



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

7:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine, I would like to rule on some matters that were before the House on Friday, the first being the petitions and tabling multiple copies together.

SPEAKER'S RULING: Tabling Multiple Copies of Petitions.

Members will remember that on Friday I raised the question of tabling multiple identical petitions. As I recall, there was a past ruling about this. I consulted with the Chief Clerk and he advised me that there was a previous Speaker's Ruling in 1995 that a member who had multiple copies of what is the exact same petition should table them collectively, rather than individually.

I recognize that petitions often come from members from interest groups and sometimes they are not all delivered to them at once, and it is understandable that this could lead to more than one tabling by a member.

The Chief Clerk advises me also that in the past there have been occasions when a member has presented different copies of the same petition on different days, notwithstanding there is a ruling that says they should be tabled as one item. The underlying principle is that the House only has so much time for its business and members should not waste that time. I'm just going to suggest to members that they be mindful of the ruling and that if they are in possession of multiple copies of the same petition, that they please do whatever they can to table them together rather than waste the time of the House. Thank you.

SPEAKER'S RULING: Letter from Attorney General to Electoral Boundaries Commn. Breached privileges of member. (Pt. of Privilege by Hon. C. d'Entremont [Hansard p. 2580, 09/26/12] Not a prima facie breach of privilege.

The second issue - on Friday there was a point of privilege. On Friday the honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader rose on a point of privilege. He asked me to rule on whether a letter from the Attorney General to the recent Electoral Boundaries Commission breached his privilege as a member of the House of Assembly.

He pointed to a letter dated February 28, 2012, in which I advised the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Commission that the terms of reference established for that commission by the Select Committee on Establishing an Electoral Boundaries Commission constituted the totality of the direction to the commission and that no person was entitled to give further direction. The honourable member put forward the position that the Attorney General breached his privileges by sending a letter dated June 4, 2012, to the commission requesting that the commission revise its interim report dated May 31, 2012, as the report “. . . did not follow the requirements set out in the terms of reference in the final report of the Select Committee.”

In his letter, the Attorney General wrote: “I've been advised by the Chief Legislative Counsel of the House of Assembly that the terms of reference are legally binding upon the Commission, and that the interim report is therefore null and void.” He went on to point out that it was “. . . necessary that the Commission follow its legally binding terms of reference.”

I have considered this matter very carefully and have come to the conclusion that the letter from the Attorney General to the commission was not a breach of privileges of the honourable member or the House. The letter advised the chairman of the commission that the commission was legally required to follow the terms of reference established for it by a committee of this House of Assembly. The will of the House of Assembly was expressed

through a duly constituted committee of this House of Assembly and had to be followed by the commission.

He had been advised by the Chief Legislative Counsel for the House that the first interim report was null and void. Had the Attorney General given some direction to the commission that was in some way different from or an expansion of the terms of reference, this might have been a breach of privilege, but that is not what happened. The Attorney General advised the commission that it had to follow its legally binding terms of reference established by the select committee. That did not contravene the will of the Assembly expressed through its committee; it drew the attention of the commission to that will. Accordingly, it is my ruling that there is not a prima facie breach of privilege.

I want to point out to all members that one of the requirements of a point of privilege is it should be raised at the first opportunity after it has occurred. Generally, with respect to matters that have arisen while the House is adjourned, the point of privilege should be raised on the first day the House resumes its business - although this would not be expected on a ceremonial day. There may be exceptional circumstances in a particular situation that allow the Speaker to accept a question of privilege at a later date, but I just wanted to draw that requirement to members' attention.

This point was raised on our second day back, and it may be that the honourable member was waiting to see the form of legislation introduced by the government but, for future references, if something that a member believes is a breach of privilege that occurs during a period of adjournment, the expectation is that it should be raised on the first business day when the House resumes. Thank you.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition on behalf of a number of my constituents regarding the condition of the Mt. Pleasant Road. The operative clause of which reads:

“We, the undersigned, who are residents living along Mt. Pleasant Road in Lunenburg County, and/or, are citizens who use this road on a daily basis, respectfully request that this road be paved on, or before, the next paving season.”

It is signed by 157 of my constituents and I have affixed my signature to it.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank you for your ruling.

I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

“ . . . your petitioners call upon the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to use its powers over the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) to deny any General Rate Application presented by NSBI requesting a rate increase in 2013, 2014 and 2015.”

There are 101 signatures and I have affixed my signature to this.

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 Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1481

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas October is Mi'kmaq History Month and 12 Mi'kmaq elders and youth were recently presented with awards at Province House to recognize their significant community involvement; and

Whereas Mi'kmaq chiefs and the provincial Cabinet held their fourth annual meeting to move forward on key issues and shared priorities; and

Whereas Mi'kmaq culture and economic development initiatives are benefiting our entire province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House recognize and congratulate Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq on a successful Mi'kmaq History Month and their ongoing contribution to Nova Scotia's vibrancy and success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1482

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

Whereas friends and families of victims of domestic violence will be better prepared to provide support with a new education program and toll-free information telephone line; and

Whereas Neighbours, Friends and Families is a public education awareness program to help people spot signs of domestic violence and teach them to approach possible victims without making the situation worse; and

Whereas those affected by family violence will now be able to call the province's first domestic violence toll-free number, which will be monitored 24 hours a day by transition houses from across the province and will provide support to callers on how to help the abused or abuser and spot warning signs of abuse;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House support the Neighbours, Friends and Families education program and acknowledge the work of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia and the support it provides to those affected by domestic violence.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, before I introduce this bill, may I please make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. JENNEX: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have some very special visitors with us this evening. I'd like to take the opportunity to acknowledge a group of students who are here from Bayview Community School in Mahone Bay. We have Evan Hennigar, Grace Adams, Maggie Baxter, and Conner Zinck.

This enthusiastic team are actually working right now on developing the province's anti-bullying awareness campaign. My colleague, the member for Lunenburg will read a resolution about their work a little bit later on. I would also like to welcome their parents, who graciously brought them here from Mahone Bay on this very windy night. Thank you very much for the parents. I would like to ask all of our special guests if they would rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 102 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act. (Hon. Ramona Jennex)

Bill No. 103 - Entitled an Act to Ensure Accountability in Providing Economic Development Assistance in Nova Scotia. (Hon. Stephen McNeil)

Bill No. 104 - Entitled an Act to Provide for the Establishment of an Entrepreneur Stream under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. (Ms. Diana Whalen)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1483

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

Whereas the Pearl & Daisy Natural Soap Company, based in Debert, Colchester North, began as a small business with President and CEO Rebecca Taylor operating from her own home; and

Whereas the business has continued to expand, with sales doubling in the last year, and expectations of an even greater future increase as the company's focus for 2013 is expanding export sales to markets in the U.S.; and

Whereas the company was recognized in 2012 with an Export Achievement Award, the award for Best New Product at the 2011 Atlantic Craft Trade Fair Show, and was an official gift lounge sponsor at the 2011 Canadian Country Music Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rebecca Taylor and the Pearl & Daisy Soap Company, as the company continues to expand and flourish and serve as a positive example to young entrepreneurs and small businesses.

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. 1484

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

Whereas the replica vessel HMS Bounty was built in Lunenburg in 1960 to be used by MGM Studios for the 1962 Marlon Brando film *Mutiny on the Bounty*; and

Whereas the Bounty encountered bad conditions associated with Hurricane Sandy on Sunday evening and tragically sank off North Carolina this morning; and

Whereas 14 members of the Bounty's crew have been rescued but the search continues for two additional crew members;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send prayers for the crew members of HMS Bounty, especially those who are not yet accounted for, and thank the brave men and women who risked their own lives in the rescue effort.

Mr. Speaker, if I may say, as a quick update, I understand that of the two who are missing, one has now been located and found unconscious but alive and so there is some (Interruptions) Unfortunately, there is an even worse update than that.

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 Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1485

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

Whereas Evan Hennigar, Grace Adams, Maggie Baxter, and Connor Zinck, students from Bayview Community School in Mahone Bay, submitted their ideas to fight cyberbullying in a video called *People, Not Profiles*, which has been selected to be the basis of a province-wide awareness campaign; and

Whereas Evan, Grace, Maggie, and Connor will have the opportunity to help develop anti-cyberbullying material to be used in all schools in Nova Scotia that will reflect their message that we need to look beyond someone's profile and get to know them as a person; and

Whereas cyberbullying is not an easy problem to solve but students like Evan, Grace, Maggie, and Connor know how it will affect young people and how good ideas make a difference;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Evan, Grace, Maggie, and Connor on speaking out against cyberbullying and helping to raise the awareness of students across the Province of Nova Scotia about its devastating effects.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare on an introduction.

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to introduce five special guests who are in the east gallery this evening. They are here to watch the second reading debate on Bill No. 94. As I call their names I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House:

Nos invités spéciaux dans la galerie du côté de l'est sont Nicole LeVert, la Directrice adjointe de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Lorraine Plourde, Coordonnatrice, du Réseau PAC; Martin Théberge, le Directeur général de la Fédération culturelle acadienne; Céleste Godin, Représentante de la Société nationale de l'Acadie et, aussi, on a le Docteur Pierre Schmitt, qui est membre de la communauté francophone, ici à Halifax : grand merci et bienvenue. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on an introduction.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the west gallery, where we have with us Emily Alford. Emily is a seven-year-old student at Hillside Park Elementary School in Sackville, and with her are her parents, Krista and Jonathon. I met Emily over the summer at a number of events, and Emily has a great interest in public service and politics. I understand she actually took an active role in the most recent municipal election, choosing her candidate and out working for them.

I know that today, Mr. Speaker, she had an opportunity to meet you, and you gave her a tour of your office. As well, this summer the staff here at Province House gave her a great tour of Province House. I want the House to give Emily a warm welcome as she listens to the debate.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1486

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 Annie V. Johnson Chapter IODE of North Preston was organized on March 16, 1981, as the first all-Black chapter in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas there are approximately 24 members of the chapter and President Genevieve Simmonds has been leading the club for about 15 years; and

Whereas the chapter raises funds, and with those funds they award two scholarships every year to high school students, they host an annual Fun Day for the community children, they also host an annual pancake breakfast for the seniors, and they were the driving force for the cenotaph built in the community to honour their veterans;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize the many positive projects the Annie V. Johnson Chapter IODE hosts for the youth, seniors, and veterans in the community of North Preston.

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. 1487

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

Whereas Father Hughie D. MacDonald celebrated 60 years of serving Nova Scotians as a Catholic priest on June 7, 2012, and is still active today at 87 years of age; and

Whereas Father Hughie D. is helping somebody with life's challenges every day, through personal guidance and spiritual retreats; and

Whereas his trusty Honda has logged 545,000 kilometres, a testament to his own durability and generosity because no one knows exactly how much he is doing for others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Father Hughie D. for his service to the people of our province, as a priest and as a friend to everyone.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

RESOLUTION NO. 1488

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

Whereas the 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 he has hiked taxes and fees and gutted essential programs such as education; and

Whereas after receiving over \$0.5 billion in taxpayer 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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour 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 in communities across the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1489

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

Whereas Ronnie Williams spent a great deal of time with his grandfather at Smelt Brook Park in North Sydney many years ago; and

Whereas when he recently returned to the park and found it was full of all kinds of debris, he took matters into his own hands and spent three days clearing up the debris from Smelt Brook that runs through the park, to do his part in cleaning up the community; and

Whereas the fire chief for the North Sydney Fire Department offered the assistance of his department to help with the cleanup and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality agreed to truck the garbage away;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ronnie Williams for taking the initiative to restore Smelt Brook Park to some of its past glory.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1490

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

Whereas on October 21, 2012, the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia presented awards to distinguished members at its annual conference; and

Whereas the Distinguished Service Award honours an individual who has significantly contributed to the well-being of the pharmacy industry in any of its many aspects; and

Whereas Leonard Siller of Sydney River was awarded the 2012 Distinguished Service Award for exceptional service both to his patients at Lawtons and through the building of programs for residents in long-term care and continuing care facilities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature congratulate Leonard Siller of Sydney River on receiving the PANS Distinguished Service Award and extend our appreciation for both his professionalism and invaluable support to residents of long-term and continuing care facilities in the Sydney area.

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. 1491

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

Whereas sisters Karina and Kylee Kuchta from Baddeck represented Nova Scotia on the Under-15 and Under-17 basketball teams at the national tournament held in New Brunswick from August 4th to 11th; and

Whereas in the tournament Nova Scotia defeated Saskatchewan and British Columbia, resulting in the U-17 team playing in the gold medal game; and

Whereas this is the first time a Nova Scotia team has played in the gold medal match;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Karina and Kylee Kuchta and the Nova Scotia team for their achievements and wish them the best of luck in next year's Go for Gold.

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. 1492

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

Whereas on October 21, 2012 the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia presented awards to distinguished members at its annual conference; and

Whereas the Craig Ennett Award is awarded to a pharmacist who best exemplifies the efforts of the late Craig Ennett, a pharmacist who worked diligently to open the doors and reduce the barriers to international pharmacy graduates who chose Nova Scotia as their new home; and

Whereas Susan Wedlake, who is the registrar of the College of Pharmacists, was awarded the 2012 Craig Ennett Award for her efforts to streamline programs and welcome new pharmacists to our province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Susan Wedlake of Halifax in receiving the 2012 Craig Ennett Award, extend our appreciation to Susan for all of her efforts in welcoming international pharmacists to our province, and wish her many more years of success and invaluable contributions to all pharmacists in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1493

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

Attendu que le 21 juin que la Caisse populaire Coastal Financial a célébré l'ouverture officielle de leur nouvelle succursale à Ouest-Pubnico avec environ 60 personnes présentes; et

Attendu que la Caisse populaire Coastal Financial est une coopérative financière, dévouée à répondre aux besoins de sa clientèle et est aussi détenue et gérée par ses membres; et

Attendu que cette année est une étape importante pour la Caisse populaire Coastal Financial, où elle célèbre 75 ans à rendre service aux communautés des Pubnico, d'Argyle, de Tuskent et de Yarmouth;

Par conséquent qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent l'administration et le personnel de la Caisse populaire Coastal Financial sur l'ouverture officielle de leur nouvelle succursale et leur remercient pour leur dévouement à leurs membres et leur souhaitent le succès continu.

