



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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. Before we start the daily routine, the subject matter for late debate has been chosen, and I will read it:

Therefore be it resolved that a week ago the Liberal Party showed how much they are job killers with no plan or vision when, as well as opposing thousands of new jobs for young Nova Scotians, the Liberal contribution to legislative debate on the future of the Bowater Mersey forest lands was to state they would say nothing until there was a government announcement, then criticize.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Queens.

Order, please. Recently I've been hearing the word "job killers" in the Chamber and I've been hearing it a lot in debate, and I find it is not to be appropriate language for a resolution of the House. I'd ask the honourable members, going forward, to please not use the word "job killers" in resolutions before the Assembly.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the following petition, the operative clause of which reads:

"To the Government of Nova Scotia: TAKE BACK NOVA SCOTIA'S POWER! - We, the undersigned CITIZENS OF NOVA SCOTIA, ask our government to re-acquire control of the production and distribution of our PUBLIC UTILITIES, beginning with electrical power, by expropriation if necessary."

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by 700 residents and I, too, have affixed my signature.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

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

"... 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."

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Report of the Standing Committee on Community Services, and I would like to take just a moment as I do that to thank the members of the committee and the witnesses for some very useful discussions throughout the year. I would like to thank those members of the public who

faithfully come out to observe the process and, in particular, I would like to thank Kim Langille, the committee clerk, and all the staff of the Committees Office who make the process work very well even though it is ever changing and sometimes quite difficult.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 105 - Agriculture and Marketing Act.

Bill No. 109 - Bee Industry Act.

Bill No. 112 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 114 - Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act.

Bill No. 115 - Interprovincial Investigative Authority Act.

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

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, shortly I will be doing a ministerial statement so I do have some documentation to table at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The documentation is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to report that our government's extensive efforts to raise the immigration caps for our province have finally paid off.

I can confirm that the federal government has given Nova Scotia an additional 200 immigration nominations for this calendar year, Mr. Speaker. That's a bump of 40 per cent. That number is on top of the existing cap of 500 for the province and giving Nova Scotia a total of 700 nominations in 2012 - the most our province has ever nominated annually through the provincial Nominee Program. This means the potential for 700 families to choose Nova Scotia as a place to call home, to put down roots, and to be part of Nova Scotia's growing economy. This is great news and timely, considering my conversation yesterday with the Irish Ambassador to Canada. Over the next two years, Canada and Ireland plan to greatly expand the International Experience Canada Program for Irish youth, and the ambassador believes that many of those young people will consider coming to Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are ready to turn the corner on 20 years of the worst economic growth of any province. This government continues to step up to attract new opportunities and create good jobs for the people of this province. Irving Shipbuilding won its bid to build Canada's next fleet of ships, \$25 billion in contracts that will provide stable work for the next 30 years and will create 11,000 jobs when the project is in full stride. This was a great accomplishment for our province but our government has not stopped there.

Last week we marked one of the most significant weeks for job creation in this province in the last decade. PROJEX Technologies and IBM Canada announced that they will expand in our province, creating nearly 1,000 well-paying, long-term jobs right here in Nova Scotia. That means our young people have the choice to stay and work at home, and families that have moved away have the choice to come back. On top of all that, these jobs will generate millions of dollars in tax revenue to be reinvested in education, health care, and roads.

In addition to attracting good jobs to Nova Scotia, our government is also focused on helping ensure people have the right skills so they will benefit from the good jobs of the future. Part of my job as Premier is to talk to business people. Just last month I hosted a series of round-table discussions with small-business owners across the province. One of the things I kept hearing is that business people are concerned about a potential labour shortage. They are worried there won't be enough skilled workers.

Our government is listening and we are acting. Our government has a plan to attract young, skilled professional immigrants to Nova Scotia. In 2011 the government introduced the Welcome Home to Nova Scotia program, a comprehensive immigration strategy to help bring new, skilled labour into our workforce. The province's immigration and workforce strategies work in collaboration with jobsHere by targeting international

workers with the technical skills and global experience that can help the province become more innovative, more productive, and more competitive.

After years of failed attempts by other governments, Nova Scotia now has an immigration strategy that is working. Our province has come a long way from the days when the previous Progressive Conservative Government had Nova Scotia embroiled in an immigration scandal. Nova Scotia is attracting and keeping more immigrants. The province is retaining more immigrants and it is consistently reaching the federal immigration caps. It is for these reasons that we were able to successfully make the case for a higher cap this year.

Mr. Speaker, the province is engaging more employers and successfully marketing Nova Scotia to the world. The province is on its way to almost doubling the retention rate for families coming to Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia START program is helping support new families by making settlement, employment, and referral service information available to people before they arrive. This makes for an easier transition during their move to one of Nova Scotia's strong and vibrant communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Nominee Program is the most direct way for the province to support families that want to make Nova Scotia their home. With the additional 200 nominees, the province can now nominate Shernette Smith, who is here with us in the gallery today with her husband Shawn. The couple wants to move here from Jamaica. They want to build a better life for themselves and for their daughter. Our province's Nominee Program is providing that opportunity. Shernette's application is now with the federal government. We hope that Shernette and her family will soon take advantage of a future filled with promise and opportunity, and that Nova Scotia will benefit from having Shernette's skills and ability in our economy. Shernette, we hope that our federal partners will approve your application soon. (Applause)

The provincial Nominee Program typically represents about one-third of all immigrants coming to Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia makes the nomination, but ultimately it is the federal government that makes the decision to allow people in. Nova Scotia wants to give more opportunities for families like Shernette's to come and to be part of our province's future. Our government will continue to make the case to the federal government to increase the number of families it allows in, and the province will continue to work with employers to help them hire international workers with specific skills.

Mr. Speaker, our government wants to make sure that all of our new Nova Scotians, including Shernette and Shawn Smith, have a successful life here in our province. When they do, we all benefit. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I too want to welcome Shernette and her husband Shawn to the gallery, and look forward to the day when they can call Nova Scotia their home. We want to welcome them on behalf of the Liberal caucus and I believe on behalf of all Nova Scotians, to our province.

I want to also acknowledge the fact, Mr. Speaker, that in this House all three political Parties have recognized and have been trumpeting the fact that 500 nominees is not enough. When you look at a province like Manitoba that's in the vicinity of 5,000 - it has helped them transform their province to be a progressive, modern province. Any time that we can increase the number of nominees in the Province of Nova Scotia, it is a positive thing. This additional 200 nominees for one year alone is good, but it is just a start. I know the government themselves have talked about reaching 1,000 by 2015 and needing to be up to 1,500 in the years thereafter.

Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of direction we, as a province, need to go. We all know of the looming labour shortages that are presented to us as a province and the challenges that we're going to be faced with in terms of meeting the growing demands that are going to be placed on an ever-shrinking workforce. The sooner we can increase our Nominee Program on an annual basis - it is a positive thing.

On a personal note, one of the disappointing things for me in this statement from the Premier is that a very good news story had to become a political story for him. He talks about 11,000 jobs coming, Mr. Speaker. They talked about the promise that they made last week of 1,000 (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, it talks about the announcement that they created 1,000 well-paying jobs last week. There is a prospect of 1,000 jobs, and when we look across the province and at the announcements this government has made around job targets, we need to look no further than Trenton and Daewoo. The 500 there is now less than 60.

This is a very good news story for the province, and quite frankly, the Premier couldn't even get that right. This is a good news story, and one thing that needs to happen is that when we talk about the Nominee Program we need to focus on that collectively as the 52 members of this House and send a very clear message to Ottawa that 700 is not enough. This province is open and welcoming to immigrants, and we, as a Liberal caucus, would support any increase in the Nominee Program, but not just for one year. We want it to be our right to continue to grow a very diverse, modern society in Nova Scotia by allowing us to open up the Nominee Program to people from all over the world that want to call Nova Scotia their home.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome the additional 200 people. We look forward to that being extended, but I hope, as we do statements in this House, that we don't turn them into political documents based on fiction. The Premier talked about how part of his job is

talking to businesses. I would say part of the Premier's job is to spend more time listening and less time talking.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Before I respond to the Premier's statement today I do want to, through you, welcome to the gallery opposite to me Travis Price, who is not unknown to members of this House, or indeed to a growing number of Nova Scotians who know Travis as one of the young men who began the Pink Shirt anti-bullying campaign that started here in our province and has grown to become a nationwide effort in the cause of stopping bullying in its tracks. Through you, sir, I would just like to welcome Travis to the House of Assembly today and encourage all members to join me in welcoming him.

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

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I, too, would like to join with all the others in welcoming Shernette and Shawn to the House of Assembly today. It is great to see them here. They are, perhaps, on the front line or the leading edge of the 200 new nominees who we'll be able to bring to Nova Scotia as a result of the announcement today. On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I just want to wish them a long, prosperous, and happy life as new Nova Scotians, as I know everyone here does. It's great to see them here in our House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the PC caucus has long believed that the time has come for Nova Scotia to get big and bold when it comes to bringing new people to our province, when it comes to being serious about immigration. Although we welcome the extension of 200 new provincial nominees to the province, I think it's important that we recognize that is just one small step along the way of what needs to be done to make Nova Scotia a growing and prosperous and diverse province. Sadly, it's going to take a lot more than a tiny amount - namely 200 additional provincial nominees - to get this province to where it needs to be.

To put the number of 200 into perspective, although the Premier is quite excited about this small step, it remains true that under this same program Manitoba brings in 5,000 new Manitobans a year. That is an order of magnitude that all Nova Scotians should aim for, that is a number that would show that rather than just pat himself on the back for the 200, the Premier should actually advocate for the same treatment as Manitoba gets under this program and get Nova Scotia up into the 5,000 range which would be big and bold and make a dramatic improvement in the state of our economy and in the working-age population of Nova Scotians.

As we know, in 2011, under the NDP, Nova Scotia had the highest level of out-migration in the last 25 years. I tabled the Statistics Canada report yesterday that proves that point. Our working-age population, those aged 15 to 64, is actually an outright decline. That highlights the urgency of getting more serious than this about immigrating more people to our province. Of course the provincial Nominee Program is only one of the many streams of nominees that we need to bring in.

The Premier, in his statement, indicates it's approximately one-third of the source of new immigration in Nova Scotia each year. Where is the plan for growing the other two-thirds? Where is the plan to go from 500 total provincial nominees to 5,000 new Nova Scotians a year like Manitoba? We don't see a statement in this House about that, as important as it is.

I'll give you a specific example. The federal government has created a new class of nominees, the Canada Experience Class. I think it's important that all members of the House know that that class of nominee is specifically for some very interesting sources of immigrants to join those that come under the provincial Nominee Program, like temporary foreign workers - of which Nova Scotia is the number-one user per capita of the temporary foreign worker program in the country. That's not new, but it is a fact and yet we don't see a plan to convert those temporary workers into full-time residents under the Canada Experience Class.

Canada Experience Class is also for foreign students. Nova Scotia has great universities that bring in thousands and thousands of foreign students a year. There is a great potential source of new immigration to add to the 200 that the Premier is announcing today. Where is the plan to bring those students here and keep them here when they graduate by making full use of the Canada Experience Class? There is nothing coming from the government to make sure we make full use of our foreign students. When the Premier brings to this House a plan that takes full advantage of our university foreign students, our temporary foreign workers and all the ways that immigration can be increased in Nova Scotia, then we'll truly have something to celebrate beyond the mere 200 that he highlights today.

Let me make just one other point in the time I have allotted for me. Nova Scotia still, no matter what the cap is, needs to be the most attractive place it can possibly be to bring in immigrants from around the world because it's a competitive world out there, including for immigrants, as many provinces and countries strive to grow their economy, to grow their working-age population through immigration.

Yet in the last three years we've seen 7,400 full-time jobs lost. Under the NDP we have the highest sales tax, the highest marginal income tax, and the highest corporate tax rates in all of Canada. Under the NDP our debt, which even new immigrants are going to look at - and these are all new, Mr. Speaker, in the last three years, new debt - in three years

the debt of the province has gone up \$1 billion. These are not actions to make Nova Scotia more attractive for immigration; they make it less attractive for immigration.

The Premier says it's his job to talk to business people; the problem is that when he talks to them all he asks them is how big a cheque they want him to write, so they can maybe hire a few people here with all those taxes that he's collecting on the backs of everyday working Nova Scotians. That is a mess the Premier should dedicate himself to cleaning up, his own mess, so that the 200 Nova Scotians that come today and the thousands more he should be out there working for can come here and truly live a prosperous and happy life in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to make an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, joining us today in your gallery is Bill VanGorder. Mr. VanGorder is the chairman of the Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia. Mr. VanGorder and his Group of IX colleagues continue to provide the province with significant input and advice in senior-related government programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome Mr. VanGorder here today, so I hope everybody will join me in thanking him and the Group of IX for their dedication and for making life better for seniors in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all our guests to the gallery.

The honourable Minister of Seniors.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place this afternoon to speak to the important topic of making life better for Nova Scotia seniors. People tell me every day about how seniors contribute in meaningful ways to the life and vibrancy of their communities. It's our job to ensure they are encouraged and supported in their efforts to remain independent. After all, making life better for seniors also makes life better for their families and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to work with seniors' groups, municipalities, the Group of IX and others, to introduce and improve a wide range of programs and services for seniors. Through age-friendly communities, we have consulted with more than 800 seniors, caregivers, and service providers. We have also formed partnerships with 13 municipalities that are committed to building communities that help

seniors age in place. Through that spirit of collaboration, we are supporting the economic and social prosperity of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you more about how we're continuing to make life better for seniors and their families. We heard from seniors struggling to make ends meet because their spouses are in long-term care. Well, I am proud to say that, starting this month, this government is making changes to enable partners living at home to keep 60 per cent of their shared income - up to 1,000 couples will benefit from this change.

I think Joan Legge, who is the chairman of the Ivany Place Family Council, said it best, she said, "Seniors want to know that they will have enough money to care for themselves and their loved ones. Today's announcement will help them make the right decisions when it comes to care." I tabled that quote earlier, Mr. Speaker.

We have also eliminated the burden that nursing home security deposits, allowed by the previous government, caused seniors and their families. In some nursing homes these changes could be as much as \$4,700. That money has been returned to those who were forced to pay. Mr. Speaker, I can tell seniors and their families that no one will ever have to pay those fees again. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, more Nova Scotians will also have help to care for a loved one at home because we are increasing support for caregivers. This government is making the Caregiver Benefit available to about 100 more Nova Scotians in more areas of the province. This helps family members, friends and neighbours, who care for their loved ones by providing personal care, help around the house, and drives to health appointments or running errands.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia seniors have told us they want more options to stay in their homes longer and we agreed. That's why we are reducing waiting lists and improving access to services. Our investments mean 7,000 hours of homecare support. We also understand the unique housing issues that seniors face and we want to come up with the best possible plan. Currently Nova Scotia families, municipal governments, community groups and others are being asked to help craft the province's first long-term affordable housing strategy. Consultations are being held in communities across the province throughout November. Seniors will play an important role in these consultations and we encourage their participation.

Mr. Speaker, despite significant improvements in the last three years, we know that some Nova Scotians are still finding it difficult to pay everyday expenses; this is especially true for low-income seniors. This government is committed to helping Nova Scotians make ends meet by returning about \$9 million in income tax to roughly 18,000 seniors. By refunding the provincial tax for seniors who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, we are putting an average of \$450 back in their pockets.

Every dollar counts, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are also returning hard-earned dollars to seniors through a rebate on municipal property taxes. In 2010 this government increased the rebate from \$400 to \$600 and the results have been incredible. Since 2009 more than 56,000 seniors have benefitted from this increase.

Mr. Speaker, this government is not only interested in helping seniors' pocketbooks, but we also want to make sure they can live healthier lives. Through fair drug pricing, Nova Scotians are paying less for generic drugs than they did a year ago. We've removed the provincial portion of the HST on basic home electricity for all Nova Scotians. The province is also helping seniors who suffer from vision loss by paying for Lucentis treatment. Ambulance fees are now lower and for low-income Nova Scotians, those fees have been waived completely. The bottom line is clear: by working with communities and organizations, Nova Scotia seniors face shorter wait times, have access to more services, and get to keep more of their income.

The difference with us is we have a strategic plan that is working, Mr. Speaker. We are improving access to home support services, reducing taxes, enhancing access to health care services, and offering a range of home improvement grant and loan programs. In fact, nothing makes me happier than when I hear about a senior like Helen Drew in Terence Bay. She recently went through the Efficiency Nova Scotia Homeowner Program and said: It has been wonderful. My electricity has dropped and I feel secure that I can stay in my home. I also tabled that earlier.

Mr. Speaker, comments from people like Helen Drew are a testament that this government has the right energy plan for seniors. It is hard to believe but the Liberals' energy plan would actually hurt seniors by increasing their electricity bills by 30 per cent to 50 per cent, which they frankly cannot afford. We will continue to strengthen Nova Scotia's position as a leader in making life better for seniors.

Tomorrow I am pleased to co-chair the 14th meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for seniors here in Nova Scotia. Together we will focus on planning for Aging in Place, supporting active participation, and supporting seniors through technology and improving access to information.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the many initiatives the province is pursuing, living up to our commitment to make life better and more affordable for seniors and their families. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her remarks. Essentially what we've heard here today is a recap of what this government thinks they have done for seniors. I can tell you that many seniors in my community are still hurting and will be hurting unless more changes. While government

boasts about the changes in the amount of income a person living in a community can keep when their spouse is in a nursing home, this is a good thing, especially in light of the fact that the maximum standard accommodation rate has increased by \$4,500 since the NDP took power. The maximum standard accommodation rate as of October 31, 2011, was \$36,100. It could be more now but we just haven't heard anything from the Minister of Health and Wellness about this.

Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke of a Caregiver Benefit Program and how they expanded the program to more Nova Scotians. The reality is that since the government came to power in 2009, the amount budgeted for the Caregiver Benefit Program over the three years in government has been underspent by \$2.2 million. They forgot to mention the 2,250 seniors in hospitals who are waiting for long-term care beds, these seniors deserve better from this government. I can tell you that the Digby hospital is half full of seniors waiting for long-term care beds.

