



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 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.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. Once again, this morning, we witnessed an example of this majority NDP Government ignoring the rules and traditions of this House. This morning at the Law Amendments Committee the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage sat as a voting member of the committee examining Bill No. 94, the House of Assembly Act, dealing with the new proposed electoral boundaries for Nova Scotia.

The minister voted on the motions and participated in the discussions. We are advised by the MLA for Halifax Chebucto that the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage was participating at the Law Amendments Committee meeting at the request of the NDP Government.

Mr. Speaker, Rule 60(5A) of the Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly states: “With the exception of the Attorney General, who shall serve as Chairman of the Law Amendments Committee, no Minister shall be appointed to a Standing Committee established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of that Minister or that Minister’s Department.”

Mr. Speaker, this rule has been upheld over the years to prevent ministers from participating in committee meetings, other than the exception with minority governments. In this case the current government has ample members available who are not members of the Executive Council to participate in committee meetings. I would suggest to you that not only was it inappropriate for a minister to participate in the Law Amendments Committee, other than the Auditor General who is the chairman, I would suggest to you that the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage was in a conflict of interest.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, debate on the electoral boundaries review has included significant presentations from the Acadian and African Nova Scotian communities on the loss of the four protected seats of Clare, Argyle, Preston, and Richmond. The *Statement of Mandate* of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage for 2012-2013 states under Mandate: “The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage is responsible for contributing to the well-being and prosperity of Nova Scotia’s diverse and creative communities through the promotion, development, preservation and celebration of our culture, heritage, identity and languages, and; by providing leadership, expertise and innovation to our stakeholders.”

Mr. Speaker, the Public Accounts, Volume 3, Supplementary Information for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2012, under Grants and Contributions, shows the following financial assistance to these groups: African Nova Scotian Music Association; Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia; Black Loyalist Heritage Society; le Comité provincial des Jeux de l’Acadie; le Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre; le Conseil communautaire Étoile de l’Acadie; la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Having the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage participate in a meeting dealing with the issue of protected ridings, which has been identified by the Acadian and African Nova Scotian communities as being a major part of the culture, language and identity is clearly a conflict of interest, as this minister is also responsible for major funding projects for these groups.

Was the minister’s participation in the Law Amendments Committee a means for the government to discourage both the Acadian and African Nova Scotian communities from continuing to express their displeasure with Bill No. 94 and the NDP Government?

Mr. Speaker, there is a reason why the rule prohibiting ministers from participating in committee work was put in place. It cannot be left to the committee on its own to uphold

the Rules of this House. When our rules are not followed in committee, only the Speaker can intervene. I would submit to you that a precedent was set by former Speaker Murray Scott when he ruled the then chairman of the Law Amendments Committee had breached the privileges of the members of that committee.

I would submit to you that having the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage sitting on the Law Amendments Committee was a breach of the Rules of this House and the rights and privileges of its members. I would ask you to uphold Rule 60(5A) and remind the government that ministers are not to participate in committee meetings of the House of Assembly. Merci. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: You know, Mr. Speaker, when government tries to do business here and it is held up by frivolous motions like this one, we clearly in the past - he even mentioned that ministers have sat on that and, indeed, that Party argued to have their Leader on committees, but when it fits them, they want to mold the rules to their order.

The idea of former Speaker Scott's ruling, Mr. Speaker, was well beyond the scope of what the member, the Liberal House Leader says. He knows that these are extremely frivolous privilege motions that he continuously brings forward to this House to slow down the business of the House. It has nothing to do with privilege. It has all the right of the markings of that member to slow down the process of government. That's what this is about, make no mistake about it. (Interruption) What's he saying? What is the member saying over there? Stand up, stand up. (Interruptions) No, no, no, that's right, that's right.

Mr. Speaker, I'm getting quite exercised and I will take my seat on this in a moment, because this - the Liberal Party, for some reason, because it is frivolous, they're all laughing over there. That says a lot about the frivolity of it. So this is, within less than 24 hours, two motions that have nothing to do with the governance of this province but about their pushback that they're not government. They're not government. We're trying to move bills through this House. We're trying to get people down into communities to discuss law amendments. They want to be obstructionists. We want to move forward. We're waiting for your timely decision on this. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) Order, please.

I made my point last week in here. When the Speaker says "order" - the Speaker controls the House of Assembly. I will not have any more chirping after the Speaker says "order" from any side of the House, all sides.

The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, of course, when somebody stands up on a point of privilege, it is one that should be taken seriously and for the wording that was brought forward, I think the member for Richmond stated the case very appropriately. The concern that we saw this morning when the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage was seen to be on that committee, wondering how that all worked out - it seemed it had been the previous practice of this House that when someone got a promotion, somebody else was able to take the position from within that caucus.

Yes, during the minority government years of this Legislature, it was necessary to have a number of ministers sit on committees, because the bench strength wasn't there, and where it had the capability, but also to make sure that they weren't discussing issues that were pertinent - that they were having issues pertinent to those departments in which they have jurisdiction. In this particular case, I think it was just of the member for Richmond to say. A lot of the organizations that want and should be presenting to the committee as it goes to Shelburne, as it sees organizations here, are the same organizations that that member is going to have to deal with as minister. Is that going to maybe scare them away from presenting, because they might see a lack in funding or something happen otherwise?

Mr. Speaker, again, I think this is a very serious issue and one that should not be taken lightly. I await your response on it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in response to the comments made by the Government House Leader, as you know, points of privilege are a rarity in this House. They are not a daily occurrence. They happen on rare occasions when it is seen by members that the rules (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I do take them seriously. I do take them seriously. I will rule on that in due time. I do take them seriously. Your point is well taken.

MR. SAMSON: Let me, Mr. Speaker, on the point of being told by the Government House Leader that this is a frivolous point of privilege. Ironically, on the point I raised, the matter of the former ruling by the Speaker at the time, Murray Scott - I just want to point out that at that time that ruling was the basis of a point of privilege raised by myself and former Opposition House Leader John Holm of the NDP when we stood together to uphold the rights of all members of this House. Nobody from the NDP thought it was frivolous back then.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, it had no relation to what the member is asking on privilege today. He continuously trots that out as a point of privilege, and it's different. (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER: Frank, you're saying it was frivolous.

MR. CORBETT: It is.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's the one who rules that, not you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. CORBETT: I can say what I want; he can rule what he wants.

MR. SPEAKER: That is true. I will take that under consideration and I will report back to the House. Thank you. (Interruptions)

Order, please. (Interruptions) Being that we are on the subject of my rulings, I think I will start with yesterday - I had a point of privilege.

SPEAKER'S RULING: Notice of Motion - "Backbencher": Usage out of order (Pt. of Privilege by Hon. F. Corbett [Hansard p. 3188, 11/05/12]) Res. 1718 out of order

Yesterday the honourable Government House Leader rose on a point of order stating that he considered the use of the term "backbench" and the resolution tabled by the honourable member for Richmond to be out of order. He referred to a previous Speaker's Ruling to that effect. He had reviewed the previous Speaker's Ruling in which a resolution was ruled out of order because it contained references to other members as backbenchers. I realize the terms "backbench" and "backbencher" are used regularly in debate in the House without causing any disorder.

However, it has been ruled repeatedly that words that are otherwise not objectionable, in most contexts may be used in such a way, in a particular case, as to cross into the realm of unparliamentary language. This is particularly the case when those objectionable words are being used in a resolution that is proposed for adoption by the vote of the House. I reviewed Hansard and the resolution in question and have considered the tone and language used. I have concluded that the use of "backbench" in this case is very similar to the language used in the resolution that was ruled out of order by a previous Speaker. The tone used to refer to other honourable members was objectionable and I'm following the earlier ruling and I rule that Resolution No. 1718 is out of order.

Before we begin the daily routine, the subject for this evening's late debate was submitted by the honourable member for Hants West:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly condemn the NDP Government for botching the process of setting new electoral boundaries and for letting the people of Nova Scotia down by interfering in what was supposed to be an independent commission.

This will be debated this evening at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

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

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

I have affixed my name to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as the Attorney General I'd like to table the amendments to the Nova Scotia Civil Procedure Rules in the House of Assembly during Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd remind the honourable Minister of Justice that is not a committee report. I will ask the honourable member that that will be tabled later on in Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

MR. SIDNEY PREST: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Resources, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2011 to August 2012 of the 61st General Assembly. Also I would like to thank all the participants of the committee for their excellent work and co-operation.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Please accept my apology there. I'd like to table amendments to the Nova Scotia Civil Procedure Rules.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendments are tabled.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: I'd also like to table an annual report and audit of the financial statements of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1756

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

Whereas the Better Care Sooner plan has helped make sure Nova Scotians get the emergency care they need when they need it, thanks largely to Nova Scotia's Emergency Health Services' internationally-recognized pre-hospital care; and

Whereas the province's paramedics would like to remind Nova Scotians that it is crucial in a medical emergency to call 911, to stay put and wait for paramedics to arrive, and to listen to the instructions from the medical communications officers, who are trained paramedics; and

Whereas too many people are driving themselves or their loved ones to an ambulance base or the hospital instead of calling 911, putting themselves, the patient, and the public at risk;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize and join me and the province's paramedics in encouraging all Nova Scotians to call 911 in medical emergencies so that emergency staff can take critical, potentially lifesaving steps to provide better and safer care sooner.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. LANDRY: In the gallery opposite to where I am, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery where we have with us today our correctional services team. Tim Carroll is the superintendent of the new correctional facility we're building in Pictou, the Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. Tim accepted this important position a few weeks ago, and I'm looking forward to him taking on that role. I would ask that Tim rise and receive the warm welcome of this House. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1757

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

Whereas correctional officers in Nova Scotia have a difficult and demanding job;
and

Whereas construction began this past summer on the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, to open in 2014; and

Whereas Tim Carroll, who has over 20 years of experience in corrections, has recently been appointed as the superintendent of the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Tim Carroll on his new position as superintendent of the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility and recognize all correctional staff across the province for the hard work they do each and every day.

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 Truro-Bible Hill on an introduction.

MS. LENORE ZANN: I'd like to introduce to the House today some wonderful young people from Truro, my own constituency. We have with us the Colchester Christian Academy Grades 11 and 12 and their teachers, Frank Melanson and Colin Murphy. I would like to bring a welcome from the House, and would they please be received with graciousness. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis on an introduction.

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a friend of mine from Digby, Gordon Wilson. I've known Gordon for many years, and he's a fine fellow. He's also the deputy CAO of the Municipality of Digby. I would like the whole House to truly welcome him. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by asking permission to do an introduction too.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. JENNEX: We have the pleasure of having the Highbury Education Centre from New Minas with us today. There are 13 Grade 10, 11, and 12 students and their teachers and their leaders with us - Stephen Rovers, Kale Webber, Justin Black, and Suzzane Winters. I had the opportunity of meeting them earlier and I'm so glad that you're here with us and I ask the House to give them a very warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution, I would like to table for the members of the House some of the excellent resources that our students are using during Holocaust Education Week. From the Azrieli Foundation is the Azrieli Series short films which give us a glimpse into stories of survival of the Holocaust and a memoir, *Gatehouse to Hell*, which tells the story of a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

These are just two of the many resources being used in our schools during Holocaust Week and I'd like to table those, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1758

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

Whereas all Nova Scotians must remain vigilant and address the perils and horrible consequences of prejudice, discrimination, sexism, racism and anti-Semitism in all of their forms; and

Whereas Holocaust Education Week provides an opportunity for all Nova Scotians to recognize the enduring lessons of the Holocaust and remind us that we must all be committed to valuing and protecting human rights for all individuals; and

Whereas students in our public schools are using Holocaust Education Week to undertake a thoughtful examination of issues of justice, dignity, respect and security, including issues of genocide, so that they may be good global and Canadian citizens in the 21st Century;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage Nova Scotians to reflect on the lessons of the Holocaust and mark the end of Holocaust Education Week by observing Dignity Day, or Kristallnacht, the Night of the Broken Glass, this Thursday, so that a terrible event such as the Holocaust will never happen again.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1759

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

Attendu que le 5 novembre 2012, la Province a annoncé que Peter Herbin de Grand-Pré, Marie-Paule LaForge d'Halifax et Robert Palmeter de North Grand Pré sont les administrateurs de la fiducie de financement du site du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO de Grand-Pré; et

Attendu que la désignation comme site du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO fera en sorte que les gens de partout au monde reconnaissent Grand-Pré comme berceau de l'Acadie et comme paysage agricole dynamique qui a été repris à la mer; et

Attendu que les administrateurs seront responsables de l'attribution du financement annuel au Comité d'intendance du site du patrimoine mondial de Grand-Pré à l'appui de la gestion du site de Grand-Pré au cours des dix prochaines années;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que l'Assemblée législative de la Nouvelle-Écosse remercie M. Herbin, Mme LaForge et M. Palmeter d'avoir accepté ce travail important de l'administration de la fiducie pour les familles néo-écossaises, et leur souhaite beaucoup de succès dans leur nouveau rôle.

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

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

Whereas on November 5, 2012, the province announced Peter Herbin of Grand-Pré, Marie-Paule LaForge of Halifax and Robert Palmeter of North Grand-Pré as the trustees for the Grand-Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site Funding Trust; and

Whereas the designation as a World Heritage Site ensures that people from around the globe will recognize Grand-Pré as the birthplace of l'Acadie and a dynamic agricultural landscape reclaimed from the sea; and

Whereas the trustees will be responsible to allocate annual funding to the Grand-Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site Stewardship Board to support the management of Grand-Pré over the next 10 years;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature thank Mr. Herbin, Ms. LaForge, and Mr. Palmetter for taking on the important task of managing the Grand-Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site Funding Trust for Nova Scotian families and wish them great success in their new roles.

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.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MORE: In the east gallery we have five representatives today who were instrumental in developing the legislation which I'm about to introduce. Four are from the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia, and I would encourage you to stand as I read out your name: Lloyd Petrie, president of the association; Dana Sharkey is its executive director; noted lawyer Noella Martin is legal counsel for the association and put in many, many hours helping to develop the legislation; and Paula Minnikin is a consultant with the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia. Also, they are joined by Royden Trainor, director in our department's Policy and Planning Division, who led much of the consultation.

Present at the bill briefing earlier this afternoon, but unable to join us in the House, is Malcolm Norton, CANS' past president, who played a pivotal role in the development of the bill. I would ask all members to offer them a warm welcome and congratulations. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 119 - Entitled an Act Respecting Cosmetology. (Hon. Marilyn More)

Bill No. 120 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act, to Ensure Appropriate Class Sizes for Grades Primary to Three. (Hon. Karen Casey)

Bill No. 121 - Entitled an Act to Review the Funding and Delivery of Public Education in Nova Scotia. (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. 1760

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 great NDP socialist experiment, which elected an NDP Government in 2009, is proving to be a disaster for all Nova Scotians; and

Whereas this failed political experiment will come to an abrupt end following the next election, whenever it is held; and

Whereas the election of the member for Kings North was one of those political mistakes that happened when Nova Scotians took a chance on this failed NDP Government;

Therefore be it resolved that this Legislature recognize there are a number of NDP members elected in 2009 who will be leaving this place following the next election and set up an employment committee to seek jobs for the NDP members who will be known as one-term wonders and footnotes on the Nova Scotia political landscape following the next election.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1761

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

Whereas Verna MacMillan of East Lake Ainslie is now Canada's champion in Scrabble for seniors; and

Whereas MacMillan took home a gold medal in the Scrabble competition at the 2012 Nationwide Senior Games, where seniors from all across the country gathered to compete; and

Whereas MacMillan has been the Inverness County Champion at the local senior games and has also won this year's provincial title, with her highest score being 351;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Verna MacMillan on her gold medal award and wish her many triple-word scores in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1762

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

Whereas Ron and Sandra Lightburn have worked together to produce creative works in several areas including fabric art, illustration, and children's literature; and

Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Lightburn have successfully crafted, published, and promoted the book *Pumpkin People*, which chronicles the story of those adorable pumpkin people who spring up every year in Kentville, upon nightfall; and

Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Lightburn continue to inspire the minds of children and adults from around the world, introducing them to the natural beauty around them and in particular the culture in our own Annapolis Valley;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the contributions made by Ron and Sandra to their local community and to the imaginations of children, and children at heart, everywhere.

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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1763

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

Whereas on Sunday, October 28th, I joined residents gathered in the Havre Boucher community centre to express their concerns over the final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, which would take residents east of the Tracadie River in the Antigonish riding and place them in the new riding of East Nova; and

Whereas the residents requested that the Law Amendments Committee hold a meeting at Havre Boucher to hear their concerns, a request that was supported by their NDP MLA, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, when he told those gathered: "Write the Premier. Get on the phone and call people. Let's try to stop this in some way. And the only way that you're going to do that is make your voices heard"; and

Whereas in a meeting of the Law Amendments Committee this morning, the NDP used their majority to vote down a Liberal motion to have the Law Amendments Committee meet in Havre Boucher with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's own Cabinet colleagues - the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage - voting against the motion;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in condemning this NDP Government for once again picking winners and losers by refusing to allow the Law Amendments Committee to hold public hearings in the community of Havre Boucher.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1764

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

Whereas Hugh R. MacDonald is an award-winning Sydney Mines writer of fiction who belongs to local writing groups and attends workshops that include renowned Cape Breton and Canadian authors, and whose work has been published on-line and in two anthologies; and

Whereas this October Hugh released his first novel illustrated by his brother, Michael MacDonald, called *Trapper Boy*, and is already at the top of the bestsellers list in Cape Breton; and

Whereas the novel is the story of a 1920's coal-mining town and 13-year-old J.W. Donaldson, whose life is drastically changed by the economic conditions of the day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hugh on the success of his first novel and wish him all the best with his next project, a novel set in Cape Breton.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1765

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

Whereas since 2008 food bank usage is up more than 38 per cent in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas power rates have risen 25 per cent under this government's watch; and

Whereas this NDP Government agreed to hand over \$590 million to six corporations only to watch them lay off 1,310 Nova Scotians, \$245 million of that went to Bowater and Port Hawkesbury paper companies that slashed wages, rolled back benefits, and left pensioners in the cold;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island still supports the Premier's inaction on power rates, and their failure to improve wages is hurting this province and the people in the riding of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1766

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 a new hospital was announced for Pugwash by the NDP Government in October 2011 and re-announced two months later by the member for Cumberland North; and

Whereas the present facility was constructed in the 1960s and has no elevator; and

Whereas Department of Health and Wellness officials have determined the scope and size of the hospital but have yet to inform Cumberland District Health Authority

officials how much they are prepared to spend on the cost of a new seven-bed hospital for the village;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Wellness inform the residents of North Cumberland on details of their new facility.