Monsieur 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 June 21st the Coastal Financial Credit Union held the official grand opening of their new branch in West Pubnico, with approximately 60 people in attendance; and

Whereas Coastal Financial Credit Union is a financial co-operative dedicated to meeting the needs of their clients and is also owned and operated by its members; and

Whereas this year is a milestone for Coastal Financial Credit Union as it celebrates 75 years of service to the communities of the Pubnicos, Argyle, Tusket, Wedgeport and Yarmouth;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the management, board and staff of Coastal Financial Credit Union on the grand opening of their new facility, thank them for their dedication to their members, and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1494

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

Whereas the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline began restoration work in Colchester North, after making several crossings on the Waugh River in the watershed area to lay pipe; and

Whereas the North Colchester River Restoration Association, which took over the responsibility 12 years ago, spends \$50,000 to \$60,000 on the river each year and has

partnered with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to build a habitat for migratory fish: salmon and trout; and

Whereas the North Colchester River Restoration Association recently formed a partnership with Millbrook First Nation to ensure that the Waugh River, for future generations, will continue to be a place where fish can thrive;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate these two groups who have taken responsibility for the environmental concerns in and along the Waugh River and for hosting an annual river walk to show the public and keep them up-to-date on the results of their work.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1495

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

Whereas a Sisters in Spirit event was held by Waycobah First Nation; and

Whereas the Sisters in Spirit campaign has been established by the Native Women's Association in hopes of raising awareness and stopping the growing rate of domestic violence toward Aboriginal women; and

Whereas the agency operates two healing centres, and recently organized a walk followed by an inspiration session to increase awareness and to inspire hope and trust that will promote healing;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the Sisters in Spirit campaign and the efforts put forth by the organizers to create positive change for Aboriginal women.

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.

I seem to have a lot of chatter in the Assembly tonight and it's very difficult for me to hear the resolutions when they're being read, so I would ask the honourable members if they would take their conversations outside so I can hear the resolutions.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1496

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

Whereas Georges Hébert is a musician who started his career with Moncton's Brunswick Playboys and ultimately rose to become an internationally-renowned guitarist, collaborating with the best in the business; and

Whereas Georges Hébert has performed on numerous television shows, including *Singalong Jubilee*, *The John Allan Cameron Show*, *The Tonight Show*, and *The Merv Griffin Show*, has recorded with everyone from Anne Murray to Roger Whittaker, has backed such artists as Jerry Seinfeld, Moe Koffman, Bryan Adams, Jann Arden, and Céline Dion, has recorded TV soundtracks for artists like Bruce Cockburn, Rita MacNeil, Julio Iglesias, and Glenn Campbell, and in the course of his career has toured Canada, the United States, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand; and

Whereas Georges Hébert was inducted into the New Brunswick Country Music Hall of Fame on October 13, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Georges Hébert on his award and on his illustrious career, and encourage him to continue producing his superb CDs and albums in his Bedford home studio.

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. 1497

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

Whereas this year marks the 85th Anniversary of the Armstrong Memorial Branch 19 Royal Canadian Legion in North Sydney; and

Whereas the Legion organization was founded to advance the cause of veterans, but its grassroots structure has led to community service at many levels; and

Whereas Branch 19 has been a cornerstone in the North Sydney community for 85 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the members of the Armstrong Memorial Branch 19 Royal Canadian Legion for 85 years of service and wish them many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1498

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

Whereas the Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative (AFSCOOP) has been supporting Atlantic Canadian filmmakers through workshops, training, equipment, and funding since 1973; and

Whereas four years ago AFSCOOP developed the Filmmaker in Residence program, whereby talented artists can receive support and resources while involving the community in the filmmaking process; and

Whereas Halifax director and cinematographer Jeff Wheaton has been named AFSCOOP's Filmmaker in Residence for the 2012-13 season to work on his documentary, *HIVE*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jeff Wheaton on his contributions to Atlantic Canada's cinema landscape and wish him success with his residency project.

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. 1499

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

Whereas Brother Milne, manager of Fresh Mart in Ingonish, was recently presented with a Special Recognition Award by the Cabot Trail Lions Club; and

Whereas Brother received this award for his many years of support of various organizations in the Ingonish area; and

Whereas for over 34 years, Brother has hired local people to work, supported students looking for summer work, donated to local fundraisers, and made his store available for various community fundraising events;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Brother Milne for his years of generosity to his community and congratulate him on his Special Recognition Award from the Cabot Trail Lions Club.

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. 1500

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 2012 Pee wee AA Atlantic Baseball Championship took place on Prince Edward Island during the weekend of September 14th to September 16th; and

Whereas after winning provincials, the Yarmouth Pee wee AA Gateways team, consisting of Brad Jones, Dylan Spinney, Brett Mercier, Corey Newell, Matthew Barron, Zack Lefave, Miguel Surette, Jacob Symonds, Cale Spates, Skylar Baxter, Brayden Moses, and Adam d'Entremont, represented Nova Scotia at the Atlantic Championship; and

Whereas the Gateways, under the guidance of coaches Scott Surette, Doug Jones, Laurie Barron, and Gary Baxter, went 4-0 in the tournament defeating teams from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and P.E.I. to become Atlantic champions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Yarmouth Pee wee AA Gateways on winning the 2012 Pee wee AA Atlantic Baseball

Championship, recognize the team and coaches for this impressive accomplishment, and wish them every future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1501

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 today is World Stroke Day; and

Whereas the purpose of this day is to place emphasis on the seriousness of this condition and raise awareness about prevention and treatment for stroke victims; and

Whereas all over the world organizations are working to educate people about the signs of a stroke and healthy initiatives they can take to prevent such a medical emergency from happening;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage Nova Scotians to make themselves aware of the risk factors associated with strokes and help ensure everyone is mindful of the warning signs.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1502

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

Whereas the Glace Bay Colonels are a perennial powerhouse within the Little League Canada program representing the Maritimes at many national tournaments and winning the Canadian banner on five occasions; and

Whereas our Colonels and Glace Bay Little League will host the Canadian National Championships at the Cameron Bowl field in August 2013, marking the third time the tournament was played on Glace Bay soil; and

Whereas the tournament will see thousands of baseball fans converge at the Cameron Bowl to witness high calibre competition - the final games in 1988 and 1998 were enjoyed by well over 15,000 spectators respectively;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in thanking the 2013 host committee for taking on this epic tournament and wish the Colonels well as they prepare to win our sixth national title.

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. 1503

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

Whereas Gerard Ansems, a retired farmer from Steam Mill, recently grew a record-breaking pumpkin weighing in at 783.4 kilograms; and

Whereas Gerard has been cultivating big pumpkins for the past 20 years and just recently started to take it seriously when he joined the Annapolis Valley Giant Vegetable Growers; and

Whereas Gerard took home a \$1,000 prize for his successful entry;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Gerard Ansems on picking up the \$1,000 prize for his winning pumpkin.

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. 1504

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

Whereas Mary-Anne (Beaver) Bailey grew up in Port Dufferin, Nova Scotia and when Terry Fox made his famous run through Sheet Harbour she joined him and she told him how much she appreciated what he was trying to accomplish as she had lost her dad and some aunts to cancer; and

Whereas she began her career as a French teacher but continued promoting the Terry Fox Foundation and the Terry Fox Runs by encouraging her students to participate, she also organized the Porters Lake Run in 1985 and restarted the Lake Echo Run in 1995; and

Whereas she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2001, which was controlled until the Spring of 2012 when it returned, Mary-Anne drew her strength from her church, her faith in God carries her as she continues to live life to the fullest, and she has just

recently completed accreditation in a four-year French-language teacher training program at Acadia University;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in thanking and congratulating Mary-Anne (Beaver) Bailey for the contribution she has made to Nova Scotia in the fight to eradicate cancer.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1505

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

Whereas Lyme disease is an illness caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, spread to humans and animals through the bite of certain types of ticks; and

Whereas this illness can have serious consequences if left untreated, including but not limited to recurring attacks of arthritis, as well as heart and neurological problems; and

Whereas the current guidelines in Canada are based on those in the United States and are so restrictive as to severely limit the diagnosis of acute Lyme disease and deny the existence of continuing infection, thus abandoning sick people with a treatable illness;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly support the passage of Bill C-442, a National Lyme Disease Strategy Act, which would convene a national conference with provincial and territorial health ministers, representatives of the medical community, and patients' groups, for the purpose of developing a national strategy that works towards ensuring the recognition, timely diagnosis, and effective treatment of Lyme disease in this country.

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 Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1506

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 NDP Government has mismanaged the economy of Nova Scotia since taking power, resulting in the worst performing economy in the country; and

Whereas in the past year alone 8,600 Nova Scotians have lost full-time work; and

Whereas the provincial economy is being downgraded by private and public sector analysts;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Halifax Chebucto remind the Premier and the rest of the NDP Cabinet that because of their mismanagement of the economy, more Nova Scotians are facing layoffs and job insecurity and that part-time work is not a substitute for the security of a full-time job.

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.

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 member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I believe I have five minutes to wrap up from my discussion that we had on Friday. I'd like to thank everybody for listening attentively to the comments that I made. Many of them, I think, can be agreed upon by members of the commission or the members of the select committee who participated in this. We feel the commission persevered and did their best to do duty to the most difficult and unfair conditions as they rolled out and consulted with Nova Scotians as they did. They presented a final report, one that we are looking at today. The report contained a dissenting opinion; one of the commissioners put in writing what many Nova Scotians were thinking at the time. Of course Paul Gaudet, who was the Acadian member of the commission, said that he believed the NDP Government "used the commission as a smokescreen to impose its will."

Those are tough words. Of course we know what happened to Mr. Gaudet after, and the comments that the Premier had towards him at that time - that well, he should have worked within it, he should have done this and should have done that. Well, he did what the Acadian member of the commission should have done - and that is to represent the community that he came from.

Mr. Speaker, also we now know, we now hear that the MLA for Shelburne is upset with the final report, of course. He knows that this process was bad and he even went out in front of the media, I think on Thursday, and he went so far as to call the final boundaries report a failed process - the immediate scrums at the House of Assembly, or here in the scrum just outside this door.

Today we are debating legislation that diminishes our province. It erodes the democratic traditions that we do hold so dear; it gives false legitimacy to a process that was unfair and we feel was a little sneaky - a process that was subject to undue, inappropriate, and unprecedented political interference. This legislation turns back the hands of time to an era when old-style politics guided the drawing of electoral boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, as I finish up I do want to make a number of suggestions - of course the suggestions are simple. This process didn't work for anybody, so why don't we find a better way to do the process so that we don't fall into this trap again? Why don't we work together as three political Parties instead of just the majority rule on a particular case like

this that impacts the political outcomes or the political advantage of one specific Party over another? Why don't we, once and for all, have a discussion about minority representation in this House, one that I believe will solve it forever, that these communities need to be looked at in special cases and provided a representation that is lasting, not one that is subject to discussion every 10 years? Every 10 years there seems to be a different outcome or a different move.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Argyle, les citoyens du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse, les citoyens d'Argyle, sont un peu déçus du processus. Il se trouve, presque, comme un football qui sont tirés d'un bord jusqu'à l'autre, du sud au ouest, de l'est à l'autre bord. Donc, on aimerait voir une réponse finale. We would like to see a final response on this one - what is the go-forward going to be from the government?

Now I see someone getting ready to speak; it's going to be an interesting discussion. I would possibly hope one that maybe will be able to shed some light on this discussion, one that I hope that he was listening to the member for Richmond and listened to me during my hour of discussion of how we saw things roll out when it comes to the setting of the boundaries commission. I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to Bill No. 94. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect on a quick introduction, please.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quick introduction - that will be different.

I'd like to bring the attention of the House to a young friend opposite who, believe it or not, was a student of mine who listened, who was an outstanding athlete. He came here and wanted to thank me for the importance of ball hockey in his school education. So based upon those facts and his interest in seeing the Legislature in action in this important debate taking place at this time, I'd ask Tyler Brown to stand and receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise and to say a few words on Bill No. 94, a subject very dear to my heart. We seem to have spent over a year looking at this question of boundaries and I know over the past year, I've spent a lot of time with the member for Argyle and the member for Richmond and I am looking forward very much to continuing this discussion. I did want to use the time I have here, to comment in particular on two parts of the discussion and two parts of the process that I was involved

in throughout this process of setting electoral boundaries; in particular, I want to speak about the principals that are driving Bill 94 and have driven the process. I also want to speak about the process itself, that lead to the creation of this bill. I would like, in the time I have, to speak to the big principals and the main principals of the bill and the legitimacy of the process itself.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that we forget in this House, and we seem to have forgotten in this debate on electoral boundaries and the setting of electoral boundaries - the process that we are going through and the situation we face has been driven by profound social and economic transformation. The world that we knew 10 years ago or two decades ago has changed. There have been great growths in population in some parts, there have been shifts in population and there has been decline in others. The point to remember is that the population shifts and demographics shifts have been driven by the fact of social and economic dislocation.

In their wisdom, the people who drew up the rules around the setting of electoral boundaries said that every 10 years, we have to review our boundaries. We have to keep our institutions representative and we have to refresh our institutions. We have, in fact, a process that necessitates that every 10 years we review our boundaries, but we should remember that that process was set in place to respond to social and economic dislocation, and to respond to the fact that these boundary changes are required every 10 years.

I think there has been a sense in the debate that it's driven by the government, and that the government somehow had an agenda. But the government's agenda in this case is no different from the government agenda on the other side. I believe that members opposite when they were in government were just as concerned about the basic principles of representative government, that they wanted a government that was representative, and responsive, and effective. They wanted processes that were legitimate and those processes were set in place and they used the same processes, and we use those processes to respect those principals. I think we have to remember that these processes were necessitated by social and economic change and by legislative mandate, by the requirements of the law.

What are the facts of economic and social dislocation, Mr. Speaker? I want to table a document that the Elections Nova Scotia Commission sent us about the current situation that we face. These constituency disparities were evident 10 years ago but they are even more evident now.

In the last 10 years, for example, a vote in the constituency of Argyle carries three times the vote in Halifax Clayton Park. A vote in Bedford-Birch Cove is worth half a vote in Victoria-The Lakes, and as of December 31st, when we received this document, 15 of the 52 constituencies were at least 25 per cent bigger or smaller than the provincial average. Another 10 constituencies were between 15 and 25 per cent of the average. Nearly half of the constituencies, on December 31st, did not even come close to meeting the "one member/one vote" test, and this is a serious problem that was identified by the data. It was

identified in 1991, it was identified in 2001 and the conclusion reads that if these issues are not addressed, if these disparities were not addressed the problem would only get worse. I will table this document, Mr. Speaker.

I should say that this requirement - this attempt to eliminate the disparity is not new. I looked at the 2001-2002 commission report, and at that time when the boundaries commission was looking at this issue, they expressed concern that in many of these constituencies, the population was declining and problems needed to be addressed. I should say, Mr. Speaker, that at the time - and I don't want to be partisan about it - this was a Progressive Conservative commission that said that boundary disparities need to be addressed - and that was in 2001-2002. I'll table that.

