



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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Fourth Session

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Fourth Session**

**12:00 NOON**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Gordon Gosse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that the priorities of the Nova Scotia NDP have changed drastically since they were in Opposition.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Clare.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition:

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce amendments to the Human Rights Act.

MR. SPEAKER: No, that's not a committee.

MR. LANDRY: I don't have a committee report.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I guess not.

### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, before I read my notice of motion, I would like to have permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery today are a number of distinguished visitors who are here today in part to hear this resolution, but more importantly to be present when the Minister of Justice presents his amendments to the Human Rights Act. I would like to call out their names.

From the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, Kevin Kindred and Kate Shewan; Hugo Dann; from The Youth Project, Maddex Greene, Kristen Sweeney and Leighann Wichman; from the Trans Family Nova Scotia, Quinn Smith and Michelle Mollet; from

Halifax Pride, Ramona Westgate; from the Human Rights Commission, David Shannon and Ritchie Wheeler; from the LGBTI Network, Lisa Lachance and Kevin Barret; and from my own Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Laura Barbour.

There are a number of other people here from the Human Rights Commission as well, Mr. Speaker, I know this is an exhaustive list, and Janet and Peter MacDonald are here from Antigonish with Cloe. I would like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2116**

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

Whereas since 1998, November 20<sup>th</sup> has been marked worldwide as Transgender Day of Remembrance, an opportunity to remember transgender people who have been affected by violence and discrimination because of their gender identity or expressions of that identity, and to recognize the hard work of everyone who speaks out against acts of hatred and discrimination against their fellow human beings in the journey towards a more open and accepting world; and

Whereas Nova Scotia was one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to formalize protection for human rights in law, through the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act in 1969, speaking to the importance of respect for the rights and dignity of every human being and the responsibility of all citizens to uphold the principles of inclusion and diversity at the heart of human rights law; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians, including transgender people, benefit from a society that rejects violence and discrimination, and embraces human rights and dignity of the individual, and we all have a role to play in building a world where gender identity and its expression is always treated with respect;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House join with people throughout Nova Scotia, across the country, and around the world, to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance, and work to promote a society that rejects violence and discrimination based on gender identity and expressions of that identity.

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 Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we have special guests with us in the gallery today. They are Meghan Laing and Doug Hall, who are the co-founders of the volunteer-led event, Halifax Connects. We would like to thank them for joining us today and for their innovative efforts to bring services to those who are homeless or at risk in our community. I'd like to welcome them. (Applause)

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

Before you read your resolution, I'd like to remind our guests in the galleries that, under the Rules of the House, they are not allowed to show either approval or disapproval of anything that happens here on the floor during our proceedings.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2117**

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

Whereas the volunteer organization Halifax Connects recently invited those struggling with homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, to attend a community event at Citadel High School in Halifax; and

Whereas about 200 volunteers generously gave their time and talent to make a range of services available at one convenient location to those facing homelessness; and

Whereas this co-operative event was able to provide about 620 people with much-needed services, along with a valuable demonstration of community support and caring;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, and all Nova Scotians, join in congratulating the organizers and volunteers of Halifax Connects for providing care and support to those struggling with, or at risk of, homelessness.

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 Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2118**

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's youngest residents and their families hold the key to the prosperous future for all Nova Scotians; and

Whereas all children have the right to live, learn, and play in a safe and healthy environment; and

Whereas November 20<sup>th</sup> marks National Child Day and this year's theme, The Right to Practice Your Own Culture, Religion and Language - or any you choose, supports the importance of embracing and celebrating the diversity of all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wear the blue ribbons provided to honour National Child Day, being celebrated worldwide today.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 140 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 214 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Human Rights Act, to Protect the Rights of Transgendered Persons. (Hon. Ross Landry)**

**Bill No. 141 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 213 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Housing Development Corporation Act, Respecting CMHC Funding. (Ms. Kelly Regan)**

**Bill No. 142 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 213 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Housing Development Corporation Act, to Establish a Housing Development Corporation Board. (Ms. Kelly Regan)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2119**