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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1767

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: M. le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivant:

Attendu que les célébrations du Jubilé de diamant ont lieu en 2012 en reconnaissance du 60^e anniversaire du règne de Sa Majesté la reine Elizabeth II; et

Attendu que soixante bourses commémoratives de deux mille dollars, c'est-à-dire une pour chaque année du règne de Sa Majesté, sont décernées dans le cadre du Prix du Jubilé de diamant aux élèves de la 12^e année qui ont fait preuve de leadership et qui ont apporté des contributions considérable à leurs communauté et à leur province; et

Attendu que Tyson Pierce de l'École Beau-Port a reçu une bourse du Jubilé de diamant parce qu'il s'est distingué dans sa communauté et dans son école à titre de bénévole pour la Maison des jeunes de Richmond, les conducteurs de VTT de l'Isle Madame, le Comité des loisirs de Richmond, le Festival acadien de Petit-de-Grat et le Relais pour la vie, et aussi à titre de récipiendaire de la Médaille du lieutenant-gouverneur et la Médaille de bronze du duc d'Édimbourg;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée félicitent Tyson Pierce pour avoir reçu une bourse du Jubilé de diamant pour avoir été un modèle positif dans son école et sa communauté.

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 Diamond Jubilee celebrations are being held throughout 2012 to recognize the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's reign; and

Whereas 60 \$2,000 commemorative scholarships under the Diamond Jubilee Award, one for each year of the Queen's reign, are awarded to graduating Grade 12 students who have demonstrated leadership and made significant contributions to their communities and province; and

Whereas Tyson Pierce of Ecole Beau-Port received the Diamond Jubilee scholarship in recognition of having distinguished himself in his community and school as a volunteer with la Maison des Jeunes de Richmond, the Isle Madame ATV riders, the Richmond Recreation Committee, le Festival Acadien du Petit-de-Grat, Relay for Life, as well as receiving the Lieutenant Governor Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tyson Pierce on receiving the Diamond Jubilee scholarship for being a positive role model in his school and community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1768

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

Whereas January 6-8, 2012 marked the 20th Anniversary of the Leonard Matheson Memorial Hockey Tournament; and

Whereas teams from Baddeck, Cheticamp, Strait Richmond, Port Hood, Pictou and Canso participated in the tournament; and

Whereas the ceremonial puck drop was performed by John Angus Matheson, who was presented with a sketch of Leonard by artist Brittany Fitzgerald, which will be displayed in the arena;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank all participants in the Leonard Matheson Memorial hockey tournament and recognize the heartfelt contribution from artist Brittany Fitzgerald.

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 Truro-Bible Hill on an introduction.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, yes, it's my lucky day here today. We have another class from Truro-Bible Hill - above me, actually, in the west gallery. We have the Cobequid Educational Centre Career Exploration Program teachers Peter Keavney, Margaret Sadler, and Emily Reilly, plus their class. I'd like you to give them a warm welcome. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1769

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

Whereas November is Diabetes Awareness Month, a month set aside to remind Nova Scotians and Canadians of the seriousness of diabetes; and

Whereas according to the Canadian Diabetes Association's Nova Scotia diabetes model, diabetes in Nova Scotia is expected to rise from 90,000 people in 2012 to 157,000 people by 2032; and

Whereas to mark Diabetes Awareness Month, the Canadian Diabetes Association has introduced the What a Cure Means to Me campaign, a campaign established to give a voice to people living with diabetes in communities across the country;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature acknowledge November as Diabetes Awareness Month, extend our appreciation to the local staff and volunteers of both the Canadian Diabetes Association and JDRF for their efforts in supporting Nova Scotians with diabetes, and thank all groups and organizations who, throughout November, will educate Nova Scotians about the importance of diagnosis and management of this chronic 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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1770

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 in Nova Scotia there are 2,228 seniors currently awaiting a space in a long-term care bed; and

Whereas the Continuing Care Strategy was implemented six years ago to address the wait lists and provide seniors with a safe and secure home; and

Whereas this NDP Government has done absolutely nothing to advance that plan and has instead halted all progress and let the wait list climb to a record high;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the NDP Government to stand up for seniors, get on with building new long-term care beds, and stop reminding us how they said anything in Opposition to get elected but take no action now that they are in government.

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 Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 1771

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

Whereas Scotiabank held their 46th Annual Scotiabank CHIN International Picnic on June 30th, July 1st, and July 2nd at Exhibition Place in Toronto; and

Whereas the Scotiabank CHIN Picnic is the world's largest free, multicultural picnic; and

Whereas Micaela Comeau from Saulnierville performed her original song, Dandelion, in front of a live audience and placed third at the Scotiabank CHIN International Picnic;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Micaela Comeau and wish her continued success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1772

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 Atlantic Baptist Senior Citizens' Homes is in the final stages of completing Fairview Court, the 34-unit seniors apartment complex in the Town of North Sydney; and

Whereas this facility has been a great community effort involving many different groups including the Atlantic Baptist group, which has invested in the development of the David Rose ball field to replace the Fairview playing field and will refurbish a community playground next to the facility; and

Whereas this is the second such unit in North Sydney, providing top-of-the-line apartments for an ever-increasing seniors' population;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the Atlantic Baptist Seniors' Homes for investing \$3 million in North Sydney to provide superior housing for our seniors.

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. 1773

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

Whereas the Atlantic Regional Gliding School in Debert, Colchester North, is one of five regional schools; and

Whereas 40 cadets from across Canada passed an exam, wrote about why they wanted to take the glider program, and underwent an interview before they were accepted into the seven-week course; and

Whereas this program teaches young people the importance of attention to detail and commitment, builds lasting relationships, and enables successful candidates to graduate with a Transport Canada Glider Pilot Licence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate cadet Justin Thibault, a 16-year-old member of 596 Phoenix Squadron based in Tatamagouche, for receiving his glider pilot wings, and wish him continued success with his dream of becoming a pilot.

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. 1774

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

Whereas in the village of Baddeck on August 29th, “The Big Bike” team nicknamed Jim’s Army, made up of 29 enthusiastic riders, pedalled through the streets of the village to raise funds for Heart and Stroke research; and

Whereas dedication from volunteers like Kathy Reashore, who spearheaded “The Big Bike” fundraiser, are the heartbeat of every community; and

Whereas team leader and stroke survivor Jim Bradley raised \$1,100 of the \$4,670 total funds raised by the event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank organizer Kathy Reashore, team leader Jim Bradley, and all participants on “The Big Bike” team for their commitment and volunteer hours towards Heart and Stroke research.

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. 1775

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

Whereas the Bedford Lions Club, which has served the Bedford community for 66 years, is the official sponsor of the 342 Bedford Lions Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron and involves the cadets in its community projects, thereby giving them the opportunity to fulfill part of their citizenship training; and

Whereas the Bedford Lions Club has over the years completed numerous projects in the community including the LeBrun Center, the Lions outdoor swimming pool and playground, the Bedford Leisure Club and the Sandy Lake Park; and

Whereas the Bedford Lions Club has also made significant financial contributions to the Cobequid Community Health Centre, CPA High School student scholarships, the Diabetes Foundation, and innumerable charities and individuals in need, both locally and worldwide, including disaster relief for the Quebec ice storm, Hurricane Katrina and the Japanese tsunami;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate all members past and present of the Bedford Lions Club for the continuous service which has helped to shape today's vibrant community in which we all take pride.

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. 1776

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

Whereas the Cops n' Kids program started in 2004 and is a joint initiative of Halifax Regional Police, Halifax District RCMP, and the Halifax Regional School Board; and

Whereas the Cops n' Kids program is designed to provide youth with adult mentors and help them focus on personal development and build their self-esteem; and

Whereas this year's event kicked off on September 22nd with 70 youth participants, 12 youth leaders, and 22 volunteers to begin their 9th program year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate all the participants involved in the Cops 'n' Kids Program on their 9th Anniversary, and commend them on their dedication to making the transition into one's teenage years a little easier.

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. 1777

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 people of Shelburne raised the issue that they did not have a voice during the boundary review process and were successful in convincing the government members of the Law Amendments Committee to travel to their community; and

Whereas the recommendations of the boundary review will have serious implications to the people of Digby; and

Whereas the government members of the Law Amendments Committee refused a motion to bring the committee to Digby so that they could also have a voice, despite the fact that the people of Digby share similar concerns to the people of Shelburne;

Therefore be it resolved that the people of Digby properly reward the NDP for refusing to hear their concerns at the earliest possible date, like the next election.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

RESOLUTION NO. 1778

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

Whereas since 2008, food bank usage is up more than 38 per cent in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas power rates have risen 25 per cent under this government's watch; and

Whereas this NDP Government agreed to hand over \$590 million to six corporations, only to watch them lay off 1,310 Nova Scotians - \$245 million of that went to Bowater and Port Hawkesbury Paper, companies that slashed wages, rolled back benefits, and left pensioners in the cold;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Chester-St. Margaret's still supports the Premier's inaction on power rates, and their failure to improve wages is hurting this province and the people in the riding of Chester-St. Margaret's.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is tabled.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 1779

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

Whereas the new commemorative medal has been created to mark the 2012 celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas while Canada celebrates Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their communities and province; and

Whereas Nicole Thimot of Little Brook was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to her community and province at a ceremony in Digby on September 25th, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nicole Thimot on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to her community and province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1780

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

Whereas Jayne Hunter of The Falls, Colchester North, has a Masters of Adult Education, with a focus on adult literacy; and

Whereas Hunter began her career with Literacy Nova Scotia in 2003 as a learner co-ordinator, and has held several positions within the organization; and

Whereas Hunter has been named Literacy Nova Scotia's new executive director;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Jayne on her new position with Literacy Nova Scotia, and express our support for the importance of adult learning and the difference it can make in people's lives.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1781

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

Whereas the Belles 'n' Beaus Square Dance Club of Berwick has been dancing up a storm since 1962, and as their members get older they continue to dance as they have for the past 50 years; and

Whereas Glen Maynard organized this group in 1962 and this year, in November, they mark their 50th year of square dancing in the Annapolis Valley; and

Whereas this club has enjoyed the talents of six different callers: Glen Maynard, Arch Erickson, Don Haley, Wilfred Burns, Barry Walker, and at present, Tom Collins;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Belles 'n' Beaus of Berwick for 50 years of square dancing, having fun, and enjoying exercise.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism on an introduction.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the House's attention to the gallery opposite. We're joined today by one of the greatest hockey players to ever wear an Acadia University hockey uniform, who still holds records at Acadia University for his years that he spent there playing varsity hockey: a former hockey colleague of mine from my youth, Brian Mosher. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1782

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

Whereas Peter Davison, a motivational speaker, high-altitude trekker and marathon runner, was diagnosed at the age of 45 with young-onset Parkinson's disease; and

Whereas Peter Davison, undaunted by this diagnosis, has since become a regular speaker for the Parkinson Society Maritime Region on the topic of living well despite Parkinson's, and encourages people to join support groups and services offered by the Parkinson Society; and

Whereas Peter, along with his wife Andrea and their two young children, took part in the 2012 Parkinson's SuperWalk in Bedford to raise money for research, education, and support services for Parkinson Society Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Peter Davison on setting a courageous and optimistic example for the 100,000 Canadians living with this illness, and for doing his part to help raise an estimated \$3 million nationwide in the 2012 Parkinson's SuperWalk.

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 on an introduction.

MS. KELLY REGAN: I would like to take a moment to introduce a friend of mine who is here. Her name is Betty Boudreau. She was from the Atlantic riding, and now I'm not sure which riding she is from, but she is here today. She is a retired nurse, and I would like her to receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 1783

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

Whereas 11-year-old Jonathan Thibideau likes collecting bottles and decided to step up and donate his earnings, joining his mother's Relay for Life team; and

Whereas at the end of April, Jonathan had raised \$500 by posting signs for bottles at his church and at his father's workplace; and

Whereas Jonathan also goes the extra step and removes every tab from cans collected and donates the tabs to a wheelchair fundraiser;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly commend Jonathan on his generous heart and wish him continued success in fundraising.

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. 1784

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

Whereas Dave MacKenna of Municipal Ready Mix has been inducted into the Cape Breton Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Dave MacKenna received this honour from the Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Cape Breton University; and

Whereas the Cape Breton Business Hall of Fame was established in 2002 to honour people from the Cape Breton business community who paved the road for future generations in Cape Breton through business achievement and community involvement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dave MacKenna on receiving this honour and thank all inductees for their continued interest in our communities in Cape Breton.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill on an introduction.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate this. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where we have a wonderful constituent of mine who has done much major work in the Province of Nova Scotia. We love her and we're very grateful to have her. Her name is Lynn Jones. Please, welcome her to the House today. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1785

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

Whereas Michael Cremo of Eskasoni First Nation earned the title of "top" graduate from Addison Bernard Memorial High; and

Whereas Michael Cremo had the highest graduating average, is the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Medal and the Governor General's Academic Award; and

Whereas Michael Cremo was the valedictorian and was also the recipient of a \$3,000 entrance scholarship to Dalhousie University;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael Cremo on the many well-deserved honours he received as he graduates from Addison Bernard Memorial High School and wish him well in his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier on an introduction.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the east gallery joining us today are three constituents who are actually originally from my hometown of Liverpool and, in fact one of them is doing a school report on tourism in the Liverpool area. So I wonder if the House might give a warm welcome to Debra, Kevin and Courtney Emenau as they join us here for our proceedings today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Again I say, we welcome all our guests to the galleries and hope you enjoy this afternoon's proceedings.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 3:08 p.m. and we will finish at 4:08 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

ERDT - DSME: GOV'T.-OWNED/PRIVATELY-OWNED BUS. - EXPLAIN

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, DSME Trenton is 49 per cent owned by the NDP Government. We've obtained internal DSME documents that say, and I'll table those documents, "We are currently looking to produce products such as pressure vessels, tanks, skid modules and a few other things for the oil and gas industry."

This document states that the company is exploring markets in Alberta, Newfoundland, Texas, Pennsylvania and New York. Mr. Speaker, there are already privately-owned Nova Scotia companies in exactly this business and in those markets. So my question to the minister is, why is this government-owned business getting ready to compete against privately-owned Nova Scotia businesses?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, DSTN in Trenton, Nova Scotia - we took a facility that was lying idle for a number of years, it was a building that was in ruin, and we negotiated with a foreign company to come in there and rejuvenate not only the building but the entire area. We partnered with our federal government to create jobs in DSTN.

We've got confidence in the success of DSTN in the future and, yes, because of economic conditions, a recession that, through no fault of theirs, this is a parent company that has great extensive networking all over the world. Those people deserve every opportunity the same as every other Nova Scotian and Canadian company to compete for jobs wherever they may be.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, hardworking Nova Scotia entrepreneurs deserve respect from this government and not the competition that is going to be driven by their own tax dollars. Not only does this government-owned business plan on competing against Nova Scotia companies in the oil and gas industry, it also plans to compete as a shipbuilding supplier. We all remember Daewoo competing against Irving for the ships contracts, but they lost. Now through DSME and with the government's help, Daewoo is trying to get a piece of Nova Scotia's shipbuilding pie by competing against other private Nova Scotia companies.

This government has no business using taxpayers' money to compete against private Nova Scotia firms. My question to the minister is, does the minister think it's fair that a government-owned business be allowed to compete against other perspective, private-sector shipbuilding companies?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, first of all I will say what is fair from my perspective. First of all, DSTN is not government-owned and I daresay that if the Leader of the Official Opposition, if they had their way, DSTN would not even be there because they would be facing 30 per cent to 50 per cent power hikes in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, one thing for certain - if this Party were in power, private sector enterprise wouldn't have to worry about the government going into business against them. This deal is a prime example of why this government's big deals, with big business, cannot and will not grow the economy. We have a government that put \$60 million into DSME and now the government is preparing to take this business and compete against private Nova Scotia entrepreneurs.

This is not an economic development strategy. This is a strategy to steal jobs from the private sector employers. This is a strategy that will put Pictou County businesses out of business. This is a recipe for the worst economy in the country. My question to the minister is, why is the government getting ready to compete against hard-working, privately-owned Nova Scotia entrepreneurs?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed, but I'm not going to say I'm surprised at the Leader of the Official Opposition trying to make some political gain out of things that aren't fact. The fact of the matter is this government has created jobs to the tune of 7,600 jobs, since we've come into power, not like that lot over there who, when they were in power, along with the Progressive Conservatives, led this province for 20 years to last place in the country.

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

ERDT - DSME: GOV'T.-OWNED/PRIVATELY-OWNED BUS. - COMPETITION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism as well. In 2010 the NDP bought 40 per cent of DSME for \$19.6 million and loaned them another \$40 million on top, some of it forgivable. They said that would create 500 jobs by now, but as the minister admitted in this House the other day, there are now fewer than 60 people working there. I will table that for the benefit of the House - that is \$1 million per job. The minister's answer now is that that company should diversify, as he said in this House yesterday, and look to the Irving contract for more business. My question to the minister is, can any company that has been bailed out by the NDP now go into any business that they want or just ones that are owned by the NDP?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we live in a society called democracy. Certainly DSTN has every right - and actually, my advice to DSTN is to diversify as much as possible. Competition is part of what this country is built on.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, yes, we live in a democracy, but we also live in a system where private business gets first crack at these things, not government-owned enterprises. That is where the minister and those of us on this side of the House disagree. He owns half the company. Government-owned businesses don't work - just look at the Liberals and Petro-Canada, a company that had to be returned to the private sector because it couldn't compete. Now the NDP have to learn that lesson all over again, at Nova Scotians' expense.

There are hundreds of suppliers for the Irving contract. There are hundreds of metal fabricators in towns and communities all across our province. They didn't ask for a bailout. They're not looking for government help to compete, but now they have a government-funded and government-owned business on their doorsteps competing for the work that they are supposed to be out to get.

My question to the minister is, why put all of those jobs at risk? Is it because he owns this company?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, again, we have the Leader of the Third Party getting on his feet and talking about job development in the Province of Nova Scotia, when that Party

over there was in power for the last 10 years before we came along. Where was the Province of Nova Scotia for the last 10, and the 10 years before that? Last place.

We are moving this province forward, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, for the record, Nova Scotia had the second-highest rate of economic growth in the country the day that that bunch came into office - let's just be clear - and at no time did anyone go about giving \$1 million a job away to another company and call that a good record in job creation. That is a disgraceful record of job creation.

Rather than admit that their bailouts don't actually create jobs, the minister's advice now is to allow those companies to go and compete against good, decent, self-funded Nova Scotia companies, putting their jobs at risk, and replace them with jobs at government-owned companies. That is not the way to grow the economy. It is a gigantic step backward.

My question to the minister is, the federal government is not advising this company to now compete against Nova Scotia companies. That is a canard. There is a big difference. So will the minister now agree to stop the bailout madness and begin the real work of building an economy where private companies can actually grow and compete, free from government interference?

MR. PARIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I'm surprised at the ignorance I'm hearing from the opposite side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) I would remind the honourable minister that that language is unparliamentary, and I'd ask the honourable minister to retract that, please.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will retract that. I'll replace that word with "lack of knowledge" - the lack of information that the member has. I would advise the member opposite, the Leader of the Third Party, that possibly he might want to make a call to his cousins in Ottawa and find out what position they've played in the partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia in DSTN.