I want to also say, Mr. Speaker, the idea behind those commissions in 1991 and 1992 were to also address issues arising from challenges faced by communities of interest and communities of identity, a very important principle in their own right. I should say that there too, the data that was presented to us at the select committee suggested that it, too, was not working. In Preston, for example - the seat that is supposed to be the seat of the African-Nova Scotian representative and the so-called protected seat - there are fewer African-Nova Scotians identified in Preston than there are in Halifax Needham, for example. It's not clear whether or not the boundaries that were established in 2001-2002 are still serving their purpose. If the idea is to represent communities of interest or communities of identity, it's not clear that it is doing that effectively.

So too, Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Richmond has fewer identified Acadians living in it - in fact I suspect that I have more Acadians living in my constituency of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island than they do in Richmond. So there is a question that can be asked about whether or not those boundaries are still serving their purpose. I will table that document, Mr. Speaker, which is presented by Elections Nova Scotia.

I should add, Mr. Speaker, in 2001-2002 there was a submission made to the Electoral Boundaries Commission by la Société Saint-Pierre de Chéticamp that made essentially that point - there were more Acadians in Inverness County and that perhaps Inverness County should have an Acadian representative. Lisette Cormier, the president of the society, made that presentation. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

The point is that the election boundaries that we have may no longer be serving the purpose that they were supposed to in terms of first principles - they are not representative, they are not responsive, and they are not effective - and the data shows that the situation is getting only worse.

So we came to this process then with the requirement from the House of Assembly Act, Section 5(3), that we establish a boundaries commission that had to report no later than the 31st day of December, 2012, and that this requirement is every 10 years, that an independent boundaries commission has to be appointed and terms of reference have to be

given to it, and members have to be appointed for the commission. In other words, this is a legislatively mandated process that requires a report by December 31, 2012, it requires an independent boundaries commission that sets terms of reference and selection of members of the commission. And I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

This is how we come to this debate, Mr. Speaker, with profound and fairly significant changes in population movements and changes in society that have made the 2001-2002 boundaries somewhat undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by talking about the core principles. We know then, the facts suggest that these changes are necessary and they have to happen. The basic principles that all government, including this one, follow for this process, flow from the legislation that sets out the process and they reflect our commitment to being a just society.

M. le Président, il existe des principes de base, que tous les gouvernements, y compris celui-ci, doivent respecter ces processus, ces principes proviennent des textes de loi qui établissent le processus et ils reflètent notre engagement à être une société juste.

We begin with equality - the principle of one person/one vote, which is at the heart of our democracy and the heart of this boundary review process. No government could or should argue that as a cornerstone of our system.

M. le Président, nous commençons avec le principe l'équité. Le principe, une personne un vote. C'est au cœur de notre démocratie et au cœur de ce processus d'examen des limites des circonscriptions électorales. Aucun gouvernement ne peut et ne doit s'opposer à cette pierre angulaire de notre système.

Fairness and effective representation also guide this process, ensuring that communities of interest and identity and geographic areas, especially rural communities, are effectively represented. It's important to this government and has been part of the process from the beginning. In other words, we have these twin commitments that we as a government and we as a society have made to the principle of representation. On one hand we have one member/one vote, that every individual is equal; and on the other hand we need effective representation so that communities of interest, communities of identity, rural Nova Scotians, and other communities are equally represented.

L'équité et la représentation effective guide également ce processus. Il est important pour ce gouvernement de faire en sorte que les communautés d'intérêt et les collectivités géographiques, particulièrement les collectivités rurales, profitent d'une représentation effective, et ce principe a fait partie intégrante du processus dès le début.

Those are the principles that have guided us and guide this bill that we have before us. It's not an alien concept to us. Many of us were involved in the Democracy 250 project. We know that Nova Scotia over 250 years ago played a leadership role in the struggle for

democracy, in developing representative and responsive and effective government. We have spent the last 250 years trying to push forward the democratic agenda in trying to make our democracy more open, more inclusive, and more effective.

So it is then with these principles in mind that we drove the creation of a process that would end in a more representative, responsive, and effective outcome. We found that in the select committee, in the commission, and in this bill that we have these principles as a driving force. So the main directive in the committee's report, in the commission's report, and in this bill, seeks to protect the constitutional right of Nova Scotians to fair and effective representation. It required the Electoral Boundaries Commission to first and foremost strive to secure relative parity of voting power by designing constituencies of equal electoral population.

While parity itself is of paramount importance, the select committee, the commission, and this bill, recognize the fact that Nova Scotia is a community of communities. It directed the commission to take into account the unique history and geographic settlement of rural communities and linguistic and cultural communities of interest in fixing electoral boundaries. This bill responds to that direction. To afford these communities more effective representation and to give the commission some flexibility, the select committee required the commission to have a 25 per cent deviation to allow for the accommodation of communities of interest and identity, and rural Nova Scotians, in other words.

The maximum difference as a result of this deviation, Mr. Speaker, could be as high as 50 per cent between the largest and the smallest constituencies. It was there to accommodate those communities. It was there to accommodate those twin principles of representative government which tends towards one member/one vote and parity of individuals and parity of constituencies and the 25 per cent deviation which allows for the accommodation.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that these are old principles, they've always been part of the Canadian and Nova Scotian fabric but to underline that, the Supreme Court in the Carter decision said effectively the same thing - we have to strike a balance between these two principles and we have to be fair in arriving at these two principles. This is what the Carter decision essentially said.

La démocratie est plus efficace lorsque le pouvoir électoral de chaque personne est équitable. C'est seulement lorsque ce principe est pratiquement impossible ou lorsque le fait que la représentation effective, qu'elle doit être mise de côté. Une telle situation doit uniquement se produire pour refléter la géographie unique ou l'histoire communautaire, les intérêts communautaires et la représentation minoritaire qui doivent être prisent en considération pour faire en sorte que notre Assemblée nationale constitue une représentation effective de la diversité de notre mosaïque sociale. Dans toute autre

situation, chaque citoyen doit avoir le droit de s'attendre à ce que son vote a la même valeur que celui de son voisin.

Democracy works best, the Carter decision said, Mr. Speaker, when the power of each person's vote is equal. Only when that principle is practically impossible or interferes with effective representation should it be set aside and that should only happen to reflect the unique geography or community history, community interests, and minority representation that may need to be taken into account to ensure that our Legislative Assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Outside of that, every citizen should have the right to expect their vote is the same as their neighbours.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, one member/one vote - this is effective representation, striking that balance. That balance is what this bill and what the commission's report and what the select committee's terms of reference sought to protect and I will table the Carter decision.

With regard to the 25 per cent variance, Mr. Speaker, much has been said about it and we've asked for a comparison - a national comparison - on what the variances are across the country in the federal system and also in our province. Keep in mind that these variances were established to protect communities of interest. In other parts of the country it's to protect rural and very long, very big northern ridings. Nevertheless, our survey of all of the provinces suggests that we in Nova Scotia have the highest, or we're at the highest - we're equal to the highest variations that are allowed across the country with the exception of one or two in northern areas.

I'm not going to go through a long discussion of the variances in various provinces, and I will table this, but effectively, in most of the other provinces the variations are much lower. Where those provinces strike the balance is beside the point for us, but the point is that our variance of 25 per cent is among the highest in the country and we're not the biggest province. We don't have the same challenges that those provinces with vast northern regions and vast tracks of land have. I will table this, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to say that most recently - in fact, as we speak - our neighbouring Province of New Brunswick is going through exactly the same process of redistricting and redistribution. Here's what direction their commission was given and I'm going to read it. Subsection 12 (3) and subsection 12 (4) of the Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act of New Brunswick prescribe that the population of each electoral district be “. . . as close as reasonably possible to the electoral quotient.” In other words, it has to be as close as possible to the average, so the Electoral Boundaries Commission was required to respect individual parity and the constituencies had to respect the parity. Electoral districts should not exceed the electoral quotient by more than 5 per cent or, in extraordinary circumstances, “. . . the number of electors in the electoral district may deviate by no greater than 25% . . .” In other words, not more than 5 per cent and only in extraordinary circumstances may they deviate by greater than 25 per cent.

Now I hear the Leader of the Official Opposition saying New Brunswick is a bilingual province. Well, of course it is, and you would expect that their variations would be much higher and yet there too, they have it in enshrined in legislation that they will go for equality, that there will be 5 per cent parity.

The commission in New Brunswick has the authority to deviate from the electoral quotient by no more than 5 per cent, and I table that, but it is a cautionary tale for us here in Nova Scotia that those variations are important. The variations are important to respect communities of interest and communities of identity and they are an important part of striking that balance that I talked about. Other provinces are less generous when it comes to setting those variations.

With that I want to turn away from the basic principles - and I'll come back to them - that have guided the work of the select committee, the Boundaries Commission and this bill that we have in front of us, to talk about some of the other issues raised in the discussion here. I listened very carefully when the members of the Opposition were talking and most of their conversation, most of their discussion, revolved around the legitimacy of the process. I'm looking here at the resolutions that were tabled in 1991, moved by the honourable member for Pictou East, Premier of Nova Scotia.

That resolution made no reference to the issues that were raised by the Opposition. It made no reference to the issues that they claimed were mentioned in the resolution. There is no reference here, for example, to protect its seats or any direction to the commission. There is no discussion here in this bill about the equality of members of the Parties selecting themselves and going forward and presenting a partisan report. It's very, very straightforward. It refers to the House of Assembly Act. It talks about the composition of the committee. It talks about the composition of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. It talks about the need for terms of reference, and essentially it says - I could read it out, Mr. Speaker, just to give you a sense of how very similar the resolutions are. The operative clause in this says: "the House declared, for the guidance of the Select Committee, its support in principle for: a House composed of 52 members" - in other words, they set the members.

Incidentally, the select committee report - and the Electoral Boundaries Commission was asked to look at less than 52 members, to have fewer members in the House. That was not something that was in this report, but that was something that was added - "a House composed of 52 members, plus one additional member who would represent the Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia" - and I'm reading, Mr. Speaker. "The need for boundaries that address the community of interest in the composition of the House, including the Acadian and Black communities; and the importance of having a person from a minority group serve on the Provincial Boundaries Commission" on this occasion. And that's it, Mr. Speaker. Those are the terms of reference.

I know the members opposite would like me to read it. Perhaps they should, and I will table it so that they will have that opportunity. The 2001 Electoral Boundaries Commission Report was no different - four or five members of the Party; there were one or two Liberals and one New Democrat - but again, there was absolutely no difference in the report.

I could read that out to you, since there's an interest in the operative clause:

the House declared, for the guidance of the Select Committee, its support in principle for:

- a House composed of 52 members, plus one additional member who would represent the Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia;
- the need for boundaries that address the community of interest in the composition of the House, including the Acadian and Black communities; and
- the importance of having a person from a minority group serve on the Provincial Boundaries Commission.

That's the effective part of the terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, and I will table that as well.

So we come to Resolution 1846, which began this process here on November 3, 2011. Just for continuity's sake, we can read the same thing: "Therefore be it resolved as follows: (1) that pursuant to Section 5(3) of the House of Assembly Act and the Rules and Forms of Procedure" - the select committee to determine the composition of an independent boundaries commission and the terms of reference, and the select committee should include the groups that we talked about. It was identical, except for the direct reference to the Act itself. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

The point is that there has been a great deal made of the resolution that was introduced on this side of the House in November 2011, but the fact is that as it relates to the terms of reference, as it relates to the composition of the committee, as it relates to the timing, they are virtually identical. They are identical because the terms for those motions are set in law and they are set by convention.

There is a sense in what was said opposite that the resolution in some way predetermined the outcome, and of course it didn't. In no way did it do that; in no way did the other resolutions that were presented on the other side by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the members opposite talk about the legitimacy of the process, and I hear the member for Argyle. Let me just quote, just give you a response on that from what someone else said. ". . . we'll watch closely to see . . ." what the government does, et cetera. I am going to table this. "At the end of the day, I don't think anybody questioned the decisions that were made, even when it was 10 years ago under a majority Progressive

Conservative Government where they clearly had a majority.” (Interruptions) No, no, it’s in here, I wanted to quote but I don’t want to get myself into - but let me just say (Interruptions) All right, Mr. Speaker, I will read it:

It was a majority Progressive Conservative Government that set up the Select Committee on Electoral Boundaries. I listened as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party talked about the wonderful debate that took place at that time to talk about equality of vote, to talk about seat counts, to talk about protected ridings, to talk about everything democratic about boundary reviews. Well, unfortunately, that didn’t happen.

What happened was we got notice one day from the then Minister of Justice, the late Michael Baker - it was sent over to us by fax saying, here is the resolution I will read tomorrow on the composition of the Select Committee on Electoral Boundaries. He came the next day and stood in the House, as was done previously, read the resolution and it was passed. There was no debate; no one talked about the Charter; no one talked about equality of vote - none of that took place. The resolution was passed and there was no further debate. So let’s be realistic here as to what took place.

That, Mr. Speaker, for the record, is the honourable member for Richmond in response to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party waxing nostalgic about the old process and how we had deviated from that. I will table that too.

So we come to the select committee itself and the report of the select committee. I would like to table the select committee reports of 1991, 2001 and 20011. (Interruptions) I’m coming to that. There’s lots here, I still have some time.

The point in tabling those three select committee reports is there was not a great deal of deviation in those select committee reports from the resolutions that were given to them. The select committee, effectively, took its mandate under the direction of the House and it responded to that. The select committee went out, conducted hearings; it listened to Nova Scotians, they had a number of meetings – some of them in camera, some of them in public – and I should say, while I am on the subject of presentations, everyone should serve on a select committee or a boundaries commission at some point. There is no better way to get to know your community, to get to know how passionately people feel about their MLAs, about their communities, and how passionate they are about their hopes and aspirations and their fears.

It was a pleasure to go out there and listen to Nova Scotians who were telling us what they felt about the political system, about how they wanted the House to function, about how they wanted to be represented. Those select committees were struck and maybe there is something to be said for making some change in the process. The select committee was struck in November and they had to report by the second week in December. The

members on the select committee will know that it was very difficult when the House was sitting. It was very difficult in the middle of winter. It was very difficult, coming towards the end of the season, to organize meetings; it was very difficult for people to get out.