The minister also mentioned the Fair Drug Pricing Act and how drugs are cheaper. Mr. Speaker, we spoke of the unintended consequences of this legislation and the seniors are facing these consequences today. As a result of this bill, pharmacies are cancelling valuable programs, are charging seniors for programs that were available to them free of charge at one time. These programs helped seniors and seniors are now hurting because they're gone.

The minister mentioned an increase in municipal property tax rebate which is a good thing because municipal taxes have gone up. What the minister failed to mention is the fact that the NDP Government hiked the HST 2 per cent and this is hurting every person and every senior across this province more than we know.

Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't mention the power rates that have increased 31 per cent since this government took office and that is hurting our seniors dearly who are on fixed incomes, because I hear it every day. Any relief for our seniors is welcome but much, much more needs to be done. With that, I'll take my seat.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to thank the minister for providing our caucus with a copy of her statement in advance. I'd like to point out a few facts that the minister didn't tell us about the way the NDP treats seniors in Nova Scotia. The wait list for long-term care beds has grown to 2,250 people; that's almost a 50 per cent increase since the NDP took office. The waiting list for nursing homes is longer than it has ever been. The NDP haven't announced a single new bed since they became government over three years ago; all they've done is cut ribbons on facilities that were announced before they took office.

Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, over the next 20 years the number of seniors aged 80 and over in Nova Scotia will more than double. We've lost three years of preparation while the NDP did nothing. As of 2010-11, only 618 of the 832 beds promised by 2010, in the first phase of the Continuing Care Strategy, were open. While the NDP held back on creating any new beds, the wait list grew almost 50 per cent. While in Opposition, the NDP often spoke out about the need for more beds to keep up with the growing demand. The then-Opposition Leader, the Leader of the NDP told the Cape Breton Post in February 2008: "The growth in the senior demographics will quickly outpace the government's plans to establish 832 long-term care beds by 2010." From the reality facing Nova Scotia's seniors, I think the NDP have forgotten that.

Families across this province are struggling to get by; budgets are stretched thin. As I said last week, many seniors are being forced back into the workplace. This government has made life so expensive that those who should be enjoying their golden years are going back to work to make ends meet. Since the NDP formed government, the number of men over 65 who have had to get part-time work has more than doubled - an increase of 112.5 per cent.

Also, aside from those seniors who have managed to find work, the number of seniors in the province who are looking for work and cannot find it has increased by 200 per cent since this NDP formed government. The NDP have made life so expensive that seniors are being forced back to work. The NDP has imposed high taxes and high power rates that are hurting some of the most vulnerable, as many of these seniors are; also the working poor.

As I've stated in this Legislature before, but I will repeat for the listening pleasure of the members opposite: the latest hunger count survey showed that 1,650 seniors in our province had to rely on a food bank last year. These people paid taxes their whole lives, but this government has forced them back to work and forced many of them to food banks.

Our seniors deserve so much better. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction? Thank you.

In the east gallery, we are joined today by Dave Raymer. Dave is the membership chairman for the COPD Canada Patient Network, and he is here to help mark World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day.

I ask all members to welcome Dave to the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1991

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

Whereas today marks World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, will be the third leading cause of death in Canada by 2020; and

Whereas COPD has a higher hospitalization rate and higher hospital readmission rate than heart failure and angina, and 90 per cent of COPD cases are caused by smoking cigarettes; and

Whereas nearly two million Canadians are afflicted by this mostly preventable chronic condition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in marking today as World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day, and show leadership in modeling healthy lifestyle practices and support organizations that help Nova Scotians with chronic obstructive pulmonary 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 Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, could I make a brief introduction?

In the gallery with us today is Deputy Sheriff Rory Fraser who, for the third year in a row, has organized the Pitches for Wishes Charity Softball Game to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada.

I'd ask everyone to give Rory a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1992

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

Whereas for the past three years, local deputy sheriffs and members of Correctional Services have played a charity baseball game to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada to grant wishes for children battling serious illnesses; and

Whereas this year, participants of the Pitches for Wishes game braved the miserable weather on September 30th to play for this great cause, supported by sponsors like Shannon Lee, UFC fighter T.J. Grant, Kris Storti, Sin on Skin Tattoo Studio and Brad Marchand of the Boston Bruins; and

Whereas the softball game and other fundraising events like the Scotiabank donation matching program, head shavings and silent auctions, raised more than \$11,000 to send Jacob, a three year old Cole Harbour boy with a life threatening heart condition, to Disney World;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Legislature thank the organizers of this great event, including Deputy Sheriff Rory Fraser, for their continued support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada, and its efforts to make life better for sick children like Jacob and their families all across the country.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1993

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 month of November is Diabetes Awareness Month and November 14th is World Diabetes Day; and

Whereas more than nine million Canadians live with diabetes or pre-diabetes, and in Nova Scotia diabetes affects more than 75,000 adults and 750 children; and

Whereas many organizations such as the Canadian Diabetes Association are leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthier lives while working to find a cure;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in marking Diabetes Awareness Month, show leadership by modeling healthy lifestyle practices, and support organizations like the Canadian Diabetes Association that supports Nova Scotians with diabetes.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1994

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

Whereas every year on November 14th, World Diabetes Day brings people together to raise awareness and bring the diabetes epidemic into the public spotlight; and

Whereas according to the Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia, 84,527 Nova Scotians had diabetes or were at risk for becoming diabetic as of March 31st, 2011; and

Whereas communities, district health authorities, and organizations like the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation will hold events to educate and engage the public on the significant impact diabetes has on the lives of individuals and on our overall health care system;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge today, November 14th, as World Diabetes Day and extend our appreciation to individuals both inside and outside our health care system, as well as the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for all they do every day when it comes to advocating for and caring for individuals with diabetes in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1995

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

Whereas tonight the local chapter of the Canadian Progress Club will host their 23rd annual fundraising event celebrating Women of Excellence; and

Whereas each year the Progress Club celebrates women who have made outstanding contributions in a variety of areas and among the many deserving women are Karen Kelloway, Krista Connell, Courtney Larkin, Kim Mason, our fellow MLA Kelly Regan - the member for Bedford-Birch Cove, I should say - among others; and

Whereas the proceeds from this event go toward enriching the Phoenix Youth Program and other charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank the Progress Club for their incredible work and congratulate the winners of tonight's awards ceremony.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1996

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

Whereas on June 11th Cancer Care Nova Scotia presented its annual Excellence Awards, recognizing the work of cancer health care professionals and volunteers; and

Whereas the Leadership Excellence Award was presented to Dr. Robert Sers, a general surgeon in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA) for being an early advocate for colon cancer awareness and prevention; and

Whereas Dr. Sers' work in colon cancer prevention in GASHA led to his co-operation with Cancer Care Nova Scotia in developing their population-based Colon Cancer Prevention Program which encourages screening as an awareness and prevention tool;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Legislature applaud Dr. Sers' cancer awareness and prevention efforts, congratulate him on receiving the Leadership Excellence Award, and thank him for his dedication to patient health.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 1997

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

Whereas this evening, the Canadian Progress Club of Halifax Cornwallis will hold its 23rd Annual Progress Women of Excellence Awards Dinner at the World Trade and Convention Centre; and

Whereas 19 inspirational women will be honoured for their exceptional contributions to their profession and their ability to influence, motivate, inspire and to make our province an even better place to live; and

Whereas the member for Bedford-Birch Cove will receive an award in the Communications and Public Affairs category for her exceptional contributions in journalism and the impact she has made both as a legislator and MLA for the constituents of Bedford-Birch Cove;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the member for Bedford-Birch Cove on receiving a Progress Women of Excellence Award and wish her many more years of exceptional contributions to public life.

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 Timberlea-Prospect on an introduction.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I thank resolutions for a moment. In our gallery opposite is an old - with emphasis on old - friend of mine who recently has received recognition by his peers at the Halifax Regional Council. I would like to introduce the new deputy mayor of the HRM, Councillor Reg Rankin. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1998

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

Whereas Shelley Fleckenstein of Kings Physiotherapy has grown her business over the past 17 years into a world-class operation employing a staff of over 25 people; and

Whereas Shelley is being profiled by the Nova Scotia Business Journal as she celebrates being named one of Profit Magazine's Top 100 Canadian Women Entrepreneurs; and

Whereas Shelley and her staff at Kings Physiotherapy continue to provide a superb level of customer service and care to their clientele from all across the Annapolis Valley, and they donated \$10,000 to the Valley Hospice Foundation as part of their 17th year celebration;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the contributions made by Shelley Fleckenstein and Kings Physiotherapy to their local 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 Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1999

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

Whereas many First Nations have long embraced Christianity; and

Whereas on October 21, 2012, Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized as the first Aboriginal saint from Canada; and

Whereas on October 27th, 2012, Indian Brook First Nation unveiled a statue dedicated to Saint Kateri;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Indian Brook First Nation for their statue to Saint Kateri respecting her life's work.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2000

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

Whereas Raymond Gregory has served as a town councillor for eight years, representing the citizens of Ward 2 in Pictou, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Raymond has worked hard as a town councillor and as a result, has helped make the Town of Pictou a better place to live and work; and

Whereas the people of Pictou thank Raymond in recognition and appreciation for his years of dedicated service to the Town of Pictou;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Raymond Gregory for his eight years of service to the Town of Pictou and wish him every success 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 member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2001

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

Whereas Mildred Sanford of Guysborough County met Nancy Inferrera when they worked together in Massachusetts; and

Whereas Nancy Inferrera moved in with Mildred Sanford upon the death of her husband, eventually becoming Mildred's caregiver due to her illness and dementia; and

Whereas efforts to allow Ms. Inferrera to remain in Canada have not prevailed and she will be deported today unless there is intervention from Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney;

Therefore be it resolved that the House urge Minister Kenney and the federal Conservative Government to see the humanity of this case and grant Ms. Inferrera the right to remain at the side of her long-time friend here in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2002

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

Whereas Chris Muise, an employee of Terry Sprinkler Ltd. in Truro, was recently awarded the 2011 Merit Apprenticeship Award at a ceremony in Fall River on October 12th; and

Whereas Terry Sprinkler Ltd. office manager Sterns Blackmore nominated Chris Muise for this award due to his exemplary track record with the company and for his strong work ethic of being a dependable and hard worker; and

Whereas during his five years with Terry Sprinkler Ltd., the company has never received a single complaint relating to either Chris Muise or his work;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Chris Muise on being chosen to receive the 2011 Merit Apprenticeship Award and wish him continued success in his career with Terry Sprinkler Ltd.

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 Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2003

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

Whereas local rock band Dali Van Gogh has had a very successful few years writing musically and performing live, were the winners of the Nova Scotia leg of the 2011 Rogers Battle of the Bands presented by Supernova.com, and had a song from their debut release, *Verbal Warning*, become part of a multinational release from 272 Records out of Hollywood, California; and

Whereas Dali Van Gogh continue to receive radio play as far from home as England, Mexico, the Philippines, and Norway, and were featured in the debut issue of *ROCKWiRED Magazine* from New Mexico this year, being hailed as a portrait of rock 'n' roll by international radio; and

Whereas the band's recent extended play release, *Wild Blue City*, this past September was held at Big Leagues sports bar in Cole Harbour to a packed house;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate local band Dali Van Gogh and their members - Marcel McNeil, Isaac Kent, Scott Turnbull and Sean Sawler - on their creative talents and their latest music release in Cole Harbour, and wish them a successful career in the entertainment industry.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2004

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

Whereas the region of Queens Municipality was formed in 1996 and includes the communities of Liverpool, Port Joli, Brooklyn, Mill Village, Port Medway, Caledonia, Milton, and many more throughout the County of Queens; and

Whereas in October of this year the region of Queens Municipality saw 26 people put their names forth in the municipal elections; and

Whereas the new council, consisting of mayor and seven councillors, will represent the best interests of the residents of the region of Queens Municipality for the next four years;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Mayor Christopher Clarke and Councillors Darlene Norman, Bruce Inglis, Brian Fralic, Susan MacLeod, Jack Fancy, Raymond Fiske, and Peter Waterman on their election to the region of Queens Municipal Council.

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 Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2005

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

Whereas Cherubini Metal Works Limited is one of Atlantic Canada's largest steel fabrication companies and is currently working on an expansion to its workforce, with the potential to add more than 100 new, good jobs; and

Whereas Cherubini and similar companies understand the importance of globalized competition and commitment to the pillars of the government's jobsHere strategy, including increasing productivity and innovation; and

Whereas this NDP Government's jobsHere plan has helped guide our province out of the worst economic growth in 20 years, which was created by previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cherubini Metal Works Limited on its successes and recognize the important role growing the economy of Nova Scotia will have in turning a corner on the 20 years of Canada's worst economic growth.

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 Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2006

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

Whereas Focal Technologies is a Nova Scotia company that has delivered technology products and services to global offshore industry for close to 30 years; and

Whereas a recent partnership with NSBI will allow Focal Technologies to create up to 60 good jobs over the next five years; and

Whereas this partnership is a direct link to the NDP Government's jobsHere plan, which focuses on growing the economy of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature congratulate Focal Technologies on their many years of success and recognize the importance of partnering with businesses to provide good jobs for Nova Scotian families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007

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

Whereas on September 27, 2012, the African Nova Scotia Prostate Cancer Support Group held their first meeting at the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Centre with an astounding 52 men in attendance; and

Whereas this support group, co-founded and co-chaired by Elwood Marsman and Earl Lucas of Upper Hammonds Plains, is the first and only group of its kind within the national Prostate Cancer Canada network; and

Whereas the volunteer-run Upper Hammonds Plains group will serve people in Hammonds Plains, Lucasville, and the Sackvilles, and is intended to be a venue for those afflicted with prostate cancer to share experiences and support one another;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House welcome the African Nova Scotia Prostate Cancer Support Group to the community of Upper Hammonds Plains, and commend the co-founders and co-chairs of the group for demonstrating their dedication and compassion for those affected by prostate cancer.

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

MADAM 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 Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2008

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's highly skilled and dedicated workforce has led to the expansion of NTT Data Canada Inc., adding up to 250 new jobs to our province; and

Whereas in order for Nova Scotia to turn the corner on the worst economic growth in 20 years, our government has formulated a plan known as jobsHere, which focuses on education, innovation, and competitiveness; and

Whereas instead of making reckless promises that will cost Nova Scotia families more and once again take us back to the past, like the Leader of the Official Opposition does, our government is focused on ways to work with business to grow the economy and secure our economic future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate NTT Data Canada Inc. on their plans for expansion and recognize that reckless promises that will take us back to the past are not the way to move Nova Scotia forward.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2009

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

Whereas ADP Canada Co. is a leading provider of human resources and payroll and benefits solutions located in Dartmouth; and

Whereas ADP Canada Co. recently announced plans to expand and add up to 250 new full-time jobs; and

Whereas ADP Canada Co.'s expansion is an example of the success of the NDP Government's jobsHere plan, which focuses on growing the economy to make up for 20 years of the worst economic growth in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate ADP Canada Co. on their success and recognize the important role they will be playing in providing good jobs for Nova Scotian families.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2010

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

Whereas Musique Royale, in its 27th season, brings performances of early and traditional music to communities throughout the province thanks to a strong group of volunteers; and

Whereas on October 28th, Musique Royale hosted the Nova Voce provincial men's choir at the historical St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg, performing a variety of choral works and styles, including works by Nova Scotian and Canadian composers; and

Whereas the concert in Lunenburg, supported by Music Nova Scotia's Community Presenters program, featured soloist Marcel d'Entremont, the recipient of Nova Voce's 2012 Male Voice Scholarship, who performed with the choir;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Musique Royale for continuing to bring high-quality cultural performances to audiences throughout Nova Scotia.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2011

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

Whereas the People's Place Library, which opened in 2011, is an excellent example of co-operation between community partners and all levels of government to create a building that truly meets the needs of the community; and

Whereas on May 24, 2012, the People's Place Library celebrated its 1st Anniversary with an afternoon of entertainment and refreshments; and

Whereas in its first year of operation the People's Place Library has had more than 200,000 visitors, an average of 600 people a day, up from 600 people a week at the old site;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the People's Place Library on a successful first year and extend thanks to all the groups that made the People's Place possible.

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

MADAM 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.

RESOLUTION NO. 2012

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

Whereas Norman Hines moved to Truro in 1960 to work as a guidance counsellor, continued in this work when Cobequid Educational Centre high school was built in 1970, and was instrumental in establishing theatrical life at the CEC, directing musicals such as *Man of La Mancha* and *Guys and Dolls*, which began the theatrical careers of many young performers, including Charles Page Fletcher, who starred in *The Hitchhiker* TV series of the same name, and this MLA for Truro-Bible Hill; and

Whereas Norman Hines continued to teach theatre to local youth and adults and became co-founder, along with Barry Stagg, of the NOSCO Academy of Theatre Arts, a school of drama which now operates in Spruce Pine, North Carolina; and

Whereas Norman Hines at 80 years of age has drawn from over five decades of theatre experience to write his first book, entitled *Soul Prints*, which is written like a play about a group of young people staging a production of *Man of La Mancha*, while unseen forces are coming together to bring about world peace;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Norman Hines on the publication of his book, *Soul Prints*, and thank him for the dedication and love of theatre that he has instilled in so many students.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION 2013

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

Whereas in September Mindy-Lee George, a native of Canso, visited the Canso Library to preview her first book; and

Whereas Mindy-Lee George has successfully completed a course on desktop publishing and design; and

Whereas Mindy-Lee George has successfully written and published a children's book, *The Alphabet Zoo*, which was officially launched on October 13, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mindy-Lee George on the publication of her first children's book, *The Alphabet Zoo*, and wish her continued success with her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2014

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

Whereas Ken Johnston has served as a town councillor for eight years, representing the citizens of Ward 1 in Pictou, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Ken has worked hard as a town councillor and, as a result, has helped make the Town of Pictou a better place to live and work; and

Whereas the people of Pictou thank Ken in recognition and appreciation for his years of dedicated service to the Town of Pictou;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Ken Johnston for his eight years of service to the Town of Pictou and wish him every success 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 3:20 p.m.; we will finish at 4:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - MANUFACTURING JOBS: INCREASE - FAILURE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told reporters that he has achieved all of his campaign commitments except for balancing the budget. The Premier failed to admit that his government missed another key economic commitment from his genuine plan for today's family. The NDP campaign document stated: "We created 2,200 jobs through a 10 per cent Manufacturing and Processing Investment Tax Credit."