Mr. Speaker, I will also inform the Leader of the Third Party that when we came into power - and this is a known fact - the Province of Nova Scotia was in the worst financial position. We inherited a mess. Thanks to them, we inherited a mess and we are straightening it out.

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

ERDT DSME - GOV'T. BRIEFING: MIN. - AWARENESS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development. Internal documents from DSME stated on April 20, 2012 that DSME staff visited government and presented its future plan, but in August the minister said he did not know the details of what the company was planning to diversify into. We have company documents saying the government knew, and we have a minister who says otherwise, so my question for the minister is, can the minister explain how a company owned 49 per cent by the government could have briefed his department in April and he not know in August?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, DSTN, as I said, are diversifying; they've been working on a market strategy. They're looking to markets all over the world; they have a parent company that has networking and connections all over the world. Look, I encourage them, I'm proud of them, I'm proud to be a partner with them, and I have great faith and confidence in this company, and certainly the people in Pictou County have great hope for the future of where they live.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, we're finally getting somewhere - at least now he's admitting he's a partner with them.

The same internal company document says, "Mr. Lee traveled to Korea for a week to speak with headquarters about DSTN, its plans for diversification and also the future of the wind industry here in this area of the world."

Mr. Lee, the company's CEO, knows the diversification plan; the people in the Korean headquarters know the diversification plan; and the people of Nova Scotia who own 49 per cent of this company deserve to know. My question to the minister is, why didn't the minister disclose the company's plans on diversification in April, when he knew?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, here in Nova Scotia we're fortunate to have a company such as Daewoo working with us, a company that is innovative, a company that has world markets and global markets. We rely and we partner with Daewoo, with DSTN, we have confidence in that company and I can tell you now the confidence that I have in that company, that this Party has in that company, has not wavered one bit.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised his company hasn't wavered, he has \$60 million and owns 49 per cent of it.

Again, that same internal document says: We at DSME Trenton have one of the highest costs of manufacturing in the world. This government has formed a habit of subsidizing other companies to keep their costs down, but their efforts have failed, so my question to the minister is, is the minister getting ready to spend additional funds to

subsidize this government-owned company so it can compete against privately-owned Nova Scotia businesses?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the fact is unemployment is down, employment is up. (Interruptions) We make and have made strategic investments in SMEs and in large companies as well.

Do you know what? Allendale Electronics, in Lockeport, employs just over 30 people; we made a PIP investment with that company so that they can now be competitive in a global market. It is obvious to me that Party over there is against jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

JUSTICE - DSME: INVESTMENT - EXPLAIN

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The people of Pictou County are still waiting for the 500 jobs promised by this government. In a November 2nd New Glasgow News, the Justice Minister said that “. . . neither the province nor the company predicted that a recession would come into play, causing a downturn in the wind energy business.”, and I'll table those comments. So now this government did not know a recession would hurt business even though it has been their excuse for our dismal GDP growth, and these are the decision makers who are holding the chequebook on behalf of taxpayers.

My question to the Minister of Justice is, why didn't the government fully analyze the extent of the recession's impact on demand before investing \$60 million on behalf of taxpayers?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass this on to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, as I am the MLA for Pictou Centre and he is the minister responsible.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand on my feet and try to explain to the Opposition Party that this government is about job creation. We've created a situation at the old TrentonWorks plant that we have confidence in, that it will be successful. It's about putting good Nova Scotians in Pictou County, which that Party may not care about, back to work. That's what it's about.

MR. MACLELLAN: The same news story featured the Energy Minister saying about DSME: “It feels it can break into the Ontario market . . .” Ontario and Quebec, Mr. Speaker, two of the largest domestic markets for DSME's originally intended product, were largely shut off to DSME because those governments required a certain percentage of local content in their wind turbines. Both of these provinces legislated such requirements

before the DSME investment was announced. My question for the Energy Minister is, why did this government invest \$60 million into an operation with such limited access to domestic markets?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: That question is really out of order. DSME is really the responsibility of the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, so I'll turn it over to my colleague. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, thank you, I will remind all honourable members that I rule on the questions that are in order and out of order. (Applause)

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has the floor.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I can speak on behalf of this Premier, this Party: we want DSTN to be successful. We want them to create good jobs for the good people in Pictou County. That's why we have recommended to them to diversify, look at a larger market, and be competitive.

MR. MACLELLAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, the same article featured the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister: 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.

This government appears to be making this work by having a government-owned company directly compete with privately-owned Nova Scotia businesses. Everything about this deal - it seems like the government is scrambling to save what was clearly a bad investment for taxpayers, from day one. My question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why is this government getting ready to put more Nova Scotian businesses out of business and send more Nova Scotians to the unemployment line?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, through this government we've made strategic investment in SMEs all over the Province of Nova Scotia. It was this government that came up with the jobsHere strategy. (Interruptions) Thank you. It was this government that came up with the PIP initiative, which we are investing in people, we are investing in equipment, we are investing so that companies will be more innovative. Now those may be foreign words to the Opposition Party, but we are investing so that we can be globally competitive in a global market.

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

PREM. - CORNWALLIS LEASE: DEAL - FAIRNESS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the NDP set a new record in foot-dragging today when it came to releasing information about the lease in Cornwallis, even resorting to blaming a faulty photocopier for their lateness - as if there is only one photocopier in the whole of government.

My question is to the Premier. He said that the move to Cornwallis would be cost-neutral for taxpayers, but now we know that the rent that the government is going to pay in Cornwallis is actually higher than the rent would be in the City of Halifax as a result of an untendered contract for the new space. My question to the Premier is this, how does he know that he got a good deal when he didn't even bother to tender the space?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that it looks like not only will this be cost-neutral, it will be of some benefit to the province because of the administrative savings that will take place because we put together the Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Fisheries and Aquaculture in one compound and that is going to be beneficial to the province. These are good jobs that are going into rural communities, going into Cornwallis. The lease itself is with a community development association, so not one penny of it goes into the pockets of a private developer; it all goes into a community organization and is invested back into the community. I know that is something really hard for the Leader of the Third Party to understand, but that, of course, is a good deal for Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this is a new policy that we've now heard from the government, that they'll only look at space if it's not owned by a private developer. That's quite an admission by the Premier here today. The fact remains, he still won't know and no Nova Scotians will know if they got a good deal if they don't actually bother to tender for the space. If a non-profit is the best price they'll win in a tender like anybody else would - that is the point. Hopefully, when they buy a new photocopier today they'll tender for that so they can get the documents out on deadline and not blame the photocopier equipment, like they did today.

Working families in the province, they're struggling to pay their bills, they're forced to squeeze their budgets, they have a higher HST, they have skyrocketing power rates, they're doing all that they can to live within their means. It's for them that the government should make sure that it treats their money with the same respect when it's in the government's hands as taxpayers as when it's in their own hands, but they're not doing that. The government won't even tender for the space.

My question for the Premier is, for the other three moves that the government is contemplating, will he commit right now to tendering for the office space required for the other three departments that are moving to rural locations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what was undertaken by the provincial civil service with respect to the leasing opportunities in Cornwallis is, in fact, the standard policy of the government, one that was followed by the previous government on numerous occasions. If you are using community development associations, there is not a tender process.

But I will tell you what did happen - the public servants went, they met with the chief administrative officers of the various municipalities, they went to the economic development agencies and they asked about the available space and all of those, almost to a person, said it doesn't make any sense for you to be in any other place other than in Cornwallis Park. The opportunities there are good; you can get a good price for a lease. I would point out that the provincial government, along with the federal government, actually hired a consultant to go out to drum up business and to find people to go into Cornwallis Park. I would think the question would be why you wouldn't go into Cornwallis Park, rather than why would you.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is going to give this House, and I suppose all Nova Scotians, a long explanation about why he didn't at least tender for that space, so we would know if they are getting a good deal or not. What we do know is that they are paying more for office space in Cornwallis than for the same space in downtown Halifax. Nova Scotians know that on the face of it, that doesn't make sense. Only a tender would tell us whether that is a good deal or not.

The cost of the space is not the only cost related to this move, Mr. Speaker; 19 of the 20 civil servants who have been identified as moving from Halifax to Cornwallis are refusing to go. So now they have the recruitment costs for an additional 19 public servants to add to the cost of this move.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised all Nova Scotians that this move would be cost-neutral. It's not. He can give the longest explanation in the world if he wants. If he truly believes that, will he prove it and refer the whole mess to an independent review, not just an internal review?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's ironic to hear the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party complain about giving an explanation but the simple fact of the matter is that these benefits are two-fold. One, it supports a community development organization that does great work in Cornwallis. None of the value of this lease goes to a private developer - and it's not that we have any problem with the private developers but there are specific advantages to community development associations - in this case every cent of it gets invested back into the community.

Secondly, these are good jobs in rural Nova Scotia. That is a benefit to Cornwallis, to Digby, to the whole area and yes, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to rural Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT - PART-TIME JOBS: VALUE - CONFIRM

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. On October 31st the minister rose in this House and said, "This government is making strategic investments to create good jobs and grow Nova Scotia's economy." Great work with DSME, by the way. Yet the latest Statistics Canada data shows we've lost 3,400 full-time jobs since the government took office in June, 2009. Those jobs were replaced by part-time jobs. My question to the minister, does this minister believe a part-time job is a good job, as he previously suggested, and that an economy can grow with such massive increases in part-time employment?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question and I will say this, since June when we came into government, the employment job numbers in Nova Scotia are up by 7,600 people. There are more people employed today than were employed when we came into power.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, when asked about changes in the job market, the Premier told the House, "Those are all good things for the Province of Nova Scotia." Here are the good things the Premier referred to: massive increases in part-time employment, we have the second lowest wages in Canada, and there are more Nova Scotians unemployed now than in December 2008, during the recession. So I guess StatCan is fear-mongering here.

My question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, does he agree with the Premier that these are "good things" for Nova Scotia?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I do know for sure is if it wasn't for this government, Stream - in Glace Bay - wouldn't be where it is today.

MR. MACLELLAN: That's it? Well, Mr. Speaker, the Stream \$2.1 million was a payroll rebase through NSBI, with job targets. So I'm glad the minister took my advice on that file and if he had done that with Trenton or with the \$600 million he spent on corporate welfare, we'd be in a lot better shape.

The quote on October 30th was, "Job growth is going in the right direction." The combination of part-time work, depressed wages, rolled back benefits, sky-high gas prices, the highest power rates in Canada and the highest taxes in the country are forcing people to make tough decisions. Mr. Speaker, this is what the Premier and apparently the minister call "the right direction".

Nova Scotians are struggling and this government is celebrating. Nova Scotians are working twice as hard because this minister isn't up to the task. So my question for the minister is, will you apologize for failing to grow our economy, failing to create

good-paying jobs and failing the people of the Province of Nova Scotia in economic development?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the only advice that that member over there gave me, and gave this Party, was around energy prices and if they had their way, Nova Scotians would be paying 30 per cent to 50 per cent more today.

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

ERDT - ECONOMIC POLICY: NOVA SCOTIANS - EFFECTS

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, last week 135 more people were added to this government's dismal record on job creation but it's not only the unemployed who are struggling in NDP Nova Scotia. The recently released HungerCount 2012 report vividly illustrates the toll this government's high tax, high energy policies have had on hardworking people in our province. I'll table that report.

Mr. Speaker, almost 3,000 hard-working Nova Scotians with jobs couldn't make ends meet and used a food bank in the last year. So my question through you to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, will the minister admit that his government's economic policy is making life harder for Nova Scotians who are playing by the rules and doing all the right things?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure for me to rise on my feet and I could spend the rest of Question Period boasting about the good things that this government has done when it comes to employment for Nova Scotians. You know, there's a company in Lockeport which I've already mentioned once today, it's called Allendale Electronics, a small company, just over 30 people, and if it hadn't been for us, they wouldn't be in the competitive marketplace that they are today because of our strategic investments - unlike that government, or that previous government over there, that left this province in shambles.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has the fastest rising prices in the country and since September 2009 the price of fuel oil has increased by 40 per cent. This government tells Nova Scotians to bite the bullet and pay more for electricity.

At the Standing Committee on Community Services this morning, long-time NDP supporter Michael Bradfield, from the Face of Poverty Consultation Group, stated that what this government has done to reduce poverty is insignificant. (Interruptions) Mr. Bradfield also explained that the majority of the poor here in Nova Scotia are the working poor.

So my question to the minister is, will the minister admit that under his watch, prices are soaring and wages can't keep up? Will he admit that his government is forcing

hard-working families to make difficult decisions like turning to a food bank to make ends meet?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I've already mentioned here once today that when we came into power, we inherited just a terrible mess. Do you know what? Every Nova Scotian knows what we inherited. I just want to - and I'm going to table this. This is to the Minister of Economic Development and I'm not going to read it all, "Dear Mr. Paris:"

AN HON. MEMBER: Read it all.

MR. PARIS: Well, I don't have time. This gentleman says: "I am a newcomer to Nova Scotia and having done business in . . ." places all over the world, ". . . all of which are considered to be world leaders in entrepreneurship and innovation, I can attest first-hand that the climate created by our provincial government here in Nova Scotia is by far the most welcoming and supportive to small and medium sized entrepreneurs."

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the minister read us his one e-mail that he got. This minister loves to quote statistics, but I'd like to tell the minister that the 3,000 new people who have had to turn to food banks to make ends meet under his watch can't put statistics on their table.

Since the NDP came to government, Nova Scotia's average weekly earnings are the second lowest in the country. HungerCount says a job, any job is mistakenly believed to be a ticket out of poverty. That's true when the job pays enough to allow that to happen, but many jobs actually result in deepening poverty for families.

My final question to the minister is, will the minister admit that his job plan is failing Nova Scotians and that for many of them a job in NDP Nova Scotia, often a part-time job instead of a full-time job they used to have, results in deepening poverty?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell you what's wrong with that lot over there. I'm going to tell you because, you know what? They did nothing. They took this province backwards. It was this government that (Interruptions) Irving Shipbuilding - they don't want to hear it; they don't want to hear the good news. They don't want to hear the good news. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has the floor.

MR. PARIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to hear about Irving Shipbuilding and the 11,500 jobs that have been created; they don't want to hear about Muskrat Falls and the jobs that are going to be created; they don't want to hear that (Interruptions) Listen to them, they don't want to hear about Nova Centre; they don't want

to hear about the development down at the waterfront. It's quite obvious there's something wrong with them over there. Everything is right here, though.

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

**STATUS OF WOMEN - OPPORTUNITIES:
GOV'T. IMPROVEMENT - DETAILS**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, here in Nova Scotia, the face of unemployment is a young face, and it is also a young woman's face. Since this NDP Government took office, unemployment for women aged 15 to 24 has increased by 51.2 per cent - and I'll table that data from Statistics Canada.

Will the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act tell members of the House what she has done to improve the lives of women in Nova Scotia?

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly our government recognizes that to provide good jobs for women they need to have the appropriate training and education, and we've invested millions of dollars to encourage women to look at the best possible opportunities for lifelong careers. We're certainly encouraging women and other marginalized groups, people with disabilities, members of Aboriginal communities, and African-Canadian citizens to take full advantage of educational opportunities. Certainly we're seeing more women interested in the trades. Giving women a solid foundation in terms of education and training will give them choices in life and allow them to take part in the prosperity which we know is coming our way.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, we need our young people to stay in this province. They can't do that if they're weighed down by student debt and grim job prospects. When faced with an increase in unemployment of over 50 per cent, young women are left wondering how they're going to make ends meet as the cost of living rises. It is increasingly difficult for young people to justify staying here in Nova Scotia as unemployment climbs.

Will the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act tell us today what she thinks young women should do when they are faced with growing student debt, rising costs of living, and dire employment options?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, certainly we inherited the poorest student assistance package in Canada. We have invested over \$90 million in the last two budget years to make post-secondary education more affordable in this province. We are the first government to bring in a debt cap. We also have allowed students to work and keep more of their money while they're supporting themselves through post-secondary institutions, the training and education. We've increased the allowances for books and living expenses. We have

improved the affordability factors in this province, and we are starting to see the results of that. We're giving opportunity to people who didn't have it before.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, women and families in Nova Scotia are feeling left behind by this government. While the NDP could easily find nearly a half-billion dollars to hand out to corporations, funding to public education and universities was slashed, women's centres are going broke, services for breast cancer screening are shrinking, the Maintenance Enforcement Program is underfunded and has lost most of its employees, and more women and their families are going to food banks.

Women in Nova Scotia want to know, how is it that this NDP Government has a blank cheque for corporations, but is nickel-and-diming the very programs on which women and their families rely?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, this government has invested over \$300 million in the last three years to help vulnerable citizens in this province, and that's the most investment in low-income people that I think any government has ever done. We are being strategic. We understand that this province has inherited a very difficult structural and budget deficit, and we are making sure that taxpayers' money is invested as wisely as possible, very strategically, to give people opportunity and hope.

As I said earlier, we are starting to turn the corner. We're giving that, and people really appreciate the fact that we are using a balanced approach that both respects the taxpayers' ability to pay and the need for training and investment in young people's futures. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ERDT - MINAS BASIN PULP & POWER EMPLOYEES: MIN. - MEET

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, last week in response to a question about the announcement that 135 Nova Scotians who work at Minas Basin Pulp and Power would be out of work by the end of the year, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism chose to score a cheap political point at their expense by reading a quote from seven years ago. Finally the minister said, "We will be there. We are there to provide support to those individuals, those workers at Minas Basin Pulp and Power. We will be there." I will table that from Hansard.

My question to the minister is, Minas Basin Pulp and Power families are worried. What plan has the minister made to support those individuals? When, where, and with whom will he meet?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I remember very well what I said. My first comments were that my thoughts were with the men, the women, and their families who

lost jobs at the Hantsport facility. I went on to say that there is a transition team in place that is meeting with employees to chart out best strategies in a go-forward way.

Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly willing - and I think this government has proven itself, under the leadership of our Premier, that when crises hit, we are there. You know, that will continue to be the way of this government, we will be there.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, last year the minister's department produced a document called *The Statement of Mandate*, and I'll table that document. In the minister's message in that document the minister writes, "Through our work with businesses, we have reaffirmed that jobsHere is the right plan to lay the foundation for success in every corner of Nova Scotia."

I'm here to tell you, Mr. Minister and Mr. Speaker, that the foundation is crumbling poorly. What exactly will the minister do to make sure the employees of Minas Basin Pulp and Power are not just more sad statistics in the minister's dismal job creation record?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as I have gotten on my feet time and time again and I've said that since we came into power, we've created 7,600 jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia. We work very closely with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education have been, and always will be, part of any transition team that moves forward with respect to displaced workers.

