



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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ADJOURNMENT:

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The subject matter for late debate has been chosen and I will now read it:

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations and that he must end his corporate handouts.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Preston.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

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

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to use its powers over the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities . . . to deny any General Rate Application presented by NSPI 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction before the resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. Joining us today in the east gallery is Dr. Susan Bryson from the IWK Autism Research Centre. Dr. Bryson recently received a Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work with autism spectrum disorder. So I would just ask all members to give a warm welcome to Dr. Bryson. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1513

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

Whereas Dr. Susan Bryson has an established career as a trailblazer in the area of autism spectrum disorder; and

Whereas Dr. Bryson was the lead in creating Nova Scotia's Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention program - or EIBI - and because of her work, children who were otherwise unable to make friends now get invited to sleepovers and birthday parties; and

Whereas Dr. Bryson was recently awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her autism spectrum disorder contributions and research;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Dr. Susan Bryson for being named the recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and for her work that has allowed Nova Scotians living with autism spectrum disorder to reach and surpass milestones that before were impossible.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1514

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

Whereas the replica of the three-masted tall ship the Bounty, commissioned by MGM Studios, was built with pride and superior craftsmanship in the shipyard of Smith and Rhuland in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, in 1960, and launched later that same year; and

Whereas the Bounty sailed majestically to ports around the world, was featured in a movie bearing its name, served as an icon of the wooden boat craft and artisanship of Lunenburg, and was a proud and beautiful reminder of the era of the wooden ship; and

Whereas early yesterday, the Bounty was lost in the winds and waves of Hurricane Sandy, 90 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras, forcing the rescue by helicopter of 14 crew members while one, Claudene Christian, perished, and Captain Robin Walbridge remains lost at sea;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize the courage and commitment of the searchers of the U.S. Coast Guard who risked their lives to save the crew of the Bounty, express our deepest sympathies to the family of Claudene Christian, and send our prayers to the family of Captain Walbridge.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with the concurrence of the House, would you please revert to the order of business, Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

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

The motion is carried.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might be permitted to make an introduction before tabling the report.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MORE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery this afternoon we are honoured to have with us the president of the Nova Scotia Community College, Don Bureaux. He was appointed president of the college last year, a very well-deserved appointment following a long career with the Nova Scotia Community College that goes back to 2004. He has been working with learners for many years.

I would ask my colleagues to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 2012 Annual Report for the Nova Scotia Community College.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

We will now revert back to the order of business, Government Notices of Motion.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1515

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

Whereas 2012 marks the 90th Anniversary of the 4-H movement in Nova Scotia, which presently has a healthy membership of 2,400 young people and 850 adult leaders; and

Whereas 4-H enriches the lives of young Nova Scotians and volunteers in communities throughout the province, as they learn by doing projects in a wide range of fields, from livestock and gardening to photography and crafts; and

Whereas 4-H gives young Nova Scotians the opportunity to grow and have fun while developing leadership skills, sportsmanship, technical skills, responsibility, and life skills, in a structured family-oriented atmosphere;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize, on the 90th Anniversary of the 4-H movement in Nova Scotia, the importance of the 4-H movement to the province, and the invaluable contribution of 4-H leaders, members and volunteers who are shaping the agricultural business and civic leaders of the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 105 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 6 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Agriculture and Marketing Act. (Hon. John MacDonell)

Bill No. 106 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act. (Hon. Karen Casey)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1516

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 that 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 Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville 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 Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I may, can I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Joining us in the gallery today, as they have since the session started, to watch the debate on the boundaries commission, are members of the Acadian Federation and their associations. With us today, we have Céleste Godin, Société nationale de l'Acadie; we have Martin Théberge, La Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; and Lorraine Plourde, Réseau acadien des sites P@C de la Nouvelle-Écosse. I'd just like to welcome them and hope that they get the warm welcome of the Legislature. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1517

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

Attendu que les élections municipales ont eu lieu à travers la Nouvelle-Écosse le 20 octobre; et

Attendu que trois conseillers de la Municipalité du District d'Argyle, Kathy Bourque, Richard Donaldson et Calvin d'Entremont, retournent au Conseil par acclamation; et

Attendu que les conseillers en exercice, Aldric d'Entremont, Roderick Murphy Jr. et Guy Surette, ont conservé leur poste et accueilleront Daniel Muise, Lucien LeBlanc et Nicole Albright, les nouveaux conseillers récemment élus;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent Kathy, Richard, Calvin, Aldric, Roderick, Guy, Daniel, Lucien et Nicole, et leur souhaitent le succès continu dans les mois et les années à venir tandis qu'ils rendent service avec fierté et dévouement à leurs communautés.

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

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

Whereas municipal elections were held across the province on Saturday, October 20th; and

Whereas the Municipality of the District of Argyle saw the return, by acclamation, of three of its councillors: Kathy Bourque, Richard Donaldson, and Calvin d'Entremont; and

Whereas incumbents Aldric d'Entremont, Roderick Murphy Jr., and Guy Surette retained their seats and will welcome the newly elected councillors Daniel Muisse, Lucien LeBlanc, and Nicole Albright;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kathy, Richard, Calvin, Aldric, Roderick, Guy, Daniel, Lucien, and Nicole, and wish them success in the coming months and years as they serve their respective communities with pride and dedication.

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.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. CASEY: I would like to draw the attention of the members to the gallery opposite where we have a special guest here - no stranger to the members of this House, Pam Murchison is here. Pam, as you will recall, is the mother of Jenna, who took her life as a result of cyberbullying. Pam has been an advocate for youth and she presents herself in many schools from Yarmouth to Sydney where she speaks to students to try to help them understand and to let them know there is someone who cares.

Pam is here today to witness the introduction of the legislation regarding anti-bullying, and I want all of us to give her a warm welcome - and congratulations and thank you for everything you do. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1518

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

Whereas Lord Dufferin, Canada's third Governor General after Confederation, created the Governor General's Medal in 1873 to encourage academic excellence across the nation; and

Whereas over the years, the Governor General's Medal has become the most prestigious award that a student in a Canadian school can achieve; and

Whereas the Governor General's Medal is awarded to the graduating student who attains the highest average of all Grades 11 and 12 courses combined on the student's official transcript;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brandon Read, the recipient of the 2012 Governor General's Medal at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche.

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. 1519

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

Whereas in just four years the Judique Volunteer Fire Department is mortgage-free; and

Whereas at a special ceremony for volunteers, family and friends of the community in July the mortgage was burned; and

Whereas with the help of former MLA and Premier Rodney MacDonald, monetary donations of equipment, materials and hands-on work by the department and the community, the new fire station was built in record time and on budget;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the members of the Judique Volunteer Fire Department on this great achievement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour on an introduction.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction on behalf of the MLA for Truro-Bible Hill. We have a group here today, I believe, in the Speaker's Gallery from Le Centre Communautaire francophone de Truro: Professor Yvette Saulnier

and étudiants Céline Thimot, Elisabeth Dromer, Peter Betts, and Itsvan Krizan. We want to welcome them to the House today. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 1520

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

Whereas on June 8, 2012, Clare hosted its 7th Annual Relay for Life fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society; and

Whereas 14 teams, 100 cancer survivors and 87 volunteers took part in this year's event; and

Whereas through the hard work of the many participants, this year's event raised \$56,459 for the Canadian Cancer Society and cancer research;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the many volunteers and participants that make Clare Relay for Life a success and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the Canadian Cancer Society.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1521

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

Whereas the Port Morien County Fair recently celebrated its 66th Anniversary; and

Whereas the Port Morien County Fair is held annually at the Royal Canadian Legion in Port Morien; and

Whereas the Port Morien County Fair is full of old-fashioned fun with everything from exhibits to horse rides which is the result of many long hours and hard work on behalf of the Fair Committee;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Port Morien County Fair Committee on all their hard work and for putting on another successful fair.

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. 1522

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

Whereas 24-year-old Johnelle Sciocchetti, who fell in love with the theatre as a child, has assembled a troupe called Wildfire Theatre to develop a venue for those who also love the theatre but have never had a chance to “tread the boards”; and

Whereas Johnelle Sciocchetti played an active role in dramatic productions at C.P. Allen High School as a student, has taken advantage of development opportunities at Neptune Theatre and has written two plays, including a romantic comedy titled *Maybe Someday* which debuted at the 2012 Atlantic Fringe Festival, and a drama presented in March 2012 through Dalhousie University’s Theatre Society; and

Whereas Johnelle Sciocchetti wants to encourage conversation, generate laughter and challenge expectations with Wildfire Theatre;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Johnelle Sciocchetti on pursuing her dream and for creating an artistic setting in which everyone has a chance to express their creativity.

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. 1523

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

Whereas the Rotary Club of North Sydney is assisting the Nora Huntley Home for Special Needs in India by contributing to a Canadian-made water purification system and four water buffalo to provide milk for nourishment and to begin a herd; and

Whereas Ramesh Nadava, while visiting Canada, was introduced to Nora Huntley of Sydney Mines who encouraged him to develop a home in India to help people with disabilities, which became a reality after Nora made her first donation; and

Whereas today the residents of the Nora Huntley Home in India have safe drinking water that they share with local families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly salute the North Sydney Rotary Club for their service locally and for their work with the Nora Huntley Home in India.

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. 1524

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

Whereas over the last eight months, the residents of the Town of Shelburne have lost three family physicians; and

Whereas one of these family physicians has left to work in the emergency room, which solves a political problem for this NDP Government when it comes to keeping the ER open, but does nothing but inappropriately drive her patient load to the emergency department for primary health care; and

Whereas three physicians lost in the span of eight months proves that this government has done nothing when it comes to both the recruitment and retention of physicians in rural Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge the fact that this NDP Government has failed 5,000-plus residents of Shelburne County who do not have a family physician and note that this is yet further proof that the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been asleep at the switch yet again.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and if I may, I'd like to begin with an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, through you I'd like to draw the attention of all members of the House here today to the gallery opposite and the presence of Mr. Sean Brownlow, a prominent resident of Dartmouth and a long-serving law enforcement officer who joins us here at the House of Assembly. I encourage you to have us all welcome him to the House today. (Applause)

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

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1525

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

Whereas October 17th marked the beginning of National School Safety Week; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians share in the responsibility to keep our children safe; and

Whereas the beginning of each school year is signalled by students commuting to school by foot, bicycle, bus or car;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House encourage people across the province to travel with caution and help ensure our students are able to get to school safely.

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. 1526

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

Whereas Shimon Walt is assistant principal cellist of the Nova Scotia Symphony Orchestra and has been part of shaping Halifax's classical music scene since his arrival to the city in 1976; and

Whereas Mr. Walt was one of the founding members of Symphony Nova Scotia, a highly-respected instructor of music at Dalhousie University, a founding member of Rhapsody Quintet and has served on the jury of the Canada Council of the Arts; and

Whereas Mr. Walt will perform a series of four solo concerts as the new musician-in-residence for the St. Cecilia Concert Series;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Mr. Shimon Walt's contribution to the classical music appreciation in Nova Scotia and congratulate him on his latest achievement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1527

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

Whereas after almost three decades on Hantsport town council, Peter Murray decided not to reoffer in this Fall's municipal elections; and

Whereas Peter has been a steady voice around the council table in Hantsport, since first being elected in 1984; and

Whereas Peter's work on council included everything from serving on the planning and advisory committee to by-laws, roles, and responsibilities, as well as the town's fire committee;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend their most sincere best wishes to Peter Murray for his 28 years of exemplary municipal service for the Town of Hantsport.

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. 1528

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

Whereas Judy Black was the Resuscitation Program Manager for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Nova Scotia office, and has retired after 23 years of service to the province; and

Whereas Judy Black is literally the matriarch of the program and has won awards because of her dedication to the programs and to her community; and

Whereas because of her work and passion in advancement of resuscitation in Nova Scotia, thousands of doctors, nurses, EMS and lay public have learned CPR, AED, and higher levels of advanced lifesaving techniques, which have saved many lives over the last 23 years;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and thank Judy Black for her many contributions to the citizens of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1529

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

Whereas the Bras d'Or Preservation Nature Trust celebrated World Oceans Day on June 8th by receiving a \$5,000 grant through the RBC Blue Water Project; and

Whereas the grant was presented by Leanne MacKinnon, Baddeck branch manager, to Jessica KleinHerenbrink, conservation program coordinator for the Bras d'Or Preservation Nature Trust, for their contribution, support, and protection of ecologically-significant habitat on the Bras d'Or Lakes; and

Whereas the grant will help with the completion of a marine survey conservation project taking place in McKinnon's Harbour;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank the Bras d'Or Preservation Nature Trust for their work to protect our precious ecosystem, and also thank manager Leanne MacKinnon and RBC for their contribution to the community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1530

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

Whereas the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association National Golf Championships were held in Ottawa, Ontario, on October 17th; and

Whereas Eric Locke of Digby, a student of Holland College as well as a member of the college's golf team, was named an All-Canadian at the championships; and

Whereas Locke was the top finisher on the Holland Hurricanes team, finishing in a tie for 16th with a total of 226 - nine strokes behind the tournament winner;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly commend Eric Locke on this award and wish him all the best with his education and the game of golf.

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. 1531

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 October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month; and

Whereas breast cancer is the most frequently-diagnosed cancer in Nova Scotian women, and this year alone an estimated 740 women will be diagnosed; and

Whereas Breast Cancer Awareness Month is organized annually to increase awareness of the disease and raise funds for research into its cause, prevention, and cure;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage all women to receive a mammogram and remember that prevention and early detection are the best way to fight this disease.

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. 1532

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

Whereas from October 11th to October 13th in Yarmouth, the Minor Music Conference & Festival took place, setting the scene for master class workshops, professional performances, youth-mentor performances, a student art challenge and display, and much more; and

Whereas the Minor Music Association believes that our community's future lies in the hands of our children, evidenced by the art auction which opened the Minor Music Conference & Festival, an event which raised over \$2,000 which will be used to develop a bursary for students planning to pursue studies in the arts; and

Whereas Minor Music Association Chair Kim Anderson has infused her passion for the arts and her dedication to the youth in our community into every aspect of the Minor Music Conference & Festival which she organizes, with the help of a team of hard-working volunteers;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize and thank Kim Anderson for the tireless effort she devotes to the Minor Music Conference & Festival, and also for her enthusiasm and commitment to the arts and the youth in our 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 Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1533

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

Whereas the L'Arche Cape Breton summer program has had a successful day camp for youth who are physically and/or intellectually challenged; and

Whereas the program has been operating in Inverness County for 20 years and gives the participants the opportunity to take part in sporting events, craft workshops and social activities; and

Whereas participants came with their parents, from all over the county, and were grateful for such a fun-filled day trying new things and meeting new friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the efforts L'Arche Cape Breton puts forth to provide programs and events that make a difference in the health and happiness of challenged youth.

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. 1534

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 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 last year alone 8,600 Nova Scotians have lost full-time work; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank 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: The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1535

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

Whereas Merle Marshall of Eskasoni won a gold medal recently at the UFC Fan Expo Grapplers Quest Tournament in Las Vegas; and

Whereas Mr. Marshall won his medal in the super heavyweight men's novice no-gi division; and

Whereas Merle trained at Mac Mooney's Gym in Eskasoni and was among a group of 11 fighters who made the trip to Nevada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Merle Marshall on his gold medal and wish him all the best in his future training.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 1536

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

Whereas on September 30, 2012, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation held its annual CIBC Run for the Cure, in Church Point; and

Whereas in keeping with their history of community involvement, Belliveau Motors co-sponsored the annual Run for the Cure this year; and

Whereas this year's run raised \$6,233.50 for breast cancer research, education programs, and treatments;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our gratitude and best wishes to Belliveau Motors for their active role, as well as the countless volunteers and participants.

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. 1537

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 will mark the fifth time in six years the Educational Program Innovations Charity Society has been recognized by the annual Donner Canadian Foundation Awards for excellence in the delivery of social services; and

Whereas the Donner Awards are Canada's largest recognition program for the not-for-profit social service agencies, established in 1998 to recognize and encourage best practices in non-profit management and increase public confidence and support for Canada's non-profit sector; and

Whereas the Northside's Educational Program Innovations is a finalist this year in the competition's Services for Children category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating EPICS and its staff for achieving this high level of national recognition and wish them good luck at the awards.

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. 1538

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 Wednesday, October 24, 2012, the Cape Breton District Health Authority issued layoff notices to six counsellor attendants who work in the withdrawal management unit, the opiate recovery program and addiction day programs; and

Whereas while the district states these layoffs were necessary due to a shift in delivery model, the reality is that experienced counsellors with a sum total of 95 years of addiction experience will be lost to patients who have and would have benefited from much-needed support in the recovery process; and

Whereas this is the second delivery model for which front-line counsellor positions were eliminated and replaced with an interdisciplinary team of health care professionals which, in turn, DHA officials have sold the model to be in the best interests of patients, the first model being the elimination of the youth workers at the ACT program at the IWK;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly demand this NDP Government respond to the letter sent to all of us from former NDP MP Michelle Dockrill, which requests reconsideration of laying off front-line addiction counsellors before it's too late.

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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1539

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

Whereas Donnie Rockwell began serving on Hantsport Town Council in 1991, at the same time Wayne Folker took over as mayor and the two have been a formidable force, until their decisions not to run in the recent municipal election; and

Whereas Donnie played an instrumental role for the Town of Hantsport during his time as councillor and deputy mayor; and

Whereas Donnie also served as Finance Committee Chair of Dykeland Lodge, a long-term care home serving the residents of Windsor, Hantsport and West Hants;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate outgoing Hantsport town councillor Donnie Rockwell for his 21 years of dedicated service as a councillor in the Town of Hantsport.

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. 1540

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

Whereas in 1932, Ray Fillmore incorporated Maritime Auto Salvage Limited in Truro and in the 1960s Ray and his son, Ronnie, relocated the business to Glenholme, Colchester North; and

Whereas in 1974 the business was sold to new owners, and in 1988 to Ed and Lana MacDonald, the present owners; and

Whereas the MacDonalds have modernized the business with a computerized inventory management system and not only reuse and recycle parts, vehicles, gas, oil and AC refrigerant, but voluntarily adhere to the Canadian Auto Recyclers Environmental Code;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the owners and staff of Maritime Auto Salvage on celebrating their 80th Anniversary and wish them continued success with their business, which provides such an important role in the protection of our environment.

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. 1541

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

Whereas October marks Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month; and

Whereas SIDS is the number-one cause of death among healthy infants in Canada;
and

Whereas the promotion of good health and safe sleeping habits for all infants is emphasized during Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize October as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month and help to raise awareness of the issue for parents across 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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1542

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

Whereas Bedford resident Laura Osborne was diagnosed with a very rare disease, metachromatic leukodystrophy, in 2007 when she was just 18; and

Whereas Laura decided this year that for her 23rd birthday she didn't want presents, but wished to help find a cure for this disease, which is always fatal; and

Whereas Laura's family, especially her mom Mary Burt and friends, have held two Laura's Dream events, raising \$35,000 to donate to Bethany's Hope, a Canadian foundation doing research into this disease;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Laura on her dream and thank her and her family for all their hard work raising money to find a cure for metachromatic leukodystrophy.

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 favor of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1543

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

Whereas Barbara Campbell was a resident of Nova Scotia for 55 years, having arrived from her native Germany at Halifax's Pier 21 in 1957; and

Whereas Ms. Campbell worked diligently to foster Nova Scotia's cultural scene, first with the German Association and then in the creation of the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia in 1975; and

Whereas Ms. Campbell was recognized in 2001 as a Canadian Progress Centre Woman of Excellence and by this House of Assembly in 2004;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the passing of Ms. Campbell, on October 12, 2012, and recognize her legacy of promoting Nova Scotia's rich cultural diversity.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1544

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

Whereas after hearing of the devastating wildfires in Slave Lake, Alberta, Grade 2 Digby Elementary students wrote letters and drew pictures, decorating them with stickers, then compiled them into a scrapbook and mailed them to the town; and

Whereas on October 5th these Grade 2 students received a visit from the Mayor of Slave Lake to thank them in person for helping lift the spirits in Slave Lake, Alberta; and

Whereas this experience has been extremely meaningful for the children, combining important creative writing skills, social studies, and letter writing while showing compassion for others;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate this Grade 2 class of Digby Elementary for their thoughtfulness toward others and wish them all the best in their bright and caring futures.

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. 1545

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 Parlee Beach Open Beach Volleyball Tournament was held in late July; and

Whereas Yarmouth residents Janelle Stewart and Emily Burbidge competed in this tournament; and

Whereas Janelle Stewart and Emily Burbidge, who only began playing beach volleyball together this summer, were silver medalists in this tournament, losing only to a New Brunswick team in their final, by a close score of 21-17 and 21-18;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Janelle Stewart and Emily Burbidge on the impressive accomplishment of becoming silver medalists at the Parlee Beach Open Beach Volleyball Tournament and wish them every future success in the sport of beach volleyball.

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. 1546

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

Whereas Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley retired in September of this year after more than four decades as a police officer; and

Whereas during Chief Beazley's watch, starting out as a beat officer, he conducted many investigations, testified in American and Canadian courts against organized crime, brought in new crime prevention reduction strategies, opened community offices in public housing areas and staffed them with full-time staff; and

Whereas he participated in policing studies which led to the current partnership between the HRM Police force and the RCMP, developing a better relationship with the African-Nova Scotian community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in congratulating Chief Beazley on his retirement and the many contributions he has made to keep our community a safe and healthier place in which to live and raise our families.

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. 1547

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

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

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Halifax Chebucto 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, 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 Premier.

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you now consider and rule on my request from a letter I sent to your office earlier today regarding an urgent debate for the support of the Lower Churchill project. This afternoon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador released sanctioned information for the Lower Churchill project. I would suggest that this new information makes it even more urgent that all members of the Legislature offer their continued support for these important projects.

The Lower Churchill project and the Maritime Link will bring predictability and stability to an electricity system in Nova Scotia that underwent no significant change for 30 years under successive governments. This system has left our province too exposed to swings in the price of fossil fuels to power our electricity system. From the natural gas spike 10 years ago back to the 75 per cent increase in the cost of coal over the past seven years, Nova Scotians remain the victim of volatile fuels which are coming under increasing regulatory pressure from the federal government.

Nova Scotia must choose how the province will replace coal as a source of electricity in an era of rapid climate change when it is necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This government's renewable electricity plan, adopted back in 2010, has

already put the province on a path back to stability in our electricity system. Natural gas has almost doubled in the past three years to almost 25 per cent of our system.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask, as I notified you this morning, I'm ready to move that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance. An independent report released today indicating that Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve \$2.4 billion of savings by proceeding to develop the hydroelectric power at Muskrat Falls on the Lower Churchill River to meet its power needs, thereby confirming the value of this important development.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: I have received more than the two-hour notice of the matter required under Rule 43(2). Under Rule 43(4) I'm required to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed. I have considered the fact as set out in Rule 43(4)(a). This is a matter of grave concern to Nova Scotians and which concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government and could come within the scope of ministerial action.

It is not on the order paper for discussion and I have no indication that it is likely to be debated within a reasonable time by other means, so I will read the motion and ask whether the honourable Premier has the leave of the House for the debate to take place.

The motion is that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance and the subject of the issue has been described by the honourable Premier as:

Therefore be it resolved "that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, the independent report released today indicating that Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve \$2.4 billion of savings by proceeding to develop hydroelectric power at Muskrat Falls on the Lower Churchill River to meet its power needs, thereby confirming the value of this important development."

Does the House agree to give leave for the motion to be debated?

Leave has been given. This debate will take place today at the moment of interruption, as provided under Rule 43(11). It replaces the late debate topic for this evening.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 2:56 p.m. and end at 3:56 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - MUSKRAT FALLS PROJ.: COST INCREASES - PAYORS CONFIRM

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we learned from the Progressive Conservative Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that the costs associated with the Muskrat Falls project have changed dramatically. Projections for the cost of this project have gone up to \$7.4 billion from \$6.2 billion.

My question to the Premier is, will the ratepayers of Nova Scotia be paying more for this renewable energy project?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't know this, he should know that under federal greenhouse gas regulations, six of the eight generating plants in Nova Scotia will have to close between 2016 and 2030 - so over 14 years, six of those will have to be replaced. The question before us is, what is the most cost-effective way to replace that generation? The answer to that is the Muskrat Falls project.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that wasn't the question. The question is, will Nova Scotians be paying more for this renewable energy project?

The Premier has signed on to a deal that has no escape clause. It has a 35-year financial investment from Nova Scotians on infrastructure that we won't own, and the Premier can't even tell us what the actual cost of this will be, what Nova Scotians' share of that project will be.