Maybe there is something to be said that we review our processes and maybe strike the select committee earlier and get that select committee report in. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, it was no different from what other committees have done, what other resolutions have required. The Boundaries Commission made several other recommendations that were very helpful, in some ways they were not very different from recommendations that were made by previous Boundaries Commission.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, this would be the moment to put some of those on the record that we should consider. The members on the select committee, in particular, may appreciate that. There was an issue, for example, about whether or not select committees could continue to provide some direction and guidance and follow-up to the Boundaries Commission in terms of the administration. There was a question about maybe setting dates early. This most recent commission, for example, has recommended that perhaps there should be an initial report, perhaps there should be an interim report that gives more people a chance to speak.

We know at the select committee that we were not sure it was fair to give the Boundaries Commission so little time to do consultations and to write a report in time. All three Boundaries Commissions have not met those deadlines and asked for an extension and in part because the process maybe is too compressed and maybe we ought to look at a longer process.

The Boundaries Commission has talked, for example, about an orientation session for commissioners so that they can get a sense of what the mandate is, what their obligations are.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that that process that we were involved in was quite illuminating, in part because it certainly educated me and I think the other members of the committee as well, as to how important this process is and how much Nova Scotians care about this province and about the principles of representation. But insofar as the report of the select committee, there is nothing significantly different in there. I'm going to come to the one issue that has been raised by the members opposite.

The hearings themselves, Mr. Speaker, I have the document somewhere here, talks about the number of people who presented was remarkable. We got dozens of people coming out initially and then more later. But we got numerous reports by e-mail, by phone, people coming in and even people talking to us on the street about the hearings. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who took the time to appear before the select committee and the commission, who took the time to e-mail, to write and to talk with us about their interests. It was an important process.

I want to say something also, Mr. Speaker, as far as the select committee goes, as far as the timing, much has been made of the timing. As I said earlier, the resolution that established the committee was struck on November 3rd and also most immediately the select committee began its deliberations. A first draft was prepared on December 14th which was effectively about a month after the committee was struck and this was after several hearings. I think on two occasions we got caught in snowstorms while we were on the road. A number of drafts were prepared and the process, as I said earlier, was very compressed. We had a number of meetings, and as the members opposite have said, at that time of year things were also terribly busy. We also, I think, delayed the process for a week because there was a death in the family of the honourable member for Argyle. There were a number of days that were lost for various processes.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a document that sets out the timing of the meetings, the timelines for the meetings, when certain drafts were prepared. I should include that we also spent a great deal of time trying to find commissioners who would be able to serve on short notice for an extended period of time, but I would like to table this document that talks about the timelines and sets out how the select committee went about its business.

I want to talk, Mr. Speaker, about the draft terms of reference - that issue that has caused so much discussion and debate here. The draft terms of reference, as I said, originate in the resolution, they originate in the basic directives that have been given to commissions before that, that we strike a balance between the principle of one member/one vote and effective resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the commission was given a clear direction - one member/one vote is the rule, but exceptions can be made within a 25 per cent range to provide more effective representation for rural communities and other cultural communities of interest. So the commission was given a mandate and a directive that was not significantly different from previous mandates.

La commission a également été chargée de prendre en considération les éléments comme la géographie, l'histoire et les intérêts de la communauté ainsi que la diversité linguistique et culturelle de la Nouvelle-Écosse, surtout les populations acadiennes et afro-néo-écossaises de la province lorsqu'on va délimiter les circonscriptions électorales. Ces facteurs visés ont aidé la commission à déterminer à quelle mesure la population d'une circonscription peut varier par rapport à la moyenne provinciale, dans un écart maximal de 25 pour cent.

The commission was directed to consider such things as geography, community history and interests, and Nova Scotia's linguistic and cultural diversity, in particular the province's Acadian and African Nova Scotian population, when coming up with electoral boundaries. These factors were to guide the commission in determining how far any constituency varied from the provincial average within that 25 per cent. So these variances,

Mr. Speaker, were spelled out very clearly. Those variances, as I said, were spelled out very clearly across the country and have been spelled out across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the issues that have been raised about the terms of reference. It has been said many times that the change in the protected seats, the change in the protected constituencies was made by some kind of subterfuge or some kind of trickery on the eve. It is a good story, but that's not what happened - and I want to say that in their comments, the members opposite in speaking to the resolution noted that the resolution did not say anything about protected seats - the resolution that was tabled in the House.

The members from the Third Party noted that; the member for Richmond commented on it. It was not there, Mr. Speaker. It was not there at the outset and I dare say that when the (Interruption) Well, let me get back to the 2001 report. So the allegation is that somehow around Draft 8 something disappeared. I want to table - I have the drafts that the select committee came up with, every one of them. I have every single draft that was given to the members of the select committee.

I would like to table Draft 1, and the members opposite should note, and the members of the House should note, that there was absolutely no reference in Draft 1 to protected seats or extraordinary circumstances, that it was not in Draft 1 and the members were aware of that.

I will table Draft 2, Mr. Speaker, which was distributed to all of the members of the select committee. Draft 2 does not have the clause that the members opposite have spoken about, about extraordinary circumstances or protected seats.

I will table Draft 3 that was circulated to every member, and I should say that if we have to I could say I got acknowledgement that they had received all of these drafts. Draft 3 says nothing about protected seats or extraordinary circumstances.

At that time there was a great deal of discussion on both sides of the Opposition benches on variances. We spent a lot of time talking about variances. We on the government side wanted a 20 per cent variance, we believed that we should come closer to approximate parity of voting power and we believed that 20 per cent was more representative. The members opposite, and particularly the member for Argyle, argued that we would go to 25 per cent and we agreed eventually to do that because we thought it would be a good way to represent. The Premier tabled, earlier this week, a document from the member for Argyle making it very clear that he was more concerned, at the time, about the variance, and we have that document.

I will table Draft 4 that makes no reference to protected seats and extraordinary circumstances. The Opposition has paid a lot of attention to Draft 4 and somewhere in

Draft 4 they argue there is a section that talks about protected seats and extraordinary circumstances and it's not in Draft 4; it was not in any of those drafts, and I will table that.

I will table Draft 5. Again, Draft 5 does not have any reference to extraordinary protections. The Opposition has made claims that somehow a clause was inserted into that section there that somehow changed the meaning of it. The clerk of that committee sent a note to the members of the select committee from both caucuses that said the acting chairman - I was the acting chairman at that time - has asked you to look at these changes in this select committee report; the acting chairman has asked you to take it to your caucuses and consult; the acting chairman would like your feedback. Out of that, Mr. Speaker, came Draft 5, and I will table that.

Draft 7 was no different. I will table that, Draft 6, and Draft 7 was no different and Draft 8 was no different. The only difference in Draft 9 was that we accepted the fact that the Opposition wanted to write a minority report and the select committee's report was ready well in advance, but they asked for time to write a dissent and this draft was changed to allow them to bring that together. I will table that.

The point is that somehow there is this claim that things were done in an underhanded way. These reports show, from Draft 1 to Draft 9, that there was never any objection from the members opposite on many of the points and that there was no significant change made between those drafts, although it perhaps makes them feel a little better now, but the facts speak for themselves and those documents are now tabled.

I will table - since the member for Argyle is so interested in this - a note that the member for Argyle sent me to that effect, saying that he was more concerned about the variances than he was in the protected seats.

I will table then the note that the committee clerk sent me, which was sent to all the members opposite on the select committee, asking them to comment on the changes, pointing out specifically, perhaps it might be a good idea for me to - it might be advisable for me to read that exchange. Here's a note that says:

“Here (attached) is Draft 5 . . . I have edited 1a, b, and c and added names to that section. We need to insert contact information for ‘nominees’ . . . In section 2 I have re-ordered the directives in clusters while remaining true to the substance of the discussion. Would you please distribute this version to the other members of the Steering Committee for consideration by their respective caucuses?”

The clerk of the committee then sent it out, asking them to do just that, and I will table that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we come to the Electoral Boundaries Commission's report. The Electoral Boundaries Commission, as you know, receives its directives from the select committee. I will table those reports from 1991, 2001 and 2011 but one thing that we do need to note is that when the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2002 reported, it said:

“The Commission reviewed the use of the five protected constituencies created in 1992. The Commission decided not to continue to use the term ‘protected constituencies,’ but instead use the ‘extraordinary circumstances clause’ contained in its Terms of Reference.”

In other words, the reference to the protected constituencies was not dropped in 2011-12; the reference was dropped in 2002 by the Electoral Boundaries Commission then.

That Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2002, it didn't stop there. The Electoral Boundaries Commission said - and I was asked earlier whether or not there was a dissenting report on the Electoral Boundaries Commission. In 2002, in its interim report, the commission recommended that three of the five constituencies that were then protected be dropped. One of them was the constituency of Richmond.

“In its Interim Report, the Commission had recommended three constituencies for inclusion under its ‘extraordinary circumstances clause.’ Clare, Argyle and Preston. The Victoria riding was the fifth protected constituency in 1992, but the basis of protection was geography, which is not an ‘extraordinary circumstance’ as specified in the current Commission's Terms of Reference.”

The use of the term ‘protected constituencies in the 1992 redistribution and the current Commission's ‘extraordinary circumstances clause’ for minority representation has generated considerable public comment.”

And that's in reference, Mr. Speaker, to the interim report which essentially called for the elimination of the so-called protection of Richmond.

“The Commission feels that this method of encouraging minority representation should be re-evaluated during the next electoral redistribution.”

So that happened - it didn't happen with this select committee; it happened in 2002 with the previous Electoral Boundaries Commission that was established by a Progressive Conservative Government. The commission recommends, and this is among the recommendations of that committee:

“The Commission recommends, during the next electoral redistribution, that the Provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission re-evaluate the method of encouraging minority representation.”

I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

So getting back then to the committee's reports. The commission's mandate, set by the select committee, was not significantly different from what was said before. This was the process that has been challenged, was guided by legislation and agreed to by a committee of the House, and it was about striking a balance between those principles that I talked about, and that is exactly what happened in the process in that Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, there is a fair amount of interest in the process and I've already talked about the process leading up to the things we learned in the select committee. I think one thing we did learn there was that the creation of boundaries is important. Allowing people a chance to speak is important. So to that end, I am asking, and we are asking, that because of the importance of the bill, the Speaker's Office support the provision of simultaneous translation for the Law Amendments Committee meeting in Shelburne. We would like to have that translated.

Cette loi, c'est important. On va demander au bureau du Président d'appuyer l'octroi de la traduction simultanée pour la réunion de la Law Amendments Committee qui aura lieu à Shelburne.

We are looking forward to hearing what the people of Shelburne have to say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we need to remember why we are all here in this place. Our real focus needs to be meeting the basic needs of the people we serve. People are looking for good jobs, skills development, better health care, good education. That's what we need to do and that's what our communities are also telling us.

I want to also say, from my personal experience, that I know what it means to be a member of a minority community, Mr. Speaker. I've lived that experience here in Canada and in India. It has been the focus of much of my professional and academic and activist work, as I sought to build understanding and bridges between communities. I think we've come too far, as a society, to believe that effective representation is only possible when an elected representative comes from a particular community of interest or a minority group. We should all be thinking more broadly than that.

J'ai moi-même vécu l'expérience d'être membre d'une communauté minoritaire, ici au Canada et en Inde. Cette situation a été sujet important dans mes travaux professionnels et universitaires, alors que je cherchais à établir une certaine compréhension

et des liens entre les communautés. Je crois que nous avons fait trop de progrès en tant que société, pourquoi que la représentation efficace est uniquement possible lorsqu'un représentant élu pour une certaine communauté d'intérêt ou d'un groupe communautaire. Nous devons tous élargir notre façon de penser.

I know my time is running out, Mr. Speaker, I believe I have two minutes. It's important to remember the basic principles that have guided us. One member/one vote is important. It's important to have an effective democracy. We believe that every Nova Scotian vote, regardless of where they live, should be worth roughly the same, recognizing that changes may be necessary for effective representation.

Nous croyons que le vote de chaque Néo-Écossais, peu importe où il habite dans la province, doit avoir plus ou moins, le même poids, tout en reconnaissant, M. le Président, que des écarts peuvent être nécessaires pour permettre la représentation effective. Il s'agit du principe fondamental établi par la ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the minister's debate on second reading has expired.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure there are many Nova Scotians asking themselves how we got to this point and now, after listening to the member opposite, I'm sure now they know how we got to this point.

I do want to correct a couple of things that the member opposite mentioned. He looked at the resolution that was presented in the House just recently – it's almost a year ago that it was presented before this House. It talked about that an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission be appointed no later than December 31st. He made reference to the fact that if he looked at the House of Assembly Act, and he talks about Clause 5(3) and if you go on to read it, it talks about the very same thing, that we have to appoint an Electoral Boundaries Commission by December 31st, 2012.

It says nothing about the fact that that commission had to have met and reported by December 31, 2012. What it says is that this House had to appoint that commission and allow them to go out through the province, so quite frankly, there is no hurry to have moved this bill through the House. It is only the wishes of the government that were driving this piece of legislation through the House of Assembly. (Applause)

Further, Mr. Speaker, to the point that he referenced, the Electoral Boundaries Commission of 2002, that was the resolution brought forward by the former Premier of this House, the Honourable John Hamm, the member for Pictou East - let me apologize, I know you're not supposed to reference a person by name - it was Pictou Centre, was in this

House. The resolutions are very much the same, but the devil is always in the details, and the devil starts showing up in both of these cases in the terms of reference.

The Premier who introduced that resolution in 2002 was not trampling on minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia. The Premier who introduced that resolution in 2002 made sure that the independent commission had the ability to protect minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia, unlike the terms of reference that were presented by this government to the commission.

He also referenced recommendations that were put forward by the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2002, and he knows full well that when he read them in this House, his comments, in my view, were misleading. He made reference to the fact that the commission said we need to look at how we have minority representation and how they are represented in this House. In no way did the commission of 2002 say that we should eliminate minority representation in the Province of Nova Scotia. What they were referring to - maybe there is another way we should be part of that conversation, but in no way did they suggest that we should eliminate minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia.

He also referenced other jurisdictions. I want to remind the honourable member, who is a political science professor from Saint Mary's, that the federal government takes in revisions, making sure that smaller provinces are protected. There are four MPs out of Prince Edward Island. The entire province of Prince Edward Island is the size of some federal constituencies in Ontario, but the federal government in its wisdom, setting a boundaries commission, made sure that they protected the cultural differences of Prince Edward Island. They did that by making sure that they have effective representation.

He also referenced the terms of reference that were set out by the committee that he was part of, that was chaired by the Minister of Justice. Well, the member for Argyle and I don't agree sometimes on issues of importance to this province. It is a far stretch to suggest that the member for Argyle and the member for Richmond ignored minority rights sitting in there and were prepared to get rid of the ridings and minority ridings.