Again, our hearts go out to these individuals and their families and again, reiteration, we've proven time and time again that in time of need, this government will be there, under the leadership of the Premier.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, in his message in that document I tabled, the minister boasts several times of the groundwork he has done to support economic opportunities in the province. He concludes by saying, "Today more than ever, I am confident in what the future holds for Nova Scotia." I know 135 families who don't share his confidence and who are afraid of what the future holds for them in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, will the minister commit today to coming to Hantsport and agreeing to meet with the long list of stakeholders who are coming together in support of these families? I'll table that list right here. We've already been working on that.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as I've already said, through this government there is a transition team in place that not only involves Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, but obviously Labour and Advanced Education is playing a very key and vital role. We have people on the ground. We have the RDA that's there that I've already been in touch with. He sent me some information. They are meeting with the families and with the individuals.

If people want to meet with me - and one of the things that I say outside of this House and I'll say inside this House, I think in the almost four years that I've been a Minister of the Crown, I think I've proven my accessibility time and time again. I think the member for Hants West, who is asking the questions, can't deny that any time he has requested a meeting with me, I've always been there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

NAT. RES.: DFO OFFICE MOVE - DIGBY CONSULTATION

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The idea to move the Department of Natural Resources office in Digby to the new proposed DFO office in Cornwallis may have a negative effect on the delivery of services in that area. This decision seems to have been made quickly, with no input from anyone from the Municipality of Digby.

I heard the Premier speak earlier in Question Period, saying he had the blessings of the municipality's CEO for putting the Department of Fisheries there, but not the Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, what consultations did the minister have with the Municipality of Digby before this decision was made to move the DNR office out of Digby County into Annapolis County?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for the question. We consulted widely in the community. There were meetings held with the warden with the Municipality of Digby and the warden with the Municipality of Clare, and also the mayor of the Town of Digby. We had discussions with those folks.

I also met personally with the warden from Digby County, the Honourable Linda Gregory, and so there was good consultation. It's a cost-saving measure bringing all three government departments together in one spot. It is going to save money, and it's also going to be a much more efficient operation.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I want to table a memo from the Municipality of Digby which outlines several concerns about the DNR move to Cornwallis, and I want to give one quote from it: "Areas of immediate concern include increased fire response time, extra costs to deliver essential regional services such as parks maintenance . . . and the negative impact of access to DNR staff by Digby County residents."

There are more quotes in there. Two of these DNR offices will be in Annapolis County and none in the Digby and Clare area. My question is, did the NDP Government consider these immediate concerns by the municipality, and if so, why are they still planning to move this office to Cornwallis?

MR. PARKER: Again, as I mentioned, we did consult widely with wardens and the mayor of the Town of Digby, but in actual fact there is a cost saving here because the DNR facility in Hillgrove is more than 50 years old. It needs a lot of repair, a lot of maintenance - somewhere in the area of \$0.75 million just to repair it, and probably about \$1.6 million to replace. By moving into one facility in Cornwallis, there is a cost saving and many benefits to all three departments and to the people of the area.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'll also table a letter from the municipality, and I want to read one quote out of that: "To our understanding the only rationale for considering the relocation is to assist the business case of the April 30, 2012 decision to move Provincial Fisheries staff to the Digby/Annapolis area."

So my question to the minister is, is the minister uprooting the DNR office in Digby and moving it to Cornwallis simply to make a business case for the NDP Government's snap decision to move the Fisheries and Aquaculture office to that area?

MR. PARKER: There are many cost savings to moving this Department of Natural Resources to Cornwallis, and the distance in time is very little. I understand it's about three minutes in the difference between Hillgrove and Cornwallis, so it's almost insignificant in that regard. The fire service will be about equally serviced as well, so there is very little difference. Plus it's going to save that \$1.6 million capital investment, and it provides efficiencies of all three departments working closely together.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC.: SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS - NUMBERS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. According to the Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia, one in 10 people have some form of learning disability. According to Autism Nova Scotia, the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder grew at an alarming rate in the last 20 years, jumping from one in 1,000 students in the 1990s to one in 110 students today.

My question to the Minister of Education is, how many students do we currently have in our public education system that have identified special needs?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: The information that is being requested is information that I will need to ask the boards to supply to the Department of Education.

MS. CASEY: Parents of special needs students who are entering our public school system have told us that they are terrified. They are watching how this government is ignoring the needs of their children. What they need from the minister is a commitment to adequately support programs and services for students with special needs. The minister will tell us that funding for special education has increased; teachers and parents are telling us

it's not enough. More students with more needs are being identified and funding to meet those needs is simply not there.

So my question to the minister is, when will the minister admit that the funding for special needs students - that there are students whose needs are unmet and that these students are falling through the cracks?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the situation with our students and children in the province with autism. The former government, when they were in power, had a lottery system for children before they went to school to get the early intervention; this government funds every child who is diagnosed with autism before they come to school. Every child gets the support that they need before coming to school.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, when this question was asked in estimates, the minister struggled with the answer. When it was asked in Question Period earlier, she struggled with the answer. When she was asked by the media, she struggled with the answer - and she still is.

The funding of which the minister speaks is not into public schools. I'm talking about the needs of our special needs students who are in public school who are feeling they are underfunded. The question that I'm asking is on behalf of parents and teachers and students in this province and they recognize that the funding is inadequate. They are asking this minister to adequately fund the needs of their special children.

My question to the minister is, when will the minister stand up for those students with special needs and when will she adequately fund programs and services, not only that they need, but that they deserve?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, this government stands up for all of our children in this province, all of our special needs children and we protected our special needs funding for the students in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, since we only have a few seconds left, I'm not going to divulge my question today.

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, would you please call Bill No. 97.

Bill No. 97 – Fairer Power Rates Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to take a couple of minutes to wrap up my comments from yesterday.

We were talking about the fact that this bill includes a number of provisions that were in the Ratepayer Protection Bill, especially the audit and so forth and the spending review, and I noted that the Premier and the minister had spoken against such a provision before. Of course, on May 15th of this year the Premier said that the audits are done regularly and that there is no need to do it - and I will table that.

On May 10th, the Premier again said that the Utility and Review Board already had the power, and then on November 10th, in the session before that, the Premier said that again there was an ability to do those audits - and those are all, of course, recorded in Hansard, and I will table those.

The fact is that time and time again for over a year, the Premier and the Minister of Energy insisted on the record that the Utility and Review Board had the power to conduct spending reviews, and now they're forced into introducing legislation to allow the board to do something which they should have known at the time they had no ability to do. This is time and time again that the government isn't even reading the bills that the Opposition puts forward, and that's obvious in some of the statements and claims that the government has made about the bills of Opposition Parties, in this case because they're the only ones who seem to believe their spin on them, and actually even some of their own staffers on-line aren't believing the NDP spin, in some cases.

So, Madam Speaker, if the Premier or the Minister of Energy had actually checked with the board before spending a year making those statements, they might have introduced this legislation - or just adopted ours, since the wording is very similar - a year ago, and these measures would already be before the board at this time. We are in a situation now where, if you look at the filings that have been tabled here before of Statistics Canada and the National Energy Board, depending on which calculation we use, we've either the highest or the second highest power rates in the country.

If you look at the Vital Signs report for the capital city, HRM, which was released just the other day, in comparing the average monthly electricity bill against other cities in the country, Halifax has the highest in the country and that is after having the highest usage of energy-efficient appliances in the country. So they have the highest bill and yet they have the highest energy efficiency, or the highest energy efficiency use. It doesn't make any sense. We should actually have lower bills but our rates are so much higher that it keeps us up there. I will table that as well.

Madam Speaker, this is an important issue. There are many other things that could be done, but the fact of the matter is that what has happened here, this bill does nothing to deal with the multiplicity of hearings before the board. It exempts all the other hearings. The minister will stand up in his remarks and say, well, it's all about the fuel costs, and the fuel costs are a major part of it, but the fact of the matter is the minister's own bill actually permits all the fuel hearings to continue. So if the minister actually believes that the major problem with Nova Scotia Power is the fuel costs - and I grant you it's one of them - but if he believes that's the only issue at Nova Scotia Power causing rates to increase, then he doesn't understand what's going on at the Utility and Review Board at the moment. He doesn't understand that Nova Scotia Power has a provision under the fuel adjustment mechanism to actually file for those increases and is required to file for those adjustments annually, through that hearing process.

They have filed for a general rate application because they are looking for increases that go beyond fuel and the way it's worded, his bill does not prohibit those increases. It doesn't change those hearings and so all of the increases that are related to fuel will still be made every single year. The fact is, when Nova Scotia Power went in, this is exactly what they asked for, to have that established.

So, do you know what, Madam Speaker? There are a number of provisions in this bill that obviously we are supportive of because they mirror exactly what we introduced a year ago that the minister and the Premier fought so hard against for a year. So we're glad that they finally changed their tune on that, obviously we are. What we're concerned about is that many of the remaining provisions in this bill don't address anything until after 2015 when we're already being hit with the potential on a number of other measures such as the unknowns around Muskrat Falls, such as the unknowns around what's going to happen with some of the other fuel costing issues, the unknowns around energy supply and how it's impacted in different ways by the economy going up or down.

This, Madam Speaker, is a serious issue and there is much more that needs to be done. We will continue to wait and I'll have a lot more to say on this, probably at third reading as we see what adjustments get made and what else the minister and the Premier are willing to introduce in this respect. The fact is the minister went down to that hearing and he made a statement and left that room with everybody under the impression that he was going to do something to impact this rate hearing. The board chairman, Peter Gurnham, asked him directly whether it was going to impact this hearing, and he left

everybody with the feeling that it was going to impact these rate increases, but the fact is this bill does not do that.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity, yesterday and today, to say a few words about this and I look forward to continuing to speak to this as it moves forward. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand and spend a few moments talking to Bill No. 97. You know, I think most of us can agree that power rates and power rate policy are very important topics on the minds of most Nova Scotians. I think any of us who have the opportunity to travel around our constituencies and even other areas of the province, the Tim Hortons talk is how power rates are getting a little out of hand, and where people are having trouble understanding the bill, why it's going up, and trying to find avenues in which to pay for those bills.

One thing that this government tends to shy away from as this discussion rolls out is a lack of admitting that during the last three years power rates have gone up by 25 per cent. That is creating true hardship to Nova Scotians, whether you're talking to the seniors who are having trouble taking care of the older homes - I know in my constituency and many of the other constituencies in rural Nova Scotia, many of the older homes that are owned by our seniors are far from efficient, and whether they're heating them with oil or with electricity, all of those costs are causing an undue hardship on them. When they're on fixed incomes, whether they're receiving Old Age Pension, their actual grants, it's very difficult for them to carve up that fixed income when part of that component continues to rise.

Not only is that happening in energy - and I'll continue on with the bill in a second - but also because of that energy cost, not just energy on electricity but energy costs all around, when it's transport of our goods to our grocery stores, whether it's transport of goods for other reasons, whether it's the electricity that is being burned by our supermarkets in order to keep the products fresh and cool and cold - all of these things are transferring into and affecting the pocketbooks of all Nova Scotians.

Many Nova Scotians - too many people - are being faced with the decision to move out west or stay here, to compete with hundreds of other unemployed Nova Scotians for those few jobs that do become available. Power rates are a big contributor to the economic conditions that have forced more businesses to lay off workers or to businesses' reluctance to set up shop here, for fear that they may not be able to be successful.

If we look at the different possibilities that we would have in many parts of our province, electricity is a big cost when it comes to either light manufacturing or even just if you're running a Home Hardware, keeping those lights on throughout the day and then as summer and Fall turn into winter, to be able to heat those facilities. So electricity plays a

huge part to the economy of Nova Scotia, and one that I think warrants a little more importance on the list of things to do by this government.

Now the bill that is before us, Bill No. 97, does many things that both Opposition Parties have talked about over the last number of years in different iterations of bills that have been introduced into this House of Assembly. Throughout the process of hearings with Nova Scotia Power, with the Utility and Review Board, many times these issues have come forward.

Now it seems to me that it wasn't that long ago that the Premier of the province was standing up and saying, there is nothing I can do - with his trademark shrug - there's nothing I can do, that's Nova Scotia Power. It's just funny that it was heard at the eleventh hour that the Minister of Energy ended up coming to the URB hearing and saying that we're going to be freezing the rate. Actually, I think freezing the rate is a loose interpretation of what he came to introduce that night. It was more that we will limit the growth or limit the increases to something a little more phony.

The Minister of Energy told the URB, "First, pending adoption by the Board of a multi-year rate settlement from this hearing, the NDP will legislate that no further rate increase can take effect before 2015." That was the announcement at the URB.

The bill that is before us states, ". . . prevents NSPI from being granted any further general rate increases, excluding an increase resulting from its existing application before the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, that take effect sooner than January 1, 2015 . . ." Let's be clear, pending approval of the board means power rates will be increasing in 2013 and 2014, so that's not quite what the minister had tried to communicate the night of the URB meeting.

The current rate application before the board is for rate increases in 2013 and 2014 and there would be no other rate increase by 2015 anyway. The assertion by the government is somehow freezing power rates, I think, and I think our Party and the Opposition Party both think it is very misleading to Nova Scotians, that it's nothing more than an attempt to appear that they're doing something about power rates.

I'm very pleased to see that the minister is finally listening to our caucus and legislating the removal of the Nova Scotia Power executive bonuses from the rate base for good. Many times it seems that Nova Scotians sort of get stuck paying the bill. In this particular case, as those bonuses were paid on infrastructure increases and the such, Nova Scotians didn't want to see, when they were really having trouble paying the bills, to see some folks do so extremely more than others, to see the increases that were coming through there were some that were just unheard of in everybody's regular way of life to hear the increases that Nova Scotia Power was getting. So it's good to see that has been adopted in this piece of legislation.

Again, we've said many times that Opposition Parties, as they introduce bills in this House, let's take those good ideas and turn them into real legislation too. If they can't adopt our bills, well at least take the ideas and put them into a government bill and adopt them and we can know at the end of the day that those are ideas that all of us had a chance to look at.

The concern I do have is with the requirement for multi-year rate applications. Of course, this year Nova Scotia Power has made a multi-year application and I'm worried that the government is mandating multi-year rate increase applications, it adds an extra risk to ratepayers and it could have unintended consequences. The more you force NSPI to make applications based on even further forecast projections, it adds more risk to the cost and to the ratepayers. As they continue to look out, who would have thought in this world that natural gas would be so low, that coal would continue to depreciate or fall in price; all these things have an effect on the rate that Nova Scotians are paying. So the further you forecast out the more susceptible to outside forces that that rate application will become. So let's not go too far out, let's not force to go three or four years down the road as we're doing this.

Looking at those executive salaries, providing guidance is a good thing as well; however, these changes do nothing to address the real hardships that are faced by people who are suffering because of this "bite the bullet" electricity plan. I think as we go along and have this discussion about power rates, it's one that we hear a lot of in our constituencies, one that we need to have some concrete examples or concrete steps to make this better. I think there are a lot of steps that are missed by this legislation. Of course, number one is the lack of return on investment that Nova Scotia Power investors are able to have. Nowhere in today's investment climate are we seeing somewhere close to 9 per cent return on investment, so it's time maybe to look at that and bring that down. That, I think, brings a true savings that could be passed on to Nova Scotia ratepayers.

The other thing is not only to look at large mega-projects. I know we had a discussion in this House not so long ago where we talked about Lower Churchill/Muskat Falls. Okay, the power is a possibility to come from there and to be able to provide us with a stable rate. We don't know what that rate is. We would like to see it. We would like to see a full review done of that. But what of the other options for electricity generation in this House? Can we look at opportunities for more natural gas usage in this province? It is at a historical low, so let's see if we can do something about that. Why not take a facility like Trenton and convert that into natural gas production and provide electricity to Nova Scotians?

As we go down the road of renewables, the best example is this: when our backup power to renewables - so wind is producing a lot of electricity, but we do have fine days in Nova Scotia where the wind is not generating as much electricity as it should, so that needs to be supplemented by another source. We're told that the coal generation stations that we do have need to be kept at a certain level of heat in order to produce electricity, so therefore

we're always spending a little more money than we should, because we can't just turn on a generation station like that immediately. So it's very difficult to use it in the mix.

On the other hand, having natural gas makes a lot more sense, because you can turn that on at a much quicker rate to provide the heat and provide the electricity so that we're able to supplement that green mix, or that energy mix, that I think will stabilize the power rates that we pay as Nova Scotians.

As we look at the larger issues of that - and the third issue of rate stabilization is, let's take electricity from somewhere else; let's buy it from another market. We've heard many times that the interconnection between Nova Scotia through New Brunswick and hooking up to Hydro-Québec is one that can't bring it toward us quite as well, that there need to be upgrades there.

Well, let's look at that as a total comprehensive package to be able to take lower rates. There is a reason why states like New Hampshire and Vermont do get their power from Quebec. It comes at such a cheap rate, so why not provide the infrastructure in order to bring it in so that their states can be used? The same thing would apply here in Nova Scotia. Instead of looking at mega-projects like Muskrat Falls alone, let's compare it across all these other options that will stabilize rates in Nova Scotia.

To finish up, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to finally say that I think bringing this bill to the House does provide us with a glimpse at what this government is interested in looking at. We don't think it's far enough to just look at what they're providing on Bill No. 97; we think there are a number of measures that should be taken to protect Nova Scotians when it comes to power rates and put it so that Nova Scotians are able to make those decisions that are important to them. It's whether to have heat and electricity or to have the other things, which are food and water and those other things that are so important to them too. Don't forget that a lot of our population are on fixed incomes, and we need to find ways to protect them as well. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: It's my pleasure to rise today and speak on this bill that is before us. It's Bill No. 97. It is a government bill entitled the Fairer Power Rates Act.

Right off the bat, Madam Speaker, I think it's important to say that there is a better bill that is on the docket that could have been called, and that's Liberal Bill No. 45, the Ratepayer Protection Act. The Ratepayer Protection Bill has a lot more teeth in it. It has a lot more detail, and it covers more ways that would actually help ratepayers and help lower the cost to Nova Scotians who are paying high bills - higher than ever - for power here in the Province of Nova Scotia.

In just the last three years alone, since the NDP Government was elected in June 2009, the cost of power has increased 25 per cent to the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. In one year alone, I think it was last year, it went up over 9 per cent in a single year and this year, just to put it all into context, we are right at this time having the URB looking at a rate application from Nova Scotia Power for 3 per cent in 2013 and another 3 per cent in 2014, right there making it a multi-year application, which could see our rates go up 6 per cent.

This bill before us, Bill No. 97, is very careful not to step on the toes of Nova Scotia Power, not to infringe on that current application of 3 per cent this coming January and 3 per cent again the year after. It has protections built in that will begin in 2015 and that is very small comfort to the Nova Scotians who just saw 9 per cent increase last year and are now faced with another 6 per cent facing them in the coming year and a half. The bill really is an effort to address public concern. It's a response from the government to what they're hearing, I'm sure, in every area of the province and that is that the rates and the Nova Scotia Power increases are simply not acceptable and people are angry and they're ready to raise Cain about it. They've had enough of this.

This bill really is a Johnny-come-lately effort to address some of that anger and to try to pretend that the Government of Nova Scotia, the NDP Government, is actually doing something about it. If we look at the details of the bill, we are going to find that there is very little in here that is going to impact anything to do with power rates. Again, going back to the title, which I think is misleading - Fairer Power Rates Act - it's going to be some time before any of this would even come into play. We're talking about 2015 on the actual rates themselves and that is too late.