Our manufacturing sector has lost jobs since the NDP Government has taken office, so my question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, why has the NDP Government failed to increase the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector, as originally promised?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I've been standing here in my place for the last couple of weeks explaining that we've created 7,600 jobs in the last year. I don't know what more I can say. We are creating jobs. The jobsHere strategy is working and we will continue to stand by the plan that we have laid out for the future of Nova Scotians.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that same NDP campaign document said the NDP "Would create the secure jobs Nova Scotia's economy needs." Nova Scotia has lost 3,500 full-time jobs since the NDP have taken office, but it has gained about 13,000 part-time jobs since they've taken office. My question to the minister, why does the government think a part-time job is good for the economy of Nova Scotia?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, again, it's obvious I'm not able to get through to the Leader of the Official Opposition, so I'm going to toss that question over to the Premier - maybe he'll have better luck.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've said this earlier, but I'll say it again for the benefit of the Leader of the Official Opposition. Statistics Canada from June 2009 through to October 2012 shows there have been 7,600 additional jobs created in Nova Scotia. And there is so much more that this government has done over that time - we have won the largest industrial contract in the history of this province, some 11,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, the attitude of the Leader of the Official Opposition - he thinks this is funny and I think it is just the ignorance and inexperience of the Leader of the Official Opposition where he refuses to understand the real prospects for long-term employment for the province and he should be congratulating Irving, IBM, PROJEX, all of the companies that are coming here to Nova Scotia to build our future.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member that the word "ignorance" is unparliamentary. (Interruption) It is, and I would ask the honourable member to retract it please.

THE PREMIER: Sure, and I'll retract it and replace it with "arrogance."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the same NDP campaign documents says: "Ensure more young people stay and build a life here in Nova Scotia." Since this government has taken office, we have lost 4,000 young Nova Scotians, we have lost them because we have seen employment for young Nova Scotians drop by that 4,000 and full-time employment dropped by 6,900.

So this government has failed to meet its own manufacturing job targets; failed to create the secure jobs; and failed to keep our young people here. My question for the

Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, why has his jobs strategy failed so miserably for Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question. I want to table for you (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. (Interruptions)

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, you see, unfortunately the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't want - he's afraid of a debate on this issue. He demonstrates not only his lack of respect but his disrespect for the people of this province through his actions. He thinks this is funny. Well, it's not funny.

Mr. Speaker, I want to table for the House the headline on The ChronicleHerald that says: Extraordinary Opportunity for Nova Scotia. This is about the IBM deal. Today - and I don't want to be accused of using this as a prop but, today, I have the business section of The ChronicleHerald: Clearwater rides high on a rising tide. Costs soar as construction boom continues in Halifax. The next page: Cherubini expansion takes shape. These are all success stories about the Province of Nova Scotia and the economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is the manufacturing tax credit at work. This is the jobsHere program at work. This is what the Leader of the Official Opposition refuses to admit, that the Province of Nova Scotia, that the young people in Nova Scotia are better off today with an NDP Government and the work that we are doing. (Applause)

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

PREM. - IRVING GROUP: FIN. GIFT - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if there was ever any doubt that the Premier only manages to read the headlines in The ChronicleHerald and nothing else, that last answer was it. Unfortunately, Nova Scotians continue to ask, how many hundreds of millions of their money have they paid for the Premier to quote that headline. That is the issue before the House today.

In fact, going back to March of this year, the Premier provided over \$300 million in financial assistance to the Irvings. Mr. Speaker, that was right around the time that he spent \$620,000 of taxpayers' money trying to take credit for their win of the shipyard contract. This is all part of the \$0.5 billion he has given away to large companies to try and quote headlines once in a while like the ones he's using here today in this House.

So my question to the Premier is, Mr. Speaker, will he now immediately and finally release the details of his financial gift to the Irving Group for this House and for all Nova Scotians to see?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I realize that in the Progressive Conservative Party, they don't recognize headlines like that because they never saw them when they were in power. I understand that it is very difficult for them to try to understand. What they should know about the support for the Irving contract is two things. First of all, had we not supported the contract, that contract would have gone to Quebec, it would have gone to British Columbia, and all of that opportunity, the 10,000 or 11,000 jobs identified by the Conference Board of Canada, would have gone somewhere else.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the support to the Irving company is a commercial loan on commercial terms, which they can only earn forgiveness on if they create the jobs that are demanded and then they would have had to have created more than \$2 billion in tax revenue for the Province of Nova Scotia to go into health care, into education, into roads, into housing. That's a good deal for Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you something that we recognize over here and that is a Premier who says one thing when he's running for office and the exact opposite when he's the Premier of Nova Scotia. That's what we recognize. (Applause)

When that member was in Opposition, he said to The Daily News at the time, and I'll quote from the member opposite who is now our Premier, in 1998 he said, "We want there to be support for the shipbuilding industry. What we don't want to see is a backroom deal that's cooked up that gives an unfair advantage to the Irving interests." I will table that for the benefit of the House - that's what we're used to seeing.

The Premier is so determined to convince us it was a loan on commercial terms. Mr. Speaker, you go to your bank and you tell your lender that you want him to forgive your mortgage and you'll find out how different this deal is from commercial terms. I will ask the Premier, the same person who said he did not like backroom deals with the Irvings when he was in Opposition - will he release the full contract, the deal between his government and the Irvings today?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, all of the material that was required was released and the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party knows this. He also knows that Irving was the only Nova Scotian company in this bid, that the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy required the participation of the government and if not, they could not have won the contract. That is some 11,000 jobs, more than \$2 billion in tax revenue to the province. You could go to any bank and you say to them, I'm going borrow a certain amount of money and then I'm going to pay you more than 30 times over, more than 100 times over - I think any bank would take that deal.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The Irving shipyard and the workers of the Irving shipyard are the best in the country and they won that bid on their own, not because the Premier was willing to lend them a bunch of money and then write it off, they won it. It's an insult to the workers at the Irving shipyard to tell them otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is releasing their agreement with the Irvings, the umbrella agreement, with the consent of the Irving Group. Only in Nova Scotia do we have a government that won't release the details of the assistance that they're providing to the Irvings. It ought to be a condition of getting government support that you accept public scrutiny. The Irvings have said yes to that in Ottawa, but the Premier of Nova Scotia won't apply the same standard here, so I'll give him one more chance; will the Premier release the file and all the details of his assistance to the Irving Group, yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first out, we released all of that information, the details of the assistance, to show what a good deal this was for the Province of Nova Scotia.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for more than 10 years when the Progressive Conservatives were in power they used the rebate program, they put in place grants, they tried to influence business to come to the province through these measures, but they were not as successful as we were and I understand that that troubles the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

There are a few years that are of particular note and they are, of course, the years when the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was actually the chief of staff for the Hamm Government. I would like to table for the edification of the House the \$35 million worth of loans and rebates that were given out while the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was the chief of staff for the Hamm Government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM: MV MINER - REMOVAL

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, in November 2011, I joined the Premier and the member for Cape Breton West on a trip to Ottawa to try to clean up the MV Miner mess. This is a very dangerous situation, we have a derelict bulk carrier rotting off the coast of Cape Breton. To make things worse, the Miner is located on a protected wilderness area known as Scaterie Island. My question to the Premier is, why is the MV Miner still floating in the rough, Atlantic waters and when will we be finally rid of this boat?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course, as you know this happened as a result of an accident at sea - I assume it was an accident, nobody would deliberately allow a former bulk carrier to float ashore. The trouble is, and I've pointed this out time and time again, is that the federal government does not have in place appropriate rules with respect to the

towing of salvage in Canadian waters. There was no insurance on the vessel to ensure there was a cleanup. There were not, in my view, inspection rules that were appropriate, or if they were appropriate they weren't appropriately followed. As the member opposite said, we have raised this directly with the minister. We have raised it with various members of the federal Cabinet, yet all of the pleas we make with respect to the federal government to clean up a mess that they allowed to happen have gone unanswered.

MR. MACLELLAN: The reality is that this is a disaster. It's an absolute albatross off the coast of Scatarie, a protected area. The issue for Cape Bretoners is not where the jurisdiction lies. It's not who is going to pay for it. The reality is that this is an absolute mess off the coast of Cape Breton, and we need an answer. As of right now, the province is responsible for oversight of this cleanup - as of right now, Mr. Speaker. (Interruptions)

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

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, a year ago the Premier talked about how this would be under control and we would make sure that this boat was removed. However, now we're over a year later - 13 months later - and there are still liquids and floatables on the ship and the province is overseeing the cleanup of the MV Miner.

My question to the Premier is, can the Premier commit today to having salvage and removal activities at least resume before January 1, 2013?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, salvage, by its very nature, requires a salvage company that decides to undertake salvage. That is not the responsibility of the Province of Nova Scotia. I don't think that students in our schools or people needing assistance in medical care - I don't think we should be taking money that we need to support education, health care, and other services in order to pay for something that is the responsibility of the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition is yelling, as usual, because he doesn't understand. I realize that he has never had to deal with these kinds of things and he doesn't have the experience that is required in order to be able to understand them. This is an important issue to people and we are working hard to try to get it resolved.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, the people of Cape Breton are growing extremely tired and frustrated with this derelict ship that is rotting. When the winter hits and the oceans crank up, I don't know if there's going to be anything left of the MV Miner, so it's certainly a concern. The Premier is talking about federal jurisdiction and he's talking about Bennington Group having shirked their responsibilities, but the reality is that this is an absolute mess. The people of Nova Scotia, the people of Cape Breton, are looking to the province and looking to the Premier to clean up this mess.

My question is simple, when will the Premier finally stand up for Cape Breton, for Scatarie - the protected area - and all the people of Nova Scotia and get this boat off our coast?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I led the team that went. I invited along the critic for the Liberal Party and the critic for the Progressive Conservative Party because I believed that the cleanup of this area is an all-Party concern, that it is not, in fact, a partisan issue. It is an issue of trying to make the federal government understand what their responsibility is and to live up to that obligation - not only to the people in this room, but most importantly to the people in Cape Breton.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay on a new question.

ERDT: IBM CONTRACT - TABLE

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in response to our caucus' privacy concerns, the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister tabled an NDP communications brochure. The document outlines no legal guarantees, is void of legal details, and does not outline any controls whatsoever.

The document promises but does not say how the government and IBM will deliver on those promises, so my question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, will this minister table today the actual contract signed with IBM that outlines measures to protect our personal information and privacy?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I am going to pass that on to the lead minister on that file.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: I want to thank the minister for an opportunity to speak to this question. Mr. Speaker, privacy is the utmost consideration for this government when we're dealing with personal information of people who either work for our province or work in entities like school boards or health authorities, or if, in fact, they are in receipt of various government programs and supports. The particular contract that the member makes reference to was subject to a review, an external review, with respect to privacy and protection of privacy considerations. We went through all of the very rigorous assessments that are required to ensure that the data will be as protected in the future as it is currently under provisions in the provincial government.

MR. MACLELLAN: The Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister thinks Nova Scotians should trust his government's ability to protect personal information yet this government's own legislation violated privacy law. Considering this government's record and IBM's past of secret deals to send personal information offshore, let's look at what the company will have access to, Mr. Speaker: addresses, banking information and, of course, social insurance numbers. That's all the information needed to take someone's

identity. This can make identity theft easier and this government did not consult the privacy officer on this. So my question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, does the contract with IBM allow for cross-border access to the information on Nova Scotia-based servers?

MR. PARIS: I'm going to pass that on to the Minister of Finance, the person responsible for the SAP.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the information remains here in Nova Scotia. Any information that will be used in this process will be masked and the standards are as high, if not higher, than the processes that we use all the time in terms of protecting information. I want to ensure Nova Scotians that they have nothing to worry about with respect to the privacy considerations raised by the member.

MR. MACLELLAN: With \$100 million on the table of taxpayers' money and the contract directly with ERDT, I would hope that the minister would be able to answer some of the details on such an important and such a large relationship. (Interruption) That's right. The member suggests that I don't understand, Mr. Speaker; I certainly do, I understand what's happening here.

Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure the minister knows there is a difference between where servers are located and where people are who can access those servers. IBM has entered into a deal with the U.K. Government to allow offshore access of personal, confidential information. The NDP claims the private consultant they used to prove the deal but we have not been shown the report of that consultant. We don't want empty promises, we don't want promotional material. Nova Scotians want and deserve access to both the contract and IBM and the report by the consultant. My question is, will the minister commit to tabling actual contracts today and reports, instead of NDP promotional material where Nova Scotians' personal, confidential information is at risk?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Well, the honourable member demonstrates he either doesn't know or he willfully doesn't want to know - perhaps because of his inexperience - that these (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, the protection of personal privacy is of the utmost importance to this government, and we ensured as we went through this process that every protection that currently exists would continue to exist with respect to the way in which information is handled as IBM transitions the process of managing the SAP work of the government.

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

PREM. - CORPORATE WELFARE: SPENDING - STOP

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told us that he is “sick and tired of watching the future of Nova Scotia being sold off,” but oddly, he didn’t feel that way when he was writing big cheques to companies like Daewoo, the Stern Group, Resolute Forest Products, the Irvings, and others. What Nova Scotians are sick and tired of is paying for his expensive corporate welfare.

My question for the Premier - in light of the fact that after all of those hundreds of millions have been spent, there are still 7,400 Nova Scotians who lost a full-time job today compared to three years ago - will he now commit to stop opening the taxpayers’ chequebook and spending so much money on corporate welfare?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, speaking out of both sides of your mouth is never attractive. You see, on the one hand, while he was the chief of staff, he approved some \$35 million in rebates because he could not instill the kind of confidence that was necessary in order to be able to ensure that we actually got the kind of attention from the business community that we are now getting.

The reality is that we have a very successful business attraction and retention program that has even - and this is, I think, a very key point, something that the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn’t understand, or doesn’t want to understand, and perhaps the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party as well. We have just gone through three years of one of the most difficult global recessions since the Great Depression, and yet, despite all that, we are still managing to create jobs. We are still managing to attract new employers into the province. That is, in fact, the hallmark of success.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier may feel that he has grabbed the attention of the corporate community, as he just said, and of course, he has. Any time you open the taxpayers’ chequebook and ask how much, you’re going to get the attention of the corporate business community. (Interruptions)

The Premier is not alone, of course, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member for Queens, a member of his caucus, said “A company without ties to this province could potentially strip all of the forest lands with no value to the province.” I’ll table that quote from Hansard for the benefit of the House.

So my question to the Premier is, who is this new bogeyman so intent on screwing the forests of Nova Scotia that he is using to try to justify another \$100 million in bailout money? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I was just going to say that that word is definitely unparliamentary. (Interruptions)

Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Resolute, unfortunately, has gone out of business in Nova Scotia. They have closed that facility. So they put up for sale all of the assets that they have. Who purchases them, I suppose, is a matter of speculation. The simple fact of the matter is that there are unlikely to be buyers within the province, so the most likely result of that would be that it would be purchased from outside of the province. We know that there have been prospectors in through the province looking for these kinds of assets because they would want to buy them, take them out of the province, and then process them. (Interruption)

The member for Halifax Clayton Park says, carpetbaggers. Well, I don't see them necessarily as being malicious, they are looking out for their best corporate interests. We understand that. We understand the relationship that exists in a market economy but we also understand that it is the members on this side of the House who are charged with the responsibility for standing up for the people of Nova Scotia, whether they are in Queens County or in Port Hawkesbury, and we intend to fulfill that responsibility.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, of course all of us in this House feel responsibility to all Nova Scotians. The difference is that the Premier feels the best way to show it is by using their money to own lands, like these lands in question, in government hands while the rest of us know that we should look for a responsible buyer, inside or outside, that can manage those lands to the benefit of all Nova Scotians, past and present.

What is most reprehensible is that yesterday a source close to the government tried to tie the sale of those lands to whether there will be money in the pension plan of the Bowater workers, which is an awful way to try and force people to accept another \$100 million cheque written by the NDP Government. As we know, amendments to the Pension Benefits Act in 2007 ensure that where there are assets available for sale, the proceeds will go to fulfill the moral and legal obligation of a company to fund its pension plan. My question to the Premier is, will he stand in his place now and assure those pensioners that he will enforce the law regardless of who buys the Bowater lands?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've been crystal clear on that and that is exactly what we intend to do. That is not the most reprehensible thing, as the member of the Progressive Conservative Party has said. The most reprehensible thing to do would be to follow the course of action that he suggests and simply wipe your hands of the whole thing and tell the people of Queens County, of Lunenburg County, of Shelburne County, of Annapolis County, you're on your own. Well, he may want to desert the people of southwestern Nova Scotia, we will not.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: DSTN CONTRACT - DETAILS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government has spent \$60 million to create 60 jobs at DSTN. We know DSTN's wind turbine business is struggling and we know they are rushing to diversify. Daewoo doesn't seem like a company to rush and change plans on the fly. Nova Scotians and the people of Pictou County are concerned about this investment and about this project. My question for the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister, or whoever he punts it to - is there any part of the contract with Daewoo that commits them to staying in the Province of Nova Scotia?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased with the relationship that this government has with DSTN. We've signed an agreement with DSTN, the parent company of Daewoo, world-renowned, known around the globe as one of the top shipbuilders in the world. They've diversified in other areas. We are proud as Nova Scotians to have this company as a partner for the good people in the Province of Nova Scotia.