My question to the Premier is, can the Premier finally tell us what the price per kilowatt will be when this renewable energy project reaches Nova Scotia families?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition should know, if he doesn't, that the electricity in this province is generated through Nova Scotia Power. They are a private company; the project is a private project; the capital invested will be private; and they will file the cost of the Maritime link between the Utility and Review Board. I'm surprised if the Leader of the Official Opposition in this province doesn't even understand how these projects are priced.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, what I understand is that any time big business sees the Premier coming, he's left with no clothes. Big business knows Nova Scotia is open for business and the Premier is willing to sign a cheque and let them fill in the amount at a later date.

The Premier can't tell us what this project is going to cost per kilowatt. We learned that the portion that Newfoundland and Labrador is responsible for is going up \$1.2 billion,

and we also learned today that the Emera portion is under review and escalating costs could be projected on that.

So my question to the Premier is, how can the Premier commit Nova Scotians to a deal that he doesn't know the cost of or what it will mean to Nova Scotian families?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the point. What we know is that Muskrat Falls will be the lowest-cost option. We know that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia are proposing to deregulate the electricity market, increase the cost of power to consumers by 30 to 50 per cent - exactly what happened in the other jurisdictions. The Leader of the Official Opposition himself has said that he would allow people to come into the province and to set up natural gas electricity plants and compete head to head. Mr. Speaker, that's deregulation. He's trying to hide from it now but that's what he said.

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

PREM. - MUSKRAT FALLS: POWER - COSTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's so interesting, we have a Premier who wants to have a debate about Muskrat Falls but it's so obvious that he has already made up his mind and today we learn he has made up his mind regardless of the cost because, as we now know, the cost has gone from \$6.2 billion up another \$1.2 billion to \$7.4 billion. We also know that Emera is going to make a 9.2 per cent guaranteed profit on their investment in Muskrat Falls. What we don't know, and what the Premier has a duty to tell Nova Scotians, is how much are they kicking in.

Although we've asked this question of the Premier 14 times already, it remains the most important question to be answered by this government in this House - how much will that power cost when it gets to our homes and to our businesses?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party knows that it is the Conservative Government in Ottawa that requires the closure of six of the eight coal-fired generating plants in this province as a result of greenhouse gas regulations that they have brought in. The question before us is, how do we replace that generating capacity and at what cost? The more you look at the Muskrat Falls project, the more you look at the independent studies they do, the more attractive that project becomes.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is right about one thing - we should compare Muskrat Falls to all of the available options before us today. Newfoundland and Labrador has tied their anchor to it because they don't have options that Nova Scotia does, but the Premier has rigged the URB review to say they must approve Muskrat Falls and they must approve it only if it's consistent with his own electricity plans. The URB is not going to tell us how does it compare to natural gas, how does it compare to importing

electricity from Quebec, how does it compare to all the other sources of energy we can bring into Nova Scotia?

The Premier will not let the URB look at those options. He has rigged the review because he has already made up his mind and he won't even tell us how much the project is going to cost. So my question to the Premier is this, if he is so confident that Muskrat Falls is the right way forward, will he agree today to allow the URB to review every single option for energy in Nova Scotia - not just the ones that are inconsistent with his plans?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The word "rigged" is unparliamentary in many jurisdictions and I would ask the honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party if he would retract that, please.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the word "fixed" would have been better. Thank you. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That is also unparliamentary so I would suggest you get the thesaurus out and have a look for another word. I would ask the honourable member, please.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw those words and replace them with the word "limit" and "constrain" and disallow any other options when I ask my question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Utility and Review Board is free to do just exactly what the Leader of the Official Opposition has asked and I believe they will.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has access to natural gas; natural gas is clean and it's cheap but it is not renewable. The Premier has told the URB they must approve his project - the project that he and Emera have together - if it meets his electricity plan which rules out counting natural gas as a renewable source. That's why he has constrained URB's ability to do what every Nova Scotian wants done which is to compare Muskrat Falls to all the alternatives.

Today we know, not only is it a mega project, it's a super mega project because the cost has gone up to \$7.4 billion of which we are committed because of the Premier to 20 per cent of the costs, starting with the Maritime link, which has already been pointed out, it's going to go up in cost itself. The Premier won't tell us how much that energy will cost when it comes to our doors and so I will say, once again, if he's so confident that this is right, why not tell the URB to look at every single option available in Nova Scotia and not just the ones that fit with his plans?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I just don't know. Either the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party doesn't understand the process or somebody has given him some wrong information. The Utility and Review Board is free to look at all of the options, to compare them and to decide what the lowest cost options are for Nova Scotians. We are confident, of course, that it will be the Muskrat Falls project.

You know something, Mr. Speaker? At one point in time the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was confident of that, too. I'll just table for you a couple of things that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party told the National Press Club. Of Lower Churchill, he said, "It's a great example of what can be done inter provincially in my region of Canada to generate real and lasting economic activity." He said, "Not only is it good energy policy, it's also a great economic development plan." What has changed?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM.: MUSKRAT FALLS PROJ. - BUDGET OVERAGES

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Obviously we're happy that after saying that the debate on Muskrat Falls was not necessary this summer, he has finally agreed that debate in this Legislature is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out by a number of my colleagues, we now have learned that the base project is \$1 billion or so over budget - and construction hasn't even begun. The NDP have handled this project poorly from the beginning here in Nova Scotia; they signed a deal without knowing the costs. The Premier promised it would bring stable energy prices - and I'll table that - and now Emera has said that it will be a 2 to 3 per cent increase every year, annually, for the life of that contract.

Mr. Speaker, if the project is \$1 billion over budget now, when they haven't begun work, would the Premier tell us how much further over budget he expects the project to be before it begins producing energy?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the project cost estimates were exactly that - they are estimates. Of course the result of further engineering work and design work, drilling down in those costs, gives us a further example of what those costs are going to be.

The question is, as I've said before - how does it compare to the other options that are in front of us? Those comparisons are going to be done by the Utility and Review Board. That will ensure that Nova Scotians get the lowest cost option. It is simply the fact that as we continue to look at this project it becomes a better and better option for the people of Nova Scotia - certainly better than the deregulation that is proposed by the Liberal caucus.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know the Premier has said over and over, this is the best option and that it meets the equivalency agreement. The fact is that it may not meet the equivalency agreement now. The project, according to the Deputy Minister of Energy, is also behind schedule by at least a year. The government has put all its eggs in one basket - the Premier has all but admitted that today - and now we've also learned that Hydro-Québec has not agreed to a division of water rights to allow the project to go ahead. I will table a letter by Hydro-Québec denying the water right and the fact that it actually has the access, as well as a letter from lawyers in Newfoundland and Labrador agreeing to the fact that that is an issue.

The NDP have guaranteed to the federal government that Churchill Falls will meet the equivalencies, and yet now it looks like it will take a number of years to sort out the water rights to move the project ahead. Mr. Speaker, what is the backup plan the Premier has to meet the renewable targets the government is committed to, and what will those backup plans cost ratepayers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member this - it is not deregulation, which is what the Liberals continue to put forward as an option for Nova Scotians, something that would increase rates by 30 to 50 per cent on the backs of the ratepayers. What we are doing is we have a project that is before us, a project which will mean that energy rates in this province, relative to the rest of the country, will actually decrease, will actually go down. (Interruption) I said relative to the rest of the provinces, and in fact they will be stable over the long term.

MR. YOUNGER: You know, Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier is making it up as he goes along. The fact is that the Premier has no backup plan for a project that has challenges and is now delayed. We also understand from Newfoundland and Labrador now that the federal loan guarantee is in question and that the reason why the loan guarantee may be in question is because the federal government is concerned about a World Trade Organization challenge under the provisions of subsidies and countervailing measures - and I'll table information on that - which is specifically whether the loan guarantee will be considered a subsidy on the cost of the export power.

The lack of a loan guarantee would again increase the project cost, yet the NDP have guaranteed that's going to happen. So since the federal government is now saying that it's on hold, will the Premier guarantee to Nova Scotians that this loan guarantee will be signed and approved and tell us when that will occur?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine that the member is serious if he thinks the federal government is going to arbitrarily release to me the date on which they intend to announce their federal loan guarantee. I can tell him that doesn't happen. I realize that's all just part of the inexperience of that caucus, of the Leader of the Official Opposition. They don't really understand that these agreements are complex, that they require a number of partners working together in order to get something done.

The member for Dartmouth East asked for a backup plan. Well, in electricity and energy, this caucus has a go-forward plan.

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

PREM.: ECONOMIC STRATEGY - WAGE GROWTH

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, after three years of this government's economic mismanagement, after three years of the worst economic growth in Canada, after three years of massive, record-breaking deals that saw big cheques going to big business - after three years we see that Dexter economics has done nothing to move up wages in Nova Scotia. We have the second lowest wages in Canada. My question to the Premier is, why is his government's economic strategy not seeing wage growth in Nova Scotia?

MR. SPEAKER: I will remind all honourable members using a member's name in the House is not permitted, so I just remind the honourable members.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, through good times and bad, over the last 20 years, the previous governments have had the worst economic growth in the country - 20 consecutive years. We are finally moving out of that. We have 8,800 more jobs in Nova Scotia today than we had in June 2009. Job growth is going in the right direction. We have signed the largest industrial contract in the province's history. We have new employers coming into the province. We have young people finally able to get jobs in our province.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to get to my question, but I can't stop laughing at the Premier; this is unbelievable. He can't believe that stuff that he ends up saying.

Unfortunately we should not be surprised that Nova Scotia wages are the second lowest in Canada, after three years of the worst economic growth in the country. Making matters worse and holding wages down is this government's habit of doing big deals with big business. This government agreed to give \$590 million to six corporations and watched them lay off 1,310 Nova Scotians - I guess that's what experience gets us - \$2 million of that went to Bowater and Port Hawkesbury Paper, companies that slashed wages, rolled back benefits and left pensioners out in the cold.

My question to the Premier is, why is this government choosing to invest in companies that bust unions, drive down wages and slash benefit packages?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite - and I read the remarks made by the Leader of the Official Opposition over the past weekend. In fact, the agreements that we have made, for example, with Irving Shipbuilding, which is going to create thousands of jobs, all have job guarantees. They all have targets that they have to meet.

Mr. Speaker, just to give you an example, there is a commercial loan with Irving, at a commercial rate, which they can only earn back if they hit - wait for it - job targets, good-paying jobs for skilled tradesmen in this province. The young people in our province are going to be able to go to the community college, they're going to be able to get a trade and they are going to be able to work their lives in that trade here in Nova Scotia, something that the Liberal Party, when they were in government, were abject failures at.

MR. MCNEIL: On October 16th of this year the Deputy Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism appeared before the Standing Committee on Economic Development in Nova Scotia and said, "So basically our old strategy was let's be the cheapest producer and that way we'll compete . . . that's a race to the bottom and someone is eventually going to beat you out."

This government's big deal with big business is subsidizing multi-million dollar corporations to make them cost competitive with markets in developing countries. We will lose that battle too, Mr. Speaker. Even if we win this race, as the Deputy Premier says, it is a race to the bottom . . .

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I didn't say that.

MR. MCNEIL: Thank you, Deputy Premier - I appreciate the help, Mr. Speaker. A race to the bottom with lower wages, fewer benefits and less supports for the middle class - the very kind of deals that this government has been signing and letting workers in the province out on their own. When they sign the cheque and give it to the company, Nova Scotia workers get a pink slip.

My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier placing Nova Scotians in a race to the bottom?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, you know the Leader of the Official Opposition has never said what his position is and that's not surprising. He rarely ever does or, better yet, he takes one position one day and another position the next day.

Mr. Speaker, the question for the Leader of the Official Opposition is, would he just have walked away from Port Hawkesbury? Would he have just said to all those working people, all those families, all of those kids in those communities, would he just have said you are on your own - is that what he would have done? Would he have just said, you are on your own?

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this, if there is one thing that is certain . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor. When the Speaker says order, that means order. The Speaker controls the Chamber, okay - do you get that? Thank you, thank you very much. (Interruption)

Pardon me, hold on. If you want to talk, we'll talk after Question Period. My door is always open, it's downstairs. (Interruption) Hold on, I am not going to ask you one more time, okay? I can hear up here in this Chair. That's the last time today I'm going to look over there and ask you to be silent.

The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 300 people at the Port Hawkesbury paper mill who are working today. There are almost 1,000 people in the Strait area who are working today. The one thing that all those people know is that the one guy you don't want in your corner when you need him is the Leader of the Official Opposition. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ENERGY - N.S. RATEPAYERS: PROTECTION - LEGISLATION INTRODUCE

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday before the URB, Mr. Antonuk of Liberty Consulting said, a change in the relationship between Nova Scotia Power and the URB is not up to him or even the URB. He said it's up to the Legislature.

He went on to say that “. . . in a market like this it's just fundamentally inconsistent to have the province's, I suppose, biggest gas user be housed in the same corporate family as an enterprise that has taken a big stake in the energy business in this part of the world.” I'll table that, Mr. Speaker, as I quoted from it.

Mr. Speaker, my question, in light of these most recent concerns about the workings of Emera and Nova Scotia Power, will the Minister of Energy bring in legislation protecting all Nova Scotian ratepayers?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Certainly, the URB has a full responsibility to look at all the costs that are involved here and you mentioned the Liberty Group as being part of that. That's in the process, they're looking at expertise from all sources, so really it's the role of the URB to determine the fairest and just costs for Nova Scotians.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns raised by the Liberty audit is whether this relationship led to higher power bills than necessary. Muskrat Falls is the next biggest project that requires corporate separation between Nova Scotia Power and Emera. The cost of Muskrat Falls is continually going up, as we hear again today. Emera and this government signed a deal without even telling people how much they will have to pay. My question to the minister is, will the minister bring forward new legislation to protect ratepayers and provide corporate separation between Emera and Nova Scotia Power before any Muskrat Falls application goes before the URB?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly again the URB has the full and total responsibility to determine what is fair and what is just. If ratepayers have paid too much, the URB will have that responsibility to indicate that it should be paid back. If they've paid too little, then they'll have to deal with that as well but that's the full responsibility of the URB to determine, again, what is fair and just for ratepayers in this province.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, all I can tell you is this caucus' number one priority is to protect the ratepayers in this province going forward. The cost of Muskrat Falls is continuing to go up, there's nobody looking out for their best (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Things are becoming a little heated in here and I'd ask that members take a deep breath so we can continue the debate in the Chamber in a nice, parliamentary way.

The honourable member for Hants West has the floor.

MR. PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'll start again. The cost of Muskrat Falls is continuing to go up. As we heard today, the estimate has gone up by \$1.2 billion and we know that can continue to rise. Emera gets a guaranteed profit when Nova Scotia Power builds big, expensive projects like Muskrat Falls and charges it back to ratepayers. Nova Scotians are right to worry about their interests and will they be protected. My question to the minister is, why is the minister continuing to stand with Emera, rather than ratepayers, when it comes to separating this corporate conflict?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the Muskrat Falls project will produce the lowest cost energy for Nova Scotians among the options that are there. I would point out - the member was focused on the question of fuel costs like natural gas and doesn't seem to understand that there is a difference between the infrastructure or the asset base of the company, and the fuel costs.

For example, Nova Scotia Power now already owns hydroelectricity dams; they already own coal-fired generating stations. He misses the fundamental point between fuel and the infrastructure. The great thing about that project, of course, is that the costs are actually known on the front end. You know because you know what the financing is for the entire length of the project.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**ENERGY - NSP/EMERA:
CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROTECTION - CONFIRM**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy - maybe we'll get some better answers there. As my previous colleague just noted, at the Utility and Review Board hearing yesterday, the Liberty Consulting Group echoed

the request that the Liberal caucus made to the board, which was that Emera and Nova Scotia Power Incorporated have firewalls put between them to prevent any real or potential conflicts of interest in the future. Does the minister agree with the Liberty audit or the Liberty comments?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Certainly, as I indicated in my answer to the previous member, the role of the URB is to look at all the options, all the costs here and make a ruling that's fair and just for all ratepayers. If it's determined by the board that the Nova Scotia Power has overcharged customers then we agree that should be paid back and then vice versa if it's not. Again, they'll rule on that decision.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the only people in this Legislature who seem to not understand how the Utility and Review Board works are the NDP. The question wasn't about whether the money should be refunded. I agree with the minister that the decision on whether that \$10 million or \$22 million gets refunded - or whatever number it ends up working out to be - is up to the board. The question which came up yesterday - which Liberty and the board both said was a policy question for this Legislature, not them - was whether there should be a firewall between Emera and Nova Scotia Power to prevent future conflicts of interest, and the question is simple. Does the minister agree with that?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, again, the URB is a system that was set up under previous governments and it's a system that looks at all the costs, all the options, and determines what is fair and what is just. If they determine that Nova Scotia Power has charged too much, it will be paid back, and if it's not, it will not be. Being open and honest and transparent is important and the role of the board is to determine what's fair for Nova Scotians.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the minister is not understanding the question or what's going on there because this is about something which the board and the auditors have all said is a decision for government, not them. This is not about the rate. This is about whether there should be a firewall between Nova Scotia Power and Emera. Liberty, in the direct comments - and he can go read the transcript himself - made it very clear, and the chairman of the board agreed yesterday, that it's a policy question.

So the question is - and this has happened before because Nova Scotia Power was criticized previously when they contracted Emera Utility Services for the Digby wind farm for the same problem as a perceived or real conflict. So the question is, does the minister agree there should be a firewall - a legislative or regulatory firewall - between Nova Scotia Power and Emera operations? It's a simple question. Does he agree or doesn't he?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, it's a simple answer. It's really the job of the URB to determine these matters. They'll base it on the best evidence that they have and I look forward to their ruling.

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

EDUC.: ANTI-BULLYING COORDINATOR - SEPT. PLACEMENT

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister of Education. The tragic circumstances around Amanda Todd's death have put the issue of bullying and cyberbullying in the minds of parents and grandparents in Nova Scotia and all across Canada. Last Spring the Minister of Education assured parents that an anti-bullying coordinator would be put in place by September; and I'll table that document.

Summer came, Mr. Speaker, and summer went and there was no announcement made. My question to the minister is this, why didn't the minister do what she said she would do and put an anti-bullying coordinator in place in time to begin work in September – the beginning of the school year?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, bullying in all of its forms, bullying, cyberbullying, is a very complex and a very heartbreaking situation that we are dealing with not only in Nova Scotia but across this country. We did name a coordinator, Kathleen Richard, to be our anti-bullying coordinator. She has hit the ground running. She's out in school boards. She's working with schools.

MR. MACLEOD: The minister is quite correct that this is a very serious issue, serious enough that she had said herself the person should be in place in September, not after that. On April 27, 2012 the minister appeared on CBC's Information Morning to defend criticism from her own task force that her legislation did not go far enough. During that radio interview the minister said: The Justice Department and the anti-bullying coordinator will be working together and we're going to be liaising with stakeholders, police departments. So there's a lot of work that needs to be done because when we do put legislation forward, we want to make sure that we've considered all the potential implications for that legislation.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this, will the minister confirm for this House which specific Justice Department officials and which specific police departments the anti-bullying coordinator has met with, to date.

MS. JENNEX: I was very pleased to be at a school just last week working with the Justice Department, with Kathleen Richard, looking at the framework that is being developed on restorative approaches within our school system which provide the opportunity for our young people to know how to have respectful conversations and resolve conflict within the school situation.

MR. MACLEOD: It appears that the minister is quite accomplished at not answering the questions that are being asked. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, bullying and cyberbullying was the topic of the popular CBC Radio program Cross Country Checkup.

Wayne MacKay, the chairman of the minister's Task Force on Cyberbullying was a guest on that show. As his interview concluded Professor MacKay said: to be fairly, brutally honest about this - break my heart might be a bit strong - but I am a bit disappointed that the governments have not reached more forceful and quickly, specifically, I guess, here in Nova Scotia. Professor MacKay said: Governments and others must move quickly to prevent tragedies due to bullying. My question to the minister is, when will the minister take the advice of her task force chairman, when will she finally move forcefully and quickly to protect kids in Nova Scotia?

MS. JENNEX: I'm going to repeat that this is a very complex issue and the province has taken a number of approaches. There are many causes for bullying and we need to get to the root causes. We are moving forward with our action plan. We're working collaboratively with many agencies, this is across government. There needs to be a community response, we need to change the culture in our society to make our people, our children, everyone here, engaged in more respectful conversations. We need to work together to solve this problem.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**EDUC. - BILL NO. 30: LIBERAL RECOMMENDATIONS
- NON-SUPPORT EXPLAIN**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my question through you is to the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education's Task Force on Cyberbullying presented their final report in February of this year. This report was a comprehensive review of the state of cyberbullying in this province. The Minister of Education had the opportunity to take the 85 recommendations and create some meaningful legislation that would positively affect the lives of our young Nova Scotians. Instead, she legislated data collection, as a means to end cyberbullying, through Bill No. 30, when it was presented in April.

Her NDP Government then refused to accept the amendments to Bill No. 30 put forward by the Liberal caucus and supported by the chairman of the task force. These amendments were taken directly from the recommendations in the report and could have translated into action. So my question to the minister is, why did the minister not support amendments taken directly from the recommendations proposed by the Liberal caucus, which would have provided action when they were presented?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: We have been working very hard at making sure that there are changes within our school system and setting a foundational base as we move forward. Kathleen Richard, our anti-bullying coordinator is liaising with our stakeholders, with school boards, with schools, with parents and we are looking forward to moving forward with our action plan, so that we are making sure that we are providing the best supports for students that are in harm's way, providing the ability for students to learn how

to have respectful conversations and to resolve conflict within our school situation. I would just like to say that this is a community problem and we need to work together, as community, to solve the problem. (Applause)

MS. CASEY: One of those 85 recommendations, which has been mentioned earlier, was to appoint an anti-bullying coordinator. On March 23rd the minister said no. In fact, she said - and I will quote and will table - "We already have people with expertise . . . who can work together on how we can fulfill this mandate without more bureaucracy."

However, after pressure from the media, the Liberal caucus, members of the task force, parents, and teachers, the minister did a flip-flop and she said she would find a coordinator from within the system. Mr. Speaker, it took five months to find somebody in the system.

My question to the minister is, how can the minister justify such a delay in responding to the report, delay in hiring the coordinator, and delays in implementing recommendations from the task force when kids in our schools are caught in a web of social media and they are crying out for help?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind everyone here that schools and school boards have been working diligently on anti-bullying initiatives for many years. We have systems in place in our schools already, but we are working on strengthening them and finding other ways and making sure that they are research-based initiatives that are going to effect the change that we need to see in our schools.

Kathleen Richard has hit the ground running. She is working with our stakeholders and our school boards to make sure that what we are providing for our children in our schools are the appropriate measures that we need to have. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, this is not a race to see who can get their legislation in first. I'll tell you what it is: it's a race against time for kids and their parents who are counting on this government for leadership and implementing meaningful anti-bullying policies and action plans that will lead to real change. They do not need any more proof that there is cyberbullying. They do not need any more data collection. They need action.

Cyberbullying, Mr. Speaker, can be quiet, a discreet act, and one that a child cannot escape. If the minister can't be a leader, will she at least be a follower and will she take the lead from counterparts in other provinces and take this charge and lead it and address the issue before more lives are lost?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we stepped up to take the challenge on to make sure that our students in Nova Scotia are safe. The former Minister of Education disregarded the problem that we were having in the schools. We've stepped up. We've had a task force. We

have good recommendations. We're working with them through our anti-bullying coordinator.

This is a very complex issue, and we are working on our action plan. I want to say that the teachers and the principals and our school staffs are working diligently with our students in our schools to remedy the situation. Thank you.

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

EDUC. - CLASS SIZES: EXTRA TEACHERS - LOCATIONS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is going to be to the Minister of Education. We've seen the NDP scramble to fix their short-sighted strategy on elementary classroom sizes by hiring 45 teachers, but only after pressure from parents made it impossible for them to do anything else. Adding these teachers a month into the school year was disruptive to children, especially those in the younger grades. Nova Scotia children, parents, and teachers deserve to have a government focused on the education of our children.

My question is, who are the winners and losers on class sizes? Which schools across the province won the NDP teacher lottery, and which have been left to deal with the high student-teacher ratios alone?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we have had the situation of declining enrolment in this province for many years. When September came and we recognized that we had pressures in certain areas, we asked the school boards where those pressures were. We listened and we responded. We did not hire 45 new teachers within our system. We hired 73. (Applause)

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, in a media release on September 27, 2012, the minister is quoted as saying, "I am pleased to announce that government will hire about 45 new elementary teachers," yet last Thursday, October 25, 2012, in Question Period, less than a month after the previous statement, the same minister said, "We just recently added 73 more teachers so that our children in Primary to Grade 3 all have classroom sizes under 25." Which is the truth - did they hire 45 or fund 73?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would like just to repeat for the honourable member that we have hired 73 teachers in our system, along with a few schools that have some extra educational assistant support.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, did those 73 teachers come out of the Education Department's budget or existing school boards' budgets? That's what we're asking.