Madam Speaker, you are aware, I'm sure, of the petition that was started on-line last Spring by Archie Stewart in Port Hawkesbury, a Nova Scotian who simply decided that enough is enough and that people have to stand up and speak up when they feel they're being abused and taken advantage of by a large corporation and that is just what he did by starting an on-line petition with 30,000 signatories.

Now I realize that wasn't accepted here in the House, given our rules about on-line petitions, but it speaks volumes. Whether or not we accept it here, 30,000 Nova Scotians - in fact it was more than that - but that number of Nova Scotians taking even a moment to read the petition and to sign that on-line shows the anger that people are feeling. Here in the House, in the last number of days, we've had the member for Kings West introducing a petition calling on the government to step in, to use its powers to stop these 2013 and 2014 rate application increases; don't allow them, that's what the petition is calling for, and we've seen a number of those introduced here in the House.

I mention those petitions because they are really a weather vane. They are a barometer to show us that the public is upset and angry and that these increases are hurting people in every community. The government can't continue to simply say that taking the provincial tax off power bills was enough. It simply wasn't enough. After taking off the

provincial tax, the HST portion that was provincial - I think the value of that was around \$70 million, total - when that came off, that's great, but now in the meantime the cost of energy efficiency programs have been downloaded to the ratepayers. That goes a long way to negating any good that came from the reduction in the provincial power rates.

The cost of that Efficiency Nova Scotia tax is \$46 million and I think it's important for us to note where that came from initially. There was an organization called Conserve Nova Scotia. I'm sure Nova Scotians love the fact that we rename the organizations and suddenly, by rebranding, think they are something entirely new. Conserve Nova Scotia was started under the Progressive Conservative Government and it began to offer programs and incentives for people who were adding improvements to their home to be more energy efficient. It gave information and guidance to business and was helping homeowners and business to try to reduce their cost of energy and at the same time help the environment. We really support that.

Here on the Liberal benches there is no question that we support the intent of it, whether you call it Conserve Nova Scotia or Efficiency Nova Scotia, in helping Nova Scotians to conserve energy and to be more environmentally responsible. It saves people money. It helps Nova Scotia Power because they will not have to build new plants, or at least not new ones, to meet demand that they didn't have the capacity for. It's going to help the province as well because it means you're moving towards achieving the sustainability goals that we have set out. So they're good reasons to have an Efficiency Nova Scotia organization, but under the Progressive Conservatives it was part of the Energy Department and it was part of the bureaucracy. So, obviously, there was a cost to government to run that department.

Now what has happened under the NDP is something that I believe, in the previous election, the NDP said they were not in favour of, and that was spinning it off, taking it out of the government bureaucracy of the Department of Energy where we have some control over it, creating an arm's-length organization called Efficiency Nova Scotia, instead of Conserve Nova Scotia, and now taking the cost of that and putting it on the backs of the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. So now this organization has grown substantially. I don't have the exact costs, but I know that its staffing component had doubled in the time that it went from being part of the Energy Department to becoming a separate arm's-length organization. So we have twice as many people working in that area and the cost has gone up to \$46 million and, you know, I'm not sure where it's headed except up and up and up on the backs of Nova Scotian ratepayers. That's what we can expect there.

So the Liberal Party, the Liberal caucus has said very loudly that that energy cost is a tax to Nova Scotian ratepayers and it should be taken off our energy bills. If the benefit is to Nova Scotia Power for us to control our demand for energy, then it should come out of their profits, not off the ratepayers. In other words, the shareholders should be paying for that cost. It was sold to us, and the arguments that Efficiency Nova Scotia gives, that this will actually help Nova Scotia Power to avoid some gigantic costs in the near future of

building more power plants, and so the argument is it's cheaper for us to conserve energy than to simply expand our production and keep meeting that insatiable demand for energy.

So, as I said, from an environmental perspective, I support it 100 per cent, but let's look at how Efficiency Nova Scotia programs work. I think almost every program offered by Efficiency Nova Scotia is a rebate program and, Madam Speaker, that means that you have to have the money in your pocket up front to pay for the improvements to your home or your business and then you go to the Efficiency Nova Scotia organization, show them your receipts and you get a rebate on a portion of what you've spent. As I say, that's a help to businesses who are trying to conserve energy and save money as well on power. It does help homeowners who are doing that, but it doesn't help the people who need it the most and those are the people who don't have hundreds of dollars in the bank to put in new doors and windows, or add insulation, or improve their roofs, or do all the things that can make their homes more energy efficient.

If you don't have the money up front, you're not going to get the help from Efficiency Nova Scotia and that's something that we object to because those people who are being squeezed and don't have the money in their pocket to take advantage of these programs are still paying their share of the efficiency tax. That works out to I think about \$53 on average per ratepayer a year. That may not sound like a lot to some of us, but \$53 a year added to all of those bills of people who get no benefit back from Efficiency Nova Scotia is a lot of money. I think it's really a travesty because those people are not getting a benefit for the amount that they're putting into that program and, again, because it's being funded now through ratepayers and the examination of Efficiency Nova Scotia now goes through the URB, we have a lot less control over the growth of that organization.

As we all know, the URB process is an expensive, complex process to go before the board and be part of those hearings. The Liberal caucus has been an intervener at every one of the rate hearings in the last three years. I know that our Energy Critic has been at every single one and other members of our caucus as well and, you know, we have a true sense of how much work is involved in following this issue and in being a participant at those hearings.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us, Bill No. 97, is doing really nothing to address this huge cost to Nova Scotians on the efficiency tax. The government is, as I say, scrambling. This is an exact example of scrambling to make it look like something is happening on the government side of the House in terms of responding to public concern over rising power rates.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to look at a few of the items in this bill. It was of interest to us about how the bill came to be because the Energy Minister himself was not an intervener at the Utility and Review Board hearings but presented himself as an individual, as the member for Pictou West, I believe, presented himself at those hearings and then

made some announcements that indicated a bill would be coming forth and that government was going to do something about these issues.

It's interesting that some of the very things that the government has shown disdain for in the last year or so - as the Liberals have suggested these changes - these are the very same items that the government has introduced in their bill. First and foremost would be the requirement now for what is described in the bill as an independent savings review for NSPI. So that means that - I'm not sure if it's every year or on years when there isn't a rate hearing - the Utility and Review Board could get an independent savings review from some consultant or expert who could come forth and examine the costs of running NSPI. (Interruption)

Now we have to be careful, too, because my colleague just mentioned that the Liberty consultant was highly criticized by Nova Scotia Power for their findings. They were quite happy with them on some earlier reports, when everything looked good, but when they actually found something amiss at Nova Scotia Power, basically the company raised Cain and has spent millions of dollars trying to debunk what was reported in that independent review.

We need to have that independence, Madam Speaker. We need to have experts who we can send in to examine Nova Scotia Power because they are largely unexamined. They really have so much power to do what they like. They have a huge number of lawyers and experts that they tromp out for each of these hearings. There was a figure given that a hearing before the Utility and Review Board can cost \$2 million in expert time and preparation for that.

In the past I've been to these hearings where you'll see the lawyers come in and they literally have little bookcases on wheels, they're wheeling in so many binders full of information and background. It's very difficult for the people who are there who are supposed to represent small business or are to represent the consumers, where we do have a consumer advocate, very difficult for them to keep pace with the kind of expensive consultants and expensive experts and lawyers that the NSPI can bring forth for each of these rate hearings. That's why we need an independent review.

I support that in the government's bill, absolutely, but Madam Speaker, I'd like to know how that differs from a performance audit or a value for money audit that the Liberal Party has been calling for, for over two years. That has been something we said is needed, that Nova Scotia Power needs to have its whole operations examined. When we suggested that, we were told it's too expensive, that it's unnecessary, that Nova Scotia Power is already audited.

By simply saying - and we heard in this very House and it can be found in Hansard - where the Premier said, oh, they're already audited. We don't need to have a performance or value for money audit. That shows a lack of understanding, Madam Speaker, because a

performance audit or a value for money audit is similar to what we see here at Public Accounts in this Chamber. That's what the auditors of our province do when they go into a department. They're not just looking at the debits and credits and checking the columns of numbers, they're looking at what things are being purchased, whether or not we're getting the right outcomes for the money that's being spent. That's what it means, value for money; when we commit money to a certain program or project, are we getting the benefit that was expected?

Madam Speaker, that's what we were calling for. Are we getting value? For example, right now Nova Scotia Power executives are housed in a beautiful, new, waterfront building that they renovated. I think it originally was supposed to be about \$60 million, and I've heard a figure closer to \$100 million, but even if we take their original estimate of \$60 million, it was a huge investment over staying in office space in downtown Halifax.

What's interesting about them investing in this complete redevelopment of what was once a power plant itself is that that adds - that \$60 million to \$100 million that they spent in renovations - to their asset base and each and every one of their ratepayers is paying a rate of return on investment of 9.2 per cent, now, on these very fancy offices that the Nova Scotia Power executives are housed in. We really didn't need that. When they were renting it was an expense; now that they own the building it becomes part of their asset base. It's a win-win for them. They couldn't go wrong - they make 9.2 per cent back.

It doesn't matter if it was a good decision or a bad decision to upgrade their buildings. The fact is, though, if you look at major corporations today, they are not building their own headquarters. That's something that's quite passé in the corporate world. They don't want to own their own buildings as a rule, because it's a lot more effective to lease a building. Maybe that's why the government is leasing in Cornwallis. I'm not sure. We wondered why they wouldn't simply buy the building at \$160,000-some rather than renting it for \$200,000-plus every single year for 10 years. It's because the government must think there's a better reason for leasing over owning.

I know that corporations are preferring to lease because there's a lot more flexibility and it's a much better decision, but not when you get a guaranteed rate of return of 9.2 per cent on everything that you own. So it's in their best interest to own lots of stuff, whether it's productive or not, whether it does provide value to the ratepayers or to the company - they don't have to pay attention to that.

I think that if we had that independent review, as the government likes to call it, or a performance audit, a value-for-money audit as the Liberal Party called for, we'd be a lot further ahead today. That could have been done. That could have been set in motion more than a year ago if the government hadn't been dug in defending Nova Scotia Power in everything that they do. That's been the position of the government.

That was only the first point in the bill. There's another point in the bill that is, again, smoke and mirrors. It says that no general rate increase would be allowed sooner than two years after one is already granted. You're basically saying you can't have back-to-back years with power increases. Again, that doesn't become effective until 2015, as I said a few minutes ago. Waiting until 2015 means you're accepting the next two years of increases that are going to come and hit Nova Scotians in their pocketbook.

One of the things that's most disturbing is that, as much as this is hurting individuals, it is really crippling our economy to have some of the most expensive power rates in the country. I think we have the second-highest power rates in the country. How can we possibly encourage business? How can we see businesses like any number of them that have floundered here? How can they thrive when the cost of power is so great? I'm sure it's been a factor in the closure of Minas Basin Pulp and Power. It certainly was in Bowater.

When we go back to the efficiency tax, it's interesting to note that in the agreement that was struck with the new owners of the Port Hawkesbury plant, they are exempt from paying for the energy efficiency tax that the rest of us have to bear. That is simply not fair, but it's a reflection on the high cost of doing business in this province. The government's coming up with ad hoc answers, just like they did in that instance, to try to address it, to give one big user of power an exemption when all the little guys are going to keep on paying. For one thing, it doesn't sound even a little bit like the NDP that we know - or thought we knew - to actually give the break to the big corporation and to still continue to leave the small individuals, the low-income people, struggling to pay that charge.

As I say, the clause that says that there won't be any general rate increases before 2015 is malarkey, really. It's just malarkey. The fact of the matter is, we're looking at rate applications right now for 6 per cent before that date. I really don't even know how the government has the audacity to put that in a bill. They must think people are not thinking and are not going to examine what's here. It was obviously done on the fly and very poorly crafted, to say so.

People are smarter than that. They know what's in the press today. They know the applications are coming. They know there are very likely going to be two increases before 2015. It's very meaningless is what I'm trying to say. It has no meaning at all. It's not going to help anybody in the interim two years.

Madam Speaker, there's a point here on executive salaries. I'm going to move on to that, because there's a lot we can say about power. I know the afternoon is only really just beginning on the debate on this bill. The bill calls for executive salaries to be more transparent, to be reported. We like that idea.

Madam Speaker, not long ago the Nova Scotia Power executives boasted that they had cut their numbers from 12 at the very top echelon of the company to eight and they said

that was really fantastic because they were trimming, and again we come back to the need for a value-for-money audit, because when you peeled back a few layers of the onion on that question and started to examine it, what you found was they had, yes indeed, dropped their numbers from 12 to eight but they had not changed their executive compensation total at all, which just meant that they took that amount of money and divided it up among eight people instead of 12 people. It just meant the eight people got more money every year and, you know, if you just listened to the first statement, it sounded good, a paring down of the number of top executives.

A little bit of examination shows that Nova Scotia Power just doesn't get it. They don't get that they've been living and acting like fat cats essentially in our Province of Nova Scotia, which is a province with a lot of economic stresses. I mean no one knows that better than those who are sitting in government - on the government side of the House; there are a lot of economic challenges in this province. In the midst of that we have a power company that takes \$100 million a year from Nova Scotians because Nova Scotian ratepayers are like a cash cow, that \$100 million a year over the last 10 years is \$1 billion that has been invested by the parent company of Nova Scotia Power in all kinds of other jurisdictions, in the Caribbean, in the United States, Maine. They are owners of Bangor Power. They've invested in all kinds of other power companies and have done it on the backs of their original holding which was Nova Scotia Power.

We are less than one million people in this province and we're sending \$100 million a year out into other investments in other places. That is not to the benefit of the ratepayers of Nova Scotia and a guaranteed rate of return of 9.2 per cent is not a guarantee. You know, it's a travesty. Whoever set it up, it's a travesty. I'm sure many people bought shares in Nova Scotia Power when it was first available - was it in 1992 or something like that? It was the Progressive Conservatives that first privatized that - exactly. That might have been some but there's one shareholder today and that's Emera.

If you can't undo the past, you can certainly look at a more meaningful bill to deal with the expenses of Nova Scotia Power today, the fact that they are occupying palatial offices and just because they own them, we pay a 9.2 per cent rate of return on that to their pocket. How can that be justified? I would have loved to have switched power companies because I wasn't happy with the offices they occupied, Madam Speaker. I think a lot of us would have because that was such an affront. Now they've got beautiful offices, we don't have to go there, but it's just an example that meant nothing to the ratepayers about where they were housed as long as the work is getting done, as long as there are some efficiencies in the organization.

You know, at the same time we read about them having lavish awards parties and simply living the high life. I don't think that's acceptable. It has been brought up here in the House that the executives of Nova Scotia Power are paid more than the executives of Hydro-Québec. It's a much larger organization in Quebec, millions more people in Quebec, and here in little Nova Scotia with less than a million people - and I'm not sure

how many accounts that would amount to but a lot less than a million accounts - they can pay themselves more than the executives of Hydro-Québec. It's pretty astounding and Nova Scotians have had enough. That's why, you know, moving on to the section on compensation, it is important that into this bill has gone an element that would mean we'll control at least what the ratepayers are responsible for in the way of compensation.

So the bill says that executive salaries will be now reported and made transparent and that they will be tied to the amount of money we pay our deputy ministers in government here, and that's a pretty good income for the deputy ministers in our province. So given that, they will be considerably curtailed in terms of what ratepayers have to pay. I think we read that that would save - well, it's a very significant amount of money each year. Actually it says a savings of more than \$500,000 from being charged to ratepayers each year. You know, one might have thought it would be higher than that but at any rate, that ties the executive salaries to a deputy minister's salary.

Also, we know that the current way that Nova Scotia Power does business includes a lot of bonuses and incentives and incentive compensation to their senior management. That can no longer come from ratepayers, as well, if this bill passes because, you know, we agree that if you're going to choose to give, again, lavish and large bonuses in executive compensation, that should come from the shareholders, not from the ratepayers who are struggling under the burden of their costs.

Madam Speaker, I think that's one of the big issues we have to face, that the independent businesses and the small homeowners and people on fixed incomes are definitely struggling with their costs of power. I think each one of us can point to our own house and say that no matter how hard you're trying to save, your bill has gone up a lot. I know that's true in my house as well.

Madam Speaker, the NDP have formed government now for the last three years; the cost of power has risen by 25 per cent in that time. It did rise during the years of the NDP, but it has gone up significantly, and when you add on the \$53 a year that comes from the demand-side management charge - which is what the government likes to call it and which is essentially the cost to run that \$46 million organization, Efficiency Nova Scotia - that adds a significant increase to individuals.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us, Bill No. 97, really is a very feeble attempt to curtail some of the lavish spending and costs that have been passed on to ratepayers, individuals in Nova Scotia. It's trying to address a few of the wrongs. If I have one major criticism of it, it is the clause that talks about no increases will be allowed before 2015, except those that are currently before us, which is a very silly clause in this bill. It should never have been put in because it is, in fact, insulting to the people of Nova Scotia because, as I said, just scratching the surface will show you that it is meaningless, that it is trying to really confuse Nova Scotians. (Interruptions) It is absolutely trying to confuse Nova Scotians.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance across the way has a few comments about this, but I think that she ought to consider a few things that are quite pertinent. The efficiency tax was something that the Government of Nova Scotia said they would not put onto the ratepayers of our province, and they have done so - that's number one.

In 2002, Madam Speaker, there was a report done that was chaired by Bob Fournier and it was about the electricity marketplace and ideas to improve it. One of the recommendations - I believe it was the 52nd or 51st recommendation - was to open the marketplace to allow competition - to allow independent producers of power to sell their power onto the grid and be able to be players in our energy market; to allow companies or properties that were adjacent to each other, that you could sell if you had a windmill or you produced power on one farm, you could sell it to the farm next to you. All of that isn't allowed right now in Nova Scotia.

When that report came in, and over the ensuing few years, which were my early years here in the Legislature, the NDP were in favour of that clause, they wanted to see that done, but something remarkable has happened in the last three years because now they're against that and they're in favour of the monopoly that is Nova Scotia Power. They don't want to do anything that in any way even takes a little bit of the power away from Nova Scotia Power. They try to, in fact, debunk anything that suggests that it's a better way to go - they try to just be naysayers.

I can tell you, I'm sure we can look and see that that bill was introduced by the NDP, that we should open the marketplace to independent producers. How else are we going to get community involvement? How else are we going to get buy-in for our renewable energies?

People don't want it now because they have no stake in it; they don't get any profit from it. But you look at communities like Berwick, that have their own power companies, and we know that they're 10 per cent cheaper today than what Nova Scotia Power is charging their neighbours next door. That is a compelling reason to go with that argument. The idea that this is deregulation is absolute malarkey, again. We're talking about competition, we're talking about a regulated environment - the regulation remains in the hands of government. We set the rules, but we allow some sensible exchange of power from more producers than just Nova Scotia Power. That's the way you're going to create an element of competition. You're going to be good, as well, for the people of Nova Scotia, better for the environment.