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 17, 2012, the Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame held its annual Induction Award Ceremony at the Royal Canadian Legion in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas amongst several esteemed individuals and teams inducted that evening was the 1982-83 Bridgetown Hawks Juvenile "B" provincial championship hockey team, a team which the honourable member for Annapolis was proud to be a member of during their winning season; and

Whereas the most notable victories for the 1982-83 Bridgetown Hawks in their 62-2-2 season were victories against the Chebucto Juvenile "A" 1981 Nova Scotia

Champions and a string of wins against Juvenile All Stars teams in Maine, as well as the Toronto West Hill Flyers, the 1981 Ontario “AAA” Juvenile Hockey Championship winners;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the members of the 1982-83 Bridgetown Hawks as well as the honourable member for Annapolis for their well-deserved induction in the Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame.

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. 2120**

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

Whereas on this day Lebanese communities across the province will celebrate Lebanese Independence Day; and

Whereas the day is set aside to mark the end of the French mandate in Lebanon and full independence for a nation that has given the world a vibrant culture over many millennia; and

Whereas the strength and spirit of the Lebanese people are depicted by the cedar tree on their national flag, symbolizing immortality and steadiness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wish the Lebanese community of Nova Scotia a happy Independence Day and thank them for their many significant contributions to our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2121**

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

Whereas churches are the heart of many Nova Scotia communities, Antigonish County being no exception; and

Whereas in August 2012 parishioners in Pomquet celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sainte Croix Church with a weekend full of events; and

Whereas the community also celebrated the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Father Peter Baccardax as parish priest in Pomquet;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the members of Sainte Croix Church and Father Baccardax on their remarkable anniversaries and wish them all the best for many years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2122**

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

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

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

Whereas after receiving over \$0.5 billion in taxpayer money, two of them shut down, one went bankrupt, two of them are on the brink of closure and all six laid off employees;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Pictou Centre still supports the Premier's misguided approach and that the Premier cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations and he must end his corporate handouts and begin work on growing the economies and communities across the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2123**

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

Whereas two brothers, Fred and Dave Lavery, who live thousands of miles away from each other will be receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Fred is the co-owner of Lakewind Sound Studios in Point Aconi and his community organization and volunteer involvements are legendary in Cape Breton; and

Whereas brother Dave lives in Pickering, Ontario and is the president of the Queens Own Rifles of Canada Association, the oldest serving infantry regiment in Canada and his work with veterans and active armed forces personnel is also legendary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Lavery boys for their dedication in serving their communities and their service for those in need.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2124**

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Yvon Thibodeau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Yvon Thibodeau will be recognized on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 by the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department for his 20 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Yvon Thibodeau for receiving the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal for 20 years of service to his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2125**

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

Whereas today is National Child Day; and

Whereas today marks the anniversary of Canada's adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which outlines the inherent human rights for children and youth; and

Whereas the convention dictates the responsibility governments have to ensure each child's right to healthy development protection and survival;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of National Child Day and commit ourselves to doing everything we can do to protect and support the children of this province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

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. 2126**

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

Whereas Nicole Himmelman is a resident of Nictaux Drive in Lower Sackville; and

Whereas Nicole and her daughter Brennah both suffer from Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome which is a connective tissue disorder that causes joints to dislocate spontaneously; and



Whereas Nicole entered Ramar Construction's Home Sweeter Home Contest in the Spring of 2012 and was awarded \$100,000 in home renovations including a chair lift to make life better for the Himmelman family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Nicole Himmelman of Nictaux Drive in Lower Sackville on her successful entry in Ramar Construction's Home Sweeter Home Contest and trust that the \$100,000 in home renovations enriches the health and lives of the entire Himmelman family.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2127**

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

Whereas Pam and Doug Champagne have been touring Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for the past three years; and

Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Champagne have been stopping at Legions on their way singing the Legion Song, which they wrote and play for members; and

Whereas they carry a banner from Colwell Bankers that is signed by Legion members everywhere they visit that will be forwarded overseas in support of our troops to honour their commitment to our country;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize the fine work that Pam and Doug Champagne are doing in recognition of our Legions and our many armed forces personnel who are representing our country in such an honourable and heroic way.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2128**