Our education system has suffered damage during the NDP's mismanagement. We have seen millions removed from the front-line services to our children, yet we have seen last-minute scrambling to adjust some prudent planning with class sizes.

Nova Scotians deserve better, so my question is will the minister take action now to reassure parents that class sizes will remain appropriate, or will parents have to go through the same sad exercise again next October?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we will be working with the school boards to make sure that we have our lowest class sizes in a generation in our school system. All of our class sizes from Primary to Grade 3 now, as far as I'm understanding from all of the school boards, is 25 or fewer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: DSME JOBS - TIME FRAME

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on March 5, 2010, the Premier promised 500 new jobs in Pictou County. The NDP handed over \$60 million to Daewoo Shipping and Marine Engineering and took a 49 per cent stake in the venture. Let me quote from the Premier's speech from that day: "This joint venture will create 120 new jobs in the first year, with long-term plans to employ almost 500 people." I'll table that.

Sixty million dollars and two and a half years later, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism tell Nova Scotians when can we expect the 500 jobs at DSME Trenton?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I think it's probably fair to say that we all want success at DSTN. We made a good investment; we took a facility that was lying idle for years and we now have people who are working there. Grant it, unbeknownst to anyone, the wind energy took a dip, but I can tell you this - we have confidence in DSTN. We are sticking with DSTN, and they are going to turn this ship around.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, one year ago DSME Trenton came to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and I asked specifically about market conditions and how they affected their business plan. My specific question, which was one that Nova Scotians are asking across the province: "With 60 million reasons to be concerned, where are the customers, where are the profits going to come from, the revenues, the profits?" I'll table that quote.

The official from DSME Trenton responded by stating: "Yes, those are certainly the same concerns we have."

We were promised 500 jobs, Mr. Speaker, and when driving by the facility in September there were maybe six cars in the parking lot, so we're all hopeful that DSME will succeed, but the reality is we have \$60 million in taxpayers' money that has been invested there and were not even close to the 120 jobs promised in the first year.

Why did the minister and the NDP Cabinet hand over \$60 million taxpayer dollars without a deep understanding of market fundamentals and the proposed business case for this large corporation?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is fortunate to have a partner with the calibre and world respect that DSTN in Japan has. We are fortunate to have that sort of company with a wealth of money, and as we speak not only have they developed a marketing strategy, but they are putting that marketing strategy to work and we are working with them and we will continue to have confidence in them, so that we can realize the jobs for DSTN.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, quite simply, \$60 million was handed over to DSME by this minister and the Premier. There were 500 jobs promised and the minister failed to deliver on that promise. We've taken a 49 per cent liability of the plant with little to no customers. With so much at stake in this deal, it's perplexing as to why the minister would push ahead so aggressively without a clear understanding of what he was getting himself into. Indeed, every single taxpayer in this province has gotten themselves into that through this minister and through the decisions made by Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. My question is, will the minister table his complete analysis of the markets and business case which led him to hand over \$60 million to DSME with absolutely no job guarantees?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say it's DSME in Korea - I think I mistakenly identified Japan. I will reiterate; this is a world-class company, deep pockets, very innovative. We've made investments. You know, there are some things that happen in the global economy that are unpredictable, out of the reach of many. We have confidence in DSTN. We've invested in them. We are sticking with them and we know that together, we are going to make this work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - CORNWALLIS OFFICE RENT: COSTS - RELEASE

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year this government decided to move offices to other locations throughout the province, which seems like an okay idea except for the fact that it seems to have been mismanaged throughout the entire course of this. The Fisheries section of the department is being moved to Cornwallis but as revealed today in allnovascotia.com, the NDP Government is refusing to say how much they will be paying for rent in order to move this department to Cornwallis. My question to the Minister

of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, why is the NDP Government refusing to release the cost of rent for the departmental move to Cornwallis?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to the member opposite. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk a bit about a move, about Fisheries and Aquaculture, because I can clearly point out that both parties had an opportunity over the last three decades - we've done more in the last three years regarding Fisheries and Aquaculture than the previous Parties have done since the golden time of sail. Thank you very much.

MR. CHURCHILL: We've said it's an okay idea to decentralize but this government hasn't even really done that. They've moved offices from Kentville to New Waterford and they said it was going to be cost neutral. I will table the comments from the Premier - he said it would be cost neutral - yet they don't tell us how much these things cost. This is an issue of accountability, openness, and transparency with the public. So I'll ask the minister again, what is the cost difference for the rent by moving this department to Cornwallis?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to see that the member opposite agrees with the move to rural Nova Scotia, something that the two Parties over there couldn't accomplish in the last 30 years. What I will say is the cost of this particular building is roughly \$250,000 a year but I would also add that we're combining other departments and we're saving \$1.5 million from the Department of Natural Resources on our renovations. It's difficult for that member over there to understand but we're going to create jobs in rural Nova Scotia, which they should have done years ago. Thank you for the question.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, honestly, the only thing I don't understand is if this minister is so confident in this government's management of this process, why can't he tell us what the numbers are? Why can't he tell us? They're hiding it from the public. Will the minister and the NDP Government be open and transparent with the people and release the information, specifically on the rent for this departmental move to Cornwallis?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I'm sure he'll go back and review Hansard, but I'm going to say it again - \$250,000 a year on this particular building we are going to in Cornwallis. Also we're going to save \$1.5 million in other departments' renovations. That's something I think everybody in this building understands. We're going to save taxpayers money and we're going to create jobs in rural Nova Scotia, which they failed to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

COM. SERV.: FOOD BANK USAGE - MIN. ASSISTANCE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Today Food Banks Canada released their annual Hunger Count survey. It paints a very real picture of families in this province who have fallen on hard times. In the past year there were over 23,000 people assisted by food banks. Of those, more than one-third were children - 7,700 children had to rely on food banks for meals this past year. More than 3,000 new people have had to seek assistance from a food bank since the NDP formed government, and I will table that document.

My question to the Minister of Community Services is, when the Minister of Finance was jacking up the HST, did the minister stand up for people using food banks who must use them to make ends meet, or did she toe the Party line?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we realize how difficult it is for Nova Scotians, and we also realize that this is across Canada and throughout the world. To put this in perspective, we need to look also at the numbers in Alberta, which everybody sees as a prosperous province. Their food bank usage went up 60 per cent - 20 per cent more than Nova Scotia. The reason Nova Scotia has kept at that level is because this government, when we came in - we have in three years invested well over \$300 million to break the cycle of poverty. We have developed and initiated numerous programs such as the Affordability Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit. We increased the child tax benefit. What did the Progressive Conservatives ever do? Absolutely nothing.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the policies of this government are not working - 3,000 more people using the food bank, and their initiatives are small consolation. Let's take a look at some of the costs of people who are living on a low income, who it affects even more - costs like power bills. They've gone up by more than 40 per cent due to this government's energy policy.

You can take the HST off all you want, Mr. Speaker, but the cost of energy and the power bills are rising. Gasoline prices have increased by over 34 per cent. Food prices have increased by over 9 per cent. Everyone is also paying 2 per cent more HST on almost everything. When her Cabinet colleague the Minister of Energy told Nova Scotians to bite the bullet and pay more for energy, which they are now doing under this NDP Government, did the minister raise her voice for the 7,700 kids who are food bank users, or did she just go along to get along?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this minister has raised her voice from day one. They were silent for decades. That Party was silent. They neglected the most vulnerable in this province, and how dare they even try to pretend that they care about Nova Scotians with a lack? Go look in the history book. You'll see a big zero when it comes to helping people in poverty.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this Progressive Conservative Party understands economics, and we also understand the importance for government to make life more affordable for Nova Scotians. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, economics matter just as much for anybody, any Nova Scotian. We have the fastest-rising prices and the lowest wage growth across the country. The most recent figures show a net loss of 6,300 full-time jobs outside of HRM. This government has killed jobs, it has raised taxes, and it has implemented expensive policies that families simply cannot afford. Nova Scotians are stretched too thin.

My final question to the minister is, will the minister acknowledge her government's wrongdoing and urge her fellow Cabinet members to reverse the decisions which have made life more unaffordable for Nova Scotians?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the member opposite to ask some people some questions. Why doesn't he ask the single-parent family that is receiving 30 per cent more income because of this government? Let's ask about the working poor who have two children, who because of this government have \$4,000 more in their pocket each and every year. Let's ask the 249 homeless individuals who now have a place to call home because of this government. If they want me to go on, I can give them lists for hours. If I want to ask them a question, what did they do when they were in? Once again, zero.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

FIN.: FUEL TAX EXEMPTION - RECIPIENTS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Does she plan to extend the fuel tax exemption that applies to forestry, farming, fishing, and manufacturing to the mining industry?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as everyone in this House knows, the mining industry is a very valuable participant in the Nova Scotia economy. Our government has, in fact, initiated a number of really important initiatives to support the mining industry. My department has met with the mining industry, as has the Department of Natural Resources.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

Bill No. 94 - House of Assembly Act.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could you tell me how much time I have left, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Forty-three minutes, exactly.

MR. BAIN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, last evening we spoke about the changes that have taken place since this process began, over one year ago. During that time we saw a flawed process, interfered with by this government, that saw the elimination of the protected areas of Clare, Argyle, Richmond and Preston; ironically, Opposition-held constituencies, and changes that have left communities and constituencies in turmoil.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the commission's public hearings, I took the opportunity to attend meetings in Sydney and Baddeck. I went to hear what residents were saying and suggesting, with no intention of speaking to the commission. Like many others, I submitted a written submission to the commission.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised at the meeting in Baddeck to hear the executive of the Victoria-The Lakes NDP Association make a suggestion to merge the ridings of Victoria and Inverness - ironically, two more Opposition-held constituencies. The suggestion was to take away The Lakes portion of Victoria-The Lakes and that Victoria County and Inverness County would be joined to form one constituency.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last evening I spoke of the challenges that face some constituencies because of geography, so can you imagine what this NDP suggestion would do to the rights of the wonderful people of Victoria and Inverness? So, as you can imagine, I had to speak and I read the written submission, at that time, that I had given the commission. Thankfully, for those people and to their credit, the commission did not consider this ludicrous suggestion.

Back to how we got here. Mr. Speaker, we saw an NDP-dominated select committee, of which I was a member, tour the province to hear Nova Scotians and an NDP

majority that didn't hear a word that was said in that process. The committee had an in camera meeting but other than to discuss names of potential commissioners, why was it secret? It didn't have to be. Held over the holidays, on Friday, where the media were forced to sit outside, where there was a major change in the rules, where a secretive, government-led decision was made to accomplish six things. The members opposite can blame nobody else but themselves for what happened.

First, the concept of protected seats was obliterated. Secondly, it was virtually guaranteed that industrial Cape Breton would lose a seat - likely the seat in the middle, something close to you, Mr. Speaker. Third, it was likely a seat would be cut out of Pictou, Antigonish-Guysborough, as it was under the first report, and since reversed. Fourth, southern Nova Scotia would lose one or two seats, just like the ferry and thousands of jobs under the NDP. Fifth, areas where the NDP are strongest would gain the seats in the Legislature. Sixth, as a result of eliminating protected seats, it was very likely to observers who studied the situation that Shelburne or Yarmouth would be split in two. But being the NDP they wouldn't come out and say they were eliminating the protected and other seats. They chose wording to obscure that, so obscure that others, including the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission, could not believe the government really meant to eliminate all discretion, especially given the weight of the submissions they heard, and that the select committee had heard, but the majority on that committee now completely ignored.

I also mentioned last night that it was bad enough that the Official Opposition wasn't willing to take a stand either, when the NDP headed down the wrong road. They also have done what no Party should do. What no Party, and especially no Leader, should ever, ever do, is say one thing in one part of the province and another elsewhere to curry favour.

Leaders have to be leaders. They have to take positions based on whether they are right or wrong. I was saddened to read the transcript for the Annapolis meeting of the boundaries commission. In that meeting the Leader of the Liberal Party suggested that the boundaries commission leave his constituency alone and that they readjust boundaries in some other constituencies. Do you know one of the places he suggested could be readjusted? It was Shelburne.

For the benefit of the House I would like to read from the Provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission Report of Thursday, August 16th in Annapolis Royal. In it it says, "Our Premier and Justice Minister. . ." - and this is from the Leader of the Liberal Party - "Our Premier and Justice Minister have forced you to look at population alone, with an average riding being 13,684. So as we look at southwestern Nova Scotia, the riding of Annapolis is exactly where it should be based on population, as well as the constituencies of Yarmouth and the County of Lunenburg could have two seats based on population. So when you look at southwestern Nova Scotia, the ridings that are not are Clare, Argyle,

Shelburne, Digby and Queens. It is in these ridings that the population problem needs to be fixed, not here in Annapolis.”

I go on, “I know other solutions have been looked at by the commission and I know that some others have been presented to you in meetings like this one - for example, like combining Clare and Argyle, or merging Argyle with the Municipality of the District of Barrington, then combining Queens with the remaining of Shelburne County, and combining Clare with Digby. All of these would meet the population target set by the NDP Government.”

“There is no question that the job you’ve been asked to do is a difficult one, particularly when government has interfered with the independence of your commission. There is no question that your decisions will affect ridings and communities, and some will not be happy. That is why I believe it is important that we impact only the communities that need to be” –and I will table that, Madam Speaker.

After reading that, it’s odd that that same Leader went to a public meeting in Shelburne the other week, on a stage before 300 or 400 people, and said he was on their side. That’s what happens when Leaders and Cabinet Ministers mess with boundaries, and I say through you, Madam Speaker, to the Leader, that Leaders need to rise above the fray, not stir the pot on what’s supposed to be a process so fundamental to our democracy that the law requires it to be independent and left to a commission, not us as politicians.

Madam Speaker, a Liberal employee suggested the split and the Liberal Leader drew the commission’s attention to Shelburne as well. Leaders can’t be advocating solutions that are best for them; they should take the position that is right, which in this case would have been to let the commission do its job and not repeat the NDP mistake of interfering in a non-partisan process.

The commission asked if there was more they needed to consider as they started out and the Speaker properly told them that nobody could tell them what to do. They came back with the report that the NDP hated. Being the majority Party, the inevitable happened and some NDP seats were on the chopping block, so the NDP got mad. They got righteous and they got high-handed. For the first time in our history, an independent commission in the midst of important deliberations was told what to do by a government.

They weren’t given the resources to find answers on their own independently; they didn’t have hearings to consider different legal arguments - they were told by a Minister of Justice who understands independence so poorly he asked for a meeting with the chairman of the commission so he could tell them what to do. And from that moment, Madam Speaker, the credibility of the process was below the waterline - independence was taken away.

So, new hearings were held. Leaving nothing to chance, the NDP sent ministers and the Premier to ask for changes at the hearing - NDP changes. That has not happened before; it should never happen. The Executive Council has to butt out, or how can anyone say there is true independence? Since we had the sorry sagas of Yarmouth and Shelburne, both of which are by-products of what the NDP set out to do - they can't blame the commissioners - and somebody was going to have to be split or combined in a way they would hate.

Because of all the interference, all the crossing of boundaries by this government, boundaries that should be unthinkable to cross, I and this caucus stand to oppose this bill, just as we have opposed each and every sorry twist in the NDP's politically-driven path. This bill is the product of the NDP repeatedly targeting a process that should have gone beyond politics and, on principle, we must vote against it.

Thank you for that, Madam Speaker, and I'll take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the electoral boundaries changes in Bill No. 94, and I want to begin with some advice I was given by a veteran MLA, the member for Timberlea-Prospect, before I gave one of my very first speeches from the floor of this famous House.

The member took me aside and told me something I never forgot, something that is particularly relevant today. He said to me, always speak from the heart and always imagine that all the residents from across Shelburne County are looking down from the gallery. That was great advice and today I'm proud to rise in this House and speak on behalf of all the people of Shelburne County. The seat I occupy in this House belongs to them. It has since before Confederation and they want it to stay that way well into the future. (Applause)

In the Electoral Boundaries Commission Interim Report, the suggestion for Shelburne County was short and to the point - no change. But when the commission released its final report, the people of Shelburne were blindsided by a recommendation to cut their county in half. This recommendation was done without any prior warning to the people of Shelburne County and without consultation with them. In this regard, the commission has failed the people of Shelburne County and at this time, I would like to table a document, a letter from the former warden for the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Mr. Sherm Embree and I ask all members to get a copy and please review that at your leisure.

Quite simply put, if the commission had any intent to split the constituency of Shelburne County, which has existed since the mid-1700s, they had an obligation to give the residents a fair warning and to visit the community and to hear their concerns. But they

did neither, which is why I rise in this House today, to ensure that they have an opportunity to have their say.

Other communities from across our beautiful province were given an opportunity to have their voices heard. This summer, the commission met with the Acadian communities in Tusket and in Church Point, it met in Yarmouth where the people there were very vocal about that seat being split. They met in Bridgewater, where the current Liberal candidate and another Liberal staffer gave presentations recommending splitting Shelburne County at Clyde River. I'd like to document the Hansard report, a printout of that and again I encourage all members to review that particular document.

This desire also was hinted at by the member for Yarmouth on August 13th and echoed by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition in Annapolis on August 16, 2012. Visiting communities and hearing those presentations was part of the process. Members of the Liberal Party were given the opportunity to suggest that Shelburne County be split down the middle and they took the opportunity. I just wish that they had been more up front with the people of Shelburne County, both prior to and after the commission's release of its final report.

There is no doubt that this is not an easy process. I understand the commission was faced with many tough decisions. Reviewing boundaries is by no means a simple exercise. Nonetheless, that doesn't change the fact that in relationship to Shelburne County the commission failed. It did not give the residents an opportunity to have their voices heard as outlined in the terms and conditions. It did not take the time to hold a meeting in Shelburne County.

It is for that reason that I want to thank the member for Pictou Centre for his giving the people of Shelburne County an opportunity to speak at the Committee on Law Amendments. Now, the councillors, the three mayors and the two wardens of Shelburne County will have their chance to have their say. Now, the men and women who work long hours in our schools and our businesses and on the many Cape Island boats that dot our coastline will be able to speak to this recommendation that has completely blindsided them.

This House of Assembly is about checks and balances, but it's also about ensuring that the democratic rights and freedom of all Nova Scotians - I repeat, all Nova Scotians - are protected. Moving the Law Amendments Committee to Shelburne was somewhat unprecedented, but not nearly as unprecedented as splitting up a constituency that existed for more than 250 years without consulting the residents.

I expect that my colleagues on the other side of the House agree with the decision to have the Law Amendments Committee travel to Shelburne County; after all, it was the member for Cumberland South who suggested that idea at a recent meeting held at Barrington. It was a good idea, which is why I discussed it with the Minister of Justice.

I also want to point out that following that meeting, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition was quoted as saying, “Shelburne has been denied a chance to be heard in their home community, and I think that’s wrong.”

Madam Speaker, I read the comments in the media that the member for Richmond is against the Law Amendments Committee travelling to Shelburne County, contrary to what his Leader said just three days before.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I at no time suggested that the Law Amendments Committee should not go down to Shelburne. In fact, I suggested that if it was going to Shelburne it should as well go to the community of Havre Boucher, where I attended a meeting on Sunday evening with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, where they feel that they have not been heard by the Law Amendments Committee. So for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to suggest comments that I have not made, I would ask the Speaker to caution the minister about making misrepresentations about other people’s comments in the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: I would find that that is not a point of order.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Ladies and gentlemen, this opportunity certainly is very important to the people of Shelburne County, so my hope is that that was just the result of some internal miscommunications with the Liberal caucus. Surely we can all agree that the people of Shelburne County deserve their chance.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I want to say again that this seat that I rise from belongs to the people of Shelburne County. It belonged to them long before I was MLA, and I hope it will belong to them long after I am MLA. By not including the people of Shelburne County in this process, the Electoral Boundaries Commission has clearly failed the constituency of Shelburne County. Fortunately, they will now have a chance to have their say, to tell the Law Amendments Committee that they want the communities that make up Shelburne County to remain united.

This is their right, Madam Speaker, and they deserve the attention of all members of this House and the Law Amendments Committee. I hope that when they are given the opportunity, each member of this House will listen very carefully and consider the desire of our constituency of Shelburne County to remain united as this bill continues to move through this House.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to share with you - and through you with all members of the House - some of the feedback from the people of Clare on the electoral boundary review that started on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2011.

Madam Speaker, since the start of this boundary review exercise in 2011 and so far this year, this exercise has been an emotional roller coaster ride for the residents of Clare for the past 10 months. The deep shock was felt on December 31, 2011. As stated on the front page of The ChronicleHerald that morning, "Acadian, Black seats lose protection." Furthermore, the reporter, David Jackson wrote on the front page of that Herald that morning, "The NDP Government has eliminated special protection for four seats in the Legislature - three in Acadian areas and one in an African-Nova Scotian district - in the next setting of electoral boundaries."

Well, Madam Speaker, people in Clare could not believe, they could not believe what they read, what they read on the front page of The ChronicleHerald that morning. I have to say myself, neither could I, when I read that article that same morning. Yet, it was written in black and white. The citizens in Clare were confused, were upset, to what it all meant. It was a total surprise, it was a total shock. You know, the headline in The ChronicleHerald on New Year's Eve - people have asked me, was this an NDP New Year's Eve resolution? Well, I can tell you, reading this headline, "Acadian, Black seats lose protection" on December 31, 2011, in every household, in every coffee shop, everywhere people gathered on that day, the headline created a lot of discussion in the days to follow and even to this day.

Madam Speaker, was it an NDP New Year's resolution to target Acadian ridings? Again, "Acadian, Black seats lose protection." This headline has stirred a lot of emotions and has upset the residents in Clare over the last 10 months. People in Clare are disgusted with our NDP Government. They're mad. They're hurt. The million dollar question that I have been hearing all along since this review started is, why is the NDP Government eliminating the four protected seats at this time? Why is the NDP Government doing this to us? What have we done to the NDP Government to deserve this? Good question.

Madam Speaker, why break the longstanding Nova Scotian tradition to have four protected seats? Obviously, the question that comes to mind is, what is the source of such a drastic initiative? Who gave the authority to eliminate the four protected ridings? I believe we all know who gave that order to eliminate the four protected seats in this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, trying to understand why the NDP Government has decided to eliminate the four protected ridings, many people have said it's all about politics and they're right - it's all about politics. It's a fact that the three targeted Acadian ridings have never elected an NDP member to the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly. Public opinion in these ridings has it that the NDP Government wants to eliminate seats in rural Nova Scotia in order to create new seats in Halifax where the NDP Party has a stronger base. There are

no clearer explanations to the government's objectives here to eliminate the four protected seats of Argyle, Clare, Preston and Richmond. Granted, these ridings are small. They were small 10 years ago. They were small 20 years ago.

Let's go back to November, 2011; let's go back to the Select Committee on Establishing an Electoral Boundaries Commission, a committee which has a majority of NDP members. A committee would have nine members: five committee members are from the NDP caucus, two members are from the Liberal caucus, and two members are from the PC caucus. It's the select committee's responsibility to determine the terms of reference for the commission and to select the members of the commission.

Prior to submitting this report on December 30, 2011, the special Select Committee of the House conducted special public hearings across the province. The committee members heard what the general public had to say on the composition of the commission and on the terms of reference for the commission, and they also heard other suggestions.

When this special legislative committee held its public meeting in Yarmouth at the Grand Hotel on Tuesday, November 29th, I had the opportunity to sit in as a committee member, replacing one of my colleagues that evening and that afternoon as well. I recall that there were 22 presentations made at the meeting by residents from Yarmouth, from Argyle and from Clare. I also recall that these presenters were very clear as to what they were requesting from the committee members. They clearly requested that measures should be taken to leave their ridings alone, measures to make sure there is someone on the commission appointed to represent the Acadian community, and to assure there was translation service available at designated meetings, especially to be held in Acadian communities.

Unfortunately, one of these requests was not taken into consideration. Measures to protect the Acadian ridings were not taken into account. Four members of the committee requested such measures, but the five NDP committee members did not support such a position.

The report of the select committee was tabled on December 30, 2011. The majority of NDP members on the committee certainly did not do what they were asked by the people gathered at the public meeting in Yarmouth. Looking back I have to question myself, why did the standing committee have a meeting in Yarmouth? It appears that the NDP had already decided what the terms of reference for the commission would be and decided not to take into consideration what they heard at the public consultation meeting in Yarmouth.