Right now you've got a government that simply defends the kingdom - just defends the kingdom, defends Nova Scotia Power. (Interruptions) We have six municipalities, Madam Speaker, in this province that have a successful model . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: I think that the members in this House know that there are some very ludicrous situations that come up because of the stranglehold that Nova Scotia Power has on the production and distribution of power in this province. They are a monopoly. They are the only game in town and if I don't like them spending \$100 million on their new office towers, I can't choose another producer of power. I have one choice. (Interruption)

Well now, there is a government that has been in power for three years and they are so pathetic, Madam Speaker, they speak about 18 years ago. They love to speak about 18 years in the past, what about the last three years? What about 25 per cent increases in power? That's what's important today. The word, pathetic, I think you might have to look it up Madam Speaker, but I think it's pathetic going back into ancient history and trying to be rude in that regard to other Parties. You have a record of three years. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: Madam Speaker, I wonder if you could tell me how much time is left in my speech today.

MADAM SPEAKER: You have 28 minutes.

MS. WHALEN: Thank you very much, that's very good. Madam Speaker, it is disconcerting to see the upset on the other side of the House, simply listening to the facts, and the facts are that the Efficiency Nova Scotia tax has added \$46 million to Nova Scotian ratepayers. The fact is - and this is an indisputable fact - that an independent savings review proposed in this bill is no more and no less than what we've been calling for, on the Liberal side of this House, for over a year and that is a performance audit of Nova Scotia Power so we know where the spending is.

That's our idea. That's been a good idea and I think a mature government would allow recognition of that and would call it what it is, yes. It's the right way to go but just like we had to change the name of Conserve Nova Scotia to Efficiency Nova Scotia, we are going to change the name of a performance audit to an independent savings review. It's just "wordsmithing", Madam Speaker, it's nothing more, and the government walking away from previous commitments to competition in the workplace and support for environmentally responsible, alternate-energy producers is also something that has gone flying out the window in the last three years while our rates here in this province have increased 25 per cent. That is the record of the current government. That is what has led to the upset of the people of Nova Scotia and that is exactly why this bill is before us.

There are some elements of this bill that I think are good. We need to have that examination of spending. We need to control the amount of executive bonuses and compensation that the ratepayers of Nova Scotia are responsible for, so that's good. If they

want to have higher salaries, it should come out of the shareholders' amount. Our position on the Liberal side of the House is that the efficiency tax should also come from shareholders of Emera and Nova Scotia Power, that's where it should come from.

Madam Speaker, we believe that there should be competition in the marketplace, under regulated conditions, so that we can see some of the foolishness that goes on today eliminated; so that people can do things that are cost-effective and responsible and environmentally helpful; that we can see farmers helping each other by producing power that they share among themselves; that we can see windmills and windmill producers actually helping Nova Scotians rather than each of these independent, smaller, renewable energy companies being strangled by Nova Scotia Power.

I have seen repeatedly over the years that Nova Scotia Power sets the framework for renewable energy in such a way that it is ensured that it will fail. They set the parameters and they go for the lowest-cost bidder. They drive the price down on these renewable projects to the point where, if you are successful winning them, you very soon discover that you can't build them, and then they become an unsuccessful bid and guess what? Nova Scotia Power moves in and they rescue them - they take it over, they move forward with the project, they own it and we all get to pay 9.2 per cent more on our rates to pay them back for more assets in their ownership.

It has been seen time and again - no wonder renewable energy companies from Nova Scotia have gone elsewhere to do business. They've been building windmill farms in the Caribbean and in Ontario, and I know of other places. They're companies from Nova Scotia, they can't do business here at home because of the regulatory framework, because of the stranglehold of Nova Scotia Power, and because of the unwillingness of the Government of Nova Scotia to work with them.

We really should be upset - all of us should be upset to see that we've driven away those kinds of important businesses. I think it is a travesty when you see these very good projects that we need being driven right into the ground, so that the independent or the smaller companies are squashed, and then you get Nova Scotia Power just adding to its asset base and, supposedly, rescuing these projects.

They were resistant to any proper renewable energy. They didn't embrace it, they've come very much dragging their heels into this situation, but they do see an opportunity to expand their asset base and make more money and it's off the very small base of Nova Scotia ratepayers, that less than one million people who are supporting an organization whose executive salary and compensation is more than the Hydro-Québec executives that they would be comparable to - and that is outrageous.

So, Madam Speaker, what it means is that there should be a lot more going on here today than examining just the few elements of Bill No. 97. Bill No. 97 doesn't come close to answering the problems in Nova Scotia Power and the ratepayers of Nova Scotia Power.

With that, Madam Speaker, I look forward to speaking again at third reading. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place and say a few words on Bill No. 97, the Fairer Power Rates Act.

This is a bill that we've actually been talking about for three full years now, giving a great deal of detail on how Nova Scotia Power, the monopoly, needs to be changed. That's one of the responsibilities that actually electors gave the NDP - to change the way Nova Scotia Power was doing its business. Here we are very, very late in the term, after three and a half years, a bill has been brought forward. It's one that is characteristically similar to one that we have already introduced in the Legislature, with a few small variations on what we had been asking for.

In many ways, I call Bill No. 97 panic politics, because we know that most Nova Scotians are very upset at Nova Scotia Power and this is a government that essentially has not challenged Nova Scotia Power; in fact, for three and a half years they have actually stood here in this place, stood here in the Legislature, the people's House, not defending the people of Nova Scotia, but defending Nova Scotia Power Corporation.

We saw that last Spring in the most classic manner when we talked about a rate of return that can go anywhere from 9.1 to 9.5 per cent, a guaranteed rate of return. We came through a difficult economic period when in 2009 there were very, very few investors who got anything - or precious little - above zero per cent, many losing as much as 10, 15, and 20 per cent on investments.

So this really stood out to Nova Scotians and all who struggle to put a few dollars away for RRSPs and saw that for almost a two-year period there was no return on the money they were investing - yet our power utility, unlike those across North America, who are getting perhaps 3, 4, and 5 per cent return, was getting 9.2 per cent for investors. Then on top of that, we had the CEO of Nova Scotia Power receive a 23 per cent salary increase.

As my colleague from Halifax Clayton Park has indeed pointed out, this is well above the range of any kind of increases during this period that we saw across Canada and the United States as well. So a 23 per cent increase, plus bonuses that went over and above the 23 per cent, and then last year we had a 9.4 per cent increase in power rates. It's at this moment where I'd like to talk about the petition that I am now entering in the House.

As I advertised in my riding that I was collecting signatures, people came from many communities - some driving as many as 40 or 50 kilometres to sign this petition - were all hoping to see a change in direction of Nova Scotia Power, but I don't let them

leave the office without telling them the real story. The real story is about a government that has not defended them.

They have not defended Nova Scotians - the 400,000 homeowners who are paying the second-highest rates in the country - because on eight separate occasions during the Spring sitting of the Nova Scotia Legislature, the Premier stood in his place, defended the rate of return, defended the 23 per cent CEO salary increase, defended the bonuses, and defended the 9.4 per cent increase. Well, that doesn't go over well with my constituents and, I am sure, my 51 colleagues here in the House. That truly was over the top, and to be able to show them, through Hansard, that this is exactly what your Premier said - the proof is right there. It can't be denied. It's the climate that presently exists in Nova Scotia that the NDP are now trying to stem that overwhelming discontent with the government they elected and not taking on Nova Scotia Power in any kind of significant way.

In fact, when we take a look at where we are since coming back to Province House for the Fall session, we see that the government now is willing to give full endorsement to the development of Muskrat Falls. Muskrat Falls is very, very controversial, at best. There are many, many unknowns around this development, some of them around the technical challenges. There's no greater challenge for the Nova Scotia ratepayer than not knowing what the cost of Muskrat Falls will be and how it will translate to increases on their power bill. That's an unknown that Nova Scotia ratepayers, I can assure you, are not willing to support this government's decision to support Muskrat Falls.

Do we need clean energy? We all know that, and Nova Scotians are committed, in very strong individual ways, toward saving power in their homes and their workplaces, in community facilities. You know we are making a much greater effort because we all know that the best conservation program is the kilowatt not used. That's the kind of consciousness that we need in the province where a great deal of our power continues to be generated by fossil fuels.

We have made some headway, but I feel that to go down the road to support Emera, to support Nova Scotia Power in developing Muskrat Falls, there are many unanswered questions around that deal that must come forward before we're prepared to support.

At this point in time we need to be looking at that range of renewables that, in fact, is at our disposal. We are not deficient here in our province when it comes to renewable possibilities. If we take a look at the area I represent and just over the North Mountain, when you take a look at the Bay of Fundy, when you get a sense and a feel for the power of the Bay of Fundy, we know that energy beyond our province and indeed, we could, in fact, be an exporter of renewable power.

We know as well that it's a renewable energy that alternates every day by an hour, in terms of what peak production of power and so on would be. We know there are challenges with it, but we know there are countries - you know Ireland, Scotland - that are

using tidal power. They have nowhere near the potential that exists out in the Bay of Fundy. Even the State of Maine has now moved with their first turbine in the water, so we need to look at what's available here in Nova Scotia.

You know if Newfoundland and Labrador is prepared to develop Muskrat Falls, then let them bring the power to our doorstep and then we can certainly be a customer of what they may develop, but in the meantime, let's look no further than what we have available to us. So, along with tidal, geothermal has a great deal of promise in Springhill, the Cumberland area generally. Again, that's another area that we need to be exploring.

I think one of the areas that does need a very strong examination is the use of gas. We know a fossil fuel, the one that burns very, very clean and we need to look at having gas as part of the mix for our energy generation, Madam Speaker. I think if we take a look at the Sable project and now the Encana, you know we once again will derive some economic benefits, but again, if we use gas in our province to create some of the electricity, the energy we need, we would be better off for that. Again, it looks like we're going down the road with the second major gas find, in Deep Panuke, and we're probably not going to be the greatest beneficiaries of that non-renewable resource. In fact, it looks like cheap gas for at least the next half century, based on what has been discovered in eastern North America. Therefore, we should be using our own gas in every possible way, both for the creation of electricity as well as a greater percentage of our homes, our institutions and our facilities where gas can indeed be delivered.

So, when we take a look at getting fairer power rates, I think this bill is, in fact, long overdue. We have now reached a point where power rates are the Achilles heel, not just of the homeowner, but the business community in Nova Scotia, because when the rates continue to go up, the plan is that despite whether this bill is passed, the rate is going to go up. The rate is going to go up in 2013, the rate is going to go up in 2014. If we don't do something about providing competition, it will go up in 2015 and 2016. If we join on to Muskrat Falls, we can be guaranteed the succession of rates for 25 years. It's a very, very costly project, so we need to look at the other renewables that can be brought on stream in our province.

I think one of the areas - and many have talked about this, many have alluded to it in different ways - Nova Scotia Power obviously doesn't like part of what Liberty Consulting is saying when they got some positive feedback about, or I should say the positive things they said in their feedback profile, they certainly like those, but when Liberty Consulting hit them very, very hard, then they brought in a team of lawyers and consultants to fight back.

I think Liberty Consulting confirmed one thing. For at least the past four to five years we have been talking about doing the performance audit of Nova Scotia Power. This is long, long overdue. I think on many occasions the URB - yes, it's a complex application, we all know that, but very quick to give the full amount that Nova Scotia Power was

asking, without taking a look at how, internally, they could sharpen the pencil, that, in fact, they could derive a benefit for the Nova Scotia consumer.

I think those are some of the areas that obviously come to the forefront when we debate a bill called the Fairer Power Rates Act. We have now introduced a number of pieces of legislation that could make an enormous difference in assisting the consumer, the ratepayer of Nova Scotia. That's who we have been standing in our places defending, unlike the Premier and the NDP who consistently have found ways to defend Nova Scotia Power.

You know, maybe that's what happened to the Premier when he flew in the Emera jet at 30,000 feet, that the real conversion took place and there was no way in which he could return to his place in the Legislature and defend Nova Scotia ratepayers and hit hard at Nova Scotia Power to do a better job on our behalf.

I see here that this bill avoids dealing with what Liberty Consulting said was really the weak area of Nova Scotia Power's operation in the last few years, and that was giving us the fuel adjustment mechanism, and, in fact, found that Nova Scotia Power – you know we're not sure if it'll be \$10 million, \$12 million, \$18 million, they're talking about \$22 million more that Nova Scotians have paid through the fuel adjustment mechanism.

Well you know, guess what? The NDP are saying this is a sacred cow of Nova Scotia Power and we're not going to include that in Bill No. 97. We're just going to deal with general rate application and fuel adjustment mechanism. You've got it in place, use it at your will, and because we don't have any competition in the marketplace, then you're bound to pay whatever the rate is.

We all know just how harsh a reality the power bill, the electricity bill, is in our province. I'm sure every MLA gets a call to try to find some assistance. Sometimes we're able to help our constituents get on a budget program. We're able to help them work out how to deal with some of the arrears. I know in my area there are a number of the churches, a number of the service clubs that have helped Nova Scotians. Last year, when the near 10 per cent increase went on, it was a crippling Spring for many families and many seniors on fixed incomes.

So I think we on this side of the House are very well prepared to take on Nova Scotia Power, and we know that the only way is, we can talk here and say, look, the rate of return is too high; the CEO's salary is too high; \$100 million going out of the province is way too much; but really, it's going to be competition. I live in a riding where one community gets their electricity 10 per cent less than I do. They get 10 per cent less, and they are able to produce some of their power and sell it to Nova Scotia Power, but in return, get a better deal. Therefore, I believe that if we get competition, we will see that in a very regulated framework we can get Nova Scotia Power to equal that once we start to get that across the province.

I think we have a very, very easy entry mechanism at the moment, and it's the six independent power commissions that still exist in Nova Scotia. I know the one that's in my riding is now on the verge of signing deals that will produce more power. This can be a vehicle whereby ratepayers, or even an industry - we have industries now that want to produce their own electricity or get a producer that will sell directly to them, and through legislation that is indeed possible to do.

I think we have to have a very, very wide debate on how we move Nova Scotia Power to be more responsive to its citizens, and so that businesses won't stop at the border. Businesses will find Nova Scotia a very attractive place on many levels. We have the benefit of one of Canada's most outstanding community college systems, a university system, and I believe if we have a competitive electricity framework for Nova Scotians, we will attract more business here. But until we create that climate, we can't put a rider into businesses as we try to attract them here - oh, by the way, we do have the second-highest rates in the country; keep that in mind. I think that will curtail many from taking a look at our province.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are probably a few others who would like to offer some thoughts and debate the fair rate bill, Bill No. 94. It comes really a bit late in the game for this government to work on fairer rate after defending Nova Scotia Power for the past three and half years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I want to congratulate my colleagues for bringing some very important points together representing the concerns that were hearing from Nova Scotians from all over the province, not only in our own ridings but from ridings that the NDP Government represent.

This is a pretty serious issue - the cost that Nova Scotia Power have downloaded on Nova Scotians - making it very unfortunate that we are less competitive than any other province in the country when it comes to power rates. When I say less competitive, that means that the companies have a very difficult time competing because their power costs are higher. Now that's only one thing that makes a company less competitive but, indeed, with the whole structure that the NDP has put in place since they've come to government, it is not an environment for business to operate in Nova Scotia.

If we look, we have the worst performance of gross domestic product in the country, Nova Scotia now, except for the Northwest Territories - and needless to say, they have a whole different situation than we have to deal with. So that does mean that our colleagues in other parts of Canada have a distinct advantage over us when it comes to power rates and that's pretty serious. That's serious stuff.

We hear the government touting all these jobs they've created, the jobsHere program - jobsHere is more hype than actual reality. We have seen so many people lose jobs. Just this week, we saw another paper operation that is shutting down in Nova Scotia. Luckily this time they didn't take the Premier and the Cabinet to the cleaners and take several million dollars before they closed the doors, like other companies have done and are in the process of doing. When you spend a half a billion dollars, with very poor results and over 1,300 people lose their jobs, after you spend half a billion dollars it makes you wonder how this government thinks that they are making the economy better. Well I can tell you Nova Scotians out there, the ones that I've talked to, understand what the government has done. They are very angry. They are waiting for the next election to take that anger out on this government.

It will be interesting to see how this jobsHere program has worked and the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister talked about 11,000 jobs that are going to be from the shipbuilding contract today. Everything that we have seen in the meantime. . .

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker, I'd just ask the honourable member to speak to the bill. Everything he has is nothing to talk on.

MR. SPEAKER: That's not a point of order in any manner. I will now recognize the honourable member for Preston.

MR. COLWELL: Thank you Mr. Speaker. It's pretty interesting, we have seen all the things that have happened and the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, again, talked about 11,000-some jobs that are going to be created by the Ships Here program. When you talk to the people who are doing the contract, the Irving organization, they say it's nowhere near that. Indeed, that has an impact and makes you wonder how accurate the government numbers are on anything they talk about.

When you look and see how the power rates really affect business - now I'm talking about business. I'm going to talk about individuals after that, but when you're talking about business, every single thing that makes you less competitive than the other companies outside of Nova Scotia means that Nova Scotia companies cannot compete. They cannot compete with other companies. When you look at that and you see that one factor, then we see the HST that's been increased in the province by 25 per cent, it makes it less possible for companies to work in Nova Scotia.

When you say companies, they get input tax credits, and they get this money back. That's fine, but that means a local market that they might test their products on, or whatever the case maybe, they are less competitive. So someone else can come in a little bit

cheaper, a little bit lower cost, all of a sudden they can't compete with other companies. And when they can't compete that means people can't work, and if fewer people are working, that's when you see the effect of the power increases in the homes.

I can tell you, I see a lot of people in my constituency office and talk to a lot of people outside of my community who are having the same problem with their power rates. This bill is not going to cure that problem; it is definitely not going to cure this problem and it's really unfortunate. We need companies that can provide power, reliable power to the province - that's very, very important, but we also need to be very competitive. We have to be competitive with other companies.

We see this efficiency tax that has been put on by this government - it's a tax, there's no other way to put it. Efficiency Nova Scotia does a great job and it will help a lot of people if it's used properly - and I'm sure it will be, I don't have any question about that, but it's the way it's funded. It should be funded by the profits out of Nova Scotia Power, that's how it should be funded. It used to be funded by the province under general revenue. So the government took off the heating tax credit and they added more tax on by putting this efficiency tax on. It's just a game to make people think they've actually done something and, indeed, they haven't.

So when you look through this whole process and see how this government has performed since they were elected in 2009, the facts are pretty dismal. We've got fewer people working full-time jobs; we've got higher taxes than we've ever had in the province; we've got higher power rates than we've ever had; we've got higher gas prices; we've got higher fuel costs; and we've got laws that will make it impossible for some companies to work here. Bill No. 100 is an example.