He knows full well that the member for Richmond and the member for Argyle and the member for Dartmouth East and the member for Victoria-The Lakes were part of that committee, and they were talking about the variance of 25 per cent. That was with the direct understanding that the minority ridings would be protected in the Province of Nova Scotia and that that variance would apply to the other ridings across Nova Scotia. There is no way any logically-thinking person in the Province of Nova Scotia would ever suggest that a member from the Acadian community would sit on that committee and say, go ahead, do away with our rights, with minority representation. How far afield is that? That's why Nova Scotians can't have confidence in what is coming out of here when we stretch it to that point.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's a liar.

MR. MCNEIL: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the terms of reference that were set out and the variation that was said in Clause 2(c).

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I heard an unparliamentary comment. I would ask the member for Yarmouth to retract that, please.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: I will retract that comment, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. MCNEIL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to go back now to where we began, and that was in November 2011 when a resolution was brought before this House. Then this House appointed a committee - two members from our caucus, two members from the Progressive Conservative caucus, and five members from the governing Party to look at the terms of reference that would guide our commission that we were to set out - and I want to remind this House, by its own Act, did not have to report to well into 2013. The commission only had to be appointed by December 31, 2012; it did not have to report to the House.

But what was important, if you go back and look at the terms of reference that had been set out for every other commission, it talked about the deviation from parity of voting. It talked about geography, community history and interest and then it talked about the linguistic and cultural diversity, particularly in the province's Acadian and African Nova Scotian populations. Those were part of what had always guided the men and women who had accepted the invitation by this House to sit on the commissions to set our boundaries.

Lo and behold, there's a new provision that was added, and added by the majority members who are members of the governing Party in the Province of Nova Scotia. It says, "Notwithstanding 2(c)" which means all of the things we talked about just a few minutes ago, notwithstanding those, "no constituency may deviate from a variance greater than 25 per cent." In essence, what they've said, by this clause is the only thing that matters in the minds of the government was the number of voters in a particular riding. Communities of interest didn't matter, linguistic and cultural diversity didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was the sheer number of how many people each elected member of this House represents. In essence, they wiped out the minority right protection that was in, that every other commission had been in front of them.

I want to be very clear about that provision because 2(d) was not supported by the Liberal Caucus in any way, shape or form. Nor do I believe it was supported by the Progressive Conservative Caucus. It was pushed through by the members of the governing Party in the Province of Nova Scotia.

With that in mind, we then asked Nova Scotians to join our commission and go out and engage the citizens, all of whom are honourable, hard-working Nova Scotians. They are really the only truly group of Nova Scotians that went out and asked Nova Scotians for their opinion. They went out and they engaged them and they followed down what they thought were guidelines. Little did they know when they accepted the invitation, that the only thing that mattered was the number of voters. Communities of interest didn't matter, linguistic and cultural diversity didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was the number.

In essence, we really didn't even strike a commission, it's a mathematical formula. Just start carving up the population. That's what we're talking about. It started at one end to the other, start moving the boundaries. But the commission went out and it spoke to Nova Scotians and it had a number of meetings from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. I don't know if the member who spoke before me should listen to me, what he should do is actually read his own notes and figure out where he went wrong. (Applause)

What happened was, they went out and they engaged Nova Scotians and they listened to them. They brought back a report, while boundaries and constituencies across the province changed to a certain degree to deal with the variances, what they said very clearly as they heard from Nova Scotians from one end of this province to the other, that the minority representation should be protected in the Province of Nova Scotia and their first recommendation to this House was to protect the minority ridings.

I want to remind the members of this House that commission went out and engaged Nova Scotians, they sat and they listened to what Nova Scotians had had to tell them. Nova Scotians responded very loudly, that minority rights should be protected in the Province of Nova Scotia and should have representation in the House of Assembly and should so be protected by the number of seats that are here.

So what happened once that report was brought in? The Attorney General, acting on behalf of the Premier, rejected it and sent a message back to the commission: you missed a clause, 2 (d). Nothing else matters but population - focus on the variance of 25 per cent, either way.

What did the commission do? It went out, again, talked to Nova Scotians, brought back a report. The report ended up coming in on July 20th and what had happened? They delivered what the government wanted them to do, which was squash minority rights and squash minority representation in the House of Assembly.

Madam Speaker, if you go back and look at what happened during that report, there are a number of interesting things that had come out. I know my riding changed; my riding went from exactly where it should be on average of 13,800 down to .80, around 11,000 voters - I almost got taken out of my own riding.

AN HON. MEMBER: You know what that's like.

MR. MCNEIL: Some members do know what that's like. But I'll tell you what I did - I let my constituents know what it meant to them. I let the people of Annapolis Royal, Parkers Cove, Victoria Beach, Granville Ferry, Granville Centre, what it meant to them, where their representation would come from, and I'm very proud of the way they responded.

There was no electoral boundaries meeting in my constituency until I, as their elected representative, reached out and told them the changes and the impact it would have on them and they responded. We then asked the commission to hold a meeting in our constituency and they did. I want to thank the commission; they came and they listened.

On the July 20th boundary review, what did they do? They cut the community of Yarmouth in half, pushed Argyle in part of it, Clare in the other. Well, through the great work of many people across that community, the community of Yarmouth responded - 2,500 showed up to a public meeting. I was trying to think when was the last time we would have had 2,500 people at a public meeting in the Province of Nova Scotia. It would have been a long time. So that, Madam Speaker, would have given some indication that what was recommended between Clare and Yarmouth was going to change - it had to, because of such an uproar.

Let me be clear about the position of this caucus. We're perfectly happy and have been all along with the status quo - 52 members, with minority rights being protected, allowing representation. Change the variance if they like, either way. But you know, when you look at what has taken place and you look at the boundary meetings that have happened across southwestern Nova Scotia - I know the member for Lunenburg spoke, the member for Lunenburg West spoke, the member for Queens, the member for Shelburne didn't, the member for Argyle did, the member for Yarmouth did, the member for Clare did, the member for Digby-Annapolis did, the member for Annapolis did. The only member who didn't speak was the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the member for Shelburne.

AN HON. MEMBER: He didn't know it was coming.

MR. MCNEIL: Well if he didn't know it was coming, he obviously didn't read the report, because the report clearly laid out direction number two. And, Madam Speaker, this is exactly what happens when you divide communities of interest and do not protect minority ridings in the Province of Nova Scotia.

By telling the communities of Argyle and Clare you do not deserve to have the right to representation in this House based on linguistic and cultural reasons, and you either tell the community of Yarmouth you are going to be cut in half or you tell the community of Shelburne that you're going to be cut in half, and that's what the NDP Government did, for the member for Shelburne to suggest he didn't know it was coming means he didn't read the report, it means he hasn't paid attention - that's all that means. There was some

suggestion there was a Liberal conspiracy to somehow divide the constituency of Shelburne. We have been very clear from the very beginning about protecting minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia. I was expecting over the weekend to hear that we found the grassy knoll and the second shooter after hearing the conspiracy about what we were supposed to have done.

I can tell you if I had any influence at all, any influence on that commission, the very first report they delivered to this House would have been the one I would have accepted. And what's even more insulting is that hard-working, honourable Nova Scotians who accepted the task put forward by this government to go out and do their work, they engaged Nova Scotians and then they get attacked personally. The commissioner from Clare gets attacked personally by the Premier. What did he think an Acadian representative on the commission was going to do, endorse the elimination of minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia? Endorse the elimination of those protected ridings? What did he think was going to happen? He somehow has confused that with partisan politics. If there is any partisan politics that has been put into this process, it comes directly from One Government Place.

Madam Speaker, they've gone out and they've engaged and worked hard on behalf of all of us in this House, to have their own reputation to be spread across the newspaper, to be insulted by the government is offensive, any way you look at it.

The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island suggested that he would encourage anyone, if they had an opportunity, to sit on a select committee and commission. Well, Madam Speaker, do you know what? That might be a good idea, except when government interferes with the process. The commission and its independence were what was at the heart of allowing us to build our independent boundaries and how we create the structure of this House. The independence of that commission was at the very heart of it and when government interfered is when it made every Nova Scotian take heed and say, why would I participate in a process that is supposed to be protecting minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia, that is supposed to be giving representation to every community across this province, when the government is going to step in when I give a recommendation and overturn it?

Madam Speaker, there's a final report that came in on September 20th, with many changes in it. We've heard about the conspiracy theory down in southwestern Nova Scotia that is somehow taking place. We're now taking the Law Amendments Committee to Shelburne. Well I haven't had a chance to look and I've asked the Attorney General and I've written to the Attorney General to ask if he is taking the Law Amendments Committee to other communities that have been affected by the boundary changes. I'm waiting to hear back from him. Particularly, as I know the member for Antigonish knows, that in the report that was delivered to the government on July 20th, the constituency of Antigonish was unchanged, just like the riding of Shelburne was unchanged.

In the final report that boundary has changed. Members who presently reside in the constituency of Antigonish and around the Havre Boucher area have been moved and go into the riding which is in Guysborough-Sheet Harbour riding, which has been renamed. That community hasn't had its chance to be heard. I want to know from the Attorney General, is he taking the Law Amendments Committee there so they can have their voices heard? I'm looking forward to that.

I know that the member for Antigonish, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, was at a meeting. If one member of that Cabinet has the Law Amendments Committee arrive to defend their constituency when they weren't prepared to do it during the process, are we going to do it for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal? We think we should. If we're going to do it, let's do it for everybody. While we're at it, let's take the Law Amendments Committee to the minority ridings that are being eliminated altogether. Let's take the Law Amendments Committee to the Speaker's riding that has completely disappeared, the riding of Cape Breton Nova, it's gone. Let's take the Law Amendments Committee down there so that we could hear from his constituents how they feel about a process that was clearly driven by the governing Party. The whole issue of deviating 25 per cent and eliminating minority rights was put in place by the governing Party, not by the support of this caucus. They would like to try to suggest to all Nova Scotians that this was the support of the House, that this committee had the endorsement of everyone in this House. That is not the case.

Madam Speaker, just like in 2002 and subsequent to that in the early 1990s, 1991-92, when they looked at boundaries, there was a resolution brought to this House, but the most important aspect of all of those was in the terms of reference. It's a little bit like when we pass laws in this House and the regulations then get set outside of this House and sometimes change the very meaning of what was talked about and presented before us, because the regulation is the detail. Oftentimes, by the time the regulations are attached to a particular bill, they've changed.

Well, that's what happened here. Members of this House supported a resolution that would strike a select committee to go out and look at boundary reviews, but it was in the terms of reference when things went sideways. It was not unanimously supported that Clause 2(d) go in there. Regardless of what's being presented by the members opposite, it was not supported by this caucus or the Progressive Conservative caucus - Clause 2(d) and the only thing that matters is 25 per cent.

I had the opportunity to be at a public meeting in Shelburne with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and I highlight the very fact that when you squash on - take away the minority rights and the ridings that are being protected, it has to have an impact on neighbouring communities one way or another. There are roughly 7,000 people in the Clare and Argyle ridings. They deserve to have representation. In our view, they deserve to have their own representation

representing their cultural and linguistic uniqueness in our province, but in the eyes of government that's not the case.

So then what happens is that you start splitting communities all the way up on both coasts. You know, it's of great interest to me when I listen to talking about the only thing - and it has been quite a debate across, when I'm talking to some of my own constituents about this issue, about equal representation and the idea that the only thing that matters is population.

I noted with interest the previous speaker's riding of 14,800. My new riding has 16,194 in it. In 15 minutes he can walk across his. My riding borders on Kings County; I touch Lunenburg County; I touch Digby County; and I would touch Queens County except that the good community of Maitland Bridge is moved into the riding of Queens for logical reasons - reasons I think the community endorsed. Now, is that equal, effective representation? How is it equal for someone who takes an hour to drive to the constituency office of their MLA when someone can walk 15 minutes across to see his? He doesn't actually need transportation, but in my riding you're not getting to the MLA's office unless you have transportation or happen to live next to it. Is that equal?

According to the government, that's what we're striving for. Look at the riding of Guysborough-Sheet Harbour; geographically, it is huge. Inverness - there's no question that there are issues around depopulation in parts of rural Nova Scotia. It doesn't mean that the communities and the members who live in those communities do not deserve to have equal representation, and equality is not just based on the number of constituents an MLA serves in this House. Access to your elected representative should be part of that conversation. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, I'm looking forward to hearing from the Minister of Justice on when our caucus can prepare for the Law Amendments Committee meetings that are going to take place in Antigonish and other communities across this province, because I think it's important. I'm pleased that the government has seen fit to move that committee to Shelburne, but if we're going to do that, then we need to go to every other community that has been affected by these changes.

Madam Speaker, I want to just finish up a little bit with my own thoughts about where we are, as a caucus. I want to make this perfectly clear - at no time did this caucus, in any way, suggest that we should eliminate those minority ridings. We believe that Clare, Argyle, Richmond and Preston should have been protected. (Applause) The members of our caucus who sat on the committee putting together the terms of reference, when they began to talk about the 25 per cent variance - they were talking about the remaining ridings in the Province of Nova Scotia, for the very reasons that we've talked about. The issues that have been associated with geography, making sure that communities like Guysborough County can be represented without having a geographical mass the size of Prince Edward

Island, and have an MLA to represent it in order to capture the right number of people that seemed to fit in the mathematical formula designed by this government.

This whole process had undermined the confidence, in many ways, of the voter. It was interesting to me, when I was listening to the first report that was delivered to this House on May 31st, I made comment on it myself in the Red Room, how pleased I was about the minority ridings being protected, but what was interesting to me was as I travelled around - those who were talking about it were talking about it really in a positive way, there were some who obviously didn't feel that way, but the majority of people who I spoke to or who were talking about this particular issue, were encouraged by it.

I can tell you when the Justice Minister sent his letter to the chairman on behalf of the Premier and government, I heard about it. I heard about it from every corner of this province - about, I thought this was supposed to be independent? What is the Attorney General doing interfering in the process? If we've asked these hard-working Nova Scotians to go across our province and engage citizens about putting together a new electoral boundary structure, why aren't we letting them do their work? The simple reason for that was because it didn't fit for the government and the clause that they endorsed wholeheartedly, which was about nothing more than population.

The only thing that caused a greater furor amongst voters that I've talked to was the way members of this commission were chastised by the Premier and the Attorney General publicly. Even people who said, you know what, we shouldn't protect minority ridings - they could not believe that the Premier of this province would treat a member of any committee or commission the way our Premier treated the member of that commission from Clare, sending out a very partisan attack on him, attacking him for no other reason than he dare write a dissenting report.