Last Friday during the debate on this bill, when the debate started, both my colleagues, the honourable member for Richmond and the honourable member for Argyle - who were both members of the select committee - expressed their concerns on the terms of reference targeting the four protected seats. Madam Speaker, as you are aware, all four

Opposition Party members on the committee, who could not support the terms of reference approved by the committee, filed a dissenting opinion.

In 1991, for the first time in our province's history, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission was appointed - back in 1991 an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission was appointed to review the electoral boundaries of our provincial ridings and make recommendations where they saw fit. This new practice was supported by all political Parties in the House. Madam Speaker, having an independent commission appointed to review the electoral boundaries of our provincial ridings every 10 years was the right decision, made by all political Parties.

This new practice, established back in 1991-92, was repeated in 2001-02 and now again in 2011-12. Madam Speaker, the reason I raise the history of these two previous electoral boundary reviews is that in both previous reviews the terms of reference allowed the Electoral Boundaries Commission to deviate from parity of voting power and consider other factors in determining effective representation for some voters. The terms of reference at that time were clearly spelled out and specifically asked the two boundaries commissions to take measures aiming at assuring a fair chance of electing representatives of these two minority groups. Now, other factors to consider included geography, community history, community interests, and Nova Scotia linguistic and cultural diversity.

In December 2011, the terms of reference for the Electoral Boundaries Commission were dictated by the majority NDP members on the select committee to reflect the will of the NDP Government. There was no discussion. There was no debate. It was a fait accompli before engaging the boundary reviews. Madam Speaker, for the record, it has to be noted that the four Opposition members on the standing committee filed a dissenting opinion in opposing the five NDP committee members in approving the terms of reference. Only NDP members endorsed the disappearance of the four protected ridings.

Why have the "notwithstanding" Clause 2(d) in their terms of reference? This is what the people of Clare can't understand. Where did this famous Clause 2(d) come from? Again, why is the NDP Government determined to eliminate special protection for minorities in Nova Scotia that was already granted to us by two previous Electoral Boundaries Commissions?

We all know that by creating these protected seats there is no guarantee that people in these four protected ridings will elect an Acadian or an African Nova Scotian to represent them. This is a free, democratic society we're living in, and yes, as a democratic society we should all respect who voters decide to elect to represent them in this House of Assembly, Madam Speaker.

I know the people of Clare have always elected an Acadian to represent them in the Legislature. The first Acadian from Clare to be elected was Frederick Armand Robicheau,

on January 12, 1837 - the first Acadian to represent the constituency of Clare at the time, back in 1837, was Frederick Armand Robicheau.

The people of Clare have always appreciated past governments respecting and recognizing us as a minority to allow us to elect whom we choose to represent us in the Legislature. To my knowledge, there has never been an uproar anywhere against this practice of giving special consideration to these four protected seats. Again: to my knowledge, there has never been an uproar anywhere against this practice.

Why did past governments allow Acadians to have effective representation? It was because past governments respected the official minority status of the Acadians. I believe that past governments recognized the advantages of these four protected ridings, the opportunity to elect one of their own, and also because past governments saw the advantages of having these four protected ridings represented in the provincial Assembly.

So, Madam Speaker, I hope you can understand why the people of Clare are disappointed. Now we have the NDP Government who want all provincial ridings to be within 25 per cent below or above the provincial average. That seems fair and equal but it does not take into account other factors. I heard many people in Clare ask, why is the NDP Government raising the bar for Clare, to have a set minimum number of voters in order to continue to exist as a riding for the next provincial election? Why raise the bar?

Madam Speaker, we have all heard the government's spin doctors talking about vote parity and nothing else than vote parity - no other factors should be considered. So why did the provincial NDP Government decide to cancel all other factors by imposing the notwithstanding clause in the terms of references? This 25 per cent variance makes it impossible for the Electoral Boundaries Commission to consider any other factors in determining the future of the four existing protected ridings.

Madam Speaker, before the public consultations started by the Electoral Boundaries Commission and came to Clare in April, the community was very upset. Our community in Clare was very upset. Our warden, under his leadership, Jean Melanson established a committee to help council clarify its decision regarding the upcoming boundary review. Members of the committee that he appointed included - les membres de ce comité, Madame la Présidente : Allister Surette, le Président de l'Université Sainte-Anne; Kenneth Gaudet, le Président du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial; Paul Comeau, un grand défenseur de la langue et de la culture acadienne et un ardent travailleur pour la promotion de la région de Clare; Paul Emile LeBlanc, Président de la Chambre de commerce de Clare; Madame Elaine Thimot, Représentante de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Nicole Pothier et Colette Deveaux-King, membres de ce comité; et, moi-même.

Madam Speaker, prior to the public meeting with the Electoral Boundaries Commission in Clare on April 20th, the municipal council organized a public meeting in

Clare to inform our residents and to seek input from them. Over 200 people gathered on Tuesday, April 3rd, at the local Legion in Saulnierville.

Madam Speaker, before I get to the meeting with the commission in Clare, I want to mention that our local radio station, CIFA, did an outstanding job in informing our residents all throughout this exercise. Also, I want to point out the outstanding work done by *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse* on this file as well. This French weekly newspaper had regular feature articles, editorials, letters to the editor and interviews informing the general public. Also I want to acknowledge the work that other local media did to inform the public - the *Yarmouth Vanguard*, *The Digby Courier*, *CJLS* in Yarmouth, *AVR* in the Valley, and the provincial media as well.

Madam Speaker, Friday April 20, 2012, is a memorable day for Clare - and I'll tell you why. Over 550 people gathered in the gym at Université Sainte-Anne to meet with the Electoral Boundaries Commission on a Friday night - on a Friday night, just imagine trying to attract over 550 people - this was just remarkable. I was proud to see that large group of people in attendance.

Again, just before the public meeting started a "tintamarre" was organized outside the gym to escort the members of the commission to the meeting. Madam Speaker, a tintamarre is a gathering of Acadians to show their fierté of their culture. It's a noise-making session to show the vitality of the community. We had some people who dressed up in our traditional Acadian costumes and used noise-making objects. Acadian flags were flying in the parade, they had cow bells, horns - anything to make as much noise as possible to show they are proud of who they are. The crowd gathered in a peaceful demonstration; membres de la troupe de danse de la Baie en Joie dressed up in their traditional Acadian costumes led the tintamarre parade that night.

People were coming into the gym showing how proud they were of their culture, their language and of their constituency, and when the chairman, Teresa MacNeil, called the meeting to order she explained to the crowd that the members of the commission would appreciate to be able to hear the presenters as they made their presentations and the crowd was allowed to make some noise and fly their flags, which they did before, after, and between presentations. The instructions were followed, Madam Speaker, and during the presentations you could have heard a pin drop. The crowd certainly supported the presenters and showed respect to the members of the Boundaries Commission.

Madam Speaker, the commission members certainly came out that night to listen to what the people of Clare had to say and it was reflected in their first interim report. The first interim report was greatly appreciated by the people of Clare - and I'll have more to say later on that report.

Madam Speaker, the highlight of this boundaries review for me was to see our youth involvement. Many students made presentations to the commission at the public

meetings in Tusket and in Clare. I want to acknowledge their work and their participation - it certainly did not go unnoticed.

Madam Speaker, I was also invited to participate in a youth rally at École secondaire de Clare. This forum was organized by a group of high school students - Student Council President Briar Spinney, students Nicole Thimot, Daralyn Comeau, and Stephanie MacLean, and they did a super job. After the invited guests had a chance to make some opening comments on the boundaries review, students had the opportunity to ask questions from the floor. I was surprised to see how well the meeting was run and how interested the students were, and knowledgeable, with this boundaries review.

The headline in The ChronicleHerald on December 31, 2011: “Acadian, Black seats lose protection.” This headline had a far-reaching effect, not just in Clare but a far-reaching effect across our province, and outside our province. Let me share with you one example to show how deeply disappointed some young Acadians were after reading this headline in The ChronicleHerald.

A group of students at École Secondaire de Clare decided to lower the flag to half-mast at school, in protest to the actions of this NDP Government. This was a very emotional day for these students. This is the only time that I can recall a symbolic action of this nature was ever taken in Clare. At some point throughout the day someone from the Department of Education in Halifax called the school to tell them this gesture was not allowed and they needed to put their flags back up.

For days following the action taken by the Department of Education, the people of Clare rallied behind our students. What a petty gesture on the part of the Department of Education and the NDP Government. Well, if the students weren't allowed to fly their school flag at half-mast, many individuals at home did, many businesses did; even our municipal council office flew their flags at half-mast in support of our students. I'll table a copy of that article just in case somebody would like to read that.

Madam Speaker, on Friday, June 1st, the Electoral Boundaries Commission submitted their first interim report. I can tell you the Acadian community throughout Nova Scotia and in Clare were delighted with the report recommending leaving the four protected ridings alone. It reflected the opinion of the Acadians expressed at the special committee hearing in Yarmouth last November and at the public meeting with the commission in Clare, back on Friday, April 20th.

After the press conference that morning in Halifax a reporter from our local radio station, CIFA, who was in attendance, did a press conference live from Province House. I was told it didn't matter where you were in Clare that day, everybody talked about the commission's recommendations to protect the four protected ridings, including Clare. Everybody was pleased with the outcome and they were all proud Nova Scotians.

Well, as we all know, the good news didn't last too long once the Attorney General stepped into the debate to tell the commission - before they finished their work, mind you - that their interim report was null and void. (Interruption) Yes, absolutely. My colleague here is indicating the Attorney General probably had some directive from somewhere else. The intervention by the Attorney General caused an uproar throughout the Acadian community and this uproar has intensified. I'm sure the members of the commission were disappointed to hear the Attorney General, on behalf of the NDP Government, telling them he could not accept their interim report. Well, members of the commission decided to try again and come up with another report.

On Friday, July 20th the commission released its second interim report. The people of Clare weren't happy this time around, nor were Acadians and francophones throughout our province. The commission was proposing major changes for the four protected seats. The commission recommended that the riding of Yarmouth be split up and the Municipality of Yarmouth be combined with Clare to make up a new riding.

I can tell you that the people of Yarmouth, along with the people of Clare, were not pleased with this recommendation, Madam Speaker. The Electoral Boundaries Commission did come back to southwestern Nova Scotia for a second round of public consultation meetings. On Monday night, August 13th, I had the opportunity to attend a public meeting in the Yarmouth Mariner Centre. Over 2,500 people gathered that night. I can't remember where I parked but I know that when I got there, there were cars parked everywhere you could think of, but I did manage to eventually find a parking spot. So again, that night, over 2,500 people gathered in the Mariner Centre in Yarmouth.

Again, with such a large crowd, the meeting went very well. Everybody who wanted to make a presentation had the opportunity to be heard by the members of the commission. It was not your typical two-hour meeting, that meeting ran until quite late that evening.

The following night, the commission came back to Clare, on Tuesday, August 14th. It was a sad day in Clare, Madam Speaker, over 300 people came out to the meeting and only one major presentation from the Municipality of Clare was made that night. Our warden, Jean Melanson, made the presentation on behalf of the residents of Clare, to the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Our position in Clare had not changed that night.

Madam Speaker, now with Bill No. 94, the House of Assembly Bill that is before the floor of this House, proposes now that Clare and Digby be combined into one riding. So when I told you earlier that the people of Clare are upset - confused, don't know where we're going, it seems this just continues. I can tell you this: many people in Clare have lost confidence with the boundary review process. Can we blame them? It has been a roller coaster ride for the last 10 months. We had a first interim report that the people of Clare were delighted with. Then we had the Auditor General, on behalf of the government,

stepped in and told the commission members the report was null and void, could not accept the report.

The commission went back to the table and they came back with a second interim report. At that time, in the second report, Madam Speaker, they had recommended that the District of Clare be combined with the Municipality of Yarmouth. Again, the uproar went again. The people of Yarmouth weren't pleased; the people of Clare weren't pleased. We had public meetings that followed on the second round in Yarmouth and Clare and then finally, once the commission delivered their final report to the government, the government brought this bill that is before the House.

Madam Speaker, many folks in Clare are of the opinion that the NDP Government will do what they want, regardless of what the people of Clare have to say or what the Electoral Boundaries Commission has to say. That doesn't matter, the general public doesn't - it's not important in this discussion. Again, what the people of Clare fail to understand throughout this heavy-handed approach taken by the NDP Government to do away with the four protected ridings, Clare has been electing an MLA since 1837 and now, all of a sudden, it's no longer allowed. So 1837 and we're telling the folks in Clare, hey, can't do it anymore. Why? Because someone, Madam Speaker, someone in government decided to do away with the four protected ridings because we're too small, as we're told. Well, who made that decision? I think people have a good sense of who that individual might be.

Let me remind you, people in Clare have always voted in previous elections with very high turnouts. I remember my first election campaign back in May 1993 as a matter of fact - I think the voting turnout of that election was over 91 per cent. I remember that just blew me away. We had probably over 200 election workers out there on election day, in that election. I remember friends of mine telling me they knew exactly who those few individuals were in each poll who had not voted and why they had not voted. They knew exactly where they were. They were fishing on Georges; they were out visiting family in western Canada. Practically everybody was accounted for. I was just overwhelmed how they worked so hard during that campaign. The people of Clare, yes, have been voting and they certainly take their elections very seriously but we'll have more to say on another day.

In closing, this NDP Government has poorly designed the outcome of this boundary review exercise from the word go. We've been hearing this ever since debate started on this bill. The so-called apparent public consultations done by the standing committee and the Boundaries Commission was a mockery of democracy. Why? Because it didn't take the will of the people into consideration; it was a mockery of democracy. Such an important question, the disappearance of four protected ridings, was not done within an open debate, which is warranted on this question.

This has been a top-down decision imposed by the NDP Government on the special committee, imposed on the Boundaries Commission, imposed on Acadians throughout

Nova Scotia, imposed on the people of Nova Scotia and imposed on the people of Clare. To say that the people of Clare are upset is an understatement. With those few comments, I will take my seat. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I would ask the honourable member for Clare to table the ChronicleHerald article that he quoted from. Thank you.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you. This is certainly a topic that has gathered a lot of headlines in the papers, it has affected every community around the province, some more than others. It's an issue that maybe it's better for politicians to have as little to do with the matter as possible, for that reason I almost feel like sitting down right now. But I'm not going to.

The reason I say that is because all of us sense here a conflict of interest on this topic - or at least we could be perceived to be in a conflict of interest - because we have a history seeing and throughout the past, where electoral boundaries were modified to support certain candidates running for election. It's not hard for us, we can look at our poll results in each of our constituencies. We can see where we did well or where we didn't do well. If we had complete control it would be very easy for us to cookie cut a riding that would favour ourselves, individually, and that is void of any political Party.

So I rise to speak today with some trepidation and with some reservation about expressing myself in any great detail on this matter, but I will say a couple of things. I know the terms for which the independent group was sent around the province, the framework they were given, the terms they were given, were handed to them by a committee of the Legislature, but I do want to point out that it was a committee in which the governing Party held the majority and held the control over what terms would be put forth. Some terms really weren't given a chance to be debated at any great length.

So, Madam Speaker, I think looking back, had that been done, there would be less debate today, here now, because with that debate having taken place and everybody putting their feelings on the table, maybe it could have been left wide open for the independent committee so that they could have gone around the province, having already heard the proposed terms by the members in this Legislature, but also coupling with that the impressions that Nova Scotians have on the matter.

Madam Speaker, I think that would have given the committee a chance to explore these ideas and maybe given Nova Scotians more say over how they want their Legislature to look. That might have taken some of the debate away that we're having now about what the terms should have been. So I want to put that on the record. I know there were a lot of public consultations. I wasn't at the first round of consultations. I did write a letter to the

committee and I remember telling them about my own constituency of Inverness and how it's such a large constituency. We heard the member for Victoria-The Lakes talk about this.

Inverness right now - say for me to depart the other side of Port Hawkesbury, drive through Port Hastings through to the causeway, I would have a number of routes from there. Well, actually I would have another route from around the other side of Port Hawkesbury, but I'll just take you (Interruption) - I do have a fast car, but I always drive at the speed limit, and stop before I blush - but, Madam Speaker, if you were to follow through Port Hastings to the causeway and continue up along Route 19 through Judique and Port Hood and Mabou and Inverness, and then go up along the coast through Dunvegan or through to Margaree Forks, then up to Cheticamp, then you leave provincial roadways and you enter the national park, the Cape Breton Highlands Park, and partway through you come to Pleasant Bay, another community that I represent. Then you get back into the park again for a little bit and you come outside of Inverness County. You have to drive for a bit through Victoria County to get back towards Meat Cove, which is back across the border in Inverness County.

I had a very nice trip up there this summer. I went up on my motorcycle and drove over some newly paved roads in the member for Victoria-The Lakes' constituency. I must commend him for his efforts to get that pavement for his constituents and for working with the government to make that happen, but I have to have to tell you, Madam Speaker, it was a long drive. My motorcycle holds quite a bit of fuel and I had to stop for gas. I basically burned probably close to two tanks of gas and that was from Judique to Meat Cove. It was quite a trip. It took the whole day, and it happens that particular day there were a lot of other motorcycles on the trail because they were having a rally to raise awareness about breast cancer and to raise money for that purpose.

Madam Speaker, my point is that that's only one route across my constituency. When I wrote to the commission I was telling them about how large the constituency was and how I supported the idea of having a variance in population, because if we compare it to a constituency, say, in Halifax, there are different demands on an MLA representing Halifax compared to a rural area. I wanted to voice my support for that factor of variance to ensure that they kept that, because it takes more time, I believe, at least in terms of trying to get around to see people. People want to see their MLA, and they deserve to have a chance to see their MLA. A lot of people don't see their representative until it comes election time. That's their chance to unload anything they might have on their mind, and it's a good opportunity for them to do that.

I did write a letter to the commission supporting the variance of 25 per cent. I just wanted to make that understood - the extra time involved and the travel involved and the need to try to make it fair for constituents, whether they live in an urban part of the province or a rural part of the province.

Madam Speaker, I know that when the committee travelled around they had to make changes because of population shifts in the province. I know a lot of the changes were not welcomed by communities. I remember that when I attended the second round in Port Hawkesbury, when they came out with the second round, they had said, one thing that we discovered as a committee was that areas that were happy with the first report, who didn't express their opinion because they were feeling like their needs had been addressed, didn't bother coming out to express their support for the decision made for their area. That wasn't expressed in some cases, so that was lost in the second round, highlighting the difficulties in trying to please everybody and trying to make constituencies that allowed people to feel like their area was cohesive and it was related, so that all the communities in a consistency would feel like they had some commonalities.

I can think of a meeting I was at just the other evening. It was in Havre Boucher, where my father used to work at the train station, so I know the community a little bit. The station is no longer there, but there are quite a few rail cars parked there in transit. I remember being on the platform, maybe going with my father to work for the day. I remember playing with some of the luggage carriers, with the old CB radios they used to use. I loved watching the trains come in. We'd be counting the cars that would be going through. I even got on the train one day and the conductor brought me up to the engine and I was allowed to blow the horn. I scared the death out myself that day, because was it ever loud. But I digress. You're probably not so interested in those stories, but I remember the fellow who let me do that. He was from New Glasgow, and I wish I could remember his name to put it on the record. Maybe I will at a future date. He also used to bring me Big Red chewing gum. Anyway - the little things you remember.

So I was in Havre Boucher and I had a chance to hear what people were saying there, and they made some good points. In their constituency they weren't happy in either case. The first time they were cutting Antigonish in half - eliminating that area from Antigonish. The second time they cut a smaller portion of Antigonish, but still eliminated their area from Antigonish County. They made the point that in their area they hadn't dropped in population, so they shouldn't be penalized. This, Madam Speaker, highlights the problem that the committee had in trying to decide the boundaries: for every decision made in one area, it affected the adjacent areas. One of the points they made was that you have people living in the Havre Boucher area whose children are going to school with people who would be living in the new proposed Antigonish constituency. They are going to two different MLAs for the same purpose - two groups of people. I thought that that made sense to me, but suffice to say it's just another example of where people are not happy with the boundaries.

I know in my own area I'm losing Port Hawkesbury and I was disappointed to learn that. Of course, I tried to stay connected with every area of my constituency, but I know I play lots of hockey in Port Hawkesbury. I know a lot of people there, many people throughout Inverness County make the drive into the Strait area to work. We have obvious commonalities between us, and to me Port Hawkesbury is part of home to me. I know a lot

of the retail businesses in Port Hawkesbury benefit from the activity brought into town from people throughout Inverness County. So I was disappointed with that, but I respect the committee's independence and for that reason, I did express my disappointment, but I left it at that. I also said that it wasn't really my place to come out and start to recommend what should or shouldn't be part of my constituency: I'd rather hear from people, the people who are in the area.

I will tell you, I was travelling through and making a multi-day visit to the Acadian area of my constituency, in the Cheticamp area. I had some of the Acadian people there tell me that they would like to be part of some kind of a protected Acadian constituency and I certainly respect that. I can see why they feel the need to band together to protect their interests and they've certainly achieved great things for their communities by sticking together. I, coming from perhaps a different background, but another culture which has experienced marginalization throughout history, respect that. I always encourage people, especially young people in the Acadian region, to make sure they speak their language and I've also said on a number of occasions to parents, to make sure they try to use it in the home. I know that is perhaps the strongest support to get people to speak a language, is to be using it in the home. Of course, there's all kinds of television, really all of the television that we would watch is mostly in English, especially a lot of pop culture and a lot of music that is listened to would, of course, be in English and that stands to reason. But that doesn't do much support to the notion for young people to continue speaking their native tongue.

Another thing that I did say to that group of Acadians was that I wanted to be careful what I would say about that because I do want to represent those people, here in the Legislature. I do respect their positions and their ability to have their own school board, for instance, and I would never want to send a message to Acadians in my constituency that yes, please go off and band together with other Acadians to form a constituency because I wouldn't want to send them the message that I don't want to represent them. I enjoy going to the area, I have a lot of friends down that way as well. I'm always amazed at how much they love music, especially the Cape Breton fiddle music and we have family friends that have developed over many years that exist between the Acadian region and the area I grew up in, so we have commonalities there. While we may have come from different histories, if you go back far enough we do share a lot of the same things today and we enjoy a lot of the same things and appreciate our coexistence in Inverness County.

On that same visit, I spoke with a gentleman who told me - and he was an Acadian - he wouldn't want to be moved in with another group of Acadians in another part of the province because he felt that - and he gave the example of roads, he said, I don't want to call somebody in another part of the province if I have an issue about a road. I want to call somebody who's down the road, a little closer at hand and maybe even somebody who is travelling the same roads that, for instance, he and I would be travelling. I thought that made sense too, Madam Speaker. I guess the point is that I think it's important that we hear from Nova Scotians, how they feel. I'm more interested in hearing that, as I said when I

started my remarks. I feel for me to speak about it - I am at least, if nothing else, perceived to be in too much of a conflict of interest to be making recommendations myself.

I also want to mention that when I was in Port Hawkesbury, a former MLA for Inverness, Danny Graham - a former Liberal MLA who is a good friend of mine as well - mentioned that in New Zealand - or maybe Australia, but I don't have it in front of me right now - the Maori people there, the indigenous people - I believe it was in New Zealand. I believe they have more than one constituency devoted to their people. It may be a matter of creating a constituency where if you happen to be of Maori descent, you can sign up to be on the electoral list for those seats that are designated for the Maori peoples.

That's an interesting idea that came forward. If enough people from a particular background wanted that, maybe it's something the committee could look at. Again, there's the power of opening this up to broader discussion to Nova Scotians to let them have their say.

Speaking of indigenous peoples, I think about the Aboriginals who I represent here in Nova Scotia in the constituency of Inverness. It's an area that's actually growing in population, which is so different from many other areas. The community I represent is Waycobah. There's also some reservation land around the area of Malagawatch, but the primary area is Waycobah. I like to spend time there with them, and I also like to represent them here in this Legislature.

Many of the Aboriginals living in Waycobah often ask me, Allan, why should we vote for you? I know I'm leaving myself open for some jeers here, but the reason they ask that is because so much of their fate is really determined by their Band Council and by the federal government, because they're living on federal lands and because of the nature of the history there of treaties and agreements. Their band budgets come from the federal government.

I also believe that I represent those people, and I take an active interest in their community. I meet with their Band Council. I attend events in their community whenever I can, and I also encourage the young people there to keep speaking their native language. Again, in a world of pop culture, a lot of young people may find their native tongue is out of style or maybe not of use to them, but I can tell you, as they get older, I think they will appreciate knowing their language. What a wonderful time to be doing it, when you're young - to be learning your language so that you have it for the rest of your life and you don't have to start grappling with it and trying to learn it later on in life. I always encourage them to keep speaking their language, and in the home as well.