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

Whereas this week marks National Addictions Awareness Week; and

Whereas drug and alcohol addiction is a serious issue in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas it is more important than ever to educate youth and adults on the devastating impact alcohol, substance abuse, and gambling can have on our families and communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of Addictions Awareness Week and highlight the need for serious action to save the lives of Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2129**

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

Whereas Jerry Thorne of New Minas was recently named recipient of the Biggs Award, presented to a client of Flowercart's Community Employment Services who embodies the spirit of hard work, dedication, positive attitude and personal growth for themselves and those around them; and

Whereas Jerry has worked for many years in the food service industry, most recently for Jungle Jim's, New Minas, as a dishwasher and as a prep cook, always with a smile; and

Whereas Jerry contributes positively to his community and to his workplace with tireless effort and a warmth of character that is invaluable to his peers and fellow community members;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the contributions made by Jerry Thorne to his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, might I do an introduction first?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, in your gallery today we have a Dartmouth resident who is very active in a number of community organizations, committees and so forth and is a Polish dancer, apparently. His name is Mr. Doug Day and he is here to take in the proceedings. Would the members give him a warm welcome? (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2130**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, this resolution isn't related to Mr. Day, but nonetheless - I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas new runners Janice Feener, Tanya Conrod and Paulette Kempton formed the Just There Pals running team in January 2012; and

Whereas the Lucky 7 Relay was held this past weekend around Halifax Common, with team members each completing a 7K run in the team half-marathon; and

Whereas the Lucky 7 Relay represents the third of three United by Running Races this team has completed together;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Just There Pals running team on completing their Lucky 7 Relay and wish them many more smooth miles ahead.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2131**

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

Whereas this week is National Restorative Justice Week, a program that offers a unique approach to resolving and addressing the needs of those impacted by crime and violence; and

Whereas Restorative Justice Week raises awareness of the program for communities and individuals wishing to take an holistic approach to dealing with crime; and

Whereas this year's theme, Diverse Needs; Unique Responses, is appropriately named for the adaptive approach it offers victims and communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize this week as Restorative Justice Week and extend thanks to those who help facilitate this program across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

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 Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2132**

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

Whereas Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her ascension to the throne 60 years ago with her Diamond Jubilee; and

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was struck to commemorate this once-in-a-lifetime event; and

Whereas Mabel McCarthy of Mount Uniacke was honoured with the presentation of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her dedication and commitment to helping her community;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Mabel McCarthy on her Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and acknowledge with gratitude her dedication and commitment to helping her community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2133**

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

Whereas Robert Sweeney began his karate training in 1984 and received his black belt in 1996, is a second-degree black belt in Shotokan Karate, is currently studying for his third degree, and was awarded Dojo Sensei of the Year by the Nova Scotia Karate Organization for 2012 for instructing kids in Yarmouth and Argyle in karate; and

Whereas the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards Banquet was held on Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas Robert Sweeney was named 2012 Yarmouth County Coach of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize Robert Sweeney for his accomplishments in karate and his contributions to youth athletics in his community and congratulate him on being awarded 2012 Yarmouth County Coach of the Year at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards Banquet.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2134**

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

Whereas Bernie Burke of Albert Bridge recently received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Bernie Burke received this award for his lifelong devotion to his church, school, and community; and

Whereas Bernie is a faithful, loyal, and committed member of the support staff at Riverside Elementary School in Albert Bridge, and has never missed a day of work in 23 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bernie Burke on his award and thank him for all his dedication, especially to the children of Riverside Elementary School.