I know that the member for Glace Bay doesn't recognize that, but we are proud. We believe in Daewoo, we believe in DSTN, and we are moving onward and upward - onward and upward.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, DSTN has said "We [DSME Trenton] have one of the highest costs of manufacturing in the world." They have the highest overall tax burden, the highest corporate tax rate, and highest power rates of any province in Canada. Those factors weigh on any business, especially a struggling business. My question to the minister is, in this minister's daily briefings with DSTN, what concerns around the cost of doing business have they raised and how many Nova Scotians are employed at DSTN today?

MR. PARIS: You know, Mr. Speaker, the same question, the same answer. Yes, there are less than 60 people employed at DSTN but we are hopeful, we are working with them. They have diversified; they are searching out new markets. We believe in this company.

What the member doesn't understand, and that's probably lack of inexperience, is that to make money you've got to invest money and that's what we are doing. We are investing in Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think I understand this whole file and these issues much better than the minister, so I'm proud of my lack of inexperience, as he says.

Over the summer, the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister said, given the current market conditions, he was not sure if they would have made the same decision now, investing in Nova Scotia. That sounds like a company worried about its investment, Mr. Speaker. That means this government should be concerned about this

investment, as, of course, the taxpayers of this province are very concerned, that we're spending \$60 million, with returns much less than what we thought they would be.

More importantly, it means that this minister must become more forthright with Nova Scotians and the company that we partly own. My question for the minister, has Daewoo shown any hesitation about staying in Nova Scotia or even hinted that they are interested in selling their 51 per cent stake in DSTN?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, unlike previous governments, we have a plan for the future of Nova Scotia. That is a long-term plan, it's a long-term commitment and we have a plan. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker and if the member hasn't heard it before, I'm going to say it again and again, it's jobsHere, jobsHere.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**COM. SERV. - N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN BD. OF DIRECTORS:
ERDT MIN. - MEMBERSHIP DETAILS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, some kind of public forum is needed to heal the deep wounds and divisions and get to the bottom of questions surrounding the past of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. In his scrum, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism indicated that he had been, at one time, a member of the Board of Directors for the NSHCC. That raises important questions of why he is involved with discussions about the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, whether there should be a public inquiry and potentially Cabinet discussions about lawsuits.

My first question is to the Minister of Community Services, whose department is responsible for the relationship with the NSHCC; has she been able to produce annual reports to establish when the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism served on the board of directors and will she table the appropriate report or reports?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this is actually an issue that is in the court system, so, I am going to pass this over to the Justice Minister, where the question belongs.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The issues surrounding the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children is one that raises concern and emotion and it requires that we allow the processes to go forward. The member knows, as the Minister of Justice I can't talk about ongoing aspects of the investigation. I can assure the member that we take all allegations and aspects of this matter seriously. We will continue to be progressive in trying to find out answers and address it through that format.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, our information is that it appears that the minister would not have been a member of any time more recently than the mid-1980s. Of course, we know the serious allegations of terrible events taking place at the home extend into the early 1980s. It's very important for Nova Scotians to know that the minister was not there during that time. He would not be able to be part of those discussions if this were true, nor would he be speaking as a Cabinet Minister, which appeared to happen in the scrum yesterday, or last week, especially not only because the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism cannot say when he was on the board.

Can the Minister of Community Service assure the House that her colleague clearly removed himself from all discussions, including at Cabinet, about the lawsuits involving the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children and the province, and associated challenges including whether there should be a public inquiry in order to avoid a potential conflict of interest?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague just mentioned, this is a terrible situation that everybody in the province is dealing with. I think that it is highly inappropriate that that Party tries to politicize something that they were in existence, they were around the same time these issues were happening, the same as the Liberal Party was around. I don't think this is a situation that I'm going to speak of because it is in the court system and it's very hurtful for many people - and those on the other side should have that kind of respect for the individuals who are going through this.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Has he or has his staff had occasion to speak directly or indirectly to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, to advise him that he should not participate in government discussions about the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children - or should he speak on the file as a minister, unless it becomes clear that he is not in a conflict of interest, given that minister, himself, cannot say whether he was a board member or that it is not clear of what time periods would be probed by an inquiry?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is this - the allegations that are made around the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children are extraordinary. Of course the people involved, whether they are the claimants or whether they are the defendants, have the right to have that process go through the due process of law. That means to have them make the allegations, to substantiate them, to before what is a system that has been put in place literally since Runnymede, where both the claimant and a defendant can stand before an arbitrator, an impartial, independent arbitrator and have their claims heard. That is what this province is committed to because those are the very hallmarks of justice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

FIN. - BALANCED BUDGET: MIN. - EXPECTATIONS

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the federal Finance Minister indicated that global economic weakness has led to falling commodity prices and tax revenues. The federal government is telling Canadians that they're going to have to wait longer for a balanced budget.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, does the minister still believe that she can deliver a balanced budget this Spring?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, when I provided the budget update back in the early Fall, I reaffirmed we are on track to a balanced budget, and I also indicated that we were watching the trends around the globe of slowing economic activity. We were aware, as most people are, of the problems in the American economy and in Europe and we were watching these trends very carefully.

We will continue to watch what is occurring and there will be an update to the province's forecast in December, as usual, and at that time we will be able to provide more detailed information about where we stand.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the provincial government relies heavily on the fiscal payments from the federal government for such things as health services, social services, housing, and infrastructure, and more. The federal government is clearly facing tough fiscal challenges and is already downloading some costs to the province, as seen in the changes to the Canada Health Transfer; however we've heard nothing from this Premier and nothing from this government when these changes were being made. Will the minister tell Nova Scotians why her Cabinet did not directly challenge the federal government's changes to the Canada Health Transfer?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberal Party has difficulty hearing good news from the government about all of our job creation plans, but apparently they also have difficulty hearing when the Premier hosts Premiers from across the country and they make equalization and transfer payments the focus of their discussion. In fact, the Premiers will be meeting here toward the end of the month to deal with these matters.

Mr. Speaker, the economy is (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker. We all know that there has been a recession, that the recovery from the recession has been extremely slow,

the recovery is still fragile, the American economy is very important to what will happen in the Canadian economy and they are facing some financial challenges of their own, inside their elected Assemblies.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things are things that we will have to watch but one thing that I can tell you, the things that are within our control, our own spending, our own work to create jobs in this province, are on track and they are going very well.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, there are some pending and potentially dangerous changes that are coming from the federal government and we know that equalization changes and the changes to that formula are among them. We have a population that is aging disproportionately to the rest of Canada and our numbers are not strong as well. We need more people in this province. We simply can't afford more cuts to federal transfers. This government has been too quiet on changes to the Old Age Security and didn't directly challenge the government on the Canada Health Transfer.

My question to the Finance Minister is what is this government going to do to make sure that Nova Scotia doesn't lose out, yet again, when it comes to equalization changes?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Well, Mr. Speaker, the question demonstrates the inexperience of the member and of the member's Party. We all know that the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't have any experience with respect to dealing with the federal (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) It's a little heated in here this afternoon. I would suggest that we just take a little bit of time to relax and get back to a good parliamentary debate. When the Speaker says order, that means order for all sides of this House to be quiet. So the next time I say order, and somebody else is speaking, they could be out of the Chamber for the remainder of the day. That's the last warning.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be a social worker. The last time I checked social workers have every bit as much ability to take leadership roles in (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the economy in this country has experienced a very difficult recession and recessionary pressures. Those are not going to go away easily. We have been through a very difficult time and we know that we need to control the things that we can control. Those things are our own expenditures, which we have done a very good job on, and we will continue to remain disciplined on that

front. We will continue to invest strategically where we need to invest: in job creation in this province, something that those job terminators have no time for.

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

ERDT: JOB RECOVERY/EXPORTS - N.S. PERFORMANCE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's manufacturing sales for August dropped 8.6 per cent from the same month last year to \$829.8 million. That was the worst performance in the country. All other provinces posted increases except Quebec. July manufacturing sales were down 16.8 per cent compared to the same month last year.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why is the rest of the country outperforming Nova Scotia so significantly in full-time job recovery and exports?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the question from the member for Cape Breton North. We talk about our economy, and I wonder if the member has ever spoken to or written a letter to the cousins in Ottawa - the federal government? We know what has happened in the Province of Nova Scotia. Let's take Cape Breton alone. Let's take the cuts to Service Nova Scotia, the call centres - I'm sorry, Service Canada. You have to excuse me, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little shaken up right now.

What about the closure of Canada Post in North Sydney? What about the closure of the Veterans Affairs Canada office in Sydney? While their federal cousins are cutting jobs, we are creating jobs.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like some proof of what jobs have been created in Cape Breton since this government has come into power. The NDP have been in power now for three years, and in the last three years, total exports dropped 16.2 per cent. Energy product exports decreased 88 per cent. Forestry product exports decreased 57 per cent. Metal ores and non-metallic mineral exports decreased 55 per cent. Manufacturing and exporting are vital to our province's economy and GDP. Nova Scotians deserve better than this NDP.

My question to the minister is, why does the minister refuse to admit his plan isn't working and get on with the hard work of actually making our economy better?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we need some people to get out of the way so that we can get on with the job at hand. Last week was a significant week for the Province of Nova Scotia, with PROJEX and IBM. When this agreement is finished, after incentives, after rebates are paid, we will realize \$13 million to the good - \$13 million that we will reinvest in roads, in education. I'm not even going to mention the hundreds of millions of dollars that projects in IMB - IBM are going to initiate just in salaries alone - hundreds of millions

of dollars. (Interruption) Now the member over there is hollering because I made an error with IMB, big deal. It's a sign of the times when it should be IBM, we all know what we're talking about Mr. Speaker.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this government has created a mess in the Province of Nova Scotia. Imports are down 37.4 per cent, exports are down. That is a symptom of a very sick economy and people are struggling as a result. My final question is will the minister admit his economic experiment didn't work and will he stop picking winners and losers in businesses and get on with the hard work of making the economy better for everyone?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I got up on my feet and I talked about some of the cuts that the Conservative federal cousins were doing out of Ottawa. What about Parks Canada, what about Fortress Louisburg, what about Bell, what about the Alexander Graham Bell Park, what about closure of the DFO office? They don't like to hear that. What about the closure of the DFO office in Baddeck, what about service reduction, Canada Revenue? They are killing jobs while we are creating jobs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - BUDGET TARGETS (2013-14): DHAS - PROVISION

MR. LEO GLAVINE: On October 14, 2011 the former Minister of Health and Wellness provided the 2012-13 budget targets for district health authorities stating she wanted to allow more time for planning, and I will table that press release. At that time a 3 per cent reduction in DHA budgets was announced. Could the Minister of Health and Wellness please indicate whether the 2013-14 budget targets have been provided to the district health authorities, yes or no?

HON. DAVID WILSON: The first thing I want to say is I want to thank all the men and women who work extremely hard in the district health authorities across this province to ensure that we live within our means, Mr. Speaker. We can't be doing business the way we've been doing business for 20 years, here in Nova Scotia. Health care is extremely important because it consumes a large portion of our budget and we're going to continue to work with everyone in the district health authorities across the province to ensure that we live within our means and also ensure that the services we provide Nova Scotians in health care are there for them.

MR. GLAVINE: That's one of the best non-answers that I have received so far in my time in the House. We'll try round two. Could the minister please indicate whether the 2013-14 budget targets have been provided to the district health authorities, yes or no?

MR. WILSON: We are working extremely hard with everyone within the health care system to ensure that not only do we come within budget but also ensuring that the

services are there. We're changing the way that we're delivering health care here in Nova Scotia. We recognize that it is difficult for the Liberal Party to recognize that we needed to change the way we did health care here in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, because the last time they were in government they made a mess of health care.

MR. GLAVINE: I see the current minister is getting a little encouragement from the former minister now known as the Minister of Disappointments - wait times have gone up - the most seniors waiting for long-term care beds ever in the history of the province, and the chief of police in Kentville still waiting for reply for over a year. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask again, could the minister indicate whether the 2013-14 budget targets have been provided to the district health authorities, yes or no?

MR. WILSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure which one to answer because he was all over the map on that. I have no clue what he's talking about - someone waiting for a year for a phone call.

I can assure the member over there that we're doing something different than when the Liberals were last in government. Do you realize that the last time the Liberals were in power they wanted to borrow \$600 million to pay off the debts of the health care authorities all across this province? Not only that, Mr. Speaker, do you know when that health investment fund would have been paid off? It would have been in the year 2012-2013.

We're not doing it that way; we're doing it the responsible way. We're working with district health authorities to ensure that we make sure that the investments are sound. We're not going to do it the Liberal way - we're going to do it the right way.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**ENVIRON. - MOUNTAIN VIEW ESTATES (LAKE ECHO):
DRINKING WATER - RESTORE**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment. In December of last year, the Department of Environment issued a boil water order to Mountain View Estates in Lake Echo. This means that more than 356 families have been living with this for the last 11 months. This has been a long, frustrating, and expensive 11 months, with little or no progress.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware of the situation facing the 356 families, and how long has he been aware of this situation?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, any time that you bring a certain case to this floor I welcome it, but after the Oral Question Period I'd be more than willing to sit down with the member opposite and discuss this particular issue one-on-one. Thank you very much for the question

MR. COLWELL: Well that's a very disappointing answer. (Laughter)

I wrote to the minister (Interruptions) I'm sure the residents of the mobile home park are going to be very satisfied with that answer, considering that I wrote to the minister many months ago in this regard.

Mr. Minister, these 356 families have been quite patient, but faced with the situation for 11 months their patience is wearing thin and they are not impressed with the many delays. Residents have received monthly boil orders from the park's owners, but there are a number of applications of permits which are involved in drilling wells and connecting to the distribution system. Obviously it has taken far too long for this process to run its course.

Mr. Speaker, what steps is the minister currently taking in order to ensure that the 365 families have their drinking water restored immediately?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I think first of all Nova Scotians (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Environment has the floor.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again to the member opposite, I think Nova Scotians want to know that their drinking water is safe and clean. It's something that we take very seriously. I thank the member opposite for bringing this question here. Again, I repeat that on any of these cases that I'll meet one on one, and I fail to see the lack of importance of this particular meeting. I'm willing to meet with the member opposite to discuss this file, and I think we take this issue very seriously and I thank you for the question. I don't see what was wrong with that response. Thank you very much.

MR. COLWELL: It would have been interesting if the minister would have answered my letter that I sent to him many months ago.

Mr. Minister, for these residents, the last 11 months have included boiling water for drinking, preparing formula for babies, brushing teeth, and cooking. Many families are spending their hard-earned money purchasing clean drinking water when water is included in their leases. The 356 families have been dealing with the high cost of having to buy the water for their daily needs - high costs which add up over the course of almost a year and have put a significant financial stress on 356 families.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the over 356 families when they can expect to have their drinking water restored?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Well thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite, I wish the member would table the letter he is referring to.

Again, I want to just emphasize that we take drinking water very seriously and it's something that we want to work with. Whether it is municipalities or individual communities, we take this issue very seriously and I encourage the member to attend that meeting and I'm here looking in the best interest of all Nova Scotians. Thank you for bringing that question to the floor and, please, table the letter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV.: INCOME ASSISTANCE - HOUSING CHOICES

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, last week I was encouraged by the Minister of Community Services' announcement surrounding the discussion paper on the Nova Scotia housing strategy. Reading through the document, it would seem that the government and this minister understand the fundamental needs of Nova Scotians when it comes to their housing needs. In a quote from the press release, the minister says, "We know that when people can choose the housing that's right for them, they are healthier, better educated, more self-reliant and our communities are more vibrant."

So my question to the minister is, Mr. Speaker, does the minister honestly believe that someone in receipt of a shelter allowance of \$535, including power, on Income Assistance, has a real choice at finding housing that is right for them?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we're absolutely thrilled and excited that we're the government that's bringing the first housing strategy to the Province of Nova Scotia. We're going around the province to talk to the people of Nova Scotia, unlike the Liberals who do not want us to do that, but we want the opinions from people in our province.

I've spoken to the member opposite before with respect to the shelter rates, that the difficulty with that is that we have to realize that when you increase those shelter rates, that on the other hand what usually happens is that their rent goes up. So we have to be innovative and creative in how we go forward and offer more support, and that's exactly what this government has done. That's why we have invested over \$300 million in breaking the cycle of poverty and offering such things as the Affordable Living Tax Credit, the Poverty Reduction Credit, allowing people on Income Assistance to be able to work and keep more of the money that they earn.

The list is very extensive, Mr. Speaker, so we know by what we've already done and what we're going to be doing that we are going to be helping people in this province have the option of the housing that they want.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, the simple fact and the reality of the fact, when it comes to the poverty tax credits, when it comes to the Affordable Living Tax Credit, people's rents are rising every month. People's power bills are going up every month. Food costs go up every month. These folks cannot wait three or four months for a cheque to come in the mail when they have to pay their bills monthly.

Mr. Speaker, the discussion paper calls for a Housing First model for homeless people, especially those with chronic illness, disabilities, or mental illness. Now, I understand that through a recent provincial initiative, more than 200 Nova Scotians who were experiencing homelessness now have a safe place, and that's good. In a recent press release, the minister stated that, "The real measure of success of this project is that fact that we have helped 200 men and woman break the cycle of poverty." I can table that press release.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister honestly believe that someone who is in receipt of Income Assistance, who is living with mental illness, disabilities and addictions, who lives on a government-funded income of \$9,276 per year, with an annual rent allotment of \$6,420 of that going towards shelter, is given a fair chance to overcome their illness, seek out employment, be active in their community, and have a real chance of deciding where they want to live? Is this what the minister deems as breaking the cycle of poverty?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this particular government has done more than any government, over decades and decades, in terms of helping people break the cycle of poverty. It's difficult, it's challenging, but we are the ones who have taken up this challenge because we care about the people of Nova Scotia. We care about those individuals who are struggling - not like the former Progressive Conservative Government. Their answer to breaking the cycle of poverty was increasing the income assistance by maybe \$3 to \$4 a month. The Liberals' answer to breaking the cycle of poverty was cutting back on dental programs for children - the ages of the children that could receive those programs - and to roll back on salaries. That was their poverty reduction strategy - it is this government and this minister who has committed to breaking that cycle of poverty.