My point is that I do try to actively represent them, and I want to put a couple of points on the record here. Contrary to popular belief - maybe it's not fair to say popular belief, but many people don't feel that Aboriginals are paying taxes. I will tell you that they are. They're paying a lot of sales tax, excise taxes on fuel and tobacco - depending where

they purchase. They are counted in our population numbers when we are given equalization payments, which make up about one-third of our actual revenue in our treasury each year. Their population counts toward the dollars we receive, and we get more money from the federal government because of them.

We know they use our services like roads and hospitals and even schools. They have their own school in Waycobah, but some of the children also travel to the school in Whycomagh, right next door. So they do count, Madam Speaker, and I certainly aspire to do everything I can to represent them and to be responsive and to be an advocate for them here in this Legislature. I know some of the ministers across the way will know that I've approached them in the past about issues in Waycobah, to represent their community.

Madam Speaker, I know we talk about minority rights and the needs of the people in the province and I just want to put on the record here today that the Aboriginal people in this province deserve representation here in this Chamber and I aim to provide it to them, as their acting MLA in Inverness right now. I would hope that I would have the chance for that to continue. I don't think we've heard too much from our Aboriginal community on the boundaries, perhaps for the reasons that I've already stated, that they often wonder, well why would we vote for somebody who is running for a provincial seat? I'm only speculating on why, as I have in my previous comments; there are probably all kinds of other reasons. But suffice it to say that's another group of people who deserve to be represented.

Madam Speaker, I know that from time to time I'll share a little bit of Gaelic here in the Legislature and that is my effort at trying to draw attention to the importance of that language and to remind many people in this province who have lineage to Gaelic-speaking peoples, to remember where they come from. Some people - and we see the comments and I respect their opinions - some people say, well, why would you bother putting money in an old, dead language or something that's old? I don't blame them for saying that, especially if they don't come from that background. I think if they do come from that background, they really should learn their history, and not to lecture them, but if they did learn about their history and what happened to their language and why it has disappeared, they might take a little more pride in it.

If you respect your parents and, by extension, you respect your ancestors, you should know your history. You should make efforts to learn it and to respect what your people went through because if your great-great-great-great-great-grandfather or, in my case, great-great-great-great-great-grandfather and his two brothers went into battle at the Battle of Culloden and risked their lives back in days when there was grapeshot coming out of cannons, which is basically loose nails flying across a field and disembowelling people, which could be your very ancestors. To me, Madam Speaker, if you respect your parents, think of your brother or your parent who is going through that, that's the way I look at it.

I know that as Remembrance Day approaches, we often think about all those people who went through that for Canada. I go back even further, Madam Speaker, and I think about what my own people went through, say at the Battle of Culloden, and going back even further throughout history. To me, that's important and that's why I think anybody who has some ancestry - in this case if it is Gaelic ancestry - they should be looking at their history and, out of respect for their people, they should learn that. I know the member for Pictou East is holding up a tartan tie today so he's showing his colours and that's good to see, and also the member for Pictou West is as well. So they take pride in where they come from.

Madam Speaker, we're talking about humble investments, modest investments in this kind of thing that to me make a difference. So I do respect that some people say, don't bother with any of that, it's a waste of money. Government should stick to its core. I would put this in the category of education and these are very modest sums of money. Really it is education that results in people knowing more of who they are. I think that helps save money in other areas. We have so many wayward youths today - we always have, I suppose, but we see stories of bullying and things like that. The more young people know about where they come from and the more they respect where they come from, their own people, of course, that leads them to respect other people and other native communities, whether it be our Aboriginal peoples here in the province, our Acadians, the foreign Protestants that arrived in mid-1700s on the South Shore, you name it. The more we know about where we come from and the more we respect our pasts, the more we respect those around us.

There is another group that I represent in my area and that's why I do on occasion share a bit of Gaelic here in the Legislature. (Interruption) Thank you, somebody is saying they appreciate that. I don't want to take too much more time here, but suffice it to say that this process, to decide these boundaries there has been a lot of negative commentary and media on it, there are a lot of people unhappy and I don't know if there are going to be people happy at the end of it. It's too bad that it hasn't gone a little more smoothly and at the end of the day, people will still get to vote, but I'm not going to say too much more other than I do think that Nova Scotians' voices should be the loudest heard on this subject.

I do also want to put on the record that I feel bad for the commission that went around the province; I know they took some abuse. It's not like they're getting paid any great sums of money to travel the province and the real challenge is to try to balance out the terms that were presented to them by a majority NDP committee of this Legislature, with what they're hearing from all Nova Scotians around the province. It has been difficult for them and I want to thank them for their efforts and I want to apologize for all members of this Legislature for any abuse they've taken because I don't think they deserved any of it and with that, Madam Speaker, I will take my place.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Madam Speaker, I have some brief comments to make about my riding of Preston, one of the four ridings that were targeted by this government to eliminate and it's very unfortunate they did that. The Preston riding is very unique in the province and for over 200 years, the community has tried to get electoral representation. Luckily in 1993, that did happen, with the election of the Honourable Wayne Adams, the first Black Nova Scotian ever elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature and indeed, the first Black Cabinet Minister ever in the Province of Nova Scotia. His picture hangs over here in the Chamber and it's quite a privilege to sit in sort of his shadow as we move forward. Now Wayne Adams is a very good friend of mine and a great supporter and I've always been a great supporter of his, as we used to occupy adjacent ridings.

I'm the fourth MLA to ever be elected in this riding, as it sits today and if this process goes through here as it will, I'll be the last one to sit in the riding. Next year, depending when the election is called, I could be the longest-sitting member ever in this riding. I've been elected three consecutive times in the riding. I'm the only person that has ever been elected more than once. I'm the only person of the only Party that has ever been elected more than once at a time. It was first held by the Liberal Party, then by the NDP and then by the Progressive Conservative Party and then by myself, representing the Liberal Party at the time when it went through.

There has been some discussion by an individual in this Legislature that perhaps I don't do a good job representing this riding because I'm not from the Black community. I can tell you, the Black community, as well as the White community in my riding, have elected me and each time I do get elected, I get elected with a bigger majority than the time before, which I'm very proud of. (Applause)

I'm very proud of that and it just goes to show you that if you represent the people properly, you listen to their concerns and you work with them, indeed you can be re-elected again. It's unfortunate that this boundary review has turned out the way it has, a real shemozzle, and I'm going to talk about that a little bit more later.

It's been an honour to represent this area. It's been a real cultural enrichment me for me to represent the Black community as well as the White community in my area. I represent the communities of Porters Lake, Lake Echo, East Preston, North Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, Montague, Mineville, and some other communities in the area. It's a very diverse community but that's what makes it so special, it really does make it so special. There is a lot of co-operation between the two cultures in my area and that is very very important, very important. We see a lot of assistance, in both ways, when you talk about things that matter to the communities and indeed it is important that that uniqueness of the community does continue.

The boundary review that happened, I've been here - I'm the third longest sitting member in this Legislature - and when I see the shemozzle that was created by this, it's unbelievable. I have never seen so much gerrymandering by government, so much

misdirection by government, in the whole situation. It's absolutely disgraceful what's happened. If the government didn't get what they want the first time, they went back and said do it over again. It's not what we want and the commission has been interfered with. I've never seen that, I don't think that has ever happened in the history of the Province of Nova Scotia. They actually interfered, this government interfered with this boundary review committee.

So it leads you to ask, why? Why did that happen? Well, I can tell you what I think happened and this opinion is shared by many, many people in this province. I believe that this government tried to manipulate where the seats would be and where the seats turned out to be, is more seats in metro, two more seats in metro. Now where does the NDP Government get most of their support? In metro; isn't that interesting. It just so happens that when you do all the boundary review, they wanted a couple more seats in metro, in the meantime they take away seats in the rural area, take away seats in the rural area. Some in Cape Breton - the Speaker's riding is going to disappear, which is very unfortunate.

But when you see what's happening, if you can get two more seats it has a net effect of approximately four seats because you take them out of the rural area, you dump them in metro, so all of a sudden the government could, in theory, win an election next time on the fact that they have two more seats in metro and two less seats in the rural areas. That makes it quite interesting. All the gerrymandering by the Justice Minister, by the Premier and everybody else was to try to get this to come out the way they wanted it - not the way it should be but the way they wanted it.

The seats that are held by the four minority seats, it's just a coincidence, it's absolutely a coincidence that this boundary committee was told that you had to change the percentage of people, and of voters in an area, in those ridings in particular. It's also very strange that the NDP, the people that decided what this commission was going to do and how they were going to do it, was a majority member on the committee and set the agenda for how it was going to be put together, so they said everything had to be within 25 per cent, effectively wiping out the four minority seats in the province that probably, for about 200 or more years, had gone into getting these seats in place and I think they are important. I think they are very important.

A seat that I used to represent in the Eastern Shore had a large Acadian population. Now that Acadian population, in my generation, had told their children not to speak French because you couldn't get a job. You couldn't get a job because you spoke French. Indeed, they almost lost their French culture. Acadians, all in the Chezzetcook area, very proud people, very intelligent people, were telling their children, don't speak French because you can't get a job. Now that's disgraceful.

We see the Acadian seats that have been - there have been three Acadian seats in the province, those are very positive that that happened. It just so happens that none of those seats are held by the NDP - none of them. So, again, it's an easy way to maybe

improve their odds of an election victory by eliminating the four minority seats in the province, ensuring - well, those seats we probably can't win anyway, we haven't won them. My seat, I think, is the only one that has ever been won - one time, for a very short period of time - by the NDP. We can't win those seats anyway, so let's eliminate them. So we eliminate those seats and increase our odds of winning the next election.

That's a fact, because I don't think the NDP had any possibility of ever winning these seats in the immediate future. So when you look at this stuff and you see what's going on here, it's a process of eliminating minority seats that the NDP can't win, haven't won - except for one very short time. So what do you do? You gerrymander the seats to make sure it can win power. If you do that process enough, that's against everything in our democracy that we stand for in this country - everything.

So as time goes on and the people talk more and more about this and see this, the real test is going to come on election day, the next election day when people come and realize that indeed they don't live in the riding they thought they did live in before and, bang, they've got a problem - who do they vote for? By that time it would be much too late, this government will push this bill through, they will have done all the PR work on it they figure they can do to get away with it, and decide that we've trampled over and stomped on everybody's democratic rights and that's okay, we're the NDP, we can do that and we really don't care.

I think that come the next election, this NDP Government is going to get an awful shock - it is going to get a terrible shock, what I'm hearing from people. A friend of mine who voted NDP last time swore up and down - when I say "swore up and down" I mean in a very positive way, not in a negative way - that he would never vote NDP again. As a card-carrying NDP member - finished, absolutely finished.

There's a little bumper sticker out there that I've started to see around - Don't Blame Me, I Didn't Vote For Them. I Didn't Vote NDP. Well, I think you're going to see a few more of those, and you're going to see some of them that are going to say: I Voted NDP, Please Don't Blame Me For All The Stuff That Has Happened.

It has been very serious and when you talk about all the boundaries review and all the time we're spending here talking about it and the fact they're going to go to Shelburne with the Law Amendments Committee - and the number of years I've been here, I was first elected in 1993, I've never seen anything so crazy in all my life. But anyway, the Premier has decided that's where the committee is going to go and that's where the committee is going. It will be interesting to see what kinds of comments are made in that area.

So when we see all the time we're spending on this issue, and it's an important issue - it if would have been done properly, it's a very, very important issue; the boundaries are very important to people. I know in my case we worked on the municipal boundaries in Cherry Brook and the community of Cherry Brook-Lake Loon at one point wanted to stay

with Cole Harbour. They wanted to stay with Cole Harbour in the municipal boundary because they had worked very hard to get Cole Harbour Place put in place and they worked with the community - and it's a community that works very, very well together. They did make that fight and they did win the fight - not the initial year, but the next election they did, and that's been changed since the last election, but indeed they did get an opportunity to do that, so it's there. So you see these boundary issues are very important to people.

But the real problem in this province is our economy. We should be talking about our economy. We should let the Electoral Boundaries Commission do their job and let the first report go through and this would have been settled. There would have been a few words on it here, the system would have gone through and it would have been fine. But no, it was interfered with by this government in hopes that they would gain some more seats by it. I don't think that's going to happen. That was their hope, but I think that it's not going to happen, based on the terrible job you've done in the economy.

You see their government putting over \$0.5 billion into companies. Companies are failing, people are getting laid off that the money was put into, and those are the things that we really should be talking about in this House. We should be talking about that every day. We should be talking about the people who can't find work. We should be talking about the businesses that don't have work. They're barely surviving - barely surviving to get through - the worst economy in the whole province, if not in North America; the highest taxes in North America in this province, probably - the highest taxes.

They put the GST up 2 per cent, and as I've said here before, most people don't realize - 2 cents on the GST doesn't sound like very much, but it's a 25 per cent tax increase - 25 per cent. That's a double-digit tax increase, and that was promised by this government before they got elected, that we would not increase the tax. I'm really afraid that if the federal government comes along and adds their 2 per cent back on again, we're going to be in an impossible situation in this province. You talk to businesspeople all over the province, and are they employing people? They can't hire anyone else because they don't have the work to do it. Very seldom do you run into a company that says, I'm doing as well as I did last year, and mostly it's because they work offshore or work in another province that they can say that.

A few companies in Nova Scotia are doing reasonably well, but the majority are not, and that's what hurts our economy. We don't have our small businesses growing and employing local people and working with local people to ensure that they've got a job, that they've got a job this year, next year, and the year after. We're never, ever going to see any economic improvement in Nova Scotia, and it has gotten so bad here, tax-wise, with the income tax and with the GST up so high - or the HST, whichever you want to call it. We can see people, seniors, who are moving out of Nova Scotia because they save a lot of money on income tax - a lot of money on income tax. I have friends who are leaving here now, and they tell me that after they've done all the information on the taxes they're going to save, they'll save about \$6,000 a year - \$6,000 a year on taxes.

You look at how this is going to negatively connect and destroy our economy as time goes on, because more and more people are leaving the province either to get work or to retire. They used to come to Nova Scotia to retire, but they can't afford to stay in Nova Scotia now. They can't afford to stay here in Nova Scotia. So what happens? They move to Ontario or Alberta. Alberta has got the cheapest tax of the provinces. Newfoundland and Labrador very soon is going to be a whole lot better off than Ontario is, so that's going to be interesting, to see how that affects our young people. They won't have to go to Alberta anymore. They'll be able to go to Newfoundland and Labrador to work, and they'll be coming home on the weekends. So that's going to be interesting.

This government talks about training people. Well, I can tell you, they want to change the training process if they want to get qualified tradespeople here and people here who will make the economy go. They want to change it a lot, and they haven't done that. At the Public Accounts Committee the other day, we had the Deputy Minister of Education in. We talked about the improvements to the trades, and I can tell you I sat there as chairman of the committee in absolute disbelief at what I heard - absolute disbelief. I was so wishing I could have asked some questions.

One lady from the Department of Education said - well, one of the members asked the question, what do you actually learn? What are you trying to teach young people when you're there? She said, hand dexterity. Okay, I guess. I ran a manufacturing business for a long time, and the programs they were talking about, the things the Department of Education was doing, certainly are not going to have a major impact on our economy. They spent a lot of money, and I think the results are going to be very, very poor.

Again, there has to be - all the years I've been on the Public Accounts Committee, and I am the longest-sitting member, and sitting in this Chamber today - that seeing such a disgraceful display of what's not happening and what needs to be done in the education system to get our young people into the workforce so they can have some productivity.

The government members may not agree with me but I can tell you, the numbers show that so many jobs have been lost in this province, jobs that are not coming back. They tout some numbers over there that they say improve these numbers. I don't know where they're getting them; it sure isn't from any reliable source. So many jobs have been lost in this province since this government took place that it's unbelievable.

They spent \$500 million trying to prop up some big companies and you see what it was - I think it was 1,210 people who lost their jobs because of this \$500 million that was spent. That means for every job lost, it cost taxpayers of Nova Scotia \$47 million, \$47 million to lay off 1,210 people - \$47 million each. At the rate they're going, we're going to see this province bankrupt by the time this government leaves.

When you see these bad investments that this government has made, when they sat on this side on this side of the House all the time, going on about how they wouldn't do

corporate welfare and all these idealistic things they had in mind and all the great plans they had for the province - well the great plans are not very good for the province, not good for employment in this province, and definitely not good for the economy.

There are other things that this government has done. It seems to be unbelievable the stuff that's - where they get the ideas from, I don't know. The answers we get here in Question Period are totally unbelievable. When you look at the facts and you see what's going on - or the lack of answers we get - if the economy was as good as they say it is - which it isn't - when we get answers back in Question Period, we should be touting the companies that have grown and prospered in the province instead of all the people who have been laid off. We know that.

The people out in the communities know that. They know that they can't find jobs in this province and they know that they've lost jobs, their neighbours have lost a job, they might have lost a job themselves or a family member has lost a job. They can't get these jobs back. Getting a part-time job just doesn't cut it. When you lose thousands of full-time jobs, and some of them come back in part-time positions, it makes you wonder why companies are doing that. It's because companies have to run cost effectively. Unfortunately, you can hire someone part-time and if you hire them for few enough hours you don't have to pay all the benefits you have to pay to a full-time employee. That ultimately cuts your costs.

That does not help the employee, it does not help our economy when that happens, but it may keep a business going in a really tough time like they're having now. I've talked to many friends of mine in business and they say they're just scraping by. A lot of them say if they didn't have so much investment, or if they could sell their business or get rid of it somehow, they would close down or move to another province and work. Some of them have done that. A lot of the branch plants in Nova Scotia, very large reputable companies, have moved their operations from Halifax and Burnside and other places in Halifax to Moncton because it is cheaper to operate a business in Moncton than it is anywhere in Nova Scotia. That gets scary. (Interruptions) Maybe we should ask some questions about Bowater.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The honourable member for Preston has the floor and we'll bring the subject matter back to Bill No. 94 please.

MR. COLWELL: Thank you. Indeed, I believe a lot of this is related to the bill that is on the table. When they start cutting up boundaries to win an election, it makes you wonder what the motive is. We see (Interruptions) There seems to be a lot of interest in this Chamber and I can tell there is a lot of interest and there's a lot of emotion here, I know from the Opposition Parties because, you know, we see our communities suffering. We see the people in our communities suffering. You know, we are very emotional about this and very concerned about this. It's very hard to keep your cool when you're talking

about this, especially when you're hearing all kinds of rhetoric from the other side of the House that isn't necessarily true.

It's difficult to say to somebody, you know, we're spending a lot of time on this boundary review because it was gerrymandered by the government and everybody knows that. Everybody you talk to knows about that. It's unbelievable how many people are talking about this and then they come right back and they say the same thing again, we want to get the economy going in Nova Scotia, we want a job. We want our kids to be working in Nova Scotia. Why waste your time on this bill because this Party wants to try to get a couple more seats in the Legislature and maybe hold onto power one way or another and that's what this is about.

We really should be talking about the economy, what's happening here with this province and the dismal state that it's in. It's a shame because we have incredibly skilled people in this province. We have very intelligent people. We have the largest number of universities, I believe, in any province or state in North America and high quality universities. People come from all over the world to go these universities and yet we can't turn that - this government hasn't been able to turn that - success into the economy and make the economy grow and prosper in this province. So it's very troubling, very troubling. It's very troubling for people out there who are trying to make a living, trying to get their young people back into the province who have gone to Alberta and trying to get a situation where their family can be together.

You know, typically what happens with young people, they decide they might even go see new horizons and try jobs in other places, and that's fair enough, that's fine. I mean that's one thing you should do if you're young, get new experiences, but when you come back home, in this case to Nova Scotia, hopefully, it helps the economy because you're bringing people, the highly skilled, highly trained and lots of experience, who can do things in the province. What's happening in Nova Scotia, with the tax structure we have, with the poor job that this government has done creating jobs in the province: number one, there are no jobs to come back to and, number two, if you do come back to a job, you make less money and pay more tax. So why would you move back to Nova Scotia? You just won't, you absolutely won't.

We've seen Newfoundland and Labrador go through about the same thing we're headed for, where home prices have gone down and homes aren't selling like they were but Newfoundland and Labrador now has got their act together. They have got their act together and they've moved back now. They're going to be a very much have province soon and we see what's happened.

We're talking about Bowater. We should talk about Bowater a little bit. Maybe we should talk about that a little bit and see what Bowater did. I mean they took the cheques and they disappeared, they disappeared. (Interruptions)

From what I understand, when the Premier went to present the cheques to Bowater, the executives of Bowater didn't even bother to come. They just said thank you very much, we will pay our loans off in Quebec and we will close this facility as quickly as possible and leave the Nova Scotia taxpayers to pay the bill, to absolutely pay the bill. When you look at what happened and you see what's happened with Bowater, in particular, all those millions of dollars absolutely wasted of taxpayers' money. You only had to go to Newfoundland and Labrador to see what they did in Newfoundland and Labrador. The same manager here that was in Newfoundland and Labrador when they shut the mill down there. So he must be the manager they send to shut mills down. They shut it down and left Nova Scotia taxpayers on the bill for about \$56 million, was it, or was it more than that? Was it \$56 million – Bowater? I can't remember the exact number but, you know, it's probably higher than that. (Interruptions) Nothing to it at all, I mean, all the . . .

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

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the final accounting is done in Bowater, when we finally get the exact accounting of what all this cost, I'm sure it's going to be more than \$56 million. And what do we get for \$56 million? All kinds of unemployment - unemployed people. We've got all kinds of contractors who have no work now, and the list goes on and on.

It was a poor deal, badly negotiated, and unfortunately, when this government loses the next election - which hopefully they will do, and from what I'm hearing in the community, that's going to happen - the unfortunate part of that is they will walk away and all the people in Nova Scotia will end up paying the bill. We'll be paying that bill for another 50 years.

The worst of it is that it would have created some employment or even maintained some employment. It would have been beneficial to all Nova Scotians, but instead, it's really hit us all.

There are more and more deals out there that I'll talk about another day, but it shows how this government has no idea how to do economic development. The only way that they figure they can win the next seat - they could gerrymander this review process and try to get some more seats in metro out of the rural area. That's what it comes down to - shove two more seats into metro, forget the rural areas of the province, get rid of the minority ridings, and away you go. Now we're all set. We didn't win those seats anyway, so now we're not going to win them again. So get rid of them, and possibly now we can win the new seats in metro, where we've got the highest popularity of any place around.

So as you review this whole thing and look at the whole thing, people out there understand what's going on. They realize this and they see this, and this government is going to get a shock when they go to the polls the next time - a real shock. It will be interesting to see how it all works out.

It's the other things they've done, too, that again, I'll talk about the next time I get a chance to speak here on this topic. It's going to be interesting to see how all this works and how it works out in Nova Scotia as we see the people in Nova Scotia suffer more and more. Today, when I see people come into my constituency office who used to make it every payday - from payday to payday they could make it - people are coming in now with reasonably good incomes who can't make it anymore. They can't make it because of taxes this government put on them. They just can't do it. I mean, you change the harmonized sales tax, the GST, whatever you want to call it, and add a 25 per cent tax increase - that's a 25 per cent tax increase. It's a couple of dollars here and a couple of dollars there, but it all adds up over a year. As this proceeds and you see people suffering, coming in, who were doing well, it makes you wonder how we can ever get the economy going again in this province. I can tell you, it's going to be a major problem.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak on this another day, and perhaps we can just adjourn the debate for today and I'll continue my remarks at another time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn 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. The House will now rise and meet from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. tomorrow, but first, I'll hand it over to the Deputy Opposition House Leader to tell us what the business tomorrow will be.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition Deputy House Leader.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to celebrating Halloween, and the birthday of the member for Argyle, we will be calling Bill Nos. 103 and 95.

MR. SPEAKER: As we have reached the moment of interruption, we will now proceed with the emergency debate under Rule 43 that the House has approved earlier today. I will now read the motion:

Therefore be it resolved "that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, the independent report released today indicating that Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve a \$2.4 billion of savings by proceeding to develop hydroelectric power at Muskrat Falls on the Lower Churchill River to meet its power needs, thereby confirming the value of this important development."

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION UNDER RULE 43**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

ENERGY - MUSKRAT FALLS: SAVINGS - REPT. DISCUSS

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate an important choice that is facing the province. It is a choice that will forever change the cost that tomorrow's families will pay to get reliable and affordable energy. It's a choice that previous governments ignored and as a result, families today are struggling to pay the high and unpredictable cost of energy. Because of previous governments' inactions, families are struggling, the environment is suffering and the province is at the mercy of expensive imported coal.