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. 2135**

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

Whereas the Ignite the Spirit Campaign was formed to raise the Truro community's portion of \$5 million to go toward the creation of the Central Nova Civic Centre in Truro; and

Whereas the Friends of David Gilroy Fund, as part of the Ignite the Spirit Campaign, was established in honour of Dave Gilroy, a past Town of Truro chief administrative officer who died in 2008 - a citizen who had a passion for sports and a strong desire to see Truro have a civic centre; and

Whereas donations to the Friends of David Gilroy Fund have resulted in the main atrium being named in memory of Dave Gilroy;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Truro community and everyone who contributed to the David Gilroy Fund and honour the memory of Dave Gilroy as a fine example of citizenship and the possibilities that can spring from philanthropy at the local level.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2136**

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

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and



Whereas Dony Deveau will be recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping preserve the security of our community; and

Whereas Dony Deveau will be recognized on November 24, 2012, by the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department for his 20 years of dedicated service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Dony Deveau for receiving the Fire Service Exemplary Service Medal for his 20 years of service to his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2137**

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

Whereas the Kitchener, Ontario man who lived the first year of his life in Florence, Cape Breton, returned to the community on bicycle with a mission to raise \$25,000 for cancer research and to support cancer patients in Ontario; and

Whereas Bob Baxter, a 52-year-old, self-employed engineer who took up cycling three years ago, can routinely bike 200 kilometres a day - he dipped his bike in the Pacific Ocean in 2011 and arrived in Florence this summer, where he dipped his bike in the waters of the back beach in Florence; and

Whereas he continued to Newfoundland and Labrador to dip his bike in the Atlantic at Cape Spear and reach his goal of \$25,000;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mr. Bob Baxter on his cross-country adventure for cancer research.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2138**

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

Whereas small businesses and entrepreneurs define the character of our communities and breathe life into our streetscapes; and

Whereas family-owned businesses, such as Lane's Privateer Inn in Liverpool, are components which truly make our communities unique; and

Whereas Lane's Privateer Inn has recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, contributing to the business community of Queens County since September 1962;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Lane's Privateer Inn for its 50 years of commitment and contributions to the business community of Queens County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2139**

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

Whereas the Premier has handed out over half a billion dollars in taxpayers' money to six companies, with no job guarantees and with no assurance that taxpayers will ever see this money again; and

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

Whereas after receiving over half a billion dollars in taxpayers' money, two of them shut down, one went bankrupt, two of them are on the brink of closure, and all six have laid off employees;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Kings North still supports the Premier, with the knowledge that the Premier cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations, and that the Premier must end his corporate handouts and begin working on growing the economy in communities across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2140**

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

Whereas on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, Knox Presbyterian Church in Ross Ferry celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; and

Whereas Knox Church is one of the oldest standing public buildings on Boularderie Island, having been built in 1886 by John Old, a master shipbuilder and carpenter from Big Bras d'Or; and

Whereas the anniversary service was conducted by Knox Minister Reverend Peter MacDonald, with special guest speaker Reverend Ritchie Robinson, a former minister of the Boularderie Charge;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Knox Presbyterian Church on its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and wish it many years of Christian witness in the area.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2141**

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

Whereas on November 19<sup>th</sup> the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry in Stellarton launched a unique exhibit, Gold: A Nova Scotia Treasure, to give Nova Scotians an opportunity to get to know the role that gold has played in our history and culture; and

Whereas the exhibit came together because of a strong partnership amongst several contributors including the Department of Natural Resources Minerals Branch, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Archives Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Museum, and the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry; and

Whereas the travelling exhibit will visit a number of venues throughout Nova Scotia until the end of 2014, thanks to the presenting sponsor Kinross Gold, and transportation sponsor DeMont's Transport;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly thank the contributors, sponsors and staff of the Museum of Industry and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia for their excellent work in preparing the exhibit, *Gold: A Nova Scotia Treasure*, and wish them great success as they share these little-known stories of our heritage and culture with visitors from across the province and around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2142**

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

Whereas the Bedford Brass Quintet, founded in 2011 features five accomplished musicians who perform renaissance classical, baroque, jazz, pop and rock music; and

Whereas the various members of this quintet - Matt Banks, Reuben Bauer, Lisa Booth, Eric Sproul and Paul St.-Amand - have played with Symphony Nova Scotia, the National Ballet Orchestra, the Stadacona Band, the Hamilton Philharmonic, Intrada Brass, the Chester Brass Band, and the Jubilee Swing Orchestra, among many more; and