I can tell you there are people throughout all of Nova Scotia so excited that this government has taken upon themselves and made a commitment to a housing strategy - neither one of those Parties ever had the initiative or the commitment to do that. It took an NDP Government to do that.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, I can sadly admit to the House that in my seven years as an MLA I've never seen the people of Nova Scotia and in my community struggling the way they have since seven years ago - and it's under this government that they're struggling. (Applause) The last shelter allowance increase was in 2006 by the then-Progressive Conservative Government. Last week, in an article in The ChronicleHerald, it was cited that young professionals are even having difficulty finding

affordable housing here in HRM. The housing consultation and the subsequent strategy is needed and required and we're looking forward to it.

With rising food costs, rising power rates, rising rents, people on income assistance are having great difficulty even getting by, let alone overcome illness or seek employment. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House if she's engaging in budget discussions with her Cabinet colleagues around increasing shelter allowance for those in receipt of income assistance?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, what we're doing is we're travelling the province to talk to Nova Scotians, to talk to stakeholders, to talk to people who are experiencing that poverty, and we're providing wraparound services and supports such as housing first - and we are the government that has made this commitment. The other two Parties over there never had a plan, no plan at all. Everything was on an ad hoc basis.

If you want to reflect and talk about poverty, there has been poverty in this province for a very, very long time. It was not until the NDP stepped foot on this side of the House that these issues have been looked at seriously. These issues have been committed to by developing plans and strategies. We're going forward and doing something; we have invested well over \$300 million to date and that is a lot of investment and we're going forward with more. What did they do? What's their poverty strategy? It was to do absolutely nothing, and that's basically what they did.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: BREAST SCREENING PROG. - AVAILABILITY

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

On November 5th, plans were announced that would see the elimination of two mobile breast screening units from the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program. We know their usage was decreasing, we know that it was old technology that's being replaced with new, more reliable technology and those are very positive moves. However, my question to the minister is this: Women living in northern Nova Scotia did not have access to any mobile screening unit during the entire 2012 calendar year. Is it really acceptable for those women in northern Nova Scotia to have been denied that access for one full year?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. No question, breast screening here in Nova Scotia is an important issue. It's something that was recognized a number of years ago, that we needed to change the way we provided those screenings to women here in Nova Scotia. That's why I'm glad to say with the new release of the schedule for the mobile unit that every woman in Nova Scotia will have

access to the more advanced digital mammography - the first time in our history that we can have that.

We recognize the importance of the mobile units, but there was a decision made almost a decade ago that we needed to ensure that people had access to fixed sites. We went from having one fixed site in the province and three mobile units to, today, having 11 fixed sites and the digital mammography unit going around the province. I hope Nova Scotians, especially women in Nova Scotia, recognize the importance of the Breast Screening Program and obtain those tests.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question was about the women in northern Nova Scotia who had no access at all to that particular service for 12 full months. I would like to table a letter - and the minister has a copy of this - from Joan Millican, co-chair of Along the Shore Community Health Board. This is a board that represents an entire rural area of the Colchester East Hants District Health Authority.

To quote from that letter, "It has come to our attention, that the mobile mammography unit did not visit the communities in our area this summer. On contacting Marian Brine, the NSBSP coordinator . . . she confirmed that the mobile unit did not go out . . ." into that area this year. The letter went on to state, "Those persons living in the rural areas await the arrival of this mobile mammography unit to support their health initiatives."

My question to the minister is, why did the minister fail to inform the community health board that his government's decision to eliminate the northern mobile unit would affect them directly?

MR. WILSON: That's not the case at all, Mr. Speaker. The Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program has really moved in a positive manner to ensure that Nova Scotians can gain access to digital mammography screening here in the province. We recognize - and it was part of the plan, and part of the plan of the committee that was together in 2005, to ensure that these fixed sites obtained the more advanced digital mammography screening units.

We recognized that the mobile units were analog units and that they weren't as efficient, and that's why we were taking them off the routes here in Nova Scotia. Often, women who obtained screening through these analog units had to be retested and were often sent to a fixed site. I believe the fixed site up in that area of the northern part of Nova Scotia now will service many of those clients, but ensuring that that digital mammography unit gets around into those hard-to-reach areas is a key priority for us. I look forward to the new route, which I believe will service the concerns of the member opposite in the riding that she represents. We look forward to seeing that more advanced technology travel around the province, so that all women have access to the more technically advanced digital mammography screening.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, there are two issues. One is that the people in northern Nova Scotia had no access to that mobile unit for one full year. The second issue is the minister did not even inform those residents through the community health board that they would not have that access. So there are two issues here. Certainly an advanced technology is important, but there are many people in rural Nova Scotia who cannot get themselves to a site and they do rely on the mobile unit.

Springhill, Tatamagouche, Bass River, Advocate, Parrsboro, Sheet Harbour, Canso, you could go on; they are just a few of the hometowns of those women who saw no mobile service this year. In fact, that northern mobile unit did provide service to 22 communities in 2011 and no service in 2012. In those rural communities - rural communities throughout all of Nova Scotia - transportation often dictates access to services. If those services are not readily available, people just do not get the services they deserve.

My question to the minister is, if you knew that you were not going to be using that northern mobile unit and you knew that it was important, did you make any effort to reschedule the other mobile units so that they could give some service to some people in northern Nova Scotia?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's important to recognize where we were and where we are when it comes to breast screening here in the province. The member opposite should know; she should have been briefed when she was the Health Minister. This has been a process to get to today, where all women in Nova Scotia will have access to the more advanced digital mammography screening in Nova Scotia. We should be very proud of that. Nova Scotia is leading the way across the country when it comes to digital mammography, not only in the fixed sites but in the mobile sites also.

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

JUSTICE: MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT PROG. - UPDATE

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, on April 30, 2010, the director of the Maintenance Enforcement Program sent letters to MLAs outlining the complaint process and giving contact information for MLAs dealing with the Maintenance Enforcement Program, and I'll table that. Subsequent phone calls, recent phone calls to many of these numbers revealed that many of the regional coordinators are no longer on their jobs. Could the minister please indicate when we might expect an update on this information?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: That program is in transition and there are going to be ups and downs as we progress in making the new adjustments. On the question that she raises here, I will look further into it - I will be happy to do so - and get back to her.

MS. REGAN: Regional offices are no longer accepting cheques. The offices in Kentville and New Glasgow are closed. There is no walk-in service in Dartmouth, Amherst or Sydney, and all MEP offices will be closed to the public as of January 1, 2013 - Happy New Year from the NDP. Mr. Speaker, 9,000 families are owed over \$80 million in maintenance payments. How does closing regional offices, where cheques can be accepted directly and where both payers and payees could receive assistance filling out forms, et cetera, improve the lives of these 9,000 families awaiting payments?

MR. LANDRY: Well, the first thing that I would like to point out is, if my memory serves me well, the Party across, the Opposition Party, had complained about the inefficiencies, the poor quality of service, and that came out in various reports. So we have taken steps now to improve the system and make sure that it is more streamlined, that there are accesses being improved. Having a regional office in some communities and not in others was not a fair balance of the system but bringing people together, training them, retooling, and making the system more modern is. However, I do see a difference between the Liberal Party; they are still stuck back 20 years ago.

MS. REGAN: Speaking of being stuck in the past, the government Web site still includes information that indicates regional offices are open for business. Nova Scotians are being asked on that site to be patient with maintenance enforcement changes; in fact, the site lists changes that people should "watch out for" - that's watch out for, not watch for. So 9,000 families, as they wait for their \$80 million in arrears payments, are left to wonder if the bank will be patient, if the landlord will be patient, if the power company will be patient. My question to the minister is, if this consolidation of services will improve service to Nova Scotians, why are you asking Nova Scotians to be patient and to watch out?

MR. LANDRY: I'll simply say in regard to that, that any transition or re-modernizing and improving the quality of the system takes a bit of a transitional change and we are in that transitional change. There are going to be some hiccups in the process and we are working through to correct them. It is not a perfect world but we are working to strive to make those changes and we are very optimistic as we are moving forward that we will have a very sound, improved system to answer the very issue that she raised about getting dollars back into those hands of the people who need them. It's about putting families first but if we continue doing the same things over and over again and expecting a different outcome, that's the Liberal way. We believe in being progressive.

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

NAT. RES. - MV MINER: CLEANUP - DETAILS

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister of Natural Resources. (Interruption) Well, we'll start there anyway.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was outside the Chamber and I heard the Premier of the province tell the community that the MV Miner cleanup has stopped again, the Bennington Group are going to walk away, which is not the first time they've said that; they have said that on a number of occasions. The people of Main-à-Dieu and surrounding areas have had this concern for quite a bit of time. On a number of occasions they have written to the Minister of Natural Resources' office to ask what Plan B was when the Bennington Group walked away.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Natural Resources is, what indeed can the people of Main-à-Dieu now expect from his department in relation to the cleanup of the MV Miner?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand the honourable member's question and the concern that has been expressed from the community. We've been working as the Department of Natural Resources with the company from New York, the Bennington Group, and we've been - in fact, a year since they first contacted us. While we don't have a contract per se with them, we've been trying to facilitate, to work with them to get through the laws and the regulations within the province. It's unfortunate that they've decided now that they're going to walk away, but in reality, they're representing the owner, Arivina Navigation from Turkey, and we've been trying to facilitate a way that they can get the shipwreck off Scatarie Island.

As you know, I'm sure, honourable member, the department has worked very, very hard to try to find a solution here, to try to find a way that that company can get that ship off Scatarie Island. We're going to continue to try to find a way to make that happen.

MR. MACLEOD: We already know what happened, Mr. Speaker. We were asking what's going to happen. What is Plan B? The people of Main-à-Dieu deserve to know what Plan B is, and they've been asking that question time and time again. Now, in a previous question from the member for Glace Bay, the Minister of Agriculture kept hollering out over there that that's a federal issue, it's a federal issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when that minister and all of those ministers took their oath, they took an oath to serve the people of Nova Scotia, and the people in Main-à-Dieu are people of this province. They're Cape Bretoners who deserve better than they're getting from this deal.

So the question is, of course, when can the people of Main-à-Dieu expect to get the same type of respect as Resolute, Stern, IBM, and all of those other companies from outside the province? When is this government here going to look after Cape Bretoners and Nova Scotians instead of passing the buck off to someone else? (Applause)

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly from the start over a year ago we learned that the federal government did not properly ensure that there was insurance on that vessel.

No proper permits were in place. Really, we've been working with our counterparts in the federal government to ensure that they take their responsibility. They have under Transport Canada the full authority to have that vessel removed from the shores of Scatarie Island. Under the Canada Shipping Act, they have full authority to remove that vessel, and if the honourable member has better contact than I do with the federal government, I would encourage him to contact his federal counterparts and ensure that they do live up to their responsibility.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have been doing my job. I have been in contact with them in Ottawa, but that lot over there has not been doing their job. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Cape Breton West has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This group over here, the Premier of this province last October said that if this doesn't get cleaned up, Nova Scotia will go it alone - we'll do it, we'll look after it. The people of Main-à-Dieu and the people of Cape Breton deserve that to be done.

THE PREMIER: I never said that.

MR. MACLEOD: You never said that? (Interruptions) Well, there you go again, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's someone else's fault.

MR. MACLEOD: It's always someone else's fault. This government over there, that Premier can never take responsibility for their responsibility to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. They have a responsibility.

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1945.

Res. No. 1945, NDP - Corporate Giveaways: Tax Breaks/Affordable Power Rates/Better Schools - Preferable - notice given Nov. 9/12 - (Hon. J. Baillie)

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and speak to the resolution before the House. It would be hard to imagine a more timely resolution than the one that has been called for debate today. After all, Nova Scotians have now seen over three years of the great experiment of an NDP Government, one that they elected - we all acknowledge they elected - with hope that things would be better, that things would be different, that they would actually do some of the things that they promised Nova Scotians they would do before they got into office.

Here we are now, more than three years later, Mr. Speaker, and the time has come for all of us who hoped that the NDP would actually prove that experiment to be a success, to declare it for what it is - a great NDP experiment that has become a great failure for the people of Nova Scotia.

The NDP came in promising to keep the budget balanced, promising not to raise their taxes, promising to actually lower their power rates, promising to build a growing economy for the 21st Century. But what they have done in each of those cases is exactly the opposite and it is Nova Scotians who are now paying the price, both in real dollars, \$1,000 more for each and every one of us in extra HST, and for 7,400 Nova Scotians they've paid with the loss of their full-time jobs. That is why it has come time to debate a resolution about two starkly different views of how to manage an economy and create prosperity for Nova Scotians.

The social engineering of the NDP, Mr. Speaker - the top-down approach where the Premier and Cabinet and his office and government dictate to others how the economy is going to work - is not working. In fact, it is not working at all. The government has even gone as far as to pick winners and losers between individual companies, sprinkling \$600 million of borrowed Nova Scotia money amongst specific companies, and what have we got for it - 7,400 fewer full-time jobs today and \$600 million more of public debt on the backs of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia and all of our children.

We had an example of this just last week in this House when the Premier looked among all of the consulting engineering companies of the province and decided he was going to give \$11 million in payroll rebates to one, at the expense of the others. Mr. Speaker, for those consulting engineering firms - and this is just one example - who have lived and worked and built prosperity in this province for years, they are now having their own tax dollars used against them, and that is not right and it has not worked. But that is part of the top-down approach of the NDP, to decide which companies are winners and which companies are losers. That's just one example.

Mr. Speaker, we see the same top-down approach on power rates. The NDP came into office promising lower power rates, inheriting a great balance, a great arrangement among those who want to both grow the economy and create jobs and those who want to

build a greener and more renewable economy at the same time, known as the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, where we would grow the economy at the rate of the national average or better every year, while also building a more renewable electricity market.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP ignored the economy side and actually made things worse on the environment side. By dictating to Nova Scotia Power that they must rush through as much renewable projects as possible, as fast as possible, regardless of the cost, the NDP have placed a hidden tax on all of our power bills, a tax that no Nova Scotian was asked if they wanted to pay. A tax, by the way, that both the NDP and the Liberals to this day support - the Liberals by not speaking out against this extra green tax that Nova Scotians were not asked to pay for.

We all want a more renewable future, and we can have a renewable future without raising rates. We could freeze rates right now and make sure the power company adds as much renewable energy as possible every year, within the current rates. That's how you do it without actually further taxing the pocketbooks of Nova Scotians, in a hidden way, through their power bills. Both the NDP and the Liberals are happy to see that tax go on. By the admission of the Minister of Energy and the Premier, that tax is a 2 per cent further charge on our power bills each and every year, from now to the end of this decade.

Muskrat Falls is another example of a top-down project imposed by the NDP, signed for on the dotted line without knowing how much that power is going to cost when it comes to our home. The president of Emera actually says Muskrat Falls will add 2 per cent to 3 per cent a year to the price of our power bills for the rest of this decade and beyond, on top of the NDP green tax that they have placed in a hidden way on top of our power bills, without even asking Nova Scotians if they wanted to pay for it, breaking that great arrangement that was made to both have a greener future and a growing economy at the same time. That is another example, along with picking corporate winners and losers, of how the NDP have messed up our economy, costing real Nova Scotians their jobs.

Another top-down decision of the NDP very early on in their mandate that we are still all paying for was to throw out their promise not to raise taxes and increase the HST - the single largest tax grab in the history of Nova Scotia. By the end of this year, each and every Nova Scotian - man, woman and child - will have paid \$1,000 individually in extra HST because of that decision, because of that broken promise.

If we actually had balanced budgets and meaningful debt reduction to go along with it, or if we actually even had better services to go along with it, Nova Scotians might forgive the NDP for breaking that promise. But we got none of those things for that extra HST. What we continue to see is a string of deficit budgets by the NDP, \$1 billion of new debt added to that already high debt of the province, something that will be a burden for generations to come while cuts happen in our schools and classrooms, but hundreds of millions is given away to large corporations.

That kind of top-down approach is not working. It is not growing the economy. It is costing jobs. I will point out that the NDP have obviously lost all credibility on any promise about the HST and the Liberals' flip-flop on whether they would cut the HST or not. They opposed its increase but won't go along with reducing the HST after the next election, when in fact if you oppose something, you should clearly want to reverse it if you had a chance, another way that both of the other Parties are continuing to play election games with the people of Nova Scotia, and sadly with our economy.

We've talked at length in this House about the NDP's extreme labour laws like the first contract arbitration, which employers, large and small, have said is a job terminator, that it is a strike against our province. Companies as important as Michelin and as small as the corner store have said it does not work for them. It will inhibit their ability to actually invest in their businesses, large and small, and create new jobs for Nova Scotians, a top-down decision unilaterally made by one Party, strongly opposed by the PCs because of what it does to our economy and to jobs. The Liberals actually called a press conference offering a compromise with the NDP on first contract, despite the devastating impact that it has on the creation of jobs in our province.

Clearly, after three years of NDP Government - this experiment that Nova Scotians put their faith in - we've seen skyrocketing power rates of 25 per cent, the largest tax increase in our province's history, the HST taking \$1,000 out of the pocketbooks of each and every single Nova Scotian, extreme labour laws like first contract that have been labelled a strike against our province when it comes to investment in the future.

The worst example was embedded in the NDP's most recent fiscal update, where they actually said, "A land purchase of \$20 million for NewPage is almost entirely offset by reduced capital spending by the Department of Education for school construction . . ." Now, Mr. Speaker, if there is a better example than that sentence of taking away from the future, of taking away the jobs of tomorrow from the next generation of Nova Scotians, to bail out a company like NewPage for today, then I don't know what it.