If you combine all those things, you're almost ready for a perfect storm in this province, to destroy the economy - and we're not far from that right now. When you look at how things work in this province and you see how far behind we are with other provinces - and I don't mean the technology, we have wonderful universities, we have wonderful community colleges, and those people are turning out great people. The problem is that they're moving to Alberta. They're going to Alberta to work, to get a job - there are no jobs here; you can't get a job here. You ask somebody who is here trying to find a job and they can't find a job because this government has destroyed any possibility they may have a job with the tax structure we have, with all the other things they've done - that really, really has done that.

We see half a billion dollars out the window - out the window, that's gone. This year the estimate by the Finance Department here says they're going to raise another \$358 million from Nova Scotians this year by the 25 per cent increase they put on the GST, the two cents, the 25 per cent tax increase - they're going to raise that much money this year. That money is all spent looking after these big corporations. There must have been

absolutely no research whatsoever that was done on this to see if it was a good investment - none.

You see the pulp and paper mills coming in and walking away with big cheques and saying, boy, did we ever do good in Nova Scotia, as they move back to Quebec or wherever they're from and say yeah, that's great, now we can use that money to prop up our operations in other places in the world.

So away you go when you see all this happening and you wonder where this government is, why they're doing these things to hurt Nova Scotians. That's what's happening, they're hurting Nova Scotians, everyday Nova Scotians - the person who goes to work in the morning and tries to make enough money to pay the bills and make sure they can look after their family and feed their families as they go forward. That's not happening anymore - people are struggling.

I've noticed something very unusual - when I first moved to Porters Lake some 20 years ago, you'd go home at rush hour and there were very few cars on the road at that time because the area hadn't been built up. Over time it has built up and the population has grown quite a bit. Two or three years ago I used to drive home after a meeting late in the evening, and I would go and I would be driving home and there would be a lot of traffic at 10:00 p.m., 11:00 p.m., a lot of traffic on Highway No. 107. I drive at that same time now, the same time through the week, and there's almost no traffic because people aren't travelling - they can't afford to. They can't afford to go to the shopping centres and do these things. They combine their trips to try to save costs on fuel. That's a sign of the economy dying. It's a sign of the economy dying.

I talked to business people and they say they're barely surviving in this environment. The rest of the country is moving forward and Nova Scotia is barely surviving and it all goes back partly to the power rates. The power rates are a symptom of the bad economy we're in. It's a symptom. The government has to realize this; they have to do something to help Nova Scotians. I don't think that they understand how to do that and that concerns me greatly. Usually there are some plans in place that really start making opportunities and hope - that things are going to get better.

But this huge increase in power, there's no real emphasis on renewable energy that would really make a difference. The previous government put a regressive bill in place, on property taxes that are charged on windmills and renewable energy. When you see that that bill's been in place, if they're already in existence, they get a tax credit back from the province to help pay their property taxes. In some places, the property taxes got so high on these windmills that the people couldn't afford to operate them. But the bill that the Progressive Conservatives put in when they were in power charges on a kilowatt hour rating, the label on the windmill - whether it's operating or not. That doesn't make any sense because if a company doesn't make money, by running a windmill, they can't possibly pay the property taxes on it.

That whole structure has to be looked at and this government has done nothing to do that, absolutely nothing. They just sit there and said, well, that's okay. When you look at this way that the tax is put on - if you weren't already in the windmill business prior to this bill going through, if my recollection is correct, you don't even get this credit back. So the whole thing is regressive. We have to really promote renewable energy in this province and really cost effective, renewable energy.

The problem with that is even if you do it, at a rate that is positive and around the same rate we're paying or lower than we're paying now, you can't transmit it anywhere. This bill doesn't cover that and doesn't allow for that, so that means you can't sell it. The only person you can sell it to is the monopoly, Nova Scotia Power. That whole system has to be changed and that's what we're proposing, that the transmission lines be available to anyone who generates power.

Of course, with some kind of proper limitations on it and everything that we should be doing, it shows that this government has no imagination. They have no way of truly generating some interest in the economy. We talked about some more money that's been spent; a 49 per cent share in Daewoo. From what I understand from people down in the area, the only people working at the company now are security guards. It makes you wonder where our 49 per cent of the shares in the company have gone.

The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism doesn't seem to understand that if nobody is working there, how can the company move forward? They're a big company. Again, when you take the power rates and all the taxes and everything that's in Nova Scotia and all the high cost of doing business in Nova Scotia, a company like Daewoo has probably decided, it costs a lot to ship these things. These things are big and they're heavy, so it's not something you can ship easily, why don't we go someplace else that has lower labour costs, lower costs of power; lower costs of everything possible to make this product.

It's easy to buy equipment, it's easy to train people but it's very, very difficult to get a situation where businesses can be profitable and they can operate and still do all the things that you need done. Business is important to this province, it's really important. There have been some comments by the Chambers of Commerce in that regard.

When you look at the environment that we don't have in Nova Scotia, we don't have that business environment. It makes you wonder how anybody can survive here. I talked before about people that are leaving the province, people that are retiring and they're leaving the province because they save thousands and thousands of dollars a year on taxes if they move to Ontario. They save even more if they move to Alberta. That's people's choices but that's income that we'll lose in this province that we badly need, and also some skill sets from people who are retiring that possibly can help some younger people develop faster and do things better.

So we have young people leaving the province to get jobs in Alberta and Ontario and everywhere else, and very soon in Newfoundland and Labrador. In Newfoundland and Labrador the economy heats up, which it is. You're going to see a big demand for people, and some young people of Nova Scotia may not want to go to Alberta, because it's a long way from home, but Newfoundland and Labrador is really close. So that means we may even lose more young, well-trained people from Nova Scotia.

Our schools have turned out really good young people, well trained, and who are we supplying them to? Other parts of Canada. Why are they leaving? Number one, they can't get a job here, and number two, it's too expensive to live here, and this government hasn't done anything to correct that situation.

If you look at the whole situation, the younger people are leaving. Some of the older people are leaving. They can afford to leave the province. All the people who are left - we have a disproportionate number of people working in government, and government employees are very, very important to this province, but we need to get businesses more involved, and more people working in business. Those are the people who generate the income for the individuals who can pay taxes. Any of us in this room - any of us - don't really add anything to the economy, and I've had this discussion here before. We don't add anything to the economy.

You take a young person, or any person of any age, who's working a business, and if they even ship anything they make into New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island or anyplace else, that adds real money into the economy. The only thing that we do as employees of the government - and we're not employees of the government, as MLAs, but everyone else is that works for government. Employees for the province or for the municipality, those individuals don't add anything to the real economy. The services they provide are very important - very, very important - but they don't add any new dollars into the economy. We just circulate the money, and we can only circulate something so many times, and all of a sudden it doesn't circulate anymore. You really have to look at that.

Then we have a lot of people in our province who decide to stay here and work here and live here for all kinds of reasons. I'm really pleased that they do that, but they are struggling. They're struggling. Those are the people who are coming in. Some of those people are coming in and saying, I'm behind in my power bill; how do I possibly pay this power bill? You look at the power bill, and these are people who are used to paying their bills and used to looking after their families and used to doing the things that we should be doing as Nova Scotians. They can't make it anymore. The few little adjustments they've made, the 25 per cent increase in the Harmonized Sales Tax or GST, whatever you want to call it - that two cents is 25 per cent, a double-digit tax increase. You look at the bracket creep in income tax, and each year that goes up. So each year, it costs more and more and more to live in Nova Scotia.

So the people are starting to realize that. I said here a couple years ago that it will take two years before it catches up with everybody, before everyone actually spends their savings, spends any extra money they have, cuts down on things that they're doing. That is beginning to show, because people now find they can't make it. Anyone over on the other side of this Legislature who thinks that they're doing a good job at helping Nova Scotians survive, they're going to get a rude awakening.

You want to talk to the people in your community and you want to see what they are saying about how they are surviving and about how difficult it is and what's been happening. It's happened since 2009. The rest of the country seems to be going along quite well. Their economies are improving all the time, but ours is going backward.

We're in a recession in Nova Scotia again. I don't think we ever got out of it. We've got a situation here that is untenable. People can't survive - they just can't survive. So what's going to happen in the long run? We're going to start seeing people losing homes, we're going to see people moving from Nova Scotia because they have no choice, who don't want to leave here. We can't afford to have those young people leave, and the people who are working. I know the members across the floor are hearing this from their residents. I know they are, because I've talked to a lot of people outside of my own area and everybody says the exact same thing: we're having more difficulty making ends meet today than we were three years ago, when this government came to power, and that's no coincidence. That's not a coincidence - that's a fact.

So as we see our economy slowly slowing down and everything happening with our young people leaving - and we've got incredible universities here, some of the top universities in the world. At one time, and we probably still have today - we had the highest per capita Ph.D. population in the world - more Ph.Ds. in Nova Scotia than anywhere else in the world. Now these people are highly intelligent, highly trained and very capable of making the economy go, but our economy isn't going. So we're not utilizing these very intelligent people, and the expertise they have, to help make our economy grow, and that can be in all kinds of ways.

We've got some extremely good research going on in the universities here, state-of-the-art things happening that will, over a long period of time, come up with all kinds of new innovative ideas that could possibly change the economy in Nova Scotia. I didn't see this government talking about that. They're not talking about that. They're not working on those things and I can tell you, I've worked with the universities when I ran my business, and they're great to work with. They have difficulty transferring technology from what they do in the research labs to commercialize it, but that's why the government should be assisting with that and really working with it. All those things take a long time and a lot of effort but I can tell you it's worth it when the time comes.

As we see so many things happen in our economy, people wonder why it's happening, wonder why they don't have the same amount of money to pay their insurance

bill, or property taxes, their heating bill, all the other bills they have to pay, buy food for their family, and do the things that they need to do, they've got to remember why - it's all those little incidental things that add up that this government, one way or another, has imposed upon them, and really start realizing why they're having such a hard time. If you look at the \$0.5 billion this government just gave away, the power breaks they give to allow these companies to get - not paying the efficiency tax. I would think if I was running a company of that size in Nova Scotia, I would be coming to the province saying, okay, I don't want to pay the efficiency tax anymore either because it makes me more competitive, and it will, it will.

That's why Nova Scotia Power should be paying it themselves instead of the ratepayers in the Province of Nova Scotia. We see over \$100 million a year go outside of this province to Emera, Nova Scotia Power's owner, I guess - whatever you want to call it - and that's being invested in the US, other parts of the world, helping their economies, but it certainly isn't helping ours.

We've got all kinds of clean energy options. I know there are some standards put in place but we have natural gas here that we're shipping to the US and to New Brunswick. New Brunswick is doing very well off our natural gas. It goes right straight through Nova Scotia and away it goes, and they're generating power with it and doing other things with natural gas that helps their economy go. (Interruption)

No, we're not doing that. We haven't got an environment for renewable energy in this province. We really don't have an environment for it. We need to do those things. It's very, very important and if you set the environment up, business will react to it in a positive way, but until we get those environments set in place - and this government has done none of this, and this bill is not going to do that, it's not going to do it. It's a small, little step. It might have some positive things in the bill, some place. I haven't seen too many of them yet, but it's not going to lower the power rates or stop the power increases for Nova Scotians. It just won't do that and if that's what this government figures they're going to do with this bill, they're wasting their time.

It's unfortunate they don't understand that because if we don't do something to correct our power bill and all the other expenses that we have every day operating here, we're going to see those two elements I talked about before: the young people are never coming back and we're going to see people retiring early and have some disposable income, moving outside the province to save taxes. So we have the group of people that's left in the middle, who have to stay here for whatever reason, and they're going to bear the brunt of all this expense that has been placed upon them.

It's going to be a long memory for Nova Scotians like it was in Ontario when the NDP was in Ontario, and they're still hurting. Their economy has hurt from there ever since. They're seeing companies move out of the province and we're seeing the same thing happen here, we're seeing branch plants here move out, we're seeing wholesalers move out

here and we're seeing businesses leave. As this government tries to say that they are doing the things that will help, it's not really affecting us, not affecting us in a positive way. As we keep on seeing these changes made and hoping that the government will do some things positively, to make sure the economy grows and the young people here can stay here, it's not happening, it simply not happening.

I just ask anyone that maybe watching this today, to sit down and look where your money is going today, compared to where it was two or three years ago and you're going to come up with an awful shock because if you made the same money three years ago - or close to the same money or even make a little bit more money today - you still do not have as much disposable income. If you don't have disposable income, that means you can't support the local shops around that you deal with, you can't do renovations to your home, so the home renovation thing goes down. The price of housing, a building to sell houses in HRM is dropping here, it's dropping, and it's a sign of the economy of being in such bad shape. I've got several friends that have homes on the market now, below what the market value is and looking at that and wondering why their homes aren't selling because people have no confidence in the economy, absolutely none. As the economy gets worse and worse in the province, it's going to make us wonder how we're going to keep young people in Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to during the meeting to give the government time to proceed till the morrow's business, as house leader of the opposition I will take my place on another day and talk further on this bill, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97. 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: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on the morrow at the hour of 2:00 p.m. The House will sit until 6:00 p.m. or until the conclusion of business. Now I'll turn it over to the Opposition House Leader to announce business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: The hours will be from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. as indicated. After the daily routine, which I'm sure will include a very limited number of government resolutions, we'll move into Question Period and following Question Period, as already provided to the Government House Leader and to the Progressive Conservative House Leader, we will be calling Bill No. 95, the Reliability and Accountability in

Electricity Act, and if time permits Bill No. 110, Supporting All Students' Success in the Classroom Act.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise and meet again tomorrow from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Hants West:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly condemn the NDP Government for botching the process of setting new electoral boundaries and for letting the people of Nova Scotia down by interfering in what was supposed to be an independent commission.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

NDP GOV'T. – ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES PROCESS: BOTCHING - CONDEMN

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It is my pleasure to stand and speak to this resolution. This is starting to feel a little bit like the movie *Groundhog Day* where the same day just keeps repeating itself, it feels like this discussion just keeps repeating itself because quite honestly, Madam Speaker, is the fact that it is an important issue that sits before us. We have seen some movements, as of late, by the government, to try to frame a discussion, to try to get control of the issue of boundaries once again, but I still have to say that the whole process, right from the start, has been one that has been difficult, that has been interfered in, that has been one that's been difficult, that has been interfered in, that has been, you know, I would qualify as being an absolute mess.

You know, we go back a year now to discuss this, it's hard to believe we can now say a whole year ago, and the resolution had gone by a year ago last week, an anniversary as an unwilling marriage here for finding the committee, the standing committee of course, to put together the terms of reference. The famous terms of reference issue is one that I think we have taken offence to. There's always a better way, it doesn't matter how things roll out, it doesn't matter how good sometimes things may roll out, there is always a better way to come to consensus on certain rules, regulations, proceedings, what have you.

Our contention, almost a year ago, over a year ago, was that there should have been issues that we, as political Parties, should have got together and gone into a room and duked it out there and come up with terms of reference that all Parties could have lived with, in order to set the independent commission down its road to consultation.

Madam Speaker, that didn't happen. The government was - heavy-handed is the wrong word, but they took it upon themselves to develop terms of reference that were difficult, that were contrary to what we had heard when we went on our road show, that were contrary to what the commission heard when they went on their road show. That, I think, is what constitutes a botched process, a difficult process that no one is happy with.

The challenge that we're going to have over the next number of weeks, as the discussion on Bill No. 94 rolls around, will sort of exacerbate the issue of the botched process. We will start to hear from groups and individuals who have been affected by this and they won't be very becoming, I don't think, or very complimentary to government or to the process itself. Of course, we're going to hear from the individuals in Shelburne County who were caught offside by a process that had been intervened and influenced by government, to come up with a certain outcome. Shelburne County got caught offside and what we're going to see from them is people who are unhappy, who are going to talk about history, who are going to talk about communities of interest, who are going to talk about boundaries and communities of interest.

We've been hearing about this for a long time, we've been talking about this for a long time. We're going to hear them all over again. So what that's going to do is make government rethink things again. I think the member for Halifax Chebucto said it well today, I had to - it's very seldom that I agree with many of the things he says, but I thought it was quite good when he was trying to frame the discussion of as we start to go down this road, as members of the Law Amendments Committee. Number one was, well, maybe we have to accept the recommendations in the bill as it stands and then we have to, in my words, sort of suck it up, that's just the way it is.

Number two is where we've sort of been all through this process, which is, it's been a bad process that has been interfered upon and has come up with a result that is almost impossible to fix, to basically reject the idea. I mean we, as a Party, have already been on the record as saying we're voting against this. We're voting against it, from second reading, to third reading to the end because there's nothing in the middle that makes sense.

The third option that was laid on the table today was the issue of tinkering with it, I guess, is how it was put, to put an amendment here, and, well, if you make that amendment that precipitates this amendment, and if you do that one that will precipitate that amendment because everything is fluid within this boundary discussion. So, as much as we're going to go to listen to Shelburne County and the wishes of Shelburne County will be, we deserve to be together, we deserve - you know, Shaun Hatfield said it well, it's a marriage. It might not be a great marriage, but it's a marriage that has lasted for a couple hundred years already and they have no want to get divorced, but what you're going to do is as you split that up you're forcing somebody else into an arranged marriage or other options.

What we're going to hear from some of the presenters - I know the Acadian Federation, I know the different francophone groups will be here to present as well and they'll say the same thing. Well, you know, you can't do this either. So that third option is probably the most fraught with danger as it rolls around because nobody is happy today. You get it done, well, maybe the people that you're trying to fix are going to be happy, but people down the road aren't going to be happy.

We, as politicians, as much as this is a political process, it's weird to say, it's one of those few processes in here that is based upon a set criteria from the House of Assembly Act that are supposed to put an independent process in place. Yet, by its very core, as it comes through this House, it opens itself up to influence by political Parties and that, I believe, is what's going to create that much more problem as we, as political Parties - and let's not forget that this is a majority government Legislature, so as much as we as Opposition Parties can complain and try to make certain things happen, we don't hold the cards.

I think the member for Richmond said it well earlier today, that really in this particular case we don't matter, we're not important in this. It is the majority government and the majority members of that committee who are going to make the difference on whether things are fixed, amended, tinkered, or thrown out. It's going to be a difficult task, but maybe this time - maybe this time - we need to listen to the people who are going to come to present to us.

You know, the select committee didn't listen to people, the commission listened to people. The very least we could do is make sure that those voices that are going to come before us, that are going to tell us, I think, from what I've heard, to reject the process, reject the bill, I think will be one that we're going to have to seriously think about as the Law Amendments Committee and, of course, at this House again. But to my resolution is the fact that this has been a botched process. It has been a difficult process for Nova Scotians and I hope like heck that this doesn't actually ever happen again. So thank you very much for the effort today. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. HOWARD EPSTEIN: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. The previous speaker, the honourable member for Argyle, has characterized the process so far that we have been dealing with four electoral boundaries as “difficult” and that is a word with which I would like to put myself on record as agreeing. He used the word “messy” and I would also agree with that word, but he also tried to characterize it as something the government had interfered with, and I reject that. (Interruptions)

In fact, when we look at what is a difficult and messy process, this has nothing to do with anything that the government did, and anything that has to do with the messiness of it is entirely to be laid at the feet of the members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission themselves. I want to be absolutely clear that one of the measures of the independence of that commission, which I should point out included on it members who were nominated by both of the Opposition Parties, one of the most important measures of the independence of that Electoral Boundaries Commission is that it resulted in a report that the government doesn't like. There is a great deal in that report that the government is not happy with.