Whereas in September, the Bedford Brass Quintet presented an evening of sacred music at Saint Ignatius Church in Bedford as a fundraiser for Chalice, a respected international aid and development agency headquartered here in Nova Scotia which works to alleviate poverty in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Haiti and Ukraine;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Bedford Brass Quintet for offering their talents to support a worthy cause.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2143**

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

Attendu que Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur est un ordre religieux qui a été au service du diocèse de Yarmouth depuis 1967; et

Attendu que Sœur Yvette Duguay et Sœur Stella Thibault sont deux des membres de l'ordre qui continuent à faire leur travail pastoral dans la communauté, en particulier dans la paroisse de Sainte-Agnès de Quinan; et

Attendu que Sœur Duguay a récemment fêté ses 50 ans de vie religieuse ainsi que Sœur Thibault a fêté 52 ans;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée remercient Sœur Yvette Duguay et Sœur Stella Thibault pour leur dévouement envers leur ordre de Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Cœur, et la paroisse qu'elles servent.

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

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

Whereas Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur is a religious order that has been serving the diocese of Yarmouth since 1967; and

Whereas Sister Yvette Duguay and Sister Stella Thibault are two members of the order who continue to do their pastoral work in the community, particularly in St. Agnes' parish in Quinan; and

Whereas Sister Duguay recently celebrated 50 years in the order and Sister Thibault celebrated 52 years in the order and they are both responsible for all aspects of pastoral duty in the parish;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sister Yvette Duguay and Sister Stella Thibault for their dedication and devotion to the Order of the Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur, the diocese and parishioners who serve them and wish them continued good 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 member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: With your permission, I would like to do an introduction. In the east gallery we have a good friend of mine, Bill Swan, who was my former riding association president that used to live in Hammonds Plains but now lives in the constituency of Timberlea-Prospect. I'd ask the House to give him a warm welcome, please. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2144**

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 2012 celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada, while also serving to honour significant contributions and achievements by Canadians; and

Whereas medal recipients are recognized for their service and dedication to our community and our country in their respective fields; and

Whereas on October 27, 2012, Mr. Ron Seney of New Germany was presented with the Diamond Jubilee Medal;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the contributions of Mr. Ron Seney of New Germany to his community and to his country, and congratulate him on receiving this recognition.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2145**

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

Whereas the Centre for Women in Business held a gala dinner for their many supporters throughout the community on November 5, 2012, to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the centre; and

Whereas the centre has assisted, advised and guided more than 10,000 Atlantic Canadian business women over the last 20 years, helping them to develop the necessary plans and skills to launch and sustain their businesses; and

Whereas the centre is the only women-focused university business development centre in Canada and its success has been built on a strong partnership between Mount Saint Vincent University and ACOA;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Centre for Women in Business and executive director Tanya Priske on achieving this



significant milestone of 20 years of education and support for women entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2146**

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

Whereas Emma Archibald of Bedford was, in May 2012, accepted to the prestigious St. Andrews University in Scotland, a school that accepts fewer than 10 per cent of applicants; and

Whereas Emma Archibald also won the esteemed McEuen Foundation Scholarship to the school, an award that covers four years of tuition and accommodation, and is available to only one Canadian student per year; and

Whereas having won this scholarship, Emma Archibald ranks among the best on an international academic scale, and upon graduation will join Prince William and the Duchess of Cornwall, among many others, as an alumnus of St. Andrews University;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emma Archibald on her academic achievements, so exceptional thus far as to have earned her a place in the international spotlight.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2147**

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

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

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

Whereas this NDP Government agreed to hand over \$590 million to six corporations, only to watch them lay off 1,310 Nova Scotians, \$225 million of that went to Bowater and Port Hawkesbury Paper, companies that slashed wages, rolled back benefits, and left pensioners in the cold;

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

MR. SPEAKER: The notice is tabled.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 12:55 p.m. and end at 1:55 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **PREM.: IBM DEAL - TRANSPARENCY**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister refuses to release the IBM contract when asked. The NDP once said government deals with big business must be tabled and debated in this House so that Nova Scotians could see how their tax dollars are being used. On November 16, 2006, the Premier said:

“Mr. Speaker, this is a plan to centralize and then outsource important government functions without any discussion on the plan. These kinds of decisions should be discussed publicly, given careful consideration before they are approved, yet the government has not reported this plan in any public document. The people who will pay the price are being kept in the dark.”