The time has come for Nova Scotians to look at a resolution like this, to consider the expense that they have incurred, the debt that they are now responsible for that has grown under the NDP, and compare that to a better way, the only way that will really grow our economy and create real jobs and opportunity, the way that this resolution spells out for Nova Scotians - balance the budget now. Lower the HST, not just for the sake of lowering taxes, but so that Nova Scotia working families can start to get ahead again in this province. Freeze power rates in their tracks where they are and tell the power company to add as many renewables as they can within the current rates and no more, because anything else is just a hidden tax on our power bills. Stop the corporate bailouts, stop the giveaways, put that money back in our schools, which is the single best investment that could be made in the future of Nova Scotia.

With that, I would encourage all Parties to get behind the resolution and start Nova Scotia down the road to real prosperity and off this awful track that the NDP experiment has us on now. Thank you very much.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, as I stand in my place again I don't even quite know where to begin. You know, I stood here on Friday and I talked for about 50 minutes or so. I talked about the contrast between this side of the House and that side of the House. I didn't hear a word from any member on the other side of the House. Not one word - obviously because they agree with what we're doing on this side of the House. Not one word.

I'm very glad to be able to stand in my place and talk a little bit about what's in this resolution to ensure that we can set the record straight on what Nova Scotians hear with the chirping on that side of the House to what is really happening with this government, and how we are going to ensure that we move Nova Scotia forward to make it a better place to live, to work, to play, and to do business. I think that that is what people elected me to do as their representative in the constituency that I have the pleasure of representing.

I do want to talk a little bit about power rates. Power rates have been an issue for many Nova Scotians for many, many years. Let's just remember which Parties actually privatized that company. It was those two Parties over there - the Progressive Conservative Party who started it, and the Liberals who signed off on it.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Not true, Mat. Fact check.

MR. WHYNOTT: The Liberals signed off on it and the member for Yarmouth is chirping on over there, chirping on over here, and he always talks about how the decisions that were made back then do not . . .

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

MR. WHYNOTT: We talk about decisions that were made in the past, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? The decisions of that Liberal Party - we are feeling that today, because what happened is that we were shackled to coal for many, many years. There was no diversifying of the portfolio of Energy that we had in this province; there was no diversification in that.

I think one of the important things is that we're moving forward, and I think that it is very important that the people of Nova Scotia - that we are getting off these fossil fuels. We need them to take one step at a time, and we've seen that. What we've done is we've come on to a program, Lower Churchill. Lower Churchill is something that will ensure

stable rates for Nova Scotians for the next 35 years, something that I think Nova Scotians will be happy to see, but you know, one thing? I do not know where the Liberal Party stands on that exact question.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to table something – I'm going to read from it first but I'll table it after – it's a screen shot of the Liberal caucus office Web site. On that Web site there is a feature to search topics on that Web site and you know what? When you search Lower Churchill, there are many things that come up. On May 27, 2010 it refers to the Premier's short-sighted stance, so that is one thing they say on that date. The second day, on August 13, 2010 it says that the Leader of the Opposition supports the Minister of Energy's position on Lower Churchill. Interesting, they changed their minds within only a few short months.

Then, on February 14, 2012 it says - this what I find very interesting, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says that Lower Churchill is crucial to Nova Scotia's energy future. So that is flip-flop number three. Number four, on July 31, 2012, again says they flip-flop, say huh, maybe it's not such a good idea. I will table that document. This is on the Liberal Party Web site, they flip-flop on the issue and I think that Nova Scotians deserve an answer on that question.

Do you know what I find interesting, Mr. Speaker? I remember watching CBC, the tee-up to the legislative session for all the Leaders, and one of the things I remember the Leader of the Opposition saying is we're going to hold the feet to the fire on energy, we're going to hold the government's feet to the fire. Well you know what, Mr. Speaker? I think in the last two weeks I haven't heard one question in Oral Question Period from the Liberal Party. Do you know why I think that is? I think that is because the government, our government, our NDP government, called them out on their plan to deregulate our power companies. We called them out on it, that the plan of the Liberal Party will ensure that power rates will go up by 30 to 50 per cent and we know that because it is tried, tested and it failed in Ontario, in Alberta, in New Brunswick, even the power company in New Brunswick says that (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville has the floor.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's just a simple fact, that we called them out on it and they just don't want to - they can't explain the situation; they can't explain where they stand. Typical Liberal, one day they say one thing, the next day they say something else.

Mr. Speaker, I know that is one thing, in this resolution it talks a little bit about jobs and ensuring that we build a future for Nova Scotians. We know that for the last - we're turning the corner on the 20 years of the worst economic performance in the country, we're turning the corner. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I sat in this Chamber last week, when the

Premier announced almost 1,000 jobs for Nova Scotians, bringing people home from out West and do you know what? I was absolutely embarrassed the way that the Leader of the Opposition stood in his place, responded to the Premier's ministerial statement - the CEO of the company is sitting in the gallery - and he was laughing at the fact that this company is bringing jobs, bringing Nova Scotians home from out West. It's absolutely embarrassing.

The CEO of the company wrote a letter in the Halifax ChronicleHerald and what he wanted to do was ensure that Nova Scotians understand, what they understand is that these are 440 good jobs for Nova Scotians to ensure that we can bring Nova Scotians home from out West - something that the other two Parties sat back and just let them go. We're bringing them home, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's a positive thing.

The other thing was bringing IBM to Nova Scotia, the first of its kind in Canada, something that I think Nova Scotians wanted us to do. The two Parties opposite will say that these were handouts. But you know what? Over time, that's \$13 million in net gain for tax revenue. Do you know where that tax revenue goes? It goes to schools, health care, community services, building roads. We're on the cusp of something good here in Nova Scotia, and I really wish that the two Parties opposite would just get out of the way and allow us to do our job so that we can have a future for Nova Scotians.

I stand in my place as a proud Nova Scotian when finally - finally - we have a Premier who is standing up for the people that I represent, for all Nova Scotians, right from Yarmouth up to Sydney. We want to ensure that future prosperity of Nova Scotia for the next 30 to 35 years. We have the largest industrial contract that we have ever seen.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. We need a little more calm for a good debate in the House.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

MR. WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's better off because of this NDP Government. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member from the NDP who just spoke - and I stress NDP Party. I can recall when the Premier of the province, the Premier who's there today, was on this side of the House and promised everything under the sun to everybody who walked forward. It didn't matter who they were, he promised it to them. Said they shouldn't spend money on this and that and complained about everything that existed, and guess what? He gets elected and he does exactly all the things that he spoke against when he was Leader of the Opposition.

These guys think they're doing a good job? Well, let me put it to you this way: the Leader of the Third Party indicated there was a HST tax increase, the biggest one in

history. Actually, it was a 25 per cent tax increase. They'll probably say it's not correct. Well, the way they work their math with the job creation and the billions of dollars they give away and the millions and millions of dollars they give away to businesses that fail immediately, it's a pretty good deal.

A 25 per cent tax increase, what does that do to regular Nova Scotians? It means they can't buy groceries, they can't buy oil, they can't buy the things they need to look after their families. That's what it means. That's what it means to people. We've seen half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money basically thrown out the window. We see unemployment rates higher than it was - absolutely no results. None. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism gets up and boasts all about the great job they're doing. Another member said today we were job terminators. I can tell you when we were in government - I have the proof right here.

We were in government between 1993 and 1999. In 1993 the unemployment rate for all families in Nova Scotia was 12.8 per cent when we came to power, and in 1999, when we left government, it was 7.9 per cent. When you look at the female unemployment rate, with a husband, the unemployment rate in 1992 was 10.3 per cent. We left government in 1999, it was 6 per cent. The male unemployment rate in 1993 when we took government was 24.4 per cent - so you think you've got problems in government? You have no idea. In 1999 we left government and it was 12.8 per cent.

These aren't just numbers we cooked up anywhere. This is information from the Department of Finance and from Stats Canada. I'll table that. (Interruptions)

There's only one job terminator in this Legislature today and that's the NDP Government. The big difference with job termination for this government is they're paying millions of dollars per job they're losing. I mean they're writing cheques to losing companies - writing cheques - this is insane, absolutely insane, and then they've got the nerve to stand up in this Legislature and tell people they're helping the economy, they're helping people get jobs. They have no idea what they're doing - none. (Interruptions)

Well, I think probably it is total inexperience and, fortunately, that experience is going to die after the next election. You know, they talk about the great job they're doing in Yarmouth - the member just spoke about the great job they did in Yarmouth. They eliminated the ferry, one of the first things they did here in this province, and I can tell you in my area with a very small tourism industry, a very small tourism industry, it affected the people in my area and most of the beds and breakfasts in my area have closed - they closed because of the ferry being shut down.

We've seen the power rates go up 30 per cent under this government - 30 per cent - and you add that to the bracket creep (Interruptions)

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

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the NDP don't want to hear about this, but these are the facts that are going on today, and the regular person on the street understands this. This is a better deal for today's families all right - better deals to get them unemployed; it costs more for everyday living, in everything they do. You know, we've seen the power rates go up 30 per cent; we've seen the GST or HST, whatever you want to call it, increase 25 per cent; we've seen bracket creep on income tax that was an immoral tax that the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, was talking about, bracket creep is still there; and we see fee increases on every single thing in this province - fee increases. And they talk about the great job they're doing to keep youth in the area - well we do a great job educating young people in Nova Scotia and we might as well give them a plane ticket to go to Alberta because that's where they all go anyway, and it's very unfortunate that happens.

We're even seeing seniors now leaving the province because it's too expensive to live in Nova Scotia. Think about that - our seniors are even leaving Nova Scotia. Any senior who has a reasonable disposable income, they're leaving the province, and that's a fact. It's a fact. So it really helps the economy. So the very people that we need, a carpenter to come work on their home and we have the money to do the home, aren't there doing that. They're not doing those; they're not helping to hold those jobs and create those jobs. So you see what's happening. It's disgraceful what's happening.

We've seen cuts in education. Education is a key to economic growth. It's the key, but these guys, they take \$65 million out of education - \$65 million - but they give half a billion dollars to losing ventures. For losing ventures, half a billion dollars - money we'll never get back. We'll never get it back.

We see cuts in health, huge wait times for operations, huge wait times for tests which would help people with better health, and you see all these things that this group of people over here have done in the interest and the idea that they've tried to convince people that they're doing a good job looking after Nova Scotia. Well, I can tell you, from the people I see in my community and the people I talk to daily, they don't believe any of this. I won't use the correct language on it because it would be unparliamentary - this information that this NDP Government is handing out to people and hoping they'll believe it.

They're going to get a rude awakening. I was to a function the other day and there was a lady there I've known for a long time. She has always been a strong supporter of the NDP, a strong supporter, one of my constituents, which there was no guess about it, she was always a strong supporter. I had a long chat with her the other day and she finally came to the conclusion, and it was a hard decision for her to make, she said I don't believe in what the NDP is doing anymore. She said when they were in Opposition they had some

really good ideas; they had some great ideas that would have helped Nova Scotians. She believed that - I never believed that from the beginning, but she believed it and that's fine, everyone has their opinion in this province and that's why we have a free country. She has now come to the conclusion since they got in government that everything has changed, everything has changed.

The Leader, now the Premier, has changed - he has changed his word on things; he has changed his ideas, how he's going to do stuff. You know, change all over the place. When he was on this side, everything was wonderful; we could do everything for everybody. All these great answers he had and he doesn't have the answers anymore. He's not able to lead the province out of this mess we're in.

That lady - I don't know how you would describe it, but when you looked in her face and she was talking to you, you could see a great deal of sadness in her face. She had lost faith in this government, in this NDP. She finally said, you know, I cannot vote for the NDP in the next election, I cannot vote. Now, I would be very concerned if I was an NDP member and that individual or individuals like that are all over the province, I believe. So what's going to happen in the next election is people are starting to listen, listen to what's happening here and they're starting to realize that these guys who promised so much and delivered nothing except more debt, money out to corporate welfare, more corporate welfare, higher taxes, all the things that killed the economy.

Now, businesses realized this a long time ago, because business can't take time, can't waste time trying to figure out what they're going to do next or how they're going to do it. They have to be in an environment, number one, that they've got reasonable taxes, reasonable power rates, skilled labour and an environment to create a business, so you can be competitive. Now competitive at one time used to mean that the guy down the road who was making some kind of a widget that everybody in the local area used, you used to have to compete with him.

Today, you don't have to compete with him, you're worried about the guy that's down in the southern United States, or in Mexico, or in China today, where they're producing products with a highly-skilled labour force and very low taxes and a very low labour rate. Now, low labour rates are not good but you have to compete, you have to compete, so you have to improve technology and do all the things necessary to make sure you're competitive.

This government has done very little to recognize that and, indeed, they tout some job numbers that aren't realistic when you look at the actual job numbers that have happened over time and you see what's happening under this government and how poorly they've performed and how poorly the economy is doing in this province. We're in a real recession here in Nova Scotia. They won't talk about that. We're in a real recession. We're way behind the rest of the country. So if the country is having difficulty, we're having a lot more difficulty. (Interruptions)

You can chatter all you want but I can tell you, when your constituents come in and they're (Interruption) Okay, I got that. When people understand, when people understand that they don't have a job and they can't buy groceries and their taxes are so high that they can't afford to do anything - the light bill is going up and everything is happening, since this government got in place in 2009, when they see, in only three and a half years, what kind of damage there is going to be in this province by the time they run the course of their term, what are they going to do? By the time that comes, they are going to be in a desperate situation.

I think very soon you're going to see the value of properties drop in the province as well. That's a sign of a really bad economy, people afraid to buy properties. I know I have some friends who have properties for sale, some very valuable properties and they can't sell them, they can't even get an offer on them and this is in HRM, where the economy is growing the best. So what's going to happen as the time goes on and we see people in real, real difficulty, how are we going to cure that? Are you going to give another corporate handout, billions or half a billion dollars to some more companies that might create some jobs?

The Premier was talking about the 11,000 jobs that are going to come with Ships Start Here. When you talk to the Irving company, there is nowhere near 11,000 jobs. There might be 2,000 - that's good, that's very positive, that's wonderful. But when you look at EastLink, which employs 2,000 people, Dalhousie, which employs 2,000 people, and other local employers that employ those kinds of numbers now, it is really not going to have a huge impact on our economy, it's not. It's over a long period of time.

It will be very positive for our economy but it's not going to bail us out. It is not going to mean that everybody has got all kinds of money to spend going to the grocery store; it is not going to be all kinds of new homes built and all the things that go with that, that's not going to happen, it's not. It's just a false leader and to keep on quoting that number, well, the company is saying there are less than 2,000 it's going to employ. So it makes you wonder how they are getting the time in place.

With those few comments, Madam Speaker, I'll take my place.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the research people in our office, they've provided some information here. There are a couple of points that are quite sobering. Nova Scotia youth between the ages of 15 and 24 have the highest unemployment rate in Canada, at just over 20 per cent. Also, it's almost twice as hard to find a job in Nova Scotia as it is for other Canadians. There are 10 people unemployed for every vacancy in Nova Scotia, whereas the national average is 5.3.

Madam Speaker, with those numbers it is a tough time to be graduating from post-secondary education in Nova Scotia right now and entering the labour force, with those statistics. It's not easy for one in five to be unemployed. I think of this government always complaining about the federal government. The federal government's transfer payments have gone up. This government is being handed more money to work with as a government than they've ever been handed, and that's right in legislation. (Interruption) The health transfers are going up by 6 per cent per year and the social transfers are up by 3 per cent per year, that's by legislation.

This government has more money to work with to balance its budgets and to provide services for Nova Scotians than previous governments, yet they've increased the HST, they're running deficit budgets and they've added more debt per year than any administration in the history of the province. It has been tabled in the Legislature twice, Madam Speaker, and if the Minister of Finance wants to dispute it, she can bring some facts to the table.

Madam Speaker, what are we debating here today, for anybody who is watching? One of the things that strikes me about this government is it is trying to pick winners and losers and that is a zero-sum gain. I'll give you an example: Authentic Seacoast Brewing Company in Guysborough County, I made a tweet one day and I got a lot of attention from the media over it, without any intention, but . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Inverness has the floor.

MR. MACMASTER: Anyway, Madam Speaker, Authentic Seacoast Brewing Company, I Googled them and what came up was Authentic Seacoast Brewing Company. It has three parts; it's a restaurant, a distillery, and a brewery. It's nice that it's located in Guysborough County. I've never had the chance to visit that business but I'd like to, but I do know that I was criticized for criticizing the government. What I had more or less said was it's not right for the government to be picking winners and losers. There are other businesses, other restaurants and breweries and distilleries in the province and as soon as the government starts giving out these forgivable loans, they are picking winners and losers and that's a mistake.

We just had the issue of IBM getting a sole-source contract for SAP and getting a payroll tax rebate. I sat at a dinner just yesterday, spoke with a Nova Scotian gentleman who has a business, he's taken the business in the last number of years, starting it with one person, he now has 65. He told me he was very upset. He first asked me, what did you think of that? I told him, I said I don't have a problem with the government using the private sector to deliver those services to government, but I said I did have a problem with it being sole-sourced because it's not fair - not fair to the other Nova Scotian companies, which I later found out he was one of, Madam Speaker. He didn't have a chance to bid on that business, so he is not happy with this government. It was sole-sourced, for one, but also

because IBM, his competitor, is getting a payroll tax rebate to support jobs - which one would say on the surface is great, but if it's supporting jobs that may be taking employees away from him, that's not right. That needs to be put on the record.

Madam Speaker, picking winners and losers is very real. We know that trade laws are created to stop this kind of activity. Every time that government hands out cash to a business, it's creating an imbalance somewhere else, and these forgivable loans - I think of the Irving loan. They are now calling it an "interest-bearing loan." They had to pay the interest on it, but the reason they are calling it an interest-bearing loan is because they don't want to talk about the fact that it is a forgivable loan. What is a forgivable loan? It's a handout. Every time the government hands out money, it's creating an imbalance.