Interestingly enough, the Premier didn't attack the member of the commission in May who resigned; why? Because she agreed with the Premier, so let that be the lesson. In the Premier's view of democracy, if you agree with him you're okay, if you have a different point of view than he does, you get chastised in public. It's bad enough if any member of this House does it; it's bad enough if any member of this House does it to a citizen of the province. But when the Premier does it, what signal is he sending about his view of democracy in Nova Scotia?

It's a response we're starting to see from the Premier on a number of fronts, but when a citizen accepts the challenge that was presented to them by this House to go out and engage Nova Scotians, they should be treated with our respect and not be treated the way they were by the Premier when it came to disagreeing with him.

Each member of that committee - while there may be challenges associated with the boundaries and how they affect our individual ridings - expressed some of them and made recommendations on how we thought they should deal with our ridings, and those of us

who were paying attention did. At the end of the day they made changes. They didn't do it with any malicious intent to go get somebody. They didn't do it in any way to come and listen to anyone over that. Who they listened to were not the 52 members of this House, while some of them took their right to present at commissions - they listened to Nova Scotians.

While I may not always agree with the members of that commission on a whole host of issues, I'd never once question their integrity and their desire to make the province a better place. All of them have made extraordinary contributions to Nova Scotia, in their own unique way, and by accepting the invitation by this House to sit on this commission that is what they were trying to do, to be an active citizen in the democracy, to help try and lay out guidelines and rules that would govern this place and who sits in it over a period of the next 10 years. They deserve more than to be chastised in public; they deserve our respect for doing so.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned earlier about inviting them to my constituency of Annapolis, after they had received a number of e-mails from people in and around Annapolis Royal and Parkers Cove and all communities across. They engaged, they accepted, they came, and they listened. The citizens of Annapolis Royal and surrounding area were very respectful. They laid out thoughtful ideas about how they believe this commission could work and what it should do to protect their community of interest. That the fact of the matter was that Annapolis Royal's communities of interest were in eastern Annapolis County, not in Digby County. They respectfully came and listened.

I must say, Madam Speaker, the most common response I got from my constituents following that meeting, before any changes had been made, was they appreciated that fact that the committee came and listened to them, when they asked them to. That is what we should be acknowledging and respecting from the men and women who agreed to sit on the Electoral Boundaries Commission. We should be thanking them for the work that they have done on behalf of Nova Scotians, not chastising them in public. The very health of this institution depends on the fact that Nova Scotians have the right to speak freely and openly without the Premier chastising them in the paper.

Madam Speaker, there is much being said about what has taken place around the issues of the boundary commission. I want to finish up by reminding this House that there is nowhere in the resolution presented by the government or by the House of Assembly Act, that it says the boundary changes have to take place by December 31, 2012 - nowhere. It's made up in the mind of the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. It's nowhere. What it says was this House has to strike a committee by that date. It doesn't say when the committee has to report to the House. Nowhere does it say when the committee has to report to the House, it just says that committee has to be struck by the date of December 31, 2012 - nowhere.

I want to make it clear to this House that while this may be the third time we're reviewing them every 10 years, and the member spoke before me, Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, kept making references to the resolutions that were passed by previous governments. Resolutions were the same, but what was not the same are the terms of reference. What they did in essence by inserting Clause 2(d) was really take away the ability of an independent commission to respond to the thoughtfulness of Nova Scotians. This independent commission - as they thought they were - went out and listened to thoughtful Nova Scotians who made presentations in communities across this province.

The commission responded in the affirmative, by protecting minority rights and making sure that they believed that the variance in other ridings was, to the best of their ability, met. In other words, they did exactly what every other commission has done because they listened and they weren't bound by Clause 2(d). In their mind, and I think if they read the original report that came in May 31, 2012, if you read what they said, they believed that those terms of reference were guidelines, just as every other commission has done in this province. It didn't say they had to protect the Acadian seats in 1992 or 2002, and it didn't say they had to protect Preston. What it said was, it needs to be part of your thought process, that Acadian and African Nova Scotian representation is protected in the House.

They gave the commission the flexibility to respond to what they were hearing from Nova Scotians. It was only this government - the NDP Government of Nova Scotia - that inserted Clause 2(d) which, in essence, took away the independence of the commission and took away the flexibility of the commission to respond to the linguistic and culture uniqueness of our province, to ensure that minority rights were going to be protected and be sitting in this House in the Province of Nova Scotia. Clause 2(d) eliminates everything.

For the government to say that it wasn't brought up before is simply wrong. It has been talked about at every opportunity. What they, in essence, said is a mathematical formula will determine who sits in this House. So let's not fool ourselves - the structure of this House, the report that was presented by the boundaries commission, was orchestrated and delivered for this government. If there are communities that are upset that they've been cut in half, that they've been moved out of their communities of interest, they have no one else to blame or to look at but the NDP members of this House. No one else in this House supported eliminating and taking away the independence of the boundaries commission - no one, except for the members of the NDP caucus. (Applause)

So, Madam Speaker, I hope that as the Law Amendments Committee moves from one community to the other that has been affected by the decision made by the NDP caucus, that we get an opportunity to further debate this. We will, when it comes back. I know I'm looking forward to when the committee goes to Shelburne, looking forward to when the committee goes to Antigonish - we'll be there to support the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal when he asks for that. I don't want to speak for the members next to me, but we'll be there to support him.

We'll be there to support any member of the House whose riding has been ill-affected, to make sure that the Law Amendments Committee shows up in their community, making sure that we want them to arrive in Clare, in Argyle, and Richmond, and Port Hawkesbury, Cape Breton Nova. We'll be there to support the independence of the Speaker, since the Speaker's independence might be questioned - we'll be there to make sure that they go to Cape Breton Nova. All of us know how proudly he speaks of his community that he represents when he talks about the uniqueness of his community. Do you know what? Under the NDP rules of 25 per cent variance either way, see you later. If it doesn't fit in the mathematical formula - we carve it up, we put pieces here and there, take away representation.

We'll be there to support any member of the government Party whose riding has been cut up and divided - we'll be there to help you get the Law Amendments Committee to your community to make sure that your constituents are treated fairly, that they can express their views. That's what we're here for, to help in any way we can.

Madam Speaker, one thing we will not compromise on, though, nor could we ever support, is the elimination of the protection of minority rights in the Province of Nova Scotia. (Applause)

I think you've heard me speak of my mother in this House. My mother is from Richmond County, she's an Acadian, a Mombourquette. Unfortunately, her language didn't get passed on to me. I'm the poorer for it, quite frankly. Our community and our province would be poorer for the fact if we do not enhance, improve the language rights in the Province of Nova Scotia. (Applause) There was talk about New Brunswick. New Brunswick is the only truly bilingual province in Canada. There was talk about the issues in and around their representation. They've enshrined the language rights making sure that people would be in that House, protecting them.

What we have said, and we believe, that minority rights should be protected in the Province of Nova Scotia. Any form of electoral boundary that does away with that will not be supported by this caucus or by this Leader. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill in second reading. I look forward to hearing from Nova Scotians as they tell us how the new electoral boundaries have impacted their individual communities and quite frankly, their individual families. I hope members of the governing Party listen because they haven't been listening. When the Electoral Boundaries Commission listened they were told, sorry, go back to the drawing board.

I hope they don't say that to Nova Scotians who take the time to come out and speak to the Committee on Law Amendments in Shelburne and in Antigonish and in every spot in between that's been affected by these changes. It is important that they get a chance to express their views and it's imperative for this House to pay attention to what Nova

Scotians say. When Nova Scotians say protect minority rights, this House should protect it and the Government of Nova Scotia should protect it. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, with those few words I'll take my place. (Applause)

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you. I wish I could say I was pleased to rise in my place to speak on Bill No. 94 but I think more than pleased, we're obliged to stand and speak on Bill No. 94.

Over the years, Nova Scotians have come to appreciate how important boundaries are. We have the Bay of Fundy, the Missaguash River, the Northumberland Strait and the Cabot Strait, all of which form Nova Scotia's natural boundaries. When we cross them, we enter other provinces where things are done a little differently but the people are very much like us. There are lines on a map that define communities, large and small, within our province. There are counties, districts, cities, towns, villages or simply places. Sometimes the people on the other side of such a line are a little bit different in their history or maybe just how they go about their business, but seldom does crossing such a boundary change us or create any problem because we get along. Mostly, those boundaries stay the same.

Then there are constituency boundaries. They too are lines on a map. Crossing them brings you in contact with more Nova Scotians, which is a good thing. In spite of the fact that the people on the other side are not all that different, if at all, we've learned that people are often uncomfortable changing these lines. Why? Because it might change how things are done. Who will have enough say to protect their way of life, their language, their culture, or whether the change will mean that fewer resources will come their way?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there are legal and ethical boundaries. Sometimes they're written down; other times they're just understood. The people on the other side of such a boundary are very different, and when someone crosses such a boundary, it can have a deep impact on everybody. These boundaries are the difference between right and wrong, fair and unfair, balance and out of balance. Blurring these lines weakens the bonds we have together as Nova Scotians and as Canadians, and when that happens, none of the other boundaries matter.

The main boundary we all must stay within to live in civil society is the rule of law. We make laws in this place on behalf of everyone. People are expected to follow them. There are consequences when that doesn't happen. Of all people, we must set the example and uphold our laws. Nobody is above that. Nobody should make the mistake of thinking they have all the right answers and feeling that that justifies whatever they do.

So it's ironic that when we try to change boundaries to do something, some people just end up crossing boundaries instead. (Interruption) If the shoe fits, Mr. Speaker. The

boundaries between right and wrong in this situation are formed by four lines. First, the law - the House of Assembly Act - which created an independent commission to draw our boundaries so that we as politicians are not tempted to cross other boundaries. Second, 20 years of practice that have made us a model of independent, fair, impartial boundary changes. Cross these precedents at your own peril. Third, what Nova Scotians expect of their elected representatives. They don't expect perfection, but they do expect that we'll try to do what is right and that we will be fair and just, not seeking unfair advantages. Fourth is common sense. The good judgment of all of us as Nova Scotians must prevail over self-interest, real or perceived, or petty concerns.

Mr. Speaker, those four lines might form a square, but that doesn't matter if someone flips a lever and lets Jack spring from the box, and that's what has happened. It didn't take much, and suddenly the government was outside the box and couldn't get back in. For the first time in the history of independent boundary setting in this province, we have a government wobbling and flopping around on top of a sprung spring. They think - and this is the saddest part - that they're on a pedestal, but the reason they find themselves losing popularity faster than a guy who brings a skunk to a picnic is that they acted high-handedly at each turn. Every decision was made in their interests, but calculated not to look that way. The first few times, it didn't look too bad to too many, but on they went and they still remain convinced they're right. Some history: first we've had two independent commissions before. They were given clear terms of reference with the co-operation from all three Parties. The key decisions were made in the Legislature, in the light of day. We also have an Elections Commission where all three Parties have representatives and where there's balance.

In October of last year, Mr. Speaker, the NDP was considering what to do this time. They asked, thank you, and to give credit where due, we advised them to keep the same very thorough terms of reference that are a precedent that has served us well, which complies with the Supreme Court's judgment in Carter - tried, tested, true, and not going to alarm people. The NDP's response was on Halloween and we're approaching that again now, in just another couple of days, so isn't this ironic. The NDP's response was on Halloween last year, when they introduced a resolution creating a select committee - not unusual - with a mandate to travel and listen - not unusual - and with the majority of government members - not unusual - but they also cropped the key terms of reference out of the resolution of the House and left important decisions to the NDP-dominated select committee - highly unusual.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island mentioned about trying to - I know in part of his talks he talked about Victoria County when he made reference to Victoria County, which is now Victoria-The Lakes. The Leader of the Official Opposition earlier referred to the members who live within metro, who can walk in their constituency, from one end to the other, in about 15 minutes. I feel that I should let the House know that in order for the member for Victoria-The Lakes to travel from

Frenchvale-MacAdams Lake area, to Bay St. Lawrence takes four hours. So don't try to walk that one.

The constituency of Victoria-The Lakes, Mr. Speaker, is so large that I as a member, or any member before me, could not expect people to come to my office. I don't think anyone should have to travel two, two and a half hours to come to see me. I feel it's my obligation, as their MLA, to travel to see them. Now, again, within metro, no problem if you want to, everybody can have their office within 15 minutes walking distance and you can see as many people on a given day as you want, but members who are in large geographical areas, within this province, don't have that luxury. The citizens of those same large geographical constituencies don't have the luxury either.

You know, getting back to what we talked about, in the set-up of the committee, I have referenced the fact that the important decisions were left with a select committee that had five members of the government on it. It also had two members from the Progressive Conservative Party and two members from the Liberal Party. We raised concerns immediately. In principle this was wrong. It meant that the NDP-dominated committee could, with very little scrutiny, make changes in the way Nova Scotians are represented. This was a hostile takeover of a non-partisan process. We objected and we asked for balance on the committee - like the election commission, so no one has parity - especially when they're like Bob Rae's Government in Ontario. It had been elected but once, but it had the opportunity to set rules to its advantage for 10 years. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, what would happen?

We had a chance to bring the focus of the Legislature to this situation, but do you know what, Mr. Speaker? I know it's not going to be appreciated, but the Party that labels itself the Official Opposition didn't want to oppose it. They didn't want to do their jobs and shine light on a bad resolution. They wouldn't invest any energy; they went along with the NDP. They clearly hadn't done their homework, because if they had they should have realized that the other shoe would drop and the next phase of the NDP scheme would be worse. I guess that's why they came up with energy policies that repeat the same expensive mistakes as the NDP of other provinces.

Pick something that sounds good, or take no position at all and wait your turn. Now the citizens of Shelburne, Argyle, Clare, Digby, Preston, Richmond, and industrial Cape Breton all lose out, as Yarmouth very nearly did, because the government made sure that the Official Opposition was asleep at the end of the NDP's bed like an obedient little lap dog when the rules were changed.

People were asked, where were the Liberals when this was a real issue with real consequences for those Nova Scotians? Let me tell them through you, Mr. Speaker - we're happy being the unofficial Opposition and getting the job done, hoping that we can do what we can to serve Nova Scotians.

So we did what we could, Mr. Speaker, without any help, and here we are, one year later - almost two days short - looking at the wreckage left by repeated NDP political interference of an independent process that should have the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the member for Halifax Chebucto, the member for Halifax Atlantic, the member for Halifax Fairview blushing if they read the law and saw the word “independent” written in black and white. As for the Premier, nothing embarrasses him.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that the hour is getting late and I have much more to say on this topic but, for the time being, I will adjourn debate for discussion another day.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment of debate 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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet from the hour of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. tomorrow. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will be doing Public Bills for Second Reading. We will do Bill Nos. 94, 97 and, time permitting, 102.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 9:55 p.m.]