In September, the federal Conservative Government introduced regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. These regulations are designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by closing coal fired generating stations after a fixed period of operation. In Nova Scotia, this would mean the closure of six of the eight generating stations by 2030; the first closure would be in 2016. This would heap an estimated \$1.3 billion in costs onto the backs of Nova Scotia ratepayers in just 14 years.

So the question before us today is, how will we replace the generating capacity of these stations that the federal Conservative Government requires us to close? Our government has presented the federal Conservatives with a plan which includes Muskrat Falls as part of an equivalency agreement. They have signed this agreement which allows us to spread out the cost as we bring new sources of energy online.

Mr. Speaker, this is the point at which we have a real, substantive choice. We can cancel the equivalency agreement and we can continue with the misguided policies of the past that have chained us to environmentally damaging and unpredictable power sources. Or we can make a choice to move towards a more progressive energy policy that includes cleaner energy, job creation and more stable, long-term energy costs. A decision that will put us at the centre of the electricity grid, one that will mean that for the first time Nova Scotia will have access, not just to the power from Muskrat Falls but to other power providers as well, from Hydro-Québec to New Brunswick, indeed, even from New England if they had power for sale. Finally, there will be a transmission link that will have the capacity to be able not only to export but to import power into the province and we will no longer be an energy island.

Now the options put forward by the Official Opposition show that they simply don't get this. Their inexperience is demonstrated by their wiliness to put forward ideas that have proven not to work, ideas that would take the province backward and lead us to

ever increasing power rates and environmentally damaging energy sources. The kind of deregulation that has been proposed by the Liberals has been tried in other provinces and states and has resulted in power increases of 30 to 50 per cent.

It amazes me actually, Mr. Speaker, that in this House of Assembly, they try now to run away from what was the very basis of the advertising campaign that they put on television. Reality is, they won't produce an actual plan, they won't actually commit something to writing but all we have to do is look directly at what their Leader has said and I want to quote exactly what their Leader has said: "Nova Scotia Power will always be part of the energy market, but there's no reason why, if you want to come in, if some other company wants to come in and do a natural gas plant . . . that they have to deal with their competition."

That was at a Liberal energy town hall at the Dartmouth Sportsplex on August 2nd. That is exactly what deregulation is about. That is exactly what has brought 30 to 50 per cent increases in the cost of energy in other jurisdictions. This is deregulation as proposed by Mike Harris and Ralph Klein. I repeat, the Leader of the Official Opposition would allow companies to come in to build, among others, natural gas generation plants to compete head-to-head with Nova Scotia, keenly aware that those costs would be loaded right onto the backs of Nova Scotia ratepayers.

How can any member of his caucus say this is not deregulation? It would be dishonest to say so. That is not what families are looking for. We need to find solutions that lower rates...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That's an unparliamentary word, the word "dishonest". I'll just remind both sides of the House that it will not be tolerated anymore this evening.

The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: For my part, Mr. Speaker, I did not refer to anyone in that regard. I made a broad statement about what would or would not be dishonest. I didn't actually hear the comments of the Leader of the Official Opposition, so I'm not sure what it was he said or to whom he was referring.

One thing is for sure, deregulation is not the solution that families are looking for. We need to find solutions that lower rates and provide stability and move us off of our dependence on coal. The renewable electricity plan that was adopted in 2010 has already put the province back on the path to stability in our electricity system. Natural gas use in our province has doubled over the past three years, now to almost 25 per cent of our Nova Scotia portfolio. Wind and other renewables make up nearly one-quarter of that portfolio and this year, for the first time, the province's reliance on coal will fall below 50 per cent.

There is still more to do to help families with volatile power rates and the Lower Churchill Project is our best option. It ensures the lowest, fairest rates for Nova Scotia families. With this option, Nova Scotians will pay one set price for power for 35 years, power that is for this region, power that is from this region. I'm going to repeat that because obviously they didn't hear it. Nova Scotians will pay one set price for that power for 35 years.

It's not imported from other places beyond our control; no more money from ratepayers is shipped overseas. The province's partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador will guarantee an abundant supply of clean, green hydroelectricity for those 35 years. This is a game changer. It means the creation of thousands of jobs for Nova Scotians. It means stable energy prices for families and businesses well into the future. It means a stronger economy from one end of the province to the other and it means real action on Atlantic Canadian co-operation. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it means a better deal for the people of this province. (Applause)

The Maritime Link, which is where most of our investment will be made, has three key elements: (1) it creates an undersea cable link from Cape Ray, Newfoundland, to Cape Breton; (2) it includes two substations on either side of the cable; and (3) it includes the enhanced transmission grid leading to the New Brunswick border.

The construction of the Link will create 2,700 person-years of employment, Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia companies with Nova Scotia jobs. In Labrador, Muskrat Falls will mean 3,100 jobs at its peak and under the benefits agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador, Nalcor is providing Nova Scotia contractors, service providers, consultants and suppliers, with open, timely and transparent access to procurement opportunities. Many Nova Scotians will inevitably work on this project, a short flight to Goose Bay instead of weeks away in Fort McMurray.

With this option, Nova Scotians will pay once, not over and over again. That is because power will be bought by paying only for the transmission system. Other options require Nova Scotians to pay for the transmission system, plus the cost of power. The choice for Nova Scotia is clear: remain chained to the expensive and volatile cost of fossil fuels like coal, deregulate the system and have prices increase by 30 to 50 per cent, or Nova Scotia can invest in good jobs, a cleaner, greener environment and more than three decades of stable, predictable energy rates. Lower Churchill is the best deal for our province. It ensures the lowest and fairest rates for Nova Scotia.

I know that in a few minutes the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party or the Leader of the Liberal Party will get up and what they will say is that we don't know what the costs are associated with this. What they do know is that the work on the Maritime Link is being done by Emera, that all of those costs are going to be transmitted to the Utility and Review Board, all to be reviewed transparently, so that everyone will know. But, Mr.

Speaker, every single report that has come forward has said the same thing - this will be the best option for Nova Scotians. (Applause)

And when is that day, Mr. Speaker? I remember when the Leader of the Liberal Party was flying off, jetting over to Newfoundland to be the first person to say, we have to participate and be part of Churchill Falls. Now, he is setting himself up to be, yet again, the weathervane of politics. So if the wind blows this way, he can go that way; if the wind blows that way, he can go that way.

The simple fact of the matter is that the people of Nova Scotia need leadership. They need somebody who is going to stand up for them. They need to know that when it comes to having a vision for the energy future of this province, that they have someone in a leadership position. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Lower Churchill project and the Maritime Link represent projects of regional and national significance. They are in the best interests of Nova Scotia families and businesses. The small business owner, who will be able to plan for a future because there is a stable and predictable power rate, is watching this debate. Seniors, who are preparing for another cold winter, are watching this debate. Families, who are struggling to deal with the unpredictable power rates that have been caused by the previous governments chaining themselves to the volatile international fossil fuel markets, they are watching.

Lower Churchill will help Nova Scotian families on a better, more affordable path when it comes to power rates and it's one that deserves the full support of this House. Thank you. (Applause)

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I was amused by the Premier's presentation here tonight, talking about my trip to Newfoundland and Labrador. I must confess I was impressed with the former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador - Mr. Williams. I want to tell you I did take the commercial flight. I didn't ask Chris Huskison to fly me over, nor did I ask Chris Huskison to participate in writing the speech that has been presented here by the Government of Nova Scotia. It's pretty interesting, the Premier has forgotten what is his responsibility, which is to stand up and protect ratepayers, not to stand up and defend Nova Scotia Power or Emera. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, what actually precipitated the Premier to finally call for a debate in the House of Assembly here in Nova Scotia was the fact that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador were updated with the cost analysis of what this project would mean to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know today, after the revised projections on this project, it's increased by \$1.2 billion for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We also know as

part of this, that the piece that Emera is looking after, the Maritime Link, which was projected to be \$1.2 billion, is also under review and we can fully expect that price to increase but what is interesting and the Premier is saying, of course, he tells Nova Scotians it's the best deal for them. Based on what? Because he says so? Trust us now? I mean is that what we should be saying - you can trust me? I think they did that in the last election campaign - taxes won't go up. Guess what? Taxes are up. Balanced budgets, guess what, they're up.

So what we have, Mr. Speaker, is a Premier who's now going out and trying to tell Nova Scotians he's signing a deal and allowing Emera to set energy policy in the Province of Nova Scotia and they have a real good track record of looking after ratepayers and not their shareholders, don't they?

THE PREMIER: What would you do?

MR. MCNEIL: Well, the Premier asked, that's great. I'm glad the Premier asked, Mr. Speaker. What any reasonable government would do, would look at all possible options presented to them instead of attaching themselves to a deal that is to the benefit of Newfoundland and Labrador. You can't tell Nova Scotians the cost of this project. You had a chance. You did not once say how much it was going to cost. You did not once say. If you want to get up and tell Nova Scotians how much a kilowatt of energy is going to cost, then do so. You can't. You know you can't. You've attached yourself to a project that you can't tell people how much it will cost and you know it. (Applause) That's not leadership. That is not leadership. That is looking after the shareholders of Emera and not the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well he can't stand in this House and tell us the true costs. I'm listening. I've listened with great interest. He could tell us how much it was going to cost to shut down the coal-fired plants from the federal government. Somebody was busily doing that work for him. You would think somebody might have been able to do an analysis on this project before you went out and attached Nova Scotians. So why is it a good deal if you don't know the costs?

So why is it a good deal, Mr. Speaker? Here's the Premier saying he doesn't know the cost but what he can say is it's a good deal for the people of Nova Scotia. What kind of lunacy, what kind of Kool-Aid has he been drinking? This is the same Premier who writes blank cheques to big corporations and corporate welfare without protecting a single Nova Scotia job. (Interruptions) His job is to look after the people of Nova Scotia and not the shareholders. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member for Chester-St. Margaret's that this government has been the biggest joke in Nova Scotia - I would agree with her - but what we have is a government that does not have an answer for Nova Scotia Power. All they know is, and they talk about power rate increases - well, they've gone up 30 per cent under the

NDP watch, with no slowing down. The Premier talks about this project as being a one-time pay; we'll have stable energy prices the next 35 years. He forgot to ask the president of Emera who has said, that is not quite true. We'll be looking at a 2 to 3 per cent increase, at least, every year going forward.

The Premier doesn't even know the facts about this project himself. He's just signing an agreement in a desperate attempt to grab onto something to show Nova Scotians that he thinks he's doing something to hold against Nova Scotia Power. In actual fact in this House it was proposed to the Premier, let's do a performance value out of Nova Scotia Power. No, we don't have to do that, it happens all the time. Well guess what? In the absence of nothing else, we have a bill in front of us to do just that because the Utility and Review Board does not have the authority to do that, even though the Premier stood in this House and said they do.

AN HON. MEMBER: They do.

MR. MCNEIL: So why are you legislating it? Why is he legislating it? The Premier says they do but he's legislating it, so why is he doing that - because they don't have the authority. (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is there are other options. Never once did anyone in this caucus, or me as the Leader, talk about deregulation. As a matter of fact we talked about allowing competition in a highly regulated environment and if the Premier has paid attention, he would have known that. The Province of New Brunswick actually does that now.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the Premier is afraid to stand up to Nova Scotia Power. The problem with the issue about allowing competition in a highly regulated market is it's not in the best interest of the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power; it's in the best interest of ratepayers and that is what his job is. That is what his job is, to protect Nova Scotia ratepayers. In the absence of the Premier being able to articulate to Nova Scotians how much his plan is going to be, what it will mean down the road, all he has left is to create a false scenario in and around the ideas that we've laid out. Every once in a while he grabs something that he thinks he can hold onto to make it look like he has been doing something. What he has been doing is sitting silently by as power rates continue to rise and force Nova Scotia families in more desperate shape.

This is a Premier who has said this deal is the only one, yet he has not spoken to Quebec about buying hydro-energy from Quebec. He's not talking to New Brunswick about building a transmission system through that province to allow renewable energies to come in. (Interruption) It is very clear that the Premier knows very little about this too. The only thing the Premier knows about energy in this province is what the president of Emera tells him and then what he does is go out and try to promote it. He can't tell us a single cost. Mr. Speaker, he can't tell us the single cost. The only thing the Premier has said in this House about that project is he can guarantee us that the \$1.2 billion price tag of the Maritime Link is going to go up but he knows for sure it's a good deal for the people of

Nova Scotia - how? Because he said so. Well, Nova Scotians are a little bit more skeptical of the Premier these days than they were in 2009.

We've laid out an idea and as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, our idea was laying out competition in the renewable energy market and it certainly caught the attention of the government. In the absence of leadership from them, the Liberal caucus has put an idea in front of the people of Nova Scotia. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier should read the bill that's before the House, because the fact of the matter is that the NDP Government might not like our plan, but Nova Scotians are liking it. They finally said, someone is standing up for ratepayers and not standing up for the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power and Emera.

The fact of the matter is, in order to move our province toward energy stability we should be looking at all the options before us. We should be engaging the Province of Quebec to see if there's a way for us to have a power purchase agreement for long-term, stable energy prices. (Interruption) I'm hearing from members opposite saying, why didn't we do it before? I think the last time there was energy stability in Nova Scotia it was a Liberal Government, but I digress from where we're going.

There are many options before us. The problem that we're having in the Province of Nova Scotia is that the government has hitched its horse to one wagon - and that wagon is Lower Churchill - without ever being able to explain the cost and the impact on what it would mean. At the last rate hearing the lawyer who was appointed by this government, the consumer advocate, spoke about the very thing about allowing the competitive pressures to take place in a regulated environment. He said that without it this monopoly will continue to go forward and run roughshod over the people of this province. Quite frankly, they've been allowed to do that, and this government has continued down the road of allowing it to happen. The only action that they've taken on Nova Scotia Power and Emera has been the action that they've been forced to take.

The only people in this province who are saying this Lower Churchill deal is a good one are the Premier, the president of Emera, and the president of Nova Scotia Power. No one else is saying this is a great deal. No one is saying it's a great deal, because they don't know the cost, and because they're prudent. They're responsible. Before they go before the people of this province and say this is a good deal for the ratepayers of the province, they should know how much it's going to cost. They should know how much we're attached to it, how much we're going to get (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, the Premier would be right. There is a process, but without that process happening he's trying to convince us it's still a good deal. Where is the process?

And why is it - and I want to mention the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, who mentioned today - the only proposal? We have talked about it; the member for Dartmouth East has talked about hydro-energy out of Quebec, looking to see if we can purchase power and bring it in. Why wouldn't that be an option we present to the Utility and Review Board? Why wouldn't we lay it open?

What I would do is allow competition in a highly-regulated environment to make sure that Nova Scotia Power can't run roughshod over the ratepayers of this province. What I would do as Premier of this province is protect ratepayers, not stand up for the shareholders of Emera and Nova Scotia Power like this Premier has done. What I would do as Premier is set energy policy in this province and not let the monopoly and Emera set energy policy for the people of Nova Scotia. Their interest isn't for ratepayers. Their interest is in one thing - increasing the share and protecting shareholders.

It is the responsibility of this government to protect ratepayers, and he can't do it. He can't stand in this House - if he could, if the Premier can stand in this House and tell us how much it's going to cost to do this deal with Newfoundland and Labrador. I wish he would do it, but he can't. In the absence of that, Nova Scotians are going to be attached to a project when they have no idea what it's going to mean to their power bills. The one thing we can be certain of is that the share price at Emera and Nova Scotia Power will be going up at the same rate power bills will be going up in this province if he goes down the road he's going. (Interruptions)

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious topic and a very complex one but I can't help but say, just to start off, that I am quite amused by the two speeches that I've just heard preceding me. First, we had the Premier who gave his remarks. I happen to know, Mr. Speaker, having heard them before and having that feeling of déjà vu, that if you lined up the Premier's remarks with the remarks of the CEO of Emera on the exact same topic, they would be an exact match, they make the exact same point.

The reason that is sad but amusing is that the Premier in his own remarks said that Nova Scotians are looking for leadership on this issue. That's absolutely true but they don't know he is referring to Mr. Chris Huskison, the CEO of Emera, and not the Premier of Nova Scotia who is really driving the agenda on what's going on with Muskrat Falls and power prices in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second sad but amusing point is that I watched the Premier actually say that the Ottawa Government is being too pro-environment in their policies in forcing him to take the action that he has taken, with the federal regulations eliminating emissions, over the next 30 years. Well, Mr. Speaker, we had better call the Guinness people because the world record for finger-pointing has just set a new high when the

Premier of Nova Scotia says it's the Ottawa Government that has set the bar too high on the environment.

The finger-pointing should stop, Mr. Speaker, as I am now doing, because power rates have gone up by 25 per cent over the last three years in this province and it is not because of Ottawa and it's not because of anyone else but the policies of the NDP Government here in Nova Scotia. We all want a renewable day. We all want to get there at a rate that Nova Scotians can afford. The NDP alone have decided never mind the cost, never mind the pace, we're going to get there right now.

The PC policy is as much renewables as we can afford within the current rate structure: that is a key difference. Before we let the Liberal Party off scot-free here, we should point out that they have bought the government's carbon tax by stealth, which is renewables without regard to cost, hook, line and sinker. Together those two Parties are fine with leaving in place the one thing that drives up our power rates more than anything else.

Although the Liberals say they're not about deregulation, their policies are exactly a policy of deregulation, just like the previous Liberal Government created Emera to allow for a deregulated market in the first place. We all learned today, we all know now, how that has turned out. So although 940,000 Nova Scotians know how much their power rates have gone up in the last three years under NDP policies, 25 per cent, they're now also learning that under Liberal policies they go up another 30 to 50 per cent. If you needed a further lesson in the problem of deregulation, just go down the street to the URB, where yesterday and today and for the rest of this week they are examining the problems when Emera and Nova Scotia Power buy and sell from each other. The answer to that: if you really want to protect ratepayers, put more regulation in place, put a concrete barrier around those two companies and between those two companies, not deregulate them and drive our power rates up even further. That is why the two previous speakers have talked about everything but what really matters, when it comes to power rates and what's really driving them up.

Mr. Speaker, here we are on the eve of the Muskrat Falls deal, suddenly having a debate in the Legislature on it. The fact of the matter is that this is a 50-year decision, this has huge implications for both the cost of power and for our economy and yet the government has already decided that this is the way we're going to go. Only under the NDP would we first decide that we're going to do it, then we'd allow a review, if only the review agrees with what the government wants and only after that, have a debate. Talk about having the cart before the horse, we're going about this in all the wrong ways.

Here is why this is important, because too many jobs have been lost in Nova Scotia in the last three years. Outside Halifax, over 7,000 Nova Scotians have lost their jobs since 2009. The manufacturing sector has been devastated. In fact we know that the manufacturers' rate of electricity, their rate class has actually dropped by 16.7 per cent in

the last three years. We know about the headliners like Bowater and New Page and so on, but there are a thousand smaller examples of that.

I'll give you just one for the record, and that is the case of the salt plant in Pugwash which is in the middle now of closing their fine salt plant with 35 full-time jobs lost in north Cumberland County, in Pugwash, and they cite as the number-one reason the high cost of power in Nova Scotia. That is why this is such an important decision to get right on the basis of facts and the basis of evidence, not on the basis of blind ideology or empty slogans like the other two Parties are proposing. That's why it's important that we extend the analysis of Muskrat Falls to make sure it's compared to all the other options.

We, on this side of the House, in both the Opposition Parties, have asked the Premier repeatedly, before he signs on the dotted line, how much will that power cost when it comes to our homes and our businesses? He either doesn't know the answer or he won't share that answer with Nova Scotians. But you know what? Although he says the answer is not knowable, he signed on the dotted line anyway. But when the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador was asked that same question she actually gave an answer. So there is an answer to the question. Premier Dunderdale of Newfoundland and Labrador in an interview with CBC Newfoundland on March 31, 2011, when asked how much the retail cost of power for Muskrat Falls was going to be for Newfoundlanders, said it would be 14.3 cents per kilowatt hour.

I just want to point out that the blended cost of power from Nova Scotia Power today is a little over 9 cents. That is a huge increase over the current blended cost of power from Nova Scotia Power. She later said in an interview with The Telegram of St. John's that it might be as high as 16.5 cents per kilowatt hour - far in excess of the price we pay in Nova Scotia today. At least she's answering the question, unlike the Premier of Nova Scotia.

All of that was before today's announcement the cost is not \$6.2 billion for the project as a whole, it is \$7.4 billion for the project as a whole and, of course, Emera wants to take on 20 per cent of the cost of that project.

No wonder of course, because at \$6.2 billion, \$1.2 billion for Emera's share, if they run it through Nova Scotia Power, as they intend to do, then they're going to make a guaranteed rate of return of 9.2 per cent on the equity portion of their financing. Simple math will show everyone in this House, and all Nova Scotians, that Emera stands to make \$44 million in profit on their share of Muskrat Falls - no wonder the CEO of Emera is so excited about this project. Unfortunately the Premier of Nova Scotia, who ought to be on the side of ratepayers, has bought the Emera CEO's line without even considering the impact of that guaranteed profit that Nova Scotia Power gets.

That's why step two of the PC plan - since the Premier is so keen to have answers on what we would do - is to remove the guarantee on that profit and force Nova Scotia

Power to put in place service standards that require that they serve their customers to earn their profit. I know some people say there is no guarantee, but there's a minimum, 9.1, and there's a maximum of 9.5, and if they don't hit the minimum they can make it up the next year. By any reasonable definition that is a guarantee on the profits of Nova Scotia Power and all Nova Scotians, except for the 30 or so on that side of the House apparently, know that to be true.

So the next step is to remove the guarantee and put the power company back in the service of the people of Nova Scotia, as they rightfully should be. Instead, the Premier wants to sign on the dotted line, hitch his wagon to the CEO of Emera, who is going to make a lot of money based on Muskrat Falls.

Thirdly, we've been asking for a long time, that because this is a 50-year decision, because there is no rush, because there are lots of other options that Nova Scotia has that quite frankly Newfoundland and Labrador doesn't have, that the review of Muskrat Falls should, in fairness, be compared to every single other option available to us. And we do have options - natural gas is one option that the current review at the URB rules out from consideration and that is just wrong.

In fact, we have Hydro-Québec, we have Lepreau in New Brunswick, all coming on line, all with excess power, we have gas in New England and a pipeline to get it there and to bring it back, all available to us, and the URB is prevented from looking at those options, and just as a matter of comparison, I will share with the House that the Point Lepreau upgrade cost \$2.4 billion. It's now commissioned for 660 megawatts of capacity for a total cost of \$3.6 million per megawatt. Buying power from Hydro-Québec, with system upgrades estimated to be \$350 million for 500 megawatts of capacity, would bring power here for \$700,000 per megawatt.

For Muskrat Falls, at \$6.2 billion, the old estimate, for 824 megawatts of capacity, \$7.5 million per megawatt - almost ten times as much as if we were to import power from Quebec, after paying for the necessary transmission upgrades, and that's the old number. Just for the benefit of the Premier and this House who say they can't calculate the cost, at \$7.4 billion, the new cost as of today, if that's it - it's \$9 million per megawatt for the power from Muskrat Falls. So why on earth would we not compare that project to all of these other alternatives and pick, for Nova Scotians, the cheapest one that brings power to their homes and businesses and saves those jobs and allows the economy to grow?

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier say that every review done says Muskrat Falls is the way to go. Perhaps he has only read the Emera review because in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland Joint Review Panel, they did a review of Muskrat Falls - a panel comprised of representatives of the federal government, the provincial government, the private sector, the public sector, a true independent review - and do you know what they concluded in that Newfoundland Joint Review Panel? They concluded, "Muskrat Falls

power is far too expensive for any Province or State to purchase.” That’s what that review concluded.

The Governor of Vermont, where we’re supposed to sell the excess power, said on the radio the other day, there is no corridor in the U.S. for the transmission of power from Muskrat Falls and it would have to be competitive with our current choices if we were to buy it. That was just before he went to Hydro-Québec and bought all kinds of power at 5 cents per megawatt hour - a long ways away from the \$16.5 that the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador says Muskrat Falls may well cost.

So I ask, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is so confident that this is the best way forward, why not say to the URB, do an independent review of every source, every possible way that we can bring power into Nova Scotia, or generate it here, and just tell us which one is the cheapest and the greenest for Nova Scotians because this is a 50-year decision?

I will just wrap up by reminding everyone why this is so important. It’s important because we have young people who want to stay. We have manufacturing that is in distress. We have a province with the highest taxes in all of Canada, already the highest HST, the highest personal income tax, the highest corporate tax. We have a province with skyrocketing power rates. Right now we have the fourth highest unemployment rate in all of Canada.