We have trade laws. Nova Scotians and Canadians will be familiar with the softwood lumber dispute, where the United States did not want to accept imports of our softwood because they felt governments in Canada were unfairly subsidizing that wood. So this is very real. The only problem that we're facing right now is that there are companies in Nova Scotia that are hurting, and the example of the gentleman that I spoke to at lunch yesterday is one of them. His company is hurting because this government has chosen to pick IBM as the winner by giving them a sole-source contract and by giving them a payroll tax rebate. He is the loser. He shouldn't be. He's the kind of business person we want in this province: somebody who goes to work every day and is not looking for a handout from government.

I want to talk a little bit about the \$260 million handout to Irving. Leading up to Remembrance Day, I was thinking about all of the people who served in our Armed Forces, the people who came back as amputees. We had the bill involving War Amps here that we were talking about yesterday. All of those soldiers who went overseas - they weren't getting any handouts from the government. They put their lives on the line. Some of them lost their lives, and some came back amputees. They gave for our country, for our province here, and I think of these corporations that are asking for these handouts and I've lost a lot of respect for them.

I believe in capitalism. I have a business degree. I'm very much a believer in the free market, but this kind of activity where companies are just asking for handouts really bothers me, especially when we compare them to people who, say, fought for our country, who really gave us the freedom so that those companies could operate here with the freedoms they have here and be in an economy that is solid, where they can make money. That's a blessing that they should be appreciative of. Instead, they don't seem to be, because they just come to the government looking for a handout.

What was particularly galling to me was Irving, because they won a taxpayer-funded contract. The taxpayers are already paying for this work to build those ships, and they need another \$260 million. That equates to an extra 1 per cent profit margin on that contract for them. Madam Speaker, from what I have heard, if you look at the

examination of the bids, there was a factor - I believe it was worth seven points on the submission they made - that had to do with the company could have asked the federal government for money to help spruce up their infrastructure to complete the contract, and it was worth seven points. Well, Irving won this bid by more than seven points, so they didn't need the handout that they got from the government.

The members opposite - I know this is something they would have been concerned about in Opposition. That's something they should look at. They should ferret that information out like we did, look at that, and recognize that Irving here got a handout that they didn't really need.

I know hindsight is 20/20, but had they made an arrangement to support Irving after the contract was won that would be something quite different, Madam Speaker, and we probably could have gotten a better deal. In fact, we probably wouldn't have had to pay one red cent because they would have gotten the contract on their own merit and without the need for government money.

I only have about three minutes left here, but that's the most glaring example. I guess what I'd like to say and I do have more to say but I'm going to have to cut it short - I'm surprised they're not more in tune with what I'm saying because I almost feel like a NDPer speaking here today, talking about handouts to corporations. Maybe they need to review these matters a little more and think about them. Maybe they should be holding the front bench a little more accountable for their decisions. I know it was very beneficial for the Premier to have his hand raised down on the waterfront by Jim Irving. That cost \$260 million and it wasn't necessary.

In short, I think we should be building a competitive economy and let the jobs take care of themselves. We've seen power rates go up; I heard the member for Sackville talk about we're shackled to the price of coal. I think about coal, if we got rid of coal tomorrow, which we know is 58 per cent of the energy source for the province, and it's also one of the cheapest sources of power for the province, our power bills would skyrocket. I would call upon that member to start tabling some numbers behind his comments or otherwise his comments are quite empty and they don't hold any weight.

This government should be focused on reducing power rates by reducing their blind drive towards renewables that are not reducing the price of power and are actually increasing the amount of emissions, so they're creating more pollution. They should be looking at the size of the government, revisiting their promise to reduce the number of people working in government by 1,000 people, which could be done without even having to let anybody go because we know there are a number of people who leave government in a year - they retire, we just don't need to replace them. Had this government done that from the outset, they could have balanced their budget and they could have stuck to their commitment of reducing the civil service by 1,000 people.

This government also talks about their small-business tax breaks. Let me just point out that amount pales in comparison to the \$600 million the government has handed out in small-business tax payments into the government, handed that same money out to big business in this province.

To conclude, start working on building a competitive economy

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1946.

Res. No. 1946, re Gov't. (N.S.): Economy - Build - notice given Nov. 9/11 - (Hon. J. Baillie)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise here this evening to speak to Resolution No. 1946, that says:

"Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature urge the government to stop buying jobs through corporate giveaways and begin the hard work of building our economy from the ground up by lowering taxes, making power affordable, and creating good, lasting jobs."

We know it's almost two times as hard to find a job in Nova Scotia than it is in any other province in the country. There are 10 unemployed people for every job vacancy in this province. In order for the economy to thrive, there has to be a level playing field here for everyone. Doling out \$600 million in corporate welfare means the government is picking winners and losers; the taxpayers are always on the losing side.

Chequebook job creation in Nova Scotia is just not working. This government has written cheques for more than \$600 million - what have we got to show for it? As of right now, not much. Parents are forced to make tough choices, for food or rent, food or medicine, food or heat, and all we hear is their claims to success. They dismiss the poverty stats and pat themselves on the back for creating all these part-time jobs - \$600 million for part-time jobs.

Nova Scotia has fewer jobs now than it did in the depths of the recession. If they were serious about job creation they would make the situation for jobs to come here attractive, scrap the first contract arbitration, lower taxes, lower power rates, lower the cost of fuel. There are 7,400 fewer full-time jobs in Nova Scotia than there were just three years ago. That's the second worst jobs record in the country; we think that's nothing to boast about.

This is in stark contrast to the average throughout the rest of the country where full-time jobs surpassed the pre-recession levels, gaining 644,200 over the past three years. Despite these statistics, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism believes his job plan is working. We're told, get out of our way and they'll do their job. In the last session we were told, just think what this government can do in 20 years. Well, Madam Speaker, if this is what happens in three years, I don't even want to think what will be happening in 20 years.

We know 7,400 reasons why this is wrong. Full-time jobs have gone, so logically, unemployment is up. We have the second-highest increase in unemployment numbers, with 2,300 more people unemployed now than in October 2009. Nothing to brag about there either, Madam Speaker. The South Shore has added 2,900 to the unemployment numbers, the unemployment rate in the province is 9.2 per cent. That's the fourth worst unemployment rate in Canada - nothing to write home about there either.

Madam Speaker, the North Shore's unemployment rate is up over the last year and Cape Breton's unemployment rate is 16.4 per cent. That is not job creation. In our books that's jobs declining in this province. Obviously their programs aren't working and that's not something that they should be boasting about. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. BRIAN SKABAR: Madam Speaker, what an excellent time to be a young person in Nova Scotia today. I'm proud to be a Nova Scotian, I'm proud to be a New Democrat, I'm proud to be a member of this government, largely because of what we've done in the last three years and what is happening right now or is about to happen.

I moved to Nova Scotia in 1988, married a Nova Scotia girl and moved to Nova Scotia in 1988 - two of the best decisions I ever made in my life. During that time I've seen a lot of changes. In 1988 you could drive from Amherst to Halifax without paying a toll, I'd like to thank our Liberal colleagues for that. In 1988 the Nova Scotia Government owned Nova Scotia Power, we were able to have some modicum of control over that, and presumably any profits went back into the company, went back to Nova Scotians. I'd like to thank them for that - only kidding.

Now, in 2012, Nova Scotians are turning the corner, we're turning the corner on 20 years of the worst economic performance in this country - jobsHere, jobs now, education, innovation and comparativeness for Nova Scotia companies and for Nova Scotians are going to make the difference. That's what we're here for, that's what we're doing and we'll deliver.

Referring to my colleague across the floor, not only is my glass half full, it's a bigger glass. Last week one of the most significant announcements happened in Nova Scotia in years, nearly 1,000 new, high-paying, long-term jobs will be created by IBM

Canada and PROJEX Technologies - 1,000 new jobs. Nova Scotians want good-paying, long-term jobs and a growing economy, so they can stay here with their families and build a life in Nova Scotia. I have four children, they're all from here. As a matter of fact my daughter, Lindsay, 27 years old, moved to Winnipeg for three years, she moved back to Halifax about a month and a half ago. Halifax is her home, she wakes up every morning - tried somewhere else, she is going nowhere - this is home.

Now, just getting back to some of the comments made about PROJEX and about the IBM contract, so Scott Richards is PROJEX Atlantic Regional president. He said it quite clearly in his letter to The Chronicle Herald on November 11th, "No new jobs: no tax break. Government - and by extension the taxpayer - is not out any money by supporting Projex, or any other company. . . It's the ultimate economic development because. . ." "the product is always in the taxpayers' interest and only when this happens would they get any money from the Nova Scotia taxpayer.

Now, that's on a macro scale. When you're talking about (Interruption) I'm sorry. We can table that article from The Halifax ChronicleHerald as well. Now, those thousands of jobs coming, when you're talking about buying jobs, I would like to bring that right into Cumberland North for a minute. Northwestern Nova Scotia is doing really quite well. As a matter of fact, LED Roadway Lighting, Chuck Cartmill did very well - the Province of Nova Scotia are \$6 million equity partners in that company. They are receiving major contracts all over the world. They are leading in technology, innovative technology with provincial support creating long-term employment in northern Nova Scotia.

IMP Aerospace company moved 25 of their machinists, their machine shop moved from Halifax to Amherst - 25 well-paid jobs moving out of the greater Halifax area. PolyCello owner/operator Steve Emmerson, with some help from the province - we helped out with \$1 million to buy a new machine which will double and a half his capacity. It has the best printing capacity for that operation this side of Toronto and competing with competitors all over the world. Things are moving as well as they can.

Madam Speaker, thank you, I'll close my remarks on that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that and I do look forward to the opportunity to speak on Resolution No. 1946. I would also like to thank my colleague from Cape Breton North who has done a great job speaking on this tonight and the gentleman whom we'll hear from C.B. West, who has also done a great job with these files. I also want to mention that the member for Cape Breton West has done great work with the MV Miner file. So I would like to congratulate him on that for sure. (Applause)

This truly is a reasonable resolution in my opinion because the proof is in the pudding. The member for Cumberland North, who is a really good guy, and it's good to see

him speak on this issue, but he did mention something that, to me, it's the theme of this resolution that I want to speak to. When he suggests that it's a great day to be in Nova Scotia for young people, Nova Scotia is a great province, there's no doubt about it, but when you're talking about economic development and young people, it's absolutely rich to suggest that there are jobs flowing here and there are people accepting resumes all the time. I've got one company who has 100 people from Glace Bay working in Fort McMurray, one company, 100 people. The top age of that 100 group is 45 and the youngest is 21. So that's the kind of demographic that we have at one company out West. So to suggest that things are great and that Nova Scotians can find work here, I think is a little bit misleading and my issue with this conversation about economic development and the corporate handouts and the big cheques is about this idea of false hope.

When you add up all the job numbers from Irving, Bowater, Scanwood, DSME, all those total promises made by this government, we're in the realm of 15,000 jobs. The number thus far at this point is a loss of 1,300 by those very corporations, the six corporations. So when you look at what the government is telling Nova Scotians versus what the reality is, they're two very different things. When you're telling taxpayers who own this money, you're investing this money on behalf of them, that things are great and we're creating 15,000 jobs when clearly we aren't, then that's the problem and that's what makes people upset.

Certainly the other thing that make businesses upset when we're talking about business is this issue of power bills, which is mentioned, and power rates in this province. One of the things that stuck in my head so vividly from the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism when I asked the question on power rates and power bills and the impact that has had on business and whether or not he was hearing from those businesses, he said that's not really an issue.

I've tabled it many times, it's in Hansard: "Power bills aren't an issue." An input cost of anything that you do from manufacturing to food services to accounting, legal to medicine and all those things, an input cost is power so when you increase any input cost naturally you decrease your profits by way of revenue minus expenses. So if the power rates are high and getting higher, this is cause for concern and it makes businesses struggle.

That is something that we've got to keep in mind, that this is not separate and different from economic development. Power bills are an input cost and it's certainly an important piece of that. Again, with respect to corporate handouts and these big cheques, I go back every time, and I'm still waiting for some kind of clarification on the DSME investment that we made on behalf of taxpayers.

It's really troublesome, Madam Speaker, when we put \$60 million into a facility that's promised to create 500 jobs, and they were doing so by way of production of wind turbines. Wind turbines - basically that plan has been abandoned and now we're looking at diversifying and we know the stories already, we've shared it many times in this

Legislature. So we're diversifying a plant that was leveraged with 60 million tax dollars. Very concerning and something that we need an answer to, and I don't know if the minister doesn't want to share that information or he just doesn't understand that this makes other businesses in that new diversified sector less competitive relative to the DSME.

So this resolution is certainly fitting and I think the corporate welfare idea, it's got to stop, and I think Nova Scotians are worried about it. So what can we do? Briefly, I think there are a number of things: the corporate handouts have to stop; you've got to look at the impact of power rates as I mentioned with some of the import costs; look at red tape and regulations which are hamstringing businesses in this province; use tax dollars for small business growth, and make them utilized and they'll grow that money. Again, we've got to support the entrepreneurial spirit in Nova Scotia and we've got to stop writing big cheques to big businesses.

With that I'll take my place. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand in my place today to say a few words on this very important topic. I want to congratulate the member for Glace Bay, he actually sat down and put some thought into, unlike the Minister of Economic Development and - whatever his title is.

AN HON. MEMBER: ERDT.

MR. MACLEOD: ERDT. I guess it's not fair of me not to know his title, but then he's never actually done anything with the title to make it worth my while to remember about.

But no question, Madam Speaker, the economy here in Nova Scotia is sick; it is not healthy. We've seen 7,400 jobs lost since October of 2009, 7,400 jobs, and at the same time we've seen over 13,000 Nova Scotians going to Alberta to find work. What's wrong with that picture? There is a cost when people leave this province to go away to find work. It's a cost on their families and on the health care system. There is a major cost that takes place.

In Cape Breton we've seen our unemployment rate rise to new highs again - 16 per cent. Five hundred jobs lost in Cape Breton in an area that can't afford to lose any more jobs. Then we see this government handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to different firms across the province. We've seen \$127 million given to Stern, and yet these are the same people who will not sit down and deal fairly with the private woodlot owners of the Province of Nova Scotia. There was a strategy released last week - and even the stumpage rates were blacked out in the strategy, so people wouldn't know what was going on.

You know, it's really sad to think that these very people that aren't getting a fair deal are the ones - are part of the group anyway - that are paying for the subsidy that was given to Stern. It's their hard-earned tax dollars that are being used to pay for these bailouts that are being given across the province. We've heard time and time again, it's like getting in a large ship and trying to bail it out with a bucket when there are pumps available. But then again, we have a large ship off Scatarie and nobody wants to do anything with that either. So I guess at least there is a trend here. If it has to do with Cape Breton, we really don't want to help - the NDP.

It seems that that's not only for Cape Breton, rural areas of Nova Scotia are taking a hammering on this whole thing, on this whole strategy, this jobsHere. Well, there ain't no jobs here, Mr. Speaker. The problem is people are getting part-time jobs but part-time jobs don't work. They are not the thing that will put food on your table, pay your light bill, get the medicine for your children, make sure they have the proper clothing and food to go and get their education. It's not working.

Then when you listen to some of these bailouts, where some of the money came from - they take it out of education; they take it out of health care. Mr. Speaker, it is not anything for that group over there to be proud of. They've had an opportunity now for three years to show leadership and what have they done? Well they stand up every time in their place and they say, those people over there, they haven't done anything. Zero is what they say; they've done nothing. Well, Mr. Speaker, they should look in a mirror. They should look at themselves because that group has done nothing to help the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. They've made it harder to find a job. You pay higher taxes. You pay higher power bills. You pay higher to go and even look for a job; it costs you money all the time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shameful thing that we have to sit here and tell them about the things they've gotten wrong because five minutes, 20 minutes, a whole session of this House would not allow us to point out all the discrepancies and all the problems that that group over there have created over the course of the last three years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That concludes Opposition Business for today and I'll turn it over to the Government House Leader to call business and the hours for tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, the business tomorrow after the daily routine will be Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 127; and Private and Local Bills, Bill No. 129 and 130. After that we'll go into Committee of the Whole House on Bills, considering Bill No. 105, 109, 112, 114 and 115.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow from the hour of 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at 12 noon.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We will now go to the late debate and the subject matter has been chosen earlier:

“Therefore be it resolved that a week ago the Liberal Party showed how much they are job killers with no plan or vision when, as well as opposing thousands of new jobs for young Nova Scotians, the Liberal contribution to the legislative debate on the future of Bowater Mersey forest lands was to state they would say nothing until there was a government announcement, then criticize.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

BOWATER FOREST LANDS: LIBERAL PARTY – RESPONSE

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand this evening at this moment of late debate to talk about the issue of the Bowater Mersey lands, which is very near and dear to my heart because I do represent the constituency of Queens and the constituency of Queens certainly is familiar with the large land tract in the Queens County area that would be known as the Bowater Mersey lands.

I am not surprised at all, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite chose not to debate this topic when it was introduced to the House last week. They chose to remain silent and, in fact, had indicated that they would have nothing to say around the government looking at the possibility of perhaps securing the Bowater Mersey lands and the assets of Bowater/Resolute in the best interests of Nova Scotians. I'm surprised that they chose not to discuss that very important issue; rather they stated that they would just kind of wait and see what happens, around those negotiations that are taking place right now, between the government and Resolute.

I just want to give you a little bit of an update of where things have been, over the last couple of months, since the closure of Bowater Mersey. What I can tell you is, immediately, with the announcement of the mill closure, the government and more in particular, the Premier, directed that a transition committee be put in place, to be on the ground, in Queens, to talk with, not only to talk with employees and community but also to have the community engage in discussion around what our economic destiny would look like, as we move forward into the months after the mill's closure.

The transition committee has been working diligently over the last couple of months and they have met with literally hundreds of community residents, over the last couple of months, they have had opportunity to speak with the chamber of commerce and the North Queens Board of Trade and the Bridgewater Chamber of Commerce. They've also had opportunity to speak with municipalities, they've had opportunity to hear from woodlot owners, from sawmill operators and they've engaged in a lot of wholesome discussion around the Bowater assets and more importantly, the Bowater Mersey lands.