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

Given on May 16, 2011

(Pursuant to Rule 30)

QUESTION NO. 13

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of Communications Nova Scotia)

(1) Will the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia make available copies of any and all hard copy and electronic correspondence, including, but not limited to, e-mails, faxes, letters, memos, et cetera, sent or received by the Office of Communications Nova Scotia between January 15, 2011 and March 5, 2012 regarding the development and execution of the Ships Start Here campaign and follow-up on this matter, including, but not limited to, any involvement/exchange with MT&L.

QUESTION NO. 14

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) The Irving Shipbuilding contract is the single largest shipbuilding contract in Canadian history. Irving won the bid based on merit and we, as Nova Scotians, couldn't be prouder. However, when the province decided to extend a loan of up to \$304 million - \$260 million of that being forgivable - we start to wonder what this NDP Government is up to. We know the contract is a huge boost to our province. That isn't our concern; our concern is the process the government went through in order to grant this funding and the structure of the loan that was granted. What alternative funding options were exhausted before this loan was authorized?

QUESTION NO. 15

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) The Irving Shipbuilding contract is the single largest shipbuilding contract in Canadian history. Irving won the bid based on merit and we, as Nova Scotians, couldn't be prouder. However, when the province decided to extend a loan of up to \$304 million - \$260 million of that being forgivable - we start to wonder what this NDP Government is up to. Did the NDP Government look at even one alternative besides giving Irving a forgivable loan?

QUESTION NO. 16

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) The Irving Shipbuilding contract is the single largest shipbuilding contract in Canadian history. Irving won the bid based on merit and we, as Nova Scotians, couldn't be prouder. However, when the province decided to extend a loan of up to \$304 million - \$260 million of that being forgivable - we start to wonder what this NDP Government is up to. Did any other bidder, B.C. or Quebec for example, give a \$300 million loan to a multibillion dollar corporation?

QUESTION NO. 17

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) When the minister announced her cuts to the school boards, there was a huge sigh of relief from the parents and students within the CSAP. We now know from letters to parents, that CSAP will be facing substantial shortfalls based on enrolment. Since the minister has justified her cuts to other boards based on enrolment, can she explain why a board with increasing enrolment has a funding shortfall of \$2.5 million and \$3 million?

QUESTION NO. 18

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) The minister justified her cuts to the other school boards because there were fewer students in the system. The CSAP, on the other hand, has been accepting more and more students, but it looks like the minister's own funding formula let the Acadian and French students down. The increase in funding the minister gave the board leaves almost 300

children unfunded. What services does the minister suggest CSAP cut to accommodate their ballooning student population?

QUESTION NO. 19

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) This government has shown time and time again their misunderstanding to the Acadian and French population. First, they rigged the redistribution of provincial constituencies to remove minority representation. Now they're starving the French board of adequate resources. Will the minister immediately commit to giving CSAP adequate funding to deal with their increasing student base?

QUESTION NO. 20

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) At the Renewable Marine Energy Strategy technical briefing with stakeholders, department staff referred to surveys that have been done that show a band that Nova Scotians are willing to pay for the transformation to renewable energy. Will the minister release the information from consultation and research that the department has done to determine how much Nova Scotians are willing to pay for renewable energy and how is that compared to department data on how much Nova Scotians can afford to pay?

QUESTION NO. 21

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) On May 4, the province announced a commitment to the aerospace and defence industry in a news release. It stated, "A \$10 million investment for the Aerospace and Defence Fund through jobsHere." How is "jobsHere" accounted for in the department's accounting system and what criteria is used to determine if the slogan is applied to an initiative?

QUESTION NO. 22

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) The Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism uses its 2008 tourism numbers when talking about the industry. It has used 2008 numbers in a number of press releases and speeches. However, the tourism industry has been through a lot of turmoil since 2008 and the numbers are out of date. How many people were employed in the tourism industry in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and how much revenue did the industry bring in each year; 2009, 2010 and 2011?

QUESTION NO. 23

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) Former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna has been lobbying to have Alberta oil piped east to the Irving refinery in New Brunswick. What has the Nova Scotia Department of Energy done to advocate for bringing Alberta oil to Nova Scotia?

QUESTION NO. 24

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) How much does a kilowatt of wind energy cost Nova Scotia Power to produce?

QUESTION NO. 25

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) Is the Premier, his government or any of the staff in negotiations with Nova Scotia Power or Emera to potentially secure more than 160 MW or 20 per cent of our electricity needs from Muskrat Falls that was already announced and, if so, at what cost?

QUESTION NO. 26

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) Why will the Premier not allow an independent review of the full Muskrat Falls project?

QUESTION NO. 27

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) What was the date when the Premier, any member of his government or staff was first made aware Nova Scotia Power would be filing to increase power rates in 2013 and 2014?

QUESTION NO. 28

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Energy)

(1) Was the Premier, any member of his government or staff involved in discussions about Nova Scotia Power's two-year rate increase before the rate application was filed with the Utility and Review Board in May?

QUESTION NO. 29

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) On April 2, 2012, a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding untendered outside consultants. As of May 11, 2012, we have received no response from your department. Will the minister please provide a listing of - or a record indicating - all untendered outside consultants hired by the department between June 1, 2009 and April 1, 2012 and deliver it by May 31, 2012?

Consultant is defined as anyone hired to give advice of any kind to anyone in government, including, but not limited to, policy, administration, implementation, accounting, legal, technical, medical, communications, economic and financial.

Please include: description of work, amount paid, amount of the consultant (for current hires), and all jobs currently being considered and those not yet approved.

QUESTION NO. 30

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 2, 2012, a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding untendered outside consultants. As of May 11, 2012, we have received no response from your department. Will the Minister please provide a listing of, or a record indicating all untendered outside consultants hired by the department between June 1, 2009 and April 1, 2012, and deliver it by May 31, 2012?

Consultant is defined as anyone in government, including but not limited to, policy, administration, implementation, accounting, legal, technical, medical, communications, economic and financial.

QUESTION NO. 31

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services if she could provide details surrounding her actions regarding an alleged abuser working at the East Preston Day Care. I asked the minister about the impact her actions may have had on the province's position in the class action suit being launched by victims of abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Did the minister have any discussions about what the impact of the minister notifying the day care or taking strong action might have had on the province's position in the lawsuit?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 11th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 32

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to provide details on the investigation undertaken by her department regarding an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer.

What precisely was looked at in this investigation and did that investigation include interviewing or reviewing material from anyone from the Department of Justice?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 11th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 33

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 18th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to attach clarification of Father Abbass' innocence to the organizational review conducted by her department. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Will the minister agree to attach clarification of Father Abbass' innocence to the review of Talbot House posted on her department's Web site?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 18th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 34

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 25th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to disclose the number of current Talbot House residents interviewed during the course of their organizational review. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. How many current residents (of Talbot House) did the minister's department speak with

during the course of their review? And, if they did not, why did her department deem it unnecessary?

If the Minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 25th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 35

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 26th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to provide details on advice she'd received prompting her to post the review of Talbot House on her department's Web site. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Did the FOIPOP Officer in her department review the freedom of information request and recommend the publication be displayed on the Community Services Web site?

If the Minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 26th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 36

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On May 8th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to indicate whether the Talbot House Board of Directors would only be invited to apply for funding through the RFP process. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Does the minister plan to invite the Talbot House Board of Directors to participate in the RFP process?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on May 8th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 37

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On May 10th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services if she could commit to reopening Talbot House. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Will the minister commit to reopening Talbot House?

If the Minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on May 10th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 38

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services if she could provide details on the investigation undertaken by her department regarding an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Did the minister learn the full gravity of the evidence against this alleged pedophile from the Department of Justice on November 15th and, if not, when was her department fully apprised of all evidence and allegations against the alleged pedophile?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 11th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 39

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 17th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Community Services to conduct an independent review of her department's handling of the situation at Talbot House. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Will the minister immediately undertake a thorough, independent review of the actions of her own department around Talbot House?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 17th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 40

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture)

(1) On April 2, 2012, a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding untendered outside consultants. As of May 11, 2012, we have received no response from your department. Will the minister please provide a listing of, or a record, indicating all untendered outside consultants hired by the department between June 1, 2009 and April 1, 2012, and deliver it by May 31, 2012?

Consultant is defined as anyone hired to give advice of any kind to anyone in government, including, but not limited to, policy, administration, implementation, accounting, legal, technical, medical, communications, economic and financial. Please include description of work, amount paid, amount of the consultant (for current hires) and all jobs currently being considered and those not yet approved.

QUESTION NO. 41

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Minister of Health and Wellness)

(1) It is our understanding that the Department of Health and Wellness hired a consultant (Dr. Reese) to provide input on brain injury best practices. When can we expect this report to be released? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 42

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Minister of Health and Wellness)

(1) On May 3rd during Question Period I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness to indicate when they will begin tendering new long-term care beds. The minister did not provide me with the answer. When (date) will the government commit to tendering new long-term care beds?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on May 3rd for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 43

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Ross Landry (Minister of Justice)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Justice to provide me with details regarding knowledge within his department of an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with an adequate response. What steps did the minister take to protect the children (at the East Preston Day Care) when he knew they were in the presence of an alleged pedophile?

If the minister so wishes, I invite him to consult Hansard on April 17th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 44

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Ross Landry (Minister of Justice)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period, I asked the Minister of Justice to provide me with details regarding knowledge within his department of an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with an adequate response. Who from the Department of Justice met with whom from the Department of Community Services, either on the phone, in person or by e-mail, and what information was conveyed to protect these children?

I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 45

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Ross Landry (Minister of Justice)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period I asked the Minister of Justice to provide me with details regarding knowledge within his department of an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with an adequate response. Will the minister tell us what exact date he became aware of the risk to preschoolers at the day care?

If the minister so wishes, I invite him to consult Hansard on April 11th. I ask that the Minister deliver an answer no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 46

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Marilyn More (Minister of Labour and Advanced Education)

(1) On April 2, 2012, a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding untendered outside consultants. As of May 11, 2012 we have received no response from your department. Will the minister please provide a listing of, or a record indicating all untendered outside consultants hired by the department between June 1, 2009 and April 1, 2012 and deliver it by May 25, 2012?

Consultant is defined as anyone hired to give advice of any kind to anyone in government – including, but not limited to, policy, administration, implementation, accounting, legal, technical, medical, communications, economic and financial. Please include: description of work, amount paid, amount of the consultant (for current hires) and all jobs currently being considered and those not yet approved.

QUESTION NO. 47

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) On February 16, 2012, the minister indicated the report on strip-mining would be made available by the end of March. When can we expect the release of that report? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 48

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) On April 17, 2012 during Question Period, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources about areas where nutrient levels are too weak for harvesting. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Can the minister indicate which regions have nutrient levels that are deemed to be so weak that nothing can be harvested?

If the minister so wishes, I invite him to consult Hansard on April 17th for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 49

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On March 27, 2012, a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding SHYFT. On April 4, 2012, receipt of that application was acknowledged and the date given for a response was April 27, 2012. As of May 11, 2012, we have received no response from your department. Will the minister please provide all documentation including e-mails, memos, letters and briefing notes sent and received within the department regarding the Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team (SHYFT) between June 1, 2009 and March 27, 2012 before the end of the Spring session?

QUESTION NO. 50

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On April 11th during Question Period, I asked the Minister of Community Services if she could provide details on the investigation undertaken by her department regarding an alleged pedophile working at the East Preston Day Care. The minister did not provide me with a relevant answer. Were officials in her department briefed about the progress of the lawsuit by victims of this alleged pedophile, by officials, or lawyers from the Department of Justice?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on April 11th. I ask that the minister deliver an answer no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 51

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

On March 16, 2012 a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding access to records containing information on Georgie Williams, the East Preston Day Care Centre,

and the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. As of May 11, 2012 we have received no response from your department.

(1) Will the minister please provide all documents and records, including but not limited to electronic documents, e-mails, phone messages, agenda entries, that relate to knowledge by employees or agents of the department Georgie Williams was an employee at the East Preston Day Care Centre, what was done, by whom, and when, by May 25, 2012? (Note: An identical FOIPOP request has been submitted to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice has provided us a date to expect the information.)

QUESTION NO. 52

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On March 16, 2012 a FOIPOP request was sent to your department regarding access to records containing information on Georgie Williams, the East Preston Day Care Centre, and the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. As a second part of the information requested in the previously-mentioned FOIPOP, will the minister provide all such documents and records that relate to any child-related, current employment, or community activities of any individuals named as having committed any act(s) of physical and/or sexual abuse in legal proceedings relating to the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children - including what was done, by whom, and when - by May 25, 2012?

(Note: An identical FOIPOP request has been submitted to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice has provided us a date to expect the information.)

QUESTION NO. 53

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services)

(1) On May 1st during Question Period, I asked the Minister of Community Services to commit to making public the framework for their upcoming consultations with private and non-profit day care owners. The minister did not provide me with an adequate answer. Will the minister make the framework for their consultation process public before proceeding with any plans? When can we expect this framework to be completed?

If the minister so wishes, I invite her to consult Hansard on May 1st for reference. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 54

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

To: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Minister of Health and Wellness)

(1) During Question Period on May 2nd, I asked the minister about her department's position on incorporating a test for Cystic Fibrosis into our Newborn Screening Program. During Budget Estimates, my colleague also put questions to the minister about this issue. At that time, she indicated to my colleague that a meeting could be set up with an individual within her department who may have specific knowledge on the issue and requested a reminder. Could the minister please pass along information regarding the department's position on newborn screening for Cystic Fibrosis? Could we go forward and set up a meeting?

QUESTION NO. 55

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) The FTE have decreased from 2012 estimates, but the estimates are above the 2012 forecast. It looks like this department is padding their budget with expectations of new positions. What positions are to be created and which positions are open to be filled? I ask the minister to deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 56

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) Within the FTE counts provided, can the department break down how many EAs, teachers, principals, vice-principals, non-teaching positions, guidance counselors and special needs assistants are within each school board? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 57

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) Can you provide the details and research behind all initiatives started by the department since the NDP have taken power, including but not limited to cost, reports, analysis, surveys, etc. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 58

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Minister of Education)

(1) During estimates, the Minister of Education said that designated special education private school grants can actually be more expensive than the per student funding. Including all micro and macro influences, please provide the report or analysis that proves that this is the case. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 59

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

(1) Revenues were \$114,000 over budget, primarily due to \$77,000 for services provided to Property Valuation Services Corporation and \$37,000 for IT training provided to Capital District Health Authority. FTEs were 22 under budget due to temporary staff vacancies. If revenues were up, expenses down and there were 22 temporary FTE vacancies, what is the justification for increasing the staff when your department is operating above expectation without those positions? I ask that the Minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 60

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

(1) "Connecting the Future Today" is a fairly wordy document, with the five priorities that advance the key business themes. The measures of success are purely subjective and qualitative. Here are some examples: Better focus; more coordinated; more effective and efficient service; better support; more relevant; benefit from a shift; more transparent; improved quality and accessibility of information; improved access; greater access; more consistent, effective and efficient; better positioned.