Whether we go with Muskrat Falls or not is very much tied into whether we’re going to have a modern, dynamic, growing economy with opportunities in all parts of Nova Scotia or not. That’s why I believe it’s time to say, hold on, \$7.4 billion is a lot of money; hold on, we have options that Newfoundland and Labrador doesn’t; hold on, there are a lot of implications to this decision that we are going to make; hold on, let’s not sign on the dotted line first, as the Premier has done, and secondly, find out how much it’s going to cost. Let’s do the right thing for the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, for the young people of Nova Scotia who are going to live with this decision for 50 years, and find out the cost, first, and then sign, second.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to participate here tonight in this emergency debate. I’m certainly pleased to rise to speak about the Lower Churchill and the Maritime Link project. You know, really this is a very important project that will bring immense benefits to Nova Scotians and to our province.

To understand these benefits, Mr. Speaker, and just how important the Lower Churchill project is to our electricity future, I think it’s important first of all to realize - where are we on our electricity path? Where have we been? Where do we go from here and where do we go from here and where must we go from here.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has a history in the past of using single-source energy to generate electricity. Certainly in the 1970s it was oil and then when the oil crisis came along in the mid-70s we switched large-scale electricity generation to coal. With the oil prices skyrocketing during that time and beyond, it was the local coal that became our single energy source. However, times have changed dramatically over the last decade or so and local coal is no longer an option, very little of it is produced here in our province due primarily to the strict environmental regulations; regulations, incidentally, that are designed to protect the health and the well-being of our children and our grandchildren, really of future generations.

Imported coal is now used to generate our electricity. It comes from offshore, it comes from South America or the Southern U.S. and as this commodity is in great demand across the world its costs certainly have risen dramatically. In fact it has gone up about 75 per cent over the last seven years.

Our electricity costs, really, are hostage to the whims of the international carbon prices set by foreign markets, set by foreign companies in a foreign land, far from Nova Scotia. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the main driver behind our rising electricity costs is the rising cost of coal, our main source of generation. In fact, as I just mentioned, coal has gone up 75 per cent in the last seven years alone and that is a price that Nova Scotians have had to pay for inaction by previous governments. It's the price that we paid for having a 1970s energy policy.

Mr. Speaker, this government knew only too well that doing nothing and keeping that status quo, was really not an option that we could live with. We knew that we had to learn from the past and we knew that we had to take action. The pattern of inaction really had to stop. Therefore, we carved out a sustainable electricity path that would see more diversity in our energy mix, one that would no longer see Nova Scotians being victim to expensive dirty coal, coal that is coming from off our shores, from foreign lands, that is used now to generate our electricity and we would no longer be the victim of foreign energy markets.

Mr. Speaker, we also knew that we had to be better stewards of the environment and those that went on before us. Coal is certainly a dirty fuel, it's a polluting fuel and it's certainly very expensive, as I just pointed out.

We understood that the path to the future was through renewable, local and regional sources of clean energy and certainly we're blessed in Nova Scotia with many good sources of clean, green energy, whether it's the tidal energy in the Bay of Fundy, wind energy on our hills - and you'll see a number of wind farms located around the province; sustainable Biomass, even using the hydroelectricity that we have here in this province, or regional co-operation with our neighbours to get more from Newfoundland and Labrador, as we're talking about here tonight.

In 2010, the government released its Renewable Electricity Plan to promote and develop both large- and small-scale renewable electricity projects. As I mentioned, there are a number of wind farms. I know of one in my riding in Pictou West, in the Dalhousie Mountain area and you'll see it every time you go over the large hill at Mount Thom - it's very visible. There is one in my colleague's riding in Pictou East, in the Avondale area as well. In addition, we have a number of smaller projects, COMFIT projects. But you know, Mr. Speaker, we didn't stop there. This government also put into place renewable targets that would see 25 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2015, and 40 per cent by 2020, as well as hard caps on greenhouse gas emissions in our electricity. We put those targets in place to meet both the environmental and our energy objectives and the environmental considerations are crystal clear.

You know, there is a lot of talk these days about climate change and certainly we know that there are ice caps that are melting in our northern latitudes. We're getting more extreme weather conditions - witness Hurricane Sandy, which is impacting the eastern part of our continent here right now. So those are clear signs that we really cannot ignore; we're getting more intense storms and they certainly do a lot more damage any time they arrive.

So, bringing in a variety of new sources of renewables, diversifying our energy mix, and we'll improve security for our electricity system. So far, Mr. Speaker, our plan is working. In 2006, 80 per cent of Nova Scotia electricity was generated by burning coal, and last year it was reduced down to 57 per cent. Next year we expect it to be well below 50 per cent, probably in the 48 per cent range, so that's a significant improvement over those few short years - from well over 80 per cent to probably in the range of about 48 per cent at the present time.

In addition, in 2006 about 10 per cent of our electricity came from renewable sources, mostly from our hydro facilities that were built generations ago in Cape Breton or in Guysborough County or on the South Shore. Those have served us well and continue to do just that. Last year our renewable electricity rose to 17 per cent in Nova Scotia, and next year we anticipate that over 20 per cent of our electricity will come from renewable sources, home-grown sources right here in our province.

As I've mentioned, our electricity plan now takes us out to 2020 for the 40 per cent goal, and we are confident that we are on that track to meet both our renewable targets and the greenhouse gas emission targets that we have in place. It's a good thing that we've set those targets.

The new federal coal regulations set targets to dramatically reduce coal. The new federal coal regulations set an emission target now out to the year 2030 that would have us reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a further three megatons from the 2020 target. This means that Nova Scotia must now tap into more sustainable sources of energy in order to meet that target. If not, the federal government is going to do it for us anyway, and they'll

do it their way, and it's going to be very expensive if we allow that to happen. It would carry a whopping price tag, somewhere in the range of about \$1.3 billion.

So getting off coal is no longer simply the choice of the provincial government to stabilize rates and to clean our environment. It's now a federal requirement that we have to meet. So that's where the Lower Churchill and the Maritime Link hydroelectricity comes in at that time. The Lower Churchill project will ensure the lowest and the fairest rates over the long term, to help us meet those federal coal regulations and those emission reductions that I've referred to.

However, this is not the only benefit of the Lower Churchill project in Nova Scotia, in fact, it's far from it. One of the greatest benefits of Lower Churchill is that it will provide Nova Scotia with access to renewable power at fixed rates for 35 years. Just think about that. That's 35 years it stays stable; it's one rate for all that length of time. It comes on-stream in 2017, and that will go right through to the year 2052 - the same rate for all that period of time, and 35 years is a long time to have price certainty in the electricity world.

In addition to providing price stability and helping us to reduce our reliance on coal even more over the long term, the project will place us in an efficient energy loop, instead of being at the end of the line. It's like an electrical cord that you plug in; if it's plugged in it forms a loop, if it's not - and that's where we're at today. We're really at the end of the line here in Nova Scotia. It goes no further than the tip of Cape Breton. That means we'll have more choices. We'll be able to take power from multiple directions once we have that energy loop.

Mr. Speaker, this will provide us with more options for purchasing electricity at competitive prices into the future, and that's another very good thing. The hydroelectricity from Lower Churchill will also be a reliable energy source to back up our increasing use of intermittent energy sources such as wind and tidal. Hydro power can be stored and it can be available when we need it. For instance, on a calm day when the windmills aren't running, we can turn to hydro to help us because it is always there. Given that we have no major sources of hydroelectricity to develop in Nova Scotia, being able to access a clean, renewable power source is another great benefit. It's a wonderful example of regional co-operation that will benefit all of the Atlantic Provinces.

The Lower Churchill project will also open up regional power opportunities, create thousands of good jobs, and generate \$3.5 billion in income for businesses and labour in Atlantic Canada. The greatest economic gift of all is the long-term, stable price of power from the Muskrat Falls project and the opportunity to purchase more power at market rates. The project will open up choices that we have never had before, which helps us to create a climate for growth across all sectors and all parts of Nova Scotia.

What is the alternative, really, of doing nothing? Right now we live with that alternative every day. I know the Progressive Conservative Party has said that they'd want

to slow us down. They want to throw us in front of progress toward lower rates in the long term by insisting that we cling to an energy policy that really was made in the 1970s.

It must be said that the Official Opposition's plan, I think, is even worse. The Leader of the Official Opposition has repeatedly said that he wants to deregulate the electricity system. That's the same plan that drove rates up 30 per cent to 50 per cent in Ontario and Alberta. Whether the Leader of the Opposition understands that or not, I'm not sure, but here's what he said on April 3, 2012. On a local radio show, the Leader of the Official Opposition had this to say: "I would have opened up the energy market. I would have put competition into the energy sector to allow Nova Scotians more than one option to buy energy from."

Later, at a press conference from his office, he said, "The Liberal Leader insists that the first step in breaking up the electricity monopoly is to pass his legislation that allows renewable energy producers to compete directly. . ." I'll table that here as well. This is exactly what Ralph Klein and Mike Harris had to say before they opened up their energy markets. That's what they said before rates in Alberta and Ontario skyrocketed 30 per cent to 50 per cent. We don't need that, Mr. Speaker.

At the end of the day all costs of the Lower Churchill project will be reviewed by the Utility and Review Board to ensure that they are in the best interests of Nova Scotia ratepayers. We believe this project remains the lowest-cost alternative to help us achieve the 2030 coal emission targets that have been set out by the federal government.

Our eye has never left our goal, which is to transform our electricity sector to be less dependent on expensive, dirty coal. We know the impact of the cost of imported coal on electricity bills right across this province, and we're doing something about it. We are not following in the path of those who have gone before us. We are taking action. We are standing up for Nova Scotians to ensure that they get the lowest and fairest electricity rates possible while we pursue the lowest-cost option for stabilizing rates over the longer term.

This government continues to support the Lower Churchill project, and certainly we're going to look forward to the Utility and Review Board having the chance to review the cost alternatives. I think I have about one minute left, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: No, seven seconds.

MR. PARKER: Again, I'm looking forward to this project. It's going to save money for Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, there have been some interesting tales told by the NDP and the Third Party over the past little while - interesting tales indeed. In

fact, the Energy Minister just tabled the statement referring to the bill which the Leader of the Official Opposition has said all along outlines breaking the monopoly piece, which is exactly what the Deputy Premier has said, in almost the exact same words that the Deputy Premier used. It is nice to have the Deputy Premier's endorsement as well as the endorsement of the member for Halifax Chebucto, who has also used almost exactly the same words as the Leader of the Official Opposition has used. We thank the Minister of Energy for pointing out that the bill has been tabled before this House for more than three years now. Maybe he'll let the Premier know, because the Premier seemed to be having trouble realizing that that is actually there.

Both the Premier and the Minister of Energy have said again that this is going to result in stable energy prices. Of course, the media called the Premier out on this and I'll table this article from October 30th from the ChronicleHerald, which actually quotes the president of Emera stating that it will result in a cost increase of 2 to 3 per cent annually for this project. So it is not stable prices, it is an increase annually of exactly the same amount that Nova Scotia Power is seeking today. In addition, he says that there will be an additional 1 per cent a year for the other renewable projects, so that's 4 per cent a year for 25 years. Let's just think about that.

I don't want to spend a lot of time on this particular issue but since the Third Party brought this up about the former Liberal Government creating Emera, he's absolutely right. I was in university then, but let's not forget that if we want to look back in the past, at the same time the NDP were promising to cut tuition fees and I'll table that. Before that and that never happened, the Tories were the ones that privatized Nova Scotia Power in the first place. So if we want to go back and revisit history on that, then we can, but the fact is that there are things that need to be done.

Equally amusing was the Leader of the Third Party standing up and suddenly saying that we should put a firewall between Emera and Nova Scotia Power which this caucus has been advocating for since before he was the Leader of that Party and is on the record since before that time. It's always good to see the NDP and the Tories criticize our positions and slowly adopt them all. We've seen the NDP now adopt repeatedly, bit by bit, bills that we've tabled on energy and now the Tories are doing exactly the same things. I guess we're on the right track.

I want to go through some of this deal because here's the real issue with this. The real issue is we have a Premier and a Minister of Energy who won't answer basic questions about this deal - won't answer them. The Premier today, during Question Period, said this is a good deal for Nova Scotians. Yet he doesn't know the price. How can he know it's a good deal if he doesn't know the price?

This is a Premier that, if you ask questions, all of a sudden he goes on the attack because he doesn't have the answers to those questions. Nova Scotians want answers. They want to know what this is going to cost, what are the risks? Today I asked the Premier, what

is the backup plan? That's a legitimate question and I'm going to go through, hopefully I'll have time, to go through the myriad of documents which are publicly available, that show why this could be a risk.

First of all, I think we need to understand that the equivalency agreement that was signed with (Interruptions) the federal Conservatives, that's absolutely right, they're phasing out coal plants and whether with an equivalency agreement you can extend that or have it shorter, that's absolutely correct. Everybody in the country knows that. It's been an issue in Alberta. It's been an issue here; it's a cost. We know that. However, the equivalency agreement that the Premier has signed requires that Muskrat Falls come online by a certain date and we already know it's delayed by at least a year.

What happens if it gets delayed even further and the equivalency agreement targets are met? There is no other way to meet those, at the moment. That's a problem. Last year in this House, I raised the fact that I had met with officials in Rhode Island and Vermont and they had shown me the long-term power purchase agreements they had signed with Hydro Quebec. I brought that to this House and pointed out that they were paying a rate of \$0.03 to \$0.04 plus an escalator, but even with that escalator, over 25 years was cheaper than year one, projected from Muskrat Falls, even in year one.

The Leader of the Third Party pointed out one of the numbers that he has for the same thing, which basically backs up that same argument I made a year ago that, on a megawatt basis, is exactly the same. I brought that to this House in Question Period repeatedly and tabled those numbers at the time.

The question is, how much of a risk is there? Well, let's look at whether they even are able to deliver the amount of energy that Muskrat Falls is promising. The Muskrat Falls project is supposed to be in the range of 5,000; I just got off the phone with the folks in Newfoundland and Labrador to get the exact numbers there, so, excuse me here, Mr. Speaker - all the water in the Upper Churchill reservoir can provide 5,000 megawatts, all right. There are only 525 megawatts in reserve at the moment - only 525 - 300 of that is for Labrador City and the remainder is actually set aside for another organization and I'm going to table this document here.

Nalcor went to the Public Utilities Board in Newfoundland and Labrador and said, listen, we need to actually have an agreement with Hydro-Québec, if we're going to use that water. This is the document they filed, which goes through the agreement, and they said we need it. They point out that CF(L)Co, which is basically Churchill Falls Labrador Corporation, is made up of representatives of Hydro-Québec and Nalcor. Both of those parties have a veto power over use of the water in the Upper Churchill reservoir.

In 2009 Nalcor went to CF(L)Co and said to them, we want to know what's going to happen. We need an agreement to use this water and access it because the current agreement signed in 1969 allows Hydro-Québec access to any and all of that water for

generation purposes with the exception of the 500 megawatts I already talked about, which is also already spoken for.

Hydro-Québec vetoed it and sends this e-mail to the Public Utilities Board and I will quote it and table this as well. "The required Board approval was not achieved. Neither was the Board able to provide any direction as to how the agreement could be modified such that it might receive board approval. The CF(L)Co negotiating team is therefore not in a position to resume negotiations at this time." I'll table that.

Now, at the moment it's a stalemate in Newfoundland and Labrador because then Hydro-Québec sent this letter to the board because the Public Utilities Board in Newfoundland and Labrador went to Hydro-Québec and said we think you should intervene because we need to get this agreement. Hydro-Québec - I'm not going to read the whole letter but I'll table it - says at the end they decided not to intervene in the Nalcor operation because they were standing by the original agreement from 1969, which says the power contract between Hydro-Québec and CF(L)Co dated March 12, 1969, the 1969 power contract, the renewed power contract between Hydro-Québec, which will come into force automatically at the expiry of the 1969 agreement and the guaranteed winter availability contract of Hydro-Québec and CF(L)Co dated 1998.

So the result of this was the Public Utilities Board in Newfoundland and Labrador went and they approved an interim and temporary water management agreement that still requires - and Nalcor said, well, listen, we have this temporary one, we're going to get it signed. But Hydro-Québec has said they're not going to sign it. They're on the record saying they will not agree to it and they vetoed it twice now at CF(L)Co. There is only one option and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador has refused to take that and I haven't heard the Premier here suggest this option either. (Interruption)

I have not heard that this Premier has called the Premier of Quebec to try to get this sorted out. Premier Dunderdale in Newfoundland and Labrador, has said that she hasn't and, you know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier should read the document because the document gives Hydro-Québec all - and, listen, I'm not a lawyer, but there are plenty of lawyers in Newfoundland and Labrador who are talking about this and agree completely that this is an issue. Nalcor, in their filing, agrees this is an issue and needs to be resolved. The Public Utilities Board in Newfoundland and Labrador agrees it's an issue. So the question here is, it's a risk and so it gets back to the equivalency agreement. They make a big deal about an equivalency agreement that they might not be able to meet.

Now, unfortunately, I'm not going to have time to go through all this other stuff but let's also point to - (Interruption) Oh, I know you're all disappointed, but I just want to point out a couple of things. As much as the Premier here talks about this being an environmental project, let's be realistic. He talks about selling the excess down to New England and so forth. Well, I'm going to table a number of documents here that point out

that in most of the New England States, they're actually not allowed to accept energy from this project and consider it renewable.

So, 25 states have adopted a Renewables Portfolio Standard, which would prohibit large scale hydroelectric projects, "Hydropower is invariably promoted as a 'clean' . . . at least with regard to . . ." greenhouse emissions ". . . despite the fact that independent research has now shown that over their lifetime, GHG emissions . . ." ". . . may either be equivalent to, or greatly exceed, those from coal burning power plants. . ." That's from an independent study.

There's another one here, it's actually a research study from the International Environmental Issues, which goes on to say basically the same thing and found that in most states – Mr. Speaker, it says, "In the case of the former" – talking about Hydro-Québec and the Churchill Falls area – "a number of states have explicitly excluded large-scale hydropower from their policy tools that serve to encourage increased use of renewable electricity. In Rhode Island, for example, only hydropower under 30 MW can qualify for its Renewable Portfolio Standard." I'll table that.

So the fact that we're talking about selling this into New England, where a lot of those states are now saying that they may not even accept it as renewable energy, where this government – where the Sierra Club has pointed out that under international rules, this project doesn't qualify as renewable energy, yet the Premier changed legislation here so that it would qualify. That's great, fine, he has the renewable, he's got the equivalency agreement but if the equivalency agreement isn't met, if you can't transfer that energy down into the United States, what is the backup plan? That's why that question is important.

He's talking as though the Utility and Review Board in Nova Scotia will automatically approve it. Well, you need to have a backup plan. He stood here in his remarks and basically assumed that the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board will approve it. Well what happens if they don't approve it?

Mr. Speaker, you have to have a backup plan. Otherwise, what he's saying is well – is he saying, well, if they don't approve it, we'll just legislate the approval? That's the problem, there are questions. You know, some of the questions that people have raised, whether it's the water rights or the renewable energy standards or whatever else, may become non-issues, they may be but that doesn't mean they are not risks now.

If you are the Premier of this province, it's your job to make sure that you have backup plans. He stood here in Question Period and said he didn't need one. Well, I'm sorry, but he does need one and he does need to have the answers as to what the cost is because you can't stand here and say it's the best deal possible if you don't know what the costs are. It's common sense. It's no different than standing there and spending the whole last session criticizing ideas that we brought forward in legislation and then bringing them

forward in his own legislation this Fall and ignoring the fact that he spent an entire session last time criticizing them. Just admit that you looked at it and okay, maybe it does make sense. His own Deputy Minister of Energy said the other day in the briefing that it turned out the Utility and Review Board didn't have the approval to do those audits.

Mr. Speaker, I'm out of time, there are a lot of questions. Nova Scotians deserve answers to those questions. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West. (Applause)

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have an opportunity to take a few minutes this evening to talk about a couple of things in this debate. Heard lots of discussions so far on a variety of topics, I guess, from history lessons to what might be the future or what might not be the future.

The Premier spoke - when he started this debate, Mr. Speaker - about choices. He's right, choices are required, but yet he's willing to go with one choice only, it appears. The one choice only that should be considered is Nova Scotians first. That's the one choice and we build from there.

We're not saying, and we've always said this, all the way along we've said we support clean energy, Mr. Speaker; we have to, that's the way of the future. There are all kinds of things to make the future better when we think about energy. We talk about energy efficiency, the reduction in the use. Well, you know, some may not agree with that but I can tell you, there's a great uptake on the programs that are out there and people who are taking these programs on and going out and getting the grants and supporting that will also say: this is a good program because it's saving me this or saving me that.

You can look at that any number of ways but these are some of the solutions going forward - not just big projects like Muskrat Falls or this project or that project, it's looking at all the variables, Mr. Speaker, that are before us and we'll stand here, unfortunately, with all of our politics and our partisan beliefs and we'll defend this and we'll defend that, and we'll criticize this and we'll criticize that. Nobody is saying, sorry, I'm going to correct that Mr. Speaker, we're not saying Muskrat Falls is a project that we shouldn't look at. We have said, let's look at this but let's do it right, let's take the time.

Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't go buy a car tomorrow or a new washer and dryer for your home or a big appliance, a big cost, without knowing what the cost was because you have to be able to afford that, you've got to be able to make the payment if that's what you're going to do or you've got to be able to take it out of your savings account, your checking account or wherever you're getting it and you need to be able to do it. That makes sense, that's how we live. It's about looking after our families and we'll get into the topic of families after a bit here, if I have time enough.

You know what, this project all the way along - it's been said this is good, this is good, this is good, and we've only asked, I don't know how many times we've been asking, what's the cost? Today we learned the cost has gone up. Well that's not totally a shock and I'm sure the Premier is not shocked by that either. This is a massive project; this is \$8.0-some billion to begin with. We know that projects like that grow, how can they not grow? You have changes in the economy in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as in Nova Scotia. You have wages, you have all these factors that are going to come into play over the years of building this project. You have a lot to add into this so how you could even begin to put a cost around this.

There are rumors out there - not even rumors, there are studies that have been done that have said that this will go way out well over \$10 billion. Who knows if it's the right answer, who knows what this is going to cost. Newfoundlanders are actually questioning and this from a Newfoundlander that I met with recently, if this is even a good project for Newfoundland and Labrador. Has the Public Utilities Board - I believe it's called in Newfoundland - even agreed to do this? Rumour says no, this isn't a done deal yet. This is not done. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I hear, are not happy with this deal, so how are we signing on? Is this a government/Emera deal? Well yes, to some degree, this is a government/Emera deal - we know, we've been all through this; we've heard all the arguments. We have to do what is right for Nova Scotians and what Nova Scotians can afford in the long-term.

The minister stood on his feet after the Premier, tonight, in this House and he said we will be able to provide the longest guarantee lowest rates for Nova Scotians. Well that's great, that's a wonderful statement. What's the rate? If that's such a good deal and it's 35 years, what's the rate? We haven't been able to put a figure on that and it's not just us who are standing here questioning this, Mr. Speaker, it's everywhere you go. It's coffee shops, it's people's houses when you're visiting, it's people coming in talking to you because they are concerned. I know the Premier says, oh yeah, okay, that's not right. You know what? That is right.

People come into my office daily, weekly. I'm sure they come into his office Mr. Speaker, concerned about how they are going to pay the bill. Unfortunately, we don't know how we're going to pay it. They have no idea. They are already struggling, there are disconnection notices, people get worked up, they struggle along to feed their families, they let the power bill go, they come into the office and now they are two, three, four or five months behind and they got a disconnection notice. Now they don't know what to do and they want us to help them out. Fortunately, we were able to do that sometimes and sometimes not, that's the nature of our business, that's one piece of it.

So those are people saying, how am I going to continue to do this and we're saying we don't know the price. So we're saying, let's look, what are all the other alternatives. Yes, Muskrat Falls, we believe is an alternative opportunity - we should be looking at this,

maybe there is something to be said for that. How much energy do we need, how much are we going to get, what are the costs to Nova Scotia ratepayers? We don't know.

The Premier spoke today about inflationary costs, increased labour costs; we talked about that a few minutes ago. There are reasons this project will climb. \$6.2 billion up now to \$7.4. When will it be over eight, tomorrow, next week, next year, who knows? I can see why the Premier would say I don't know what the rate will be, to some degree but how does that make it the right deal is the question. If you don't know what the rate will be, you've got to have an argument to say that this is the right deal for Nova Scotians.

Are there other alternatives? Perhaps there are, there should be. We should be looking at every opportunity to create energy - \$1.2 billion, how many people could you put to work in Nova Scotia with \$1.2 billion working on future energy plans, creating jobs in this province, Nova Scotia first. What's wrong with that model, Mr. Speaker? We don't think there is anything wrong with that model. Is it an opportunity, is it something we should be looking at? Yes it should.