Not only has the transition committee been out in the community but also the Minister of DNR has been meeting with many members of the community - woodlot owners, sawmill operators, almost a repeat of the community members that the transition committee has been meeting with, as well. Again, the purpose of the minister's visits to community is to get a sense of what the community is thinking in terms of those Bowater Mersey lands and certainly the assets of Bowater Mersey and Resolute.

What we've been hearing loud and clear is that Nova Scotians, and community members in particular along the South Shore, are very much concerned about what happens to those Bowater Mersey lands and the assets of the mill and the Brooklyn energy facility. What we've been hearing loud and clear, is because Nova Scotians are so passionate about those forested lands, they have been telling government and the minister and the transition team, that they expect the government to be looking quite seriously at the purchase of those Mersey lands, for the protection of the forest legacy, for future generations, for the protection of the valuable land assets, in terms of the ecological and environmentally sensitive areas of some of those lands.

Also, for the recreational importance of those lands, we know that for many generations that residents all along the southwestern shore, from Lunenburg, as far down as Yarmouth and Digby, that many people have been using those forested lands for recreational purposes whether it be hunting, hiking, camping, or fishing. So those lands have become very valuable, for many generations of families, for hundreds of years. Not only have they become valuable in terms of what it means for individuals to be using those lands for their own recreational purposes, but those lands we all know have provided many, many, many years of economic revenues for many families working in the forest industry, whether they be millers, woodlot owners, paper makers when Bowater was up and running, the Bowater paper mill, those lands generated a wealth of income for many, many families. That's what we heard loud and clear from community members from one end of the

southwestern part of the province to the furthest end of the southwestern part of the province. We heard loud and clear that the majority of Nova Scotians are very interested in the government securing the Bowater Mersey lands.

In fact, I believe the Premier's Office received hundreds of e-mails, letters, and inquiries. I know my office has received many e-mails and many telephone calls, and many people stop me on the street when I'm out and about in the community. I get asked frequently, what is the situation with the Bowater Mersey lands? I'm telling people in all sincerity that the government has entered into negotiations with Resolute and the government is looking at all of the assets to see whether or not it makes sense for the government to secure those assets in the best interests of Nova Scotians. I'm proud of my government for entering into such negotiations, because the government clearly understands the value and the importance of those assets for the future of Nova Scotians and generations to come.

As I said just a few days ago around this debate, the government is not interested in getting into the pulp and paper industry. We're not interested in becoming mill operators. The government is certainly not interested in becoming owners of a plant, but what I can tell you is we're most interested in making the right decision for future generations of Nova Scotians. As the Premier said yesterday - and I don't have his exact words - he indicated that it's time that we stand up and stop seeing our resources being secured by foreign ownership and being taken outside of the province with little or no account.

He didn't quite use those words, Mr. Speaker, but he meant just that, and that was not seeing our natural resources being taken out of province for the use of foreigners, exactly. What I can tell you is that I know the Premier has also been out and about in the community over the last couple of months in Queens. I know he has been hearing the same thing as I've been hearing, and the same thing as the Minister of Natural Resources. One thing I do know is that we all understand that we can work together should the province and should this government secure those natural resources, that we can scale up our sawmill industry if we are to secure all these assets, that we can assist woodlot owners in developing the forestry industry, and that we can all work together to see a healthier forest and protect those forests for many generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it was with great interest that I was listening to the member for Queens. I know she has an awful dilemma on her hands with the failed and botched deal that the Premier and the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism put together to save the Bowater Mersey paper mill in her riding. It's unfortunate that that didn't work, but from the beginning it appeared that it wouldn't work, and unfortunately, it seems to be a desperate attempt by the member for

Queens and the NDP Government to divert attention from their failed economic record to bring something like this forward. That's very unfortunate.

We see that there were big promises by the Premier, the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister, and the member for Queens that they're going to protect the 2,000 jobs in southern Nova Scotia. I really feel that trying to come up with a plan to protect 2,000 jobs, that wasn't a bad idea, but when you throw money at something, you don't do your research, you don't have any guarantees in place, you don't have any idea what the business is about, and you don't do any research on the business to see if the business makes sense to continue in Nova Scotia - you just throw \$60 million or \$50 million or more, whatever the number was; we still are not sure what the total number was on the Bowater deal, but someday we'll find out - with no hope of it ever succeeding.

So when you look at the whole deal and how they negotiated and how they put it together, it makes you wonder how capable this government is in doing any deal. When you look at the other deals they've put together, the other close to \$500 million altogether - over \$500 million actually; half a billion dollars - you realize that they really don't know how to create jobs in the province, and that's serious.

We've seen them very early on can or dump or get rid of the ferry in Yarmouth. They said, it will have no impact at all in the economy. Well, we sure found out that it had a major impact on the tourism industry. As the tourism industry doesn't make money, if they don't make money, to me it means that they don't re-invest in their facilities, they don't hire people in the summertime, they don't do things that are needed to really, really grow the economy. The tourism industry is very, very important to this province, and as I've said here before, years ago, the federal government used to indicate that every dollar you import into the province - tourism; if you come from outside the province, it's tourism - it's a \$7 impact. That's quite a significant impact in the economy. So you take every dollar you've taken away because the ferry's gone or from the money that Bowater Mersey would have exported paper, any place they exported paper to, and it's a major impact on the province.

The idea of trying to protect jobs in Nova Scotia is very important, but you've got to do your homework. The homework was not done. This government did not do the homework. If they had done the homework, they would not have invested in this company. They would not. Have a look at what happened at Bowater in Newfoundland and Labrador; same scenario. Just happened to understand, it was the same manager who was brought into this mill who closed the one in Newfoundland and Labrador. Is that a coincidence? That's no coincidence. When you see that, they had no research at all. They just rushed in and gave them a whole pile of money and said, here, take it, go away, we don't care. Now they're talking about a land deal - another great thing for Nova Scotia. The last deal with Bowater wasn't a great deal for Nova Scotia, so what makes us think that anything this government can negotiate will be a great deal for Nova Scotia?

There's a good, strong argument for protecting the land or whatever way you want to look at it. There is the good possibility, but can we afford to buy it? That's a good question. Half a billion dollars already wasted that could have been spent on education, health care, roads, you name it. No, they decide to dump it into large corporations, with no research and no results - over 7,000 people who are now unemployed, who held full-time jobs, over 7,000, and we spent half a billion dollars to do that. There's something wrong with that. There's something basically wrong with that.

So when the people of Nova Scotia realize - and they're starting to realize - how poorly managed this province is under this NDP Government, they're going to be very, very angry. I can see that already started, and as we go through and you see the people all over southwestern Nova Scotia had great hope in this deal, to hopefully make or create wholesome jobs - maybe create some new jobs - when they realize that millions of dollars are spent on this Bowater operation, it's just gone out the window, moved off to Quebec or wherever the money went, it's gone. The mill closed down, and now we don't even have that money to reinvest and get diversity in our products that we sell there. We don't have that money. We would have been better off to start doing that, and the same with the other things we do. We would have been better off to reinvest in Nova Scotia, into small businesses and rural Nova Scotia. These places are going to be worth nothing. There's going to be a lot of people in the province who are left behind and will really suffer financially for a long, long time.

It's very unfortunate. It's very unfortunate that this government has no foresight and has no planning. They talk about jobsHere. Well, I don't know where "here" is, but it sure isn't in Nova Scotia. Maybe they just took Alberta out of it and said, jobsHere in Alberta; maybe that's what it is, because that's where all the young people are going, and you know what? Very soon, they're all going to be going to Newfoundland and Labrador, because in Newfoundland and Labrador, the economy is starting to really boom. So now it's going to be even easier for young people to go, just hop on the ferry, hop on a short plane ride, and you're in Newfoundland and Labrador and you've got a job and you can come home on the weekend. That's going to be interesting, very interesting, when that all transpires. Great for Newfoundland and Labrador, they struggled a long time, they've got some very aggressive governments in place and they did, indeed, improve their fate.

This is not happening in Nova Scotia, just the opposite. We're going further in debt, fewer jobs, and no hope for employment here. If you're a young person and really want to climb up in a corporate organization and succeed, as the time goes on and help a business grow, it's not here. When you look at all these things that have happened, you look at DSME, look at them. We were in Pictou last summer and talked to a local business there and they said the only people working at this DSME plant were the security guards. That was last summer. I've asked the chairman of the Economic Development Committee, we were supposed to take a field trip to see this wonderful new business, I thought it was a really good idea, so did all of the committee members and guess what? All of a sudden, the trip was off. Why is the trip off? Good question, I guess they don't want us to go down and

talk to security guards that are guarding the place. So the \$60 million that is in that and the corporate welfare that was handed out, that's a pretty good paying job for a security guard.

It makes you wonder how they did the research on this. They didn't do the research, that's the point, they did not do the research, and they do not understand business. They do not understand business, they don't know how to create jobs, they never will, they'll never get it and unfortunately, each one of us as individual taxpayers in this province is going to pay the bill; not only the bill but we're going to have all kinds of our family members who are going to have to move outside of the province to get employment. Think about that, it's going to get worse.

The Premier announced today, more immigrants coming in. Fine, we'll bring more immigrants in, we need the skilled people here but if there are no jobs for these people guess where they'll be, they'll be in Toronto, they'll be in Alberta, they'll be in B.C., they'll be everywhere but Nova Scotia. They'll come here and take advantage of the system and when they get here, realize that, indeed, they can't get a job here that pays well and they are going to have to leave. So we're going to bring people into the province to help our economy grow, there is no economy for them to get employed with, so by no choice of their own, they are going to have to leave. Does that make economic sense? It certainly doesn't and that's where this government is going. It's going in that direction and it's scary.

It's almost a year and half, about a year and half left in the mandate, three and a half years into it, 2014 is probably when they'll have the next election, hoping that they can pull it out in a very short time, with maybe what appeared to be a balanced budget. Maybe they'll promise to take the two cents off the GST, the 25 per cent increase they had. They'll promise it but they can't deliver on it because they spent so much money on corporate welfare that they will not be able to cut the taxes. With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It's my pleasure to stand this evening and speak to this resolution in late debate. I want to thank the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for being here tonight, to maybe pass that on to some of his friends and I want to thank the member for Preston for his comments here tonight.

I've got to start off by saying I was wrong the other night, I was wrong - write it down - I was wrong by saying we haven't heard much from the member for Queens because we hadn't heard too much from her up to now and here we are on, I think, the third resolution, this is the third resolution that she has been able to present in late debate having to do with her community. I need to commend her for bringing these issues forward and just wondering where the rest of the caucus is at this point talking about their communities because we haven't heard too much from the other members but I commend the member

opposite for her work on bringing this one forward. I hope she continues to do it because the Bowater lands in southwestern Nova Scotia are extremely important.

As we know, the so-called Bowater lands were one of Nova Scotia's great natural resources. These lands productively grow and regenerate forest, they contribute greatly to our tremendous natural beauty and they've provided a living for countless Nova Scotians over many generations. As our natural areas are increasingly reduced and threatened, so are our productive forest lands. It is very important to conserve a solid representation of our natural areas. We do it because it's good for us; because it protects diverse species of plants and animals, even for economic reasons like tourism; and we do it to provide recreation and fitness opportunities - but most of all we do it because it is the right thing to do and we must commit to doing it well.

At the same time our forests are like our farms, places where we grow and regrow trees, which are the livelihood of many people; people who work in the forest, trucking, sawmills, and paper mills. They work in value-added businesses that make wood products and pellets, just to name two examples. We must protect these livelihoods and ensure the future of our forests in a province that increasingly faces a shortage of wealth-creating activity under this government.

We must safeguard these jobs, not only for the workers but for the sake of our health care and education systems, for these must be paid for by wealth being created somewhere in our province.

I'm not confident that the NDP gets that. I think they know that jobs are good for those who have them, but I don't think they understand at a fundamental level how we generate the wealth to create jobs and pay for those social programs and services that we do hold dear. If they did understand, they wouldn't put money into industries that would compete against those already owned and operated by Nova Scotians, money that will ultimately flow out of the province, money that discourages home-grown wealth generation and erodes our economy. If they did understand, they wouldn't give up selective help to Crown wood harvesters while doing nothing for our private landowners and wood harvesters. This would drive many out of business.

They have families, Mr. Speaker, owners have major capital investments in their lands which aren't worth much, or as much, if the wood is worth less, and particularly if nobody can afford to cut it. In fact, everything they have might as well be tied up in their lands, which up until now have provided good jobs for them and others.

The NDP didn't understand that those who rely on those woods are being worked out, are now out in the cold. Now the NDP is making a similar mistake - the NDP wants to own vast tracts of land, which is a poor move for Nova Scotia. People fear the NDP will pick winners and losers with the resource that they control, and get it wrong. They fear the NDP will not understand the importance of those forests to our people through jobs and a

healthy economy, and they fear that our debt will grow, as \$100 million, plus interest, every year is directed away from important goals. And given this government's track record, those fears are all reasonable.

So is there a better way? Of course there is. The government has the power to regulate, and regulating those lands is cheaper than maintaining ownership. Lands can be sold to private owners with rules to ensure good practices and conservation. Then private owners, Nova Scotians, will be motivated to find the best way to create wealth that we need, and thus provide long-term economic benefits and jobs for people in their communities.

Should this happen with all lands, Mr. Speaker? Of course not, no, some should be conserved or reserved for possible conservation, but we need to recognize the best ways to generate wealth on a local and provincial level, and that few people would want their money tied up unnecessarily, buying lands instead of paying for health care or lowering taxes.

This government, which has created a poor economic climate for job creation with odd decisions, must send a signal that it understands, if it does, a signal that public ownership is, in one of the most important generators, not the best way to create jobs, a signal by allowing the sale of lands with sensible precautions, and use the people's money for other good things.

If the government truly wants to create jobs locally, it will let them pass to local owners who will create local wealth through local jobs, and it will support conditions for people to create and maintain jobs. That is more effective at creating local jobs than paying higher rents to shuffle officials around, as the government has done in a number of their offices.

So I implore the government not to pat themselves on the back until they actually understand how jobs are created and allow our job-generating private sector to flourish. At the same time, I do implore the Liberals, as this resolution is actually about them, to take a stand as well; take a stand on something, take a stand on anything, and show people that they have some core beliefs because, once again, the Liberals want to claim the benefit of criticism while ducking from the burden of decision. To give credit where credit is due, at least we know where the government stands and people know where we stand because this caucus has been very, very clear.

So do the Liberals believe in spending over \$100 million to buy land? I'm not sure from the speech we just got, Mr. Speaker, whether the Liberal Leader or the caucus believes the province should even balance the budget right now. He won't be clear. He won't commit to any of the priorities - the deficit that the Auditor General calls immoral. So why should anyone expect him to commit to spending \$100 million or not? That is a

sign of weakness, a lack of imagination, of indecision, and to steal something from them - of inexperience.

It's high time to call him on that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much to the member for Queens for bringing this resolution forward and I thank the members for being here tonight to listen to this debate.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to thank all the members in the Assembly tonight for a very informative debate on all sides of the House.

The motion for adjournment has been made earlier, so we will now adjourn to sit between the hours of noon and 6:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House adjourned at 6:26 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2015**

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Newfoundland and Labrador and Lunenburg County have shared close ties due to the fishing industry in the North Atlantic, with more and more Newfoundlanders moving to Lunenburg County throughout the 20th Century; and

Whereas “Newfie Days” is an annual festival that has celebrated the vibrant culture and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador and its impact on Lunenburg County for 16 years; and

Whereas this year’s Newfie Days Festival, held October 12th-14th in Lunenburg, featured music and comedy, traditional meals, contests like potato peeling and yarn balling, the Blessing of the Fishermen service at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, and a tribute to the 2012 Honorary Fisherman, Raymond Hunt;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commends the volunteer organizers of the 16th Annual Newfie Days Festival, and recognizes the important cultural and historical ties between Newfoundland and Labrador and Lunenburg County.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016

By: Ms. Becky Kent (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Impressions Hair Salon, in Eastern Passage, held a fantastic fundraiser for the Relay for Life Cancer Campaign at 12 Wing Shearwater on June 15th; and

Whereas proprietor Joyce Treen put together this event where stylists did haircuts for \$10 and buzz cuts for \$5, with all proceeds going to the cause; and

Whereas the many waiting patrons were able to take advantage of a BBQ and cupcake sale only adding to the enjoyment and success of the fundraiser;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulates Joyce Treen and her staff of Impressions Hair Salon, in Eastern Passage, as well as all

participants who braved the scissors to raise funds for fighting the continuous battle with cancer.

RESOLUTION NO. 2017

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 Mark Smith is a resident of Lower Sackville, whose son was diagnosed with autism at the age of two; and

Whereas Mark has been dedicated to raising awareness about autism and has previously walked 33 kms from Mount Uniacke to Halifax in seven hours; and

Whereas on Walk the Walk for Autism Day held on June 16, 2012 Mark walked 46 kms in nine hours, from Peggy's Cove to the site at the Halifax Commons, and has set future goals to walk from the Halifax Airport and from Cape Breton;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House commend Mark Smith, of Lower Sackville, on his commitment to raising awareness of autism through walks from Mount Uniacke to Halifax, Peggy's Cove to Halifax, and wish him success in his endeavour to walk from the Halifax Airport in 2013 and in his ultimate goal of walking from Cape Breton.

RESOLUTION NO. 2018

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 Holly and George Pelley are residents of Lower Sackville; and

Whereas the Pelleys, like most parents, attend activities to support their children and have spent many hours watching their 12-year-old daughter, Kristyn, who has been involved in competitive cheerleading for two years; and

Whereas Holly and George themselves became involved in the sport of cheerleading, even with Holly's recent back injury, and have accomplished many performance routines such as cartwheels, roundoffs and other stunts;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize Holly and George Pelley, of Lower Sackville, for their example of how parents can be truly involved in activities while supporting their children and for their achievements in cheerleading, and wish them future success and continued health.