Please provide any quantitative measures by which you are measuring your success and the criteria by which you will deem the department successful. I ask that the Minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 61

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

(1) Jobs Start Here had two phases; the first at a cost of \$248,000 and the second at \$226,000. Can you describe what was involved with the two phases, and provide spending details and all invoices? I ask that the Minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 62

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

Re: SNSMR Estimate Questions.

(1) We see the FTE count with the department at 120.4 in the forecast but the estimate stayed flat at 107.8. Which positions will be cut, where and when? I ask that the Minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 63

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

Re: SNSMR Estimate Questions

(1) Is there a cost savings by using the Queen's Printer rather than going to the market with government printing needs? If so, please provide the analysis that shows the competitive advantage or cost benefit analysis that supports this information.

QUESTION NO. 64

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Frank Corbett (Minister of the Public Service Commission)

(1) "Support Services" makes up such a large percentage of totals billed to departments. Provide a breakdown of the services and associated revenue generated for CNS through "Support Services." I ask that the Minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 65

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) Interest rates are now at historic lows - in other words, never better. What plans does the department have to deal with inevitable higher interest rates and what are the effects would higher interest rates have on the budget? Please provide analysis and scenarios considered into the future. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 66

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) When teachers and hospital workers are being cut and these services are suffering, is it prudent to add more bureaucracy at the top of government? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 67

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

We have all heard about the 5 per cent and 10 per cent target. A story by the Canadian Press on April 6, 2010 contained a government commitment to decrease public sector jobs by 1,000 positions.

(1) How was the 5 or 10 per cent target communicated to departments? Please provide written examples. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 68

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) We have all heard about the 5 per cent and 10 per cent target. A story by the Canadian Press on April 6, 2010 contained a government commitment to decrease public sector job by 1,000 positions. Were departments required to submit a plan showing how they would accomplish the 10 per cent cuts target?

QUESTION NO. 69

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) We have all heard about the 5 per cent and 10 per cent target. A story by the Canadian Press on April 6, 2010 contained a government commitment to decrease public sector job by 1,000 positions. How long did the departments have to develop their plan to reduce spending? How long did they have to accomplish their goal?

QUESTION NO. 70

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) We have all heard about the 5 per cent and 10 per cent target. A story by the Canadian Press on April 6, 2010 contained a government commitment to decrease public sector job by 1,000 positions. Were people offered early retirement incentives in any department at any time by the NDP Government?

Please provide a breakdown showing the number of people offered such incentives, the number of people who were expected to take up the incentives, the number of people who did take up the incentives to retire, the type and range of cost of the incentives per person, the average age of each such retiree and the total cost of each type of incentive (i.e. lump

sum payout, top-up of pension, benefits by type, etcetera). I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 71

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) With respect to the savings targets requested of each department by the minister, which departments achieved a 10 per cent reduction in expenditures? Which departments achieved a 5 per cent reduction in expenditures? Which departments did not achieve even a 5 per cent reduction in expenditures? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 72

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) In the 2010 Public Accounts, salaries and fringe benefits totalled \$729,416,130.47, compared with the 2011 total of \$754,981,765.74. This shows a \$25,565,635.27 or 3.39 per cent increase. Please provide the dollar value in salary and benefit cuts that are making up the belt-tightening message that has been delivered by the government. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 73

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) The overall number of recommendations made in the Auditor General's Report increased by 16 per cent (23) over the previous year; 41 per cent (69) of the recommendations made in 2011 were repeated from 2010. Please provide rationale for not achieving these recommendations and timeline details (including studies, reports, internal analysis) on when or if they will be completed. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 74

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) In his report and for the second time, the Auditor General noted the revenue estimates for 2012-13 include all revenues of the consolidated entity, including all agencies' third-party revenues in a schedule, to ensure the budget is prepared and presented fully in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Does the department intend to follow this recommendation? If no, why? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 75

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) Why has the interest on pension, retirement and other obligations increased from an estimate of \$118 million to a forecast of \$125 million to a 2012 estimate of \$145 million? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 76

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) What audits are planned for 2012-13 that justify a 31 per cent increase over the forecast? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 77

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) Financial institutions have received \$656,000 according to the forecast. What is the rationale for increasing the estimate for 2012 by \$358,000 or 55 per cent? Please include

supporting documentation of all projected expenses that are included in this figure. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 78

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) The forecast for the year ended 2009-10, total FTE were 172. If you follow the estimates for the 2012-13 budget, the government will have added 85 FTE. What is the justification for each FTE added? Provide an organizational chart of FTE structure within the department. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 79

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) Total department expenses in the 2009-10 forecast were \$27,875,000. There is authority in the budget to spend up to \$11,115,000 more than what was spent in the 2009-10 fiscal year. For the department responsible for fiscal responsibility, there seems to be a double standard. Justify the spending increase per year of administration and provide rationale for each expenditure being more important than teachers in our public education system. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 80

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) With SAP, how much is spent on consulting services to assist the department with that software? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 81

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) Provide reports detailing all expenditures to each of these vendors found on Page 129, Public Accounts 2011:

N Spro Inc. - \$700,000
Adesso Project Management Inc. - \$171,000
Discovery Point Solutions - \$319,000
Illumiti Inc. - \$1 million
Prodigy Consulting Group. Ltd. - \$127,000
SAP America Inc. - \$6,000
SAP Canada Inc. - \$4.9 million
GSA Search Consultants Inc.
Oracle Canada ULC
Sapphire Technologies Canada Ltd.
Sierra Systems Group Inc.
Via Consultants Informatiques (2000) Inc.

I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 82

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. Graham Steele (Minister of Finance)

(1) How is our debt currently distributed in terms of different types of debt instruments, currencies, geographical location of creditor, rate of interest, term to maturity, and premiums and discounts offered at issuance? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 83

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) Based on the Auditor General's Report, there is no quality assurance that includes key operational activities. In the Auditor General's Report, there is no plan to implement this guideline. Is it enough to say nothing has happened yet? What consequence would cause government to do things differently? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 84

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

The Auditor General's Report revealed that the Department of Agriculture is not ensuring compliance with the meat inspection regulations. The Auditor General says, "Many facilities are not taking meat safety as seriously as they should."

(1) If there's one thing that the minister should take seriously, it is the food supply of Nova Scotians. Have changes been put in place since the report that can give Nova Scotians confidence that government is taking meat safety more seriously?

(2) The Auditor General found that there is no formal policy in place for auditing the food processing facilities of our province. There is an informal policy that says they should be inspected monthly. Has that policy been formalized?

I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 85

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

None of the facilities that were supposed to be audited monthly had been, according to the Auditor General, not the slaughterhouses, not the meat processing facilities. In fact, six of the eight that were reviewed by the Auditor General had not been inspected in more than a year.

(1) What, if anything, has the department done to eliminate this risk to Nova Scotians?

(2) During Question Periods immediately after the report was released, the minister assured us that meat was safe in Nova Scotia. Given that audits and inspections were not being done, on what did the minister base his answers?

I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 86

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) In the aftermath of the Auditor General's Report, the minister said on CBC that the Auditor General's Report was not accurate. In the response to the Auditor General's Report, the department agreed with nearly every recommendation. Did the Auditor General get it wrong in his report? Which of the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's Report does the minister consider to be the highest priority, the problem that required immediate attention? Why? I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 87

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) Has the department developed a policy to guide inspectors in assigning and documenting severity ratings for deficiencies? Provide documentation. I ask that the minister deliver an answer by no later than May 31, 2012.

QUESTION NO. 88

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

(1) The minister is fully cognizant that towns across Nova Scotia are struggling. The Towns Task Force Report, which the department supplied funding for, is due out August 31. What is the hope and desire of the minister once this report is out and certain municipalities can't agree on the sharing of services?

QUESTION NO. 89

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

(1) The seizures of contraband cigarettes remain significant. Will the minister tell me how many enforcement personnel are working on this at the present time and last year, how much tax revenue was lost from contraband cigarettes?

QUESTION NO. 90

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture)

(1) In New Brunswick around Grand Manan, they are tracking berried female lobsters by attaching numbered zip ties to the claws of the females. They are then asking lobster fishermen to report when and where they see these bands of females come up in traps. They are doing this to determine where the female lobsters of different sizes migrate to through the Fall/winter. Have you or staff in your department been in consultation with Fisheries officials in New Brunswick and is it anything that is being done or looked at in Nova Scotia?

QUESTION NO. 91

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

To: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture)

(1) Beginning September 1st last year, two longline fishing vessels contracted by fishers and scientists surveyed 53 areas between Sambro and Canso. Cod and haddock are showing a decrease in this area. How serious is the decline?

QUESTION NO. 92

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. Charlie Parker (Minister of Natural Resources)

(1) Nova Scotia Christmas tree growers would eventually like to get a code for shipping their trees to the United States. As minister, has this kind of talk ever surfaced in any trade negotiations you might have set in on?

QUESTION NO. 93

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) The Federation of Agriculture in their Outlook 2021, entitled *Homegrown Success*, noted that in many other provinces and countries in which Nova Scotia farmers must compete, those provinces and countries have much better incentive programs making it even more difficult for Nova Scotia farmers to compete. One example is the potential of farm buildings being exempt from the municipal tax base. Does the minister see this as something the present government can afford to do?

QUESTION NO. 94

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) Why can't the definition of community be expanded to include individual farm operations and supporting businesses and allow the farms to qualify for the COMFIT Program without forming a co-operative?

QUESTION NO. 95

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

To: Hon. John MacDonell (Minister of Agriculture)

(1) When does the minister plan to implement a mandatory point of origin labelling on all agricultural products so Nova Scotians, when they go into a grocery store, will know precisely where the food they are buying is coming from? At the present time, Nova Scotians have no idea unless they ask 75 to 80 per cent of the time whether the food in front of them is locally produced.

QUESTION NO. 96

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) L.E. Elliot Lumber Mill is the last lumber mill in New Ross, Lunenburg County. They still have markets open to them, but could potentially increase employment as well as their orders with a kiln so they would be able to dry their lumber. How much funding is the minister prepared to commit via loan/government assistance toward a kiln for the L.E. Elliot Lumber Mill, and will he have officials in his department contact the mill so the necessary paperwork can be filled out?

QUESTION NO. 97

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) How much funding was allocated for Nova Scotia Government tourism advertising outside Atlantic Canada for 2012, and will the minister break down individually how this money was spent via individual newspaper advertising along with an individual breakdown of Web site ads?

QUESTION NO. 98

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Cape Breton North)

To: Hon. Percy Paris (Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

(1) Where, if any, did the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism host leading tourism writers from across North America in an attempt to have them write about Nova Scotia in their publications such as the Los Angeles Times or the Calgary Herald and will he provide, if he can, details and expenses on when the department met with these national and international tourism writers?

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1507**

By: Mr. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas on October 21st, 2012 the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia presented awards to distinguished members at its annual conference; and

Whereas the Takeda Magnum Opus Award recognizes a pharmacist who has competed advanced training and who has used that training to expand their practice and offer more services to their patients; and

Whereas Graham MacKenzie of Baddeck, winner of the 2012 Takeda Magnum Opus Award, recognized a need in his community and as a result traveled all over North America to develop specialized compounding skills which have been added to his redesigned pharmacy practice in Baddeck, making it the only pharmacy in Cape Breton offering these unique compounding services;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Graham MacKenzie of Baddeck on receipt of the 2012 Takeda Magnum Opus Award and extend our appreciation for his initiative in bringing more extensive quality health care services to the residents of Cape Breton.

RESOLUTION NO. 1508

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas since 1983 Alice Housing, in Dartmouth, has provided safe, second-stage housing and supportive counseling for women and children fleeing domestic violence; and

Whereas for the past 15 years the Donner Foundation has been recognizing and rewarding excellence in social service provision by Canadian non-profit organizations; and

Whereas with this latest award, Alice Housing becomes the most honoured organization east of Ontario by the Donner Foundation, in the award's 15-year history;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Executive Director Joanne Bernard and her exceptional staff and board of directors on winning the 2012 Donner Award.

RESOLUTION NO. 1509

By: Mr. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas from October 26th to the 28th, the fifth annual Chicks With Sticks female hockey tournament took place at Yarmouth Mariners Centre; and

Whereas Chicks With Sticks is the province's largest female hockey tournament, with this year's tournament consisting of 22 teams and approximately 300 players from across the province; and

Whereas many volunteers dedicate their time and energy to ensuring that each year's tournament is always an exciting and memorable weekend for Yarmouth sports;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate all the players who took part in the fifth annual Chicks With Sticks female hockey tournament and thank the many volunteers who helped organize this exciting event.

RESOLUTION NO. 1510

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Ruth Goldbloom was a tireless promoter and fundraiser for so many worthy Nova Scotia causes and needs; and

Whereas Mrs. Goldbloom made many contributions to the arts and culture of Nova Scotia, including Pier 21, Canada's National Museum of Immigration, and Neptune Theatre; and

Whereas her passing leads so many Nova Scotians, who were touched by her incredible spirit and generosity, to reflect and honour her for her work;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend condolences to her family and loved ones and show gratitude for Mrs. Goldbloom's extraordinary contributions.

RESOLUTION NO. 1511

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Phoenix Agritech (Canada) Limited, a Debert company owned by Bruce Blacklock, makes bird deterrent systems that are being sold all over the world; and

Whereas Phoenix Agritech products can be found at airports, farms, agricultural research stations and power plants in more than 80 countries as far flung as Namibia and Azerbaijan; and

Whereas the company was named the Truro and District Chamber of Commerce 2012 Exporter of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Bruce Blacklock and his Phoenix Agritech staff for their ingenious products and remarkable international success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1512

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas today marks the first day of Canadian Patient Safety Week; and

Whereas this annual campaign was launched to inspire improvement in patient safety and quality health care delivery; and

Whereas the Canadian Patient Safety Institute reminds us that the key to good health care is good communication;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize this week as Patient Safety Week and encourage patients and health professionals across the province to communicate effectively with one another.