them. I know there will be a number of representations so we might as well go down there and listen to them rather than make them come up with buses and all, because there were a number of organizations that were ready to spend money on buses - it costs \$1,600 or \$1,700 to get a bus to come to Halifax from Shelburne. But we're going to go down, and we're going to hear "don't split us up."

Where does that leave Argyle and Clare? If the government listens to Shelburne, which I think they should, where does that leave Argyle? People in Argyle at this point are starting to get a little shell-shocked; they feel a little bit like a football - one minute you're over here, one minute you're over there. Where are they going to go? Are you going to leave us alone finally? We've made representation after representation after representation to say that this is important to Nova Scotians, this is important to us, to leave us alone.

Shelburne will have their chance to say leave us alone and they're going to make an adjustment for Shelburne County. Where does that leave the Acadian constituencies in Nova Scotia? That means hopefully they'll finally listen to that community and leave us alone. Give us the representation that we feel is representative of our community and move along. But if I go back, my original issue is the process itself has been flawed from the start.

Mr. Speaker, I too have to express my embarrassment of the Premier's comments with regard to Paul Gaudet's dissenting report in the final report. Like the member for Richmond said, when the first report came out and there was a dissenting opinion and the resignation from Dr. Jill Grant, all of us said I respect her decision, I respect her comments, I respect what she has to say, and everything moved on.

For the Premier to have taken such a malicious attack on Paul Gaudet is something I've never seen from a Premier - never. He accused Paul of jury-rigging, of trying to change the outcome of it, to try to be a dissenting member. He just called him everything, you know, that because he was an Acadian he was just representing himself and he was representing the Liberal Party that put him in there. Are you kidding me? He did it anyway. It was very unbecoming of a Premier - a Premier who should accept the thoughts and wishes of his citizens. But no, no, no, because he didn't do the thing that he wanted him to do, it's all his fault. I'm going to bet that they are going to take shots at other members of the commission, when all the commission did was put their names forward and allow them to stand and go through this difficult process.

What I do want to leave this with is that, at the final meeting with the final report of the commission, Dr. Jim Bickerton was there, of course, with the rest of the CPSA members. Someone mentioned, or asked the question - I think it was the media asked the question - of Dr. Bickerton, whether or not this will result in a court case. Dr. Bickerton said yes, that because of the interference throughout the whole process, it creates a strong case to fix this once and for all.

That's the shame of all this, I think - the fact that at the beginning of this process we said, this is not going to work. We cited the Carter case at the time. I know the Acadian Federation at the time with its president, Ron Robichaud, and the executive director at the time, Jean Léger, had a very good brief - a very good presentation that cited a number of points of the Carter case and the findings of Justice McLachlin of how these things go forward. I guess people are smarter than us sometimes; people are smarter than the organizations that actually know the files. Nope, that's not going to happen, don't worry

about it, even if they do it they are going to lose - that's kind of the brush-off that I think we got from the select committee and from the members of government as this thing has rolled along.

So the government is going to end up in this court case, defending itself from a court case from the French Acadian community, from the FANE and others that will support it. It will be something that I'm sure will be in court for a while. Thousands of dollars will be spent on a court case - hundreds of thousands of dollars, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, will be spent on both sides. I don't know what the number is - \$100,000, \$200,000 - but that's government's money. That's taxpayers' money. That's \$200,000 of community money that should be used for community development, should be used for our communities to continue to bring them forward, but no.

Because of the righteousness they couldn't accept that this is where it was going to end up, it's going to end up in court. We've been assured of that, that the Acadian Federation is ready to go. We could have stopped all that. We could have avoided all that. We could have avoided the heartache. We could have avoided the money loss. We could have avoided the separation of our communities, but no. There are people over there who think they are smarter than everybody else and have pushed us down this road.

I want to thank a bunch of people before I finish up. I want to thank my caucus for supporting me and supporting our cause throughout this. It's a difficult situation, but they support it. I want to thank members of the Liberal Party as well, because there are very few things that you see in this House where we all seem to work together. I was proud to work with my friend the member for Richmond. I was happy to work with the member for Dartmouth East. I was proud to work with the member for Victoria-The Lakes. I wish I could say that for the members who were on the committee on the other side because I think they're pretty good guys and girls. I think they really have a lot to present but they got squashed by an ideal and by a number of individuals who thought they were smarter than everybody else.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the Acadian Federation - j'aimerais remercier la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui ont vraiment pris ça en main. They really took this in hand. Ça c'est quelque chose qu'ils ont travaillé sur depuis leur commencement. Il y a déjà presque un an, si pas deux ans, que la Fédération acadienne regarde ça de proche.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for their work. They've looked at this for almost a year, if not almost two years now, you know, a file that is extremely important to them, even though you would hope that they were there working on community development and other issues, this one is important to them. So I want to thank, of course, Justin Mury, the new president of La FANE, and Marie-Claude Rioux, la directrice générale. I also want to thank Ron Robichaud, the outgoing president, and Jean Leger. They worked very hard on

this file and I know they'll continue to be champions for our Acadian communities for times to come.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is getting late - it's 11:56 a.m. - and I move adjournment of debate and to come back on another day.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is for adjournment on Bill No. 94. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet from the hours of 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Monday. After the daily routine we will do Government Business: Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 94, and if time permits, Bill No. 97, and if we have time after that, Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I move that the House do now rise to meet from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is for adjournment and to reconvene on Monday at the hour of 7:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 11:58 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1479**

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's deer hunting season opened at dawn this morning and the safety of all hunters should be a paramount thought between now and when the season concludes on December 1st; and

Whereas Nova Scotia's deer hunting season brings at least \$30 million into Nova Scotia's economy annually while hunters also provide Natural Resources staff with ongoing numbers of deer in Nova Scotia forests; and

Whereas despite 2,314 deer being harvested in Lunenburg County last Fall, 1,114 in Colchester County and 983 in Hants County, deer license holders for the first time this year, whether they harvest a deer or not, must submit a report to the Department of Natural Resources detailing their hunting effort as well as an estimation of the deer population in their area;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage Nova Scotia's more than 1,000 deer hunters to be safe first while having an enjoyable two months in the woods and enjoying the fellowship they share with their fellow hunters.

RESOLUTION NO. 1480

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas 16-year-old Falmouth High School student, Austin Shaw-O'Leary, has been named by Fogi Racing as one-half of a Canadian road racing team handpicked to compete in the Spanish Moto Championship in Spain; and

Whereas Fogi Racing Development Team was established in 2010 to assist young, talented, motorcycle road-racing riders to reach the pinnacle of their new sport; and

Whereas Austin will attempt to adapt to Fogi Team objectives, which are to bring young riders from the age of 12 years from GP 125/250 machinery to Moto 2/Moto GP world level racing;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the tremendous accomplishment of Falmouth's Austin Shaw-O'Leary and wish him nothing but the best as he participates in test runs October 29th and 30th and from November 16 - 18 in Spain.