Look at how Cape Breton Nova was dealt with. That is not something the government is happy with. Look at how Shelburne was dealt with. That's not something the government is happy with. Look at how the commission failed to add an additional seat to the HRM area, which the population of the HRM area, on a comparative basis, should probably have had. Those are things the government is simply not happy with, but there it is. It's a messy process, it was a difficult process, but it wasn't interfered with.

Now, we're debating this on the same day as our neighbours to the south of the 49th parallel are engaged in a great election for their President and for some members of their Congress. One of the things that has emerged during that election is a huge number of complaints about the electoral process in the United States. We're aware of this, and that is also the U.S. - the home of the term that we know now as “gerrymandering,” dating back to the 1850s when it was first invented.

Now the electoral process can be interfered with in a number of very sophisticated ways. I've heard the terms “cracking” and “packing” and “kidnapping,” which describe ways to creatively draw electoral boundaries. We know that, given the sophistication of geographic information systems now, it's quite within the power of a malevolent government to move in ways that could manipulate an electoral boundaries process, but you know what? That hasn't been what's been going on here. That is simply not what's been going on here.

Next, I want to put on record a little bit of history in Nova Scotia. It was, in fact, only in 1991 that for the first time we had an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission. That means that this is only the third independent Electoral Boundaries Commission that Nova Scotia has ever had. Prior to that, in 1978 and 1981, there were rudimentary attempts to move in that direction, but really this is only the third time that we've had a truly independent Electoral Boundaries Commission. Of course, it happens

only every 10 years, which means that everyone has very limited experience with this, and you have to come to grips with it when it comes forward.

I said, and will repeat, that I believe that the Electoral Boundaries Commission this time managed to make a pretty big mess of this all on their own, and they did it without government interference. In fact, let me point out one of the most egregious messes that emerged from the Electoral Boundaries Commission. It was in its second interim report, when it made certain proposals with how to deal with the Town of Yarmouth. What an incredible proposal that was. That resulted in thousands of people turning out in the Town of Yarmouth to complain about it.

The government didn't like that. Nobody liked it. If we had some kind of interference with the commission that wouldn't have happened, but that is just a big indicator of the messiness of this process. Essentially, what we have to remind ourselves of is the fact that the criticisms that have been made from the Opposition benches of the government's handling of this are simply misfounded.

The first and most important point there is that the final results contain those elements that I indicated before - the fact that Cape Breton Nova, Shelburne, and Queens were handled the way they were; the fact that there's a simple reduction to 51 which has resulted in not enough seats in the metro area. All of those things are things that are not appealing to the government. We have to remind ourselves of that.

The second thing I've heard from the Opposition benches is that the government set up this commission in a way because the government was hostile to the Acadian population. I have to say that that has to be rejected immediately. The question that is posed on the other side is to imagine members of the Acadian community saying, what did we ever do to you that you took such a hostile approach to us?

Let me point out the most important fact about that. The constituencies of Clare, Argyle, and Richmond have not disappeared in this process. They still exist, and they still exist as predominantly Acadian constituencies. Their boundaries have changed. What has changed is the protected nature, which means that they are not any longer going to be allowed to deviate from the plus or minus 25 per cent level that prevails for all other seats. That is not hostility; that, in fact, is something that recognizes the ongoing, strong Acadian presence in our province.

I've heard suggestions on the other side, as well, that somehow the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 3, the right to vote and the manifestation of that as effective representation, has been violated. Again, this is entirely to be rejected, when one reads what the Supreme Court of Canada has said in the Carter decision, it's clear that it's parity of voting power is legitimately to be seen as the primary factor in manifesting the right to vote under Section 3 of the Charter. What the Carter case says is that it's allowable, it is constitutionally allowable to have variances but it's not mandatory.

What we have done, in the terms of reference, for the Electoral Boundaries Commission is set up a plus or minus 25 per cent variance, which is the highest variance that exists anywhere in Canada. Nowhere else does there exist something beyond that. That was already very generous, and I have to say that in terms of my own personal perspective on it, way too high. If you read what the Utility and Review Board did for municipalities, they said that the plus or minus variance that is tolerable is plus or minus 10 per cent because that works closest to parity of voting power. I have to say, that's how I read the Charter and what it offers us and the guarantee that's offered to us.

So I have to say that there is nothing that I have seen in the process at all that even remotely brings us to a conclusion that suggests that there has been government interference in this. If the point is that the Attorney General pointed out to the commission that they had failed to fulfill their mandate, he was entirely correct about that. The dissenting member in the first interim report, Professor Jill Grant, pointed out to her colleagues at the time that it was wrong and the rest of the commission actually, upon more mature consideration, ended up agreeing that that was the case. There was one dissenting voice at the end but the majority of the commission understood that that, in fact, was what they had to do, that it wasn't a guideline, it wasn't a suggestion, that the terms of reference as set by this House were binding on the commission and I have to say that I believe it is entirely correct.

The situation this leaves us in is not a question of whether we assign blame to anyone in particular, the question is what are we going to do now? I want to thank the member for Argyle for realistically laying out the three options that I articulated earlier today; we have to decide, as a whole, this House has to decide as a whole, are we going to accept the report as it is? Are we going to reject it and start all over again, or are we going to tinker with it? Now that is a complex question, for an adult conversation. It's not a question of blame, it's a complicated question, that we will all have to engage with and I look forward to further debate about this as we proceed through the House. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to maybe bring us back to reality from some of the fantasyland that we were just brought into because I was a member of the select committee. I don't believe the member for Halifax Chebucto, who just spoke, was. Therefore, for him to say he's not aware, then maybe he should look exactly at the transcripts of the select committee. But that might be a challenge because right now the government is refusing to release the transcripts.

I know that the member for Halifax Chebucto is a learned colleague in the law and that I'm sure he would want to read what was said prior to stating in this House, that he has seen no evidence. Well naturally, as a lawyer, you'd want to actually read what was said before making such a determination. So I think it's a bit disingenuous for him to stand in

his place and say that the Opposition's concerns are unfounded, when he was not sitting in the committee room - what was it, December 23rd? I think it was for one of the meetings, and on December 31st for the final meeting. So he may want to take the opportunity to read, if the government allows the release of the minutes from our meetings, to see exactly what was said.

What was interesting as well, and I'm glad it was the member for Halifax Chebucto who spoke tonight, is that what he failed to mention is that he was a member of the select committee, back in 2001. He was a member of the select committee in 2001 that looked at the terms of reference, had the 25 per cent variance. I don't remember him objecting to it back then. He says he doesn't like it now. He wanted it only to be 10 - it would be interesting to see what the riding of Guysborough would look like with a 10 per cent variance.

What's interesting, as well, is that he was also a member of that select committee that set the terms of reference, that allowed the notwithstanding clause, that, beyond the 25 per cent, if for purposes of the promotion of the Acadian culture, African Nova Scotians, or geographic size, that you could go beyond that 25 per cent. That was there in 1991. It was there in 2001. He was a member, and I looked again to see, did he say something at the time? Did the member for Halifax Chebucto say voter parity is not being addressed? (Interruptions) I was, I was, but then again, when he spoke in the House, I read his comments in Hansard; not once did he talk about voter parity not being respected; not once did he talk about saying he felt that the ridings of Clare, Argyle, Richmond or Preston were, somehow, inappropriate and they shouldn't be permitted. I have yet to hear him, once in the House (Interruption) No, I'm not talking about Colin Dodds, I'm talking about the member who just spoke, the member who has been elected to this House as long as I have, who prior to this never once stood in this House to say what he just said tonight - not once.

If this is such a strong conviction, it took 14 years to get to that conviction, and it took the second round of electoral boundaries for him to find that sudden conviction of voter parity, more ridings for Halifax, and abandoning the Acadian community. I have to say, it's a bit disingenuous as well, and a bit insulting, to tell the Acadian communities of Richmond, Clare and Argyle that they have not disappeared from the electoral map. It's an insult is what it is, because you know what it does? It marginalizes the Acadians even more; it marginalizes the African Nova Scotians even more, and for someone to suggest in this House that that is not the case, when you look at the numbers of the ridings now, the voters in there and where the Acadians were, as a percentage and where they are now, it's very disingenuous to make that kind of statement.

The NDP have had since 2001 to tell Nova Scotians that they think what was done in 1991, 2001 was wrong, that the terms of reference were fundamentally flawed and they should be changed, so we could have had a debate on that. Had the government, three years into their mandate, at one point said, look, boundary review's coming up, we don't think

the terms of reference used before are appropriate. Let's talk to the Acadian Federation; let's talk to the Black Cultural Society; let's talk to other groups and say, what we have now is not working so let's see if we can have - I think the member for Halifax Chebucto said - an adult discussion. Let's see if we can have an adult discussion with these groups to see if there is another way. Is there a better way? That we can still respect the intent, in 1991 and 2001, when we are going to do the process this time.

That would have been responsible government. That would have been leadership, but the member for Halifax Chebucto and the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage both know that the changes were made under the cover of darkness. (Interruptions) An e-mail was sent by the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, unbeknownst to the other members of the committee, instructing the staff. Now I have to say, it's probably the most inappropriate thing I've ever seen done in my 14 years, someone telling staff to make a political decision; instructing them to remove a term of reference that had all been agreed to, that had been in four draft reports. It was in there the entire time and he instructed (Interruptions) Well, release the minutes of the meetings and then we'll know exactly what happened.

If you don't have a problem, release the minutes tomorrow; release the minutes tomorrow then, that's very simple, if you have no problems, release the minutes and we'll see what happens. The e-mail said, based on discussions we have had, I'm instructing you to make the following changes. So, one has to ask, well who were the discussions with? Well, they weren't with me, as a member of the committee; they weren't with the member for Argyle as a member of the committee. The discussions were within the NDP caucus office. That's where those discussions were, because they certainly weren't with us, so unless the member talked to himself and said, based on the discussion we had amongst that group of himself, that he made those changes, obviously it was a decision that came from the NDP caucus.

It was cute today I have to say - I was thinking what was the appropriate word to say and I thought of quite a few words but I figured "cute" might be the most appropriate one - to listen to the member for Halifax Chebucto speak to the media after our meeting at the Law Amendments Committee, and say I've heard the Opposition's concerns with the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and I agree. Now we all know, and the member knows, our concern is not with the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, our concern is with the interference of the NDP Government with the terms of reference - the way, from day one, they manipulated the terms of reference.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'll have the opportunity as we continue on this debate, because while I looked through Hansard I found very interesting comments from a previous Leader of the NDP, from back in 1991-92, Alexa McDonough, and I'll quote what she said - I'll just touch on it briefly tonight - praising the government of the day, a Tory Government, for the fact that this was done independently, the terms of reference

were done with all-Party support and that this was a model and a proud day for Nova Scotia.

Well I'd love to hear what Alexa McDonough thinks of the process followed by this government in 2012. I'd like to hear if she'd say this was a model for Nova Scotia and a proud day for Nova Scotia, because from day one - and to hear the member for Halifax Chebucto say we have to work together, this is very important work, we have to be united and work together. Where was that spirit in the terms of reference, when they brought it to a vote? Here we had the unprecedented situation of two of three political Parties in Nova Scotia voting against the terms of reference - never been seen before, not a proud day for Nova Scotia.

So the member for Halifax Chebucto knows that, and he can stand in place and say that it is all the fault of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. It was interesting - I was at a meeting at Havre Boucher and listened to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal publicly, repeatedly, attack Jim Bickerton, a professor at St. F.X., a well-respected professor. Now when the day comes that Ministers of the Crown stand there and start attacking professors - but then again who should be surprised when you had the Premier attack a member of the commission publicly, someone who volunteered, was asked to sit on the commission and was publicly attacked by the Premier, so there was no surprise there.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotians are seeing exactly the interference by this government, they are speaking loud and clear, and they will continue to do so - and we'll continue to stand up for Nova Scotians in this process. Merci.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. The time allotted for late debate has elapsed. I want to thank everyone for their participation in the lively discussion.

The House now stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 6:28 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1786**

By: Hon. David Wilson (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas November is Osteoporosis Month and as many as two million Canadians have osteoporosis while 25 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men over the age of 50 are at risk of developing the disease; and

Whereas osteoporosis often goes unnoticed and undiagnosed until a fracture occurs; and

Whereas Nova Scotians can reduce their risk of developing osteoporosis by getting sufficient amounts of calcium and vitamin D and by regularly participating in weight bearing activities like walking, dancing and tennis;

Therefore be it resolved that all member of this House of Assembly join me in marking November as Osteoporosis Month, show leadership by modeling healthy lifestyle practices, and commend the organizations that help Nova Scotians with osteoporosis thrive.

RESOLUTION NO. 1787

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 Kyle Kormish was named Springhill High School's Senior Boys Athlete of the Month for September; and

Whereas Kyle runs on the cross-country team and finished 20th with a time of 33 minutes in his first 7 km in Trenton and completed his next race in Truro in 29 minutes; and

Whereas Kyle has exemplified the characteristics of a dedicated and influential teammate throughout the cross-country season thus far;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kyle Kormish on being named Springhill High School Senior Boys Athlete of the Month and wish him continued success through the year.

RESOLUTION NO. 1788

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 the Thompson family, of Thompson Berries located on the Wentworth/Collingwood Road, has been preserving and selling jams, jellies, sauces and more for 25 years; and

Whereas Bessie and Lawson Thompson started the business in 1987 as a way of preserving surplus fruits that they sold at a U-pick operation; and

Whereas 25 years later the Thompson family sells to not only the public, but also companies such as Sobeys, Jost Vineyards and Acadia Maple Products;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Thompson family, of Thompson Berries, on their 25 years of business and wish them many more successful years.

RESOLUTION NO. 1789

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Barrington Municipal High School student Maria Adams is one of the recipients of the 10th Annual Fishermen and Scientists Research Society Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Oceans 11 Program; and

Whereas this annual award recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in the Oceans 11 class by their level of participation, interest, contributions to the classroom, and scholastic achievement; and

Whereas the Oceans 11 Program is helping to educate the future stakeholders of Nova Scotia's marine industry by offering Grade 11 students the opportunity to learn about a wide range of marine science topics;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Barrington Municipal High School student Maria Adams, who was presented with the award on Oceans Day - June 8, 2012.

RESOLUTION NO. 1790

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Lockeport Regional High School student Rebecca Brannen is one of the recipients of the 10th Annual Fishermen and Scientists Research Society Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Oceans 11 Program; and

Whereas this annual award recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in the Oceans 11 class by their level of participation, interest, contributions to the classroom, and scholastic achievement; and

Whereas the Oceans 11 Program is helping to educate the future stakeholders of Nova Scotia's marine industry by offering Grade 11 students the opportunity to learn about a wide range of marine science topics;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport Regional High School student Rebecca Brennen, who was presented with the award on Oceans Day – June 8, 2012.

RESOLUTION NO. 1791

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Barrington Municipal High School student Donovan Nickerson is one of the recipients of the 10th Annual Fishermen and Scientists Research Society Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Oceans 11 Program; and

Whereas this annual award recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in the Oceans 11 class by their level of participation, interest, contributions to the classroom, and scholastic achievement; and

Whereas the Oceans 11 Program is helping to educate the future stakeholders of Nova Scotia's marine industry by offering Grade 11 students the opportunity to learn about a wide range of marine science topics;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Barrington Municipal High School student Donovan Nickerson, who was presented with the award on Oceans Day - June 8, 2012.

RESOLUTION NO. 1792

By: Hon. Sterling Belliveau (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Barrington Municipal High School student Ashleigh Waybret is one of the recipients of the 10th Annual Fishermen and Scientists Research Society Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Oceans 11 Program; and

Whereas this annual award recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in the Oceans 11 class by their level of participation, interest, contributions to the classroom, and scholastic achievement; and

Whereas the Oceans 11 Program is helping to educate the future stakeholders of Nova Scotia's marine industry by offering Grade 11 students the opportunity to learn about a wide range of marine science topics;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Barrington Municipal High School student Ashleigh Waybret, who was presented with the award on Oceans Day - June 8, 2012.

RESOLUTION NO. 1793

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21st, 2012; and

Whereas Reverend D. Laurence Mawhinney not only has an extensive career as a Presbyterian Church Minister but also has served 10 terms in office as the Mayor of Lunenburg over 33 years;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Reverend D. Laurence Mawhinney of Lunenburg for his volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates him on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1794

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21st, 2012; and

Whereas Josephine Eisenhauer of Lunenburg has been a tireless volunteer, serving numerous community organizations, including St. John's Anglican Church, Fishermen's Memorial Hospital and Girl Guides of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Josephine Eisenhauer of Lunenburg for her volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates her on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1795

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21st, 2012; and

Whereas Captain Phillip S. Watson of Mahone Bay has been the Master of the Bluenose II since 2001, after starting his career as a deckhand and has volunteered his time with school children to discuss the importance of the Bluenose to our Maritime heritage;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Captain Phillip S. Watson of Mahone Bay for his volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates him on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1796

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21, 2012; and

Whereas Barbara Zwicker of Lunenburg has many volunteer commitments under her belt as one of the founders of the Annual Lunenburg Craft Festival, the Lunenburg Heritage Society and the Lunenburg Waterfront Development Association, while also volunteering for the Lunenburg Art Gallery, the Lunenburg Academy Foundation and St. John's Anglican Church;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Barbara Zwicker of Lunenburg for her volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates her on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1797

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21st, 2012; and

Whereas Christopher Norman of Lunenburg has gained worldwide recognition as a recording artist, composer, performer and teacher of music, providing performances and

workshops around the world but is also the founder and artistic director of the Boxwood Festival held in Lunenburg each year;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Christopher Norman of Lunenburg for his volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates him on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1798

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21, 2012; and

Whereas Robert F. Hirtle of Mahone Bay has served on the Lutheran Church Council, while volunteering with the Swimming Pool Society, the Royal Canadian Legion Mahone Bay Branch and the Mahone Bay Cemetery;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Robert F. Hirtle of Mahone Bay for his volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates him on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1799

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medals are presented on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to honour worthy citizens who have contributed to making Nova Scotia a better place to live; and

Whereas 25 recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medal were honoured at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on September 21st, 2012; and

Whereas Benjamin C. Smith of Lunenburg is a timeless volunteer who has contributed to his community through his involvement with the Lunenburg and District Swimming Pool Society, the Lunenburg Academy Foundation, the Lunenburg Marine Museum Society and the Restoration Committee of St. John's Anglican Church;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes Benjamin C. Smith of Lunenburg for his volunteer commitments and community service and congratulates him on receiving the Diamond Jubilee Medal.