I talked about those programs that were being put forward, the energy efficiency stuff that is out there, there have been a lot of updates. That is a good program, people will tell you that. Not everybody can afford it or they think they can afford it but what people don't realize is every single Nova Scotian and business has the opportunity to reach out for that program. Some are doing it, and there are positive stories out there from businesses that have done it, that have been able to afford to do it and pay their piece. There is a threshold - just like every other program out there in government - that says you meet this and low-income families don't have to pay as much or don't have to pay anything sometimes, based on that.

Should we be looking at the reduction of energy in everything? Yes, in our schools, in our jails, in every government facility in this place, everywhere. We should be looking at how we reduce our energy costs. That's part of it.

At the same time, we refuse - or the government refuses, and perhaps he doesn't know. I think he sat there earlier this evening, maybe, in quips back and forth here, and said that he doesn't know the cost. Then how is that the right deal? All we're saying is, let's see the cost. How is it beneficial to Nova Scotians?

They signed a deal with Emera to bring electricity from Muskrat Falls, but don't know how much it's going to cost. The minister stands on his feet and says, this is a good project and we're going to bring the lowest guaranteed prices that are out there. Well, that's a great statement, a wonderful political statement, a good statement all around - if it means something. The problem is, what does it mean? In this case, it means I'm talking about dollars. It means we don't know. Everyone struggles to figure out how that can possibly be - 25 per cent to 30 per cent increases, you know, that's where we've been. Where are we going? We've got maybe 3 per cent coming once the URB decides in the near future this

year, and again for next year, another 5 per cent or 6 per cent. We can pretty much be guaranteed rates are going up. What will they go up after that?

I don't know how many bills now have been put forward in this House. I know I've stood on my feet on a few occasions and put forward legislation that we thought might be worthy of some debate. I know that others have stood on their feet in this place and introduced legislation that they thought might be worthy of some debate. Mr. Speaker, you know how it works in here: a majority government, that's not - we couldn't pass a bill like that. Then put your own bill in.

I've said this before - it doesn't matter to me whose name is on the bill, if there's a way to make life better for Nova Scotians. That's what this is supposed to be all about - our energy costs, deals, and long-term stability. What are we doing with that? We're not doing anything with it. The bills are just sitting on the order paper, and they'll die when this House finally is closed. We're off to an election at some point, whenever that may be, and people will decide whether it has been good, bad, or indifferent. They will decide whether Muskrat Falls is the right deal.

Why aren't we talking to Nova Scotians? Why aren't we asking the people now, what do you think about Muskrat Falls? A lot of people will probably tell you, in all honesty, I don't understand a lot of it. It's very convoluted. It's very complex. Those 13 different agreements that were out recently, there's a lot of stuff in there and you probably need to be a lawyer to understand a good part of it, but there's a lot of stuff in there they probably would understand if given the opportunity. Put something forward that allows people to come into this very House, the people's House, which says come on in, give us your opinion, tell us about this. We do it with all kinds of other things.

Now we're even taking the show on the road. We're going down to Shelburne, we hear. What about other areas? Let's go around the province. Let's take the time, if this is such a good deal - 35 years of good deal, or 50 years, I believe, when you really think about this, of good deal - and if it's such a good deal for Nova Scotians, well, let's go ask Nova Scotians what they think. We're not doing that. We'll stand in this place and we'll have this debate and we'll say, this is right or that's right. Don't just take our word for it. Let's go talk to the Nova Scotia ratepayers who are putting the money out every month to pay the bill or trying to pay the bill and foregoing something else. It's not how it should be, and it doesn't have to be this way.

What are some of our other options? Well, we talked about gas here. I asked a question of the minister today on gas. I'm not sure he understood it, by the answer that I received back. Well, fine. We have had the opportunity, but yet we're developing, there's all kinds of gas - bring the pipeline the other way, bring it in. Why couldn't we do that? But we're not looking at those options. Everything is focused on Muskrat Falls. It doesn't have to be.

We talked about coal. We know we have a number of years to work our way through and get off coal. Most will tell you coal is going to be around for a good long time. We can bring it in. Maybe if we're going to be continuing to burn coal and there's a contract to burn coal, we should be looking at local coal. We spent money and technology and cleaning and all of these things, so why aren't we putting people to work? That would make sense to me and probably to a lot of other people that you talk to, everyday folks. It doesn't seem to be what we want to do. Instead we want to say, no, this is the right deal, let's commit. It's not good enough. We need to have more; we need to have other options. There are other options, and they should be looked at.

The Premier is relying on Emera - this is the right deal, let's get that link built. Well, there's a deal for Emera in this, let's be honest. Once the link is built and the commitment is made and the ratepayers are paying it - oh, I should mention, Mr. Speaker, in previous statements made by Emera, and Nova Scotia Power, who will pay for the cost overruns? Who was that again? That's right, it's the ratepayer. That's who's going to eat that cost - \$1.2 billion, \$2 billion, \$3 billion, whatever it might climb to. We are going to eat, as ratepayers in the Province of Nova Scotia, that fee.

Again, where are the rates and what is the cost? Well, we don't know, but yet this is a good deal for Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker. Emera is the only one that stands to gain here. When we really look at the long-term deal, we have a corporation that is going to charge ratepayers to build the link. They're going to bring the power through. We're going to take what we need, and you can see this, they're going to keep flowing. They're going to buy their cheap energy, so-called cheap energy they think they can get from Newfoundland and Labrador, and they're going to funnel it right through and, as always, the last people who are going to get looked after are going to be Nova Scotians, because that's not in their best interests - not in their best interest at all.

Mr. Speaker, that's not right. Government has an opportunity, government has an obligation to do what is right on behalf of all Nova Scotians. They have the opportunity to do that but refuse. Now we put forward some ideas. We talked about regional energy markets, let's go buy from whoever has the best rates. What's wrong with that? Not a thing. Nova Scotians want, what Nova Scotians care about and will tell you very honestly is that we want to have long-term sustainable rates. They don't see Muskrat Falls as being that deal, but how would we know without the cost?

So let's go compare. Let's look at the regional energy market and opportunities that might exist. Can we buy from New Brunswick, who's probably going to have an overflow now with Lepreau back on. Can we buy gas coming the other way? Sure, we can; great opportunities. Can we buy from Quebec? Perhaps we can. Are we even talking about it or seeking these deals out? I don't believe we are. How come? It seems simple to me, Mr. Speaker. There's more to it though; there are other things.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what? Emera is locked in here. That's our biggest problem; that's our biggest problem. Why are we committed to Emera, Nova Scotia Power? We don't need to be committed to any of them. If they want to produce and sell power in the Province of Nova Scotia, to the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, at the best possible price, then it would be our obligation as a government and as an organization, a regional energy market, whatever that might be, to go and buy power at the best rate. We don't care where we're buying it from. Let's do what's right for Nova Scotians and that's called putting Nova Scotians first. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise tonight in my place on behalf of the people of Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, and indeed all Nova Scotians, to speak on this very important topic, this emergency debate brought forth by the honourable Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I speak strongly in favour of the Lower Churchill Energy Project and the Maritime Link. I believe any MLA who is in this House thanks to the good people of Nova Scotia, should also be in favour of it. We can pretend like my colleagues across the floor that the status quo is the only option. The status quo is never an option nor is it into the future and I will speak to that as I go through. It is the fixation, by that crowd over there, with the status quo, that this province has never reached its potential.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I take nothing for granted when it comes to my colleagues in the Opposition. As we have heard many times in the past number of months, if the Leader of the Liberal Party had his way, rates for Nova Scotians would not come down - they would increase 30 to 50 per cent. I would remind my Liberal colleagues that the experience with Emera would be duplicated if you were in control because basically most Nova Scotians do not believe what you say, they believe what you do and what you have done in the past.

I'm not sure that the Third Party is in favour or against stable energy prices as well. As the Premier mentioned earlier today in this House, on March 8, 2011, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party thought the Lower Churchill deal was "good energy policy and a great economic development plan." Maybe we should table that.

As the Premier and the Minister of Energy have already said, 35 years of predictable and stable energy prices for Nova Scotians. The choice is obvious. I know that this possibility is far beyond the ability of those opposite to comprehend the importance and magnitude of this visionary step forward.

AN HON. MEMBER: No vision, no vision.

MR. BOUDREAU: In fact, if the Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments of the past had made this move, I dare say we would not be discussing this important topic in this House of Assembly this evening. They had their chance for many, many years and they made their choice. They chose to do nothing, to stand by while Nova Scotians continued to watch rates go up and up and up and now, they both have all the answers.

I actually apologize, they did do something. They voted for the privatization of Nova Scotia Power despite public concern. I think some of us might recall that there was great discussion over the privatization of Nova Scotia Power. I think some of us in this House would remember a gentleman by the name of Louis Comeau, the former president of the PC Party of Nova Scotia during the Buchanan era, of grand fiscal management and fairy tales. I remember reading and hearing, in obvious disbelief, that according to Mr. Comeau, the privatization of Nova Scotia Power had nothing to do with the study to determine if it was the right thing to do, it was simply a matter of philosophy.

It was under the leadership of our Premier, our government, that we made the choice to work with our friends and neighbours, to find a solution for the rising cost of energy due to the rapidly rising price of imported coal. In partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador, the Lower Churchill deal will guarantee green, clean hydroelectricity for 35 years. One of the things that seem to be lost in this whole debate is the fact that hydroelectricity has proven itself to be the most cost effective and efficient form of electricity. This is not myth. This is not conjecture. This is fact.

There are members opposite in both Parties who have sat on this side in government, at one point in time. Quite thankfully, I'm glad they're not here now. They, too, had a choice. But they chose to do nothing but play petty politics. The same game they play today and that is both shameful and backward. I know that my colleague for Hants West did try to address some of this but if we listen to his full conversation, we will notice that he did talk I'd like to say, out of both sides of his mouth. That's unparliamentary?

I, for one, am very proud that our government made the decision that is right for Nova Scotians, the one that will provide long-term stability to a long-standing problem. For the Opposition to suggest that we're not looking at that and to suggest that we're not looking at options, I might want to remind the members opposite that we're talking about 10 per cent of the electricity needs for the Province of Nova Scotia under this program. We are looking toward renewable energy projects - I might want to make a point that just recently, down in Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, down in Goldboro, there was a discussion about reversing the pipeline and that is an option that is being considered for sure.

Now you see, Mr. Speaker, this choice is about the future, it's not about the past, it's about looking forward. It's about looking to a vision. Again, the vision that those members opposite had was not forward-thinking and it wasn't looking to the future.

This is a proactive, not reactive, solution. It is both sad and amusing to listen to the Leader of the PCs talking about natural gas, in particular. (Interruption) It is indeed sad, okay? This is about the future, just like the people developing wind energy in Shag Harbour or the group of partners with the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, who are working through the Community Feed-in Tariff program to provide clean, renewable energy to their area.

The COMFIT program, which was started under this government, has approximately 52 companies and 52 projects that have started in the province. Six of them, I'm very proud to say, are in Guysborough-Sheet Harbour. The Sable Wind Project, which is a 13.8 megawatt project, is the largest municipally led project in the Province of Nova Scotia. So that's a good project and we're moving forward with projects like that, Mr. Speaker.

I will also remind the members of this House that not only will the Lower Churchill hydro-energy project create stable energy prices, it will create jobs, thousands of jobs for Nova Scotians, some of whom will be in Cape Breton, people from Cape Breton North, Victoria-The Lakes, Cape Breton South and perhaps even Richmond County. The Maritime Link will provide approximately 2,700 person-years of employment, good jobs for skilled workers, allowing people to provide for their families and work right here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what our Premier has said. This project means stable energy prices for families and businesses well into the future. It means a stronger economy from one end of the province to the other. Maybe it would be worthwhile for the members opposite to listen to some of the communities that have benefited from the COMFIT projects: Pictou, Trenton, Kemptown, Brooklyn, Sydney, Terance Bay, Mulgrave, Grand Étang, Point Aconi, Tatamagouche, North Preston, Digby - COMFIT programs - Petite Passage, Grand Passage, Barra Strait, Grand Étang, Whynotts Settlement, Lower Wedgeport, Millbrook, Riverton, Chester and three right here - Melford, Goldboro and so on.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why aren't you speaking to the issue?

MR. BOUDREAU: We're speaking to the issue, sir. As I said, this project means stable energy prices for families and businesses well into the future. It means a stronger economy from one end of the province to the other. It means real action on Atlantic Canadian co-operation but perhaps most important, it is a better deal for Nova Scotians because it means clean, green electricity at a stable price for families and businesses, well into the future.

Now as I said, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the price of hydroelectricity has proven itself to be the least costly form of electricity that we are using in the world today.

Now we all know the fluctuations in the market, dealing with fossil fuels is up and down. Right now, the price of natural gas is (Interruptions) I better stop.

Anyway, I would be happy to wind it up, but perhaps this is a step forward, it's a project that speaks to the future and I'm very happy to be sitting on this side of the House supporting such a project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise this evening and have a few words about electricity rates as an important issue, but I don't think Muskrat Falls is on the minds of many Nova Scotians. Those who came to my office by the hundreds this summer, to sign a petition, were talking about power rates and also a few other things as well that I will relate this evening.

Just today, a lady came from the small community of Lake Paul, knowing that I was still collecting signatures for the petition being presented in the House. That's a good 40- to 50-kilometre return trip, so obviously, Nova Scotians are making a pretty strong statement that they are very upset at the current level of power rates that they're paying in their homes. We know, in fact, businesses, in fact, are very, very concerned, large-scale business we know, in fact, as well, are concerned about the direction of power rates in this province.

When we take a look at the increases, the 25 per cent increase in just a matter of a few years, this indeed is top of mind. We know that there's really no emergency about having an emergency debate around Muskrat Falls, there is absolutely no need. Is this to convince the URB that they need to approve and support government in this venture? That's perhaps maybe what the emergency is all about. There are many, many unanswered questions around the Muskrat Falls project and its future as a reality for Newfoundland and Labrador and for Nova Scotia. A number of these have been outlined here this evening.

I think we definitely need to know what the price is and how much Nova Scotians will be paying on their power bills for Muskrat Falls. I think if we were to do a poll with Nova Scotians, to find out what they have to say on this topic, they can agree that having clean, hydro-energy, hydroelectricity is important, but at what cost. They will definitely want to know: will our power bills continue to go up over the next number of years? With all certainty, that indeed seems to be the case, but also Nova Scotians want to know very close at what that price will be.

Right now we're hearing 14 cents to 17 cents a kilowatt and that's at the current level of investing in Muskrat Falls and the Maritime Link. We did have a presentation in our caucus on Muskrat Falls, by the president and CEO of Emera, Chris Huskison, and also the president of Nova Scotia Power was present at that meeting. He wasn't 100 per cent clear that, in fact, all of the technical requirements to have the power transmitted across the Strait of Belle Isle, down to the southern point of Newfoundland and Labrador,

then back across the province and across the very deep channel, as we know, the Laurentian Basin, and bring it ashore into Nova Scotia. There are issues there that will have to be addressed.

What will that mean in terms of adding additional costs onto this project? I believe that we can be looking at the energy that we can provide here in Nova Scotia as one of the alternatives. We have a wide range of renewables that are available to us. We've tapped into wind energy to a very strong extent. In fact, we're probably starting to reach some of our limits there, but I'm still a believer in the Bay of Fundy. Now, it's obvious that Emera has pretty well given up on the Bay of Fundy. They're going to put their stake in the ground on Muskrat Falls, and it's going to be the greater benefit of Emera, perhaps, rather than the ratepayers here in Nova Scotia.

In fact, it's interesting that the State of Maine has jumped ahead of Nova Scotia. I was hoping that we could claim a very, very strong part of the development of tidal energy. Well, presently Maine is producing energy from tidal power. It's an area in which they have obviously gone on a smaller scale. They're not looking for the big prototype, the big fix of a large amount of energy, but rather smaller turbines that they have placed in the water. We could easily be moving toward some in-stream tidal energy such as we see in Ireland and Scotland, but no, we're probably not going to get an investment from Emera there. We're going to see them move, if you wish, toward Muskrat Falls and place everything there, and it will be at a high cost to Nova Scotia ratepayers.

So the one message that is coming out of today, very loud and clear, is that this project has a great deal of mystery about it - mystery on what it will cost the Newfoundland and Labrador ratepayer and what it will cost the Nova Scotia ratepayer. When you are close to the highest electrical cost in Canada, we are at a tipping point. We are now having business and industry investment, and even, we've heard in the House, Nova Scotians at the break point with their electrical bills. So I would say we need to use a precautionary approach, at the very least, as we take a look at Muskrat Falls. We need to be putting up a lot of red flags.

Yes, we had a presentation from the member for Dartmouth East around the water supply. That's very, very much controlled by Hydro-Québec, and that certainly will need to be addressed before this project ever starts. Will we be able to sell power into the United States? New Hampshire has made a wonderful deal with Hydro-Québec and will not be buying power from Emera. They'll be going to Quebec for future deals as well. So knowing where electricity is going to be going is an important part of the equation of this deal.

As Nova Scotians know, half of the money earned each year by Emera comes from Nova Scotia Power. It's roughly 50 per cent. So we can be sure that Emera overruns here on the Maritime Link are going to be passed on to the ratepayer.

Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to have those few words about, you know there is a deep commitment by the NDP to the Muskrat Falls project at any cost, at any cost to the ratepayer of Nova Scotia, and the one thing they can be guaranteed with this deal is 35 years of continuous rate increases. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now know what an emergency debate is - everybody heads for the exits. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, how can Nova Scotians be sure this is a good deal when they're being asked to pay billions of dollars but they're not told how much electricity will cost when it comes to their door?

Power rates have gone up 25 per cent under this government, and this project appears to only increase future power rates for Nova Scotians. My difficulty here is that there are no economics tied to this plan - and I'm going to give you an example, a real-world example. The paper mill in my area, the number-one cost is power. Did they want to buy renewables to power their mill? No. They didn't want them. That is economics. That's speaking loudly and clearly they don't want to pay for it. I guess I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, why don't other Nova Scotians have the same choice?

We learned today that the Muskrat Falls project is going up from \$6.2 billion to \$7.4 billion - that's up 19 per cent. If you look at Nova Scotia's link project costing \$1.2 billion, it could go up another \$232 million. So it's not chump change.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier speaking this evening, and I just want to go over a few of the points he made. He said the previous governments ignored the rising costs and he started referring to, for instance, imported coal. Because this is always talked about in this Legislature, about the rising costs of coal, I thought I would provide a chart, something I will table, that shows that the price of coal, in fact, over the past year, since 2011, it was trading around \$70 per short ton - that's in U.S. dollars - and it's now trading at \$58.70. So it has actually come down in the past year. Now if we look back to 2001, which is 11 years ago, yes it was trading around \$40 and it went as high as almost \$140, but today, as we know, it's back down to \$58.70 per U.S. dollar ton.

So there are some economics that I think we should start introducing on a regular basis in this Legislature, instead of rhetoric. So I will table that, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

But let's not stop there; let's introduce some more economics - and I would encourage the government to use some of this information when they are making their case, because the numbers don't lie.

Let's talk about natural gas. In 2008 it was trading between \$12 and \$13. Recently it went under \$2, and today it is trading at \$3.72. So this point about fossil fuels always increasing is actually not true. If we look at natural gas, it has come down in price significantly - and I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

To the point about gas - why aren't we using more natural gas in this province? We have the resource. If you look at the other provinces across the country that have cheaper power rates, they are using their natural resources to their advantage.

I want to point out something the federal government did, and something the Premier mentioned, and that was that it would be a requirement to close coal generation plants in Nova Scotia. The federal government backed off on that, and that saved stranding an asset worth \$45 million in the case of Point Tupper, 60 jobs there, people working there - I know a lot of them, they are my constituents - and, like it or not, coal is still 58 per cent of our energy, how we generate energy in the province and it's still one of the cheapest forms of energy generation.

If we just blindly said, let's get rid of it tomorrow, we'd be looking at massive power rate increases. That's a fact. The other thing I want to mention is carbon emissions. We've actually seen carbon emissions increase despite the addition of renewable energy. I'll get into that a little more in a little bit. I don't have much time tonight.

I want to say, the Premier also mentioned something about job creation. Denmark found out that it was actually killing jobs, the introduction of renewable energy. I think the point needs to be made, there's nothing necessarily wrong with renewable energy, but it's the way it's introduced that's important. Denmark did a study that said in their case, it killed two to four jobs for each one that it created. The Ontario Auditor General's Report, which I talked about in the last sitting here, basically said that their experience was a disaster for their economy. They're actually subsidizing renewable energy production and then they're selling it, exporting it, at a loss. So they're losing on both ends. The economics are not working and that's all I would ask is that we look at the economics when we're talking about this matter.

One of the things in Ontario, there are actually no agreements to protect people who are paying their power bills in Ontario when they don't need the renewable energy. So they're having to buy the energy, even if people don't need it. That's a case of renewables gone wrong. We can't afford that.

The other thing I want to mention is the Premier mentioned something about transmission to Newfoundland and Labrador will allow energy export. I'm thinking if we have the highest cost of energy in North America, who would want to buy it? Lastly, why would Newfoundland and Labrador want to buy it when it already has plenty of hydro power already and it also has a thriving offshore oil and gas industry to supply its needs?

We hear about cleaner and greener environment but there have actually been studies completed that show emissions have actually increased with the introduction of renewables in Nova Scotia because when the wind stops blowing, the burning of coal and natural gas is done more inefficiently, which is causing more carbon emissions. Is this really helping our environment?

The members across, I've been called a dinosaur before for talking about this kind of thing. Well, I think if I'm the one here talking about carbon emissions and showing how this government is actually increasing them, maybe we need to erect a mirror here so the person who is calling somebody a dinosaur over here can call themselves a dinosaur. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I don't have much time left but I want to make this other point. We're talking about the importance of renewable energy. China's increase of energy production, their rate of energy demand is 13.3 per cent per year. They're using massive amounts of energy. They would swallow up our entire energy consumption in Nova Scotia in about four days. Let's be real here, what we're doing here is not having an impact on a global basis. What we could do, is do something that helps the environment and is backed by solid economics, so we could bring something to China and show them, here's how you protect the environment but also you can do it without affecting your economy. We know that they're not going to make a decision to help their environment unless they also see it help their economy. That's what we would do if we were real leaders instead of all this rhetoric that we hear.

In closing, I would encourage the members all around the House, like I have in the last sitting, to use economics and to use numbers to back up their statements. Otherwise, we're doing Nova Scotians a disservice when we make statements and claims in the media that simply aren't true. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time has expired for the emergency debate this evening.

The House is adjourned until tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 7:59 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1548**

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's HungerCount survey shows more than 23,000 Nova Scotians needed assistance from a food bank for their meals this year - that's 3,000 more than when the NDP came to office; and

Whereas this government has killed jobs, raised taxes, allowed power rates to skyrocket, and increased the cost of living beyond the capacity of many Nova Scotians' pocketbooks; and

Whereas the expensive policies of this government have forced too many families to choose between paying their bills and putting food on the table;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commit to making life affordable for Nova Scotians and urge the government to reverse their expensive policies so fewer adults will have to make that decision and fewer children will need to rely on food banks to eat.

RESOLUTION NO. 1549

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Emma Taylor is a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where her group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Emma's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating, as part of a

challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Emma Taylor, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for her participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for her efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish her future success in her endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1550

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Adam Gavel-Greencorn is a Grade student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where his group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Adam's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Adam Gavel-Greencorn, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for his participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for his efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish him future success in his endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1551

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Matthew Lausten is a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where his group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Matthew's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Matthew Lausten, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for his participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for his efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish him future success in his endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1552

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Jason Gardner is a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where his group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Jason's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Jason Gardner, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for his participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for his efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish him future success in his endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1553

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Adam O'Brien is a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where his group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Adam's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Adam O'Brien, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for his participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for his efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish him future success in his endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1554

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that reaches more than 30 countries and is run as an after-school activity where students work in teams to solve challenges and go on to compete in tournaments; and

Whereas Paige Fitzpatrick is a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School in Lower Sackville and was one of seven Grade 8 students to take part in a Destination Imagination challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011, where her group gave an eight minute presentation for a community outreach challenge; and

Whereas Paige's group also started an after-school program at Hillside Park Elementary School in Lower Sackville to promote exercise and healthy eating as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia and has kept this program running into the 2011-2012 school year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Paige Fitzpatrick, a Grade 9 student at A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School, for her participation in a Destination Imagination community outreach challenge in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 2011; and also for her efforts in creating and maintaining an after-school program promoting exercise and healthy eating at Hillside Park Elementary as part of a challenge to fight childhood obesity in Nova Scotia, and wish her future success in her endeavours.