Mr. Speaker, it is this Premier who is now keeping the people who will pay for the big deal with IBM in the dark. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier - a man who once stood for openness and transparency - now hiding his deal from the view and scrutiny of the people of this province?

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, well in fact we signed - along with the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at the time, I believe - a public service protection agreement that lays out, very clearly, four or five steps that have to be met when these kinds of things take place. Indeed, we thoroughly engaged in that process, ensured that particularly the employees understood what the ramifications were.

Of course the contractual arrangements are part of the negotiation that takes place with the department and there are commercial aspects to that. So, far from not being prepared to release it, we are simply insisting that the Freedom of Information Office, which is the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office, actually has an opportunity to do their job.

MR. MCNEIL: It's interesting how the minister hides behind the Privacy Review Officer in the Province of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, when they wouldn't even show the deal to the Privacy Review Officer before they started.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier once stood in this House and demanded openness and transparency on behalf of Nova Scotians. This Premier also once stood with the middle class instead of with big business. On April 30, 2002, the Premier said:

“ . . . whenever I mention the kind of corporate welfare that they engage in, it causes a great deal of nattering among them. You know, oh no, they shouldn't be saying that; people are going to get upset. Our constituents are going to get mad at us; here we go again. Well, it's true; that's what they're doing. They're taking money out of the pockets of middle-class taxpayers, the poor, and people on minimum wage, and who are they giving it to? They're giving it to the wealthy.”

Mr. Speaker, this government just signed a \$100 million deal with IBM, the ninth largest corporation in the world. IBM is worth \$213.7 billion, with \$106.9 billion in revenue last year. My question to the Premier is, why is the government more concerned

about the protection and reputation of the ninth largest corporation in the world than the government is about being open and transparent with Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this does exactly the opposite. That quote that he just read - this one actually does exactly the opposite. This is a payroll rebate, which means that the onus is on IBM to actually create the jobs and then retrospectively, audited in arrears, the government looks at the tax that has already been paid, nets out some back to IBM, and then takes the balance of that money and provides the services they need to the middle class, to the poor, to seniors.

This is, in fact, about making money and putting it in the hands of people who need it and giving them the services they require.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier read the deal before he signed it. What he did, actually, was give an untendered, sole-source contract to IBM for \$84 million before he decided to add to them and give them \$12.4 million in payroll rebates. To add further insult to the people of this province, he has given IBM access to preferential treatment when it comes to future outsourcing of this government.

This government sides with big business over the middle class. The government is choosing corporate welfare over developing a sound economic vision. The people who voted for the NDP and all Nova Scotians were truly disappointed with this government. They are disappointed because the NDP once stood against these deals.

On November 4, 1999, the Deputy Premier said, "Where is the economic vision?" He criticized a government deal with Scotiabank, a company four times smaller than IBM saying, "We were just here a few weeks ago and the Minister of Economic Development went on and said we had this glorious announcement to make. We are going to give money to Scotiabank. This poor company, just barely scraping by, we have got to give them money to help them attract business to this province."

IBM, Daewoo, Irving, the biggest of the big - we have yet to see the contracts from any of these deals. This government is hiding and the government does not want Nova Scotians to know the truth. My question to the Premier is, why is the government afraid to show Nova Scotians the contracts they are signing with big business?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, on the day that we announced the support to ensure that Irving Shipyard was able to win the largest industrial contract in our history, we actually released all of the information with respect to that agreement; he disagrees. The Leader of the Official Opposition criticizes all of these things, but he never says what he would do or what he wouldn't do, because of course past Liberal Governments created the rebate program, past Liberal Governments invested in companies like Dynatech that went bankrupt, like Orenda Recip, another one that went bankrupt. We remember these.

The simple fact of the matter is this is a government that is engaged in economic development activities that are creating thousands of jobs. Do you know something? The Liberal Party hates that - they hate that because they are job killers.

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

### **NDP - EMERA: INTERESTS - ALIGNMENT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, as we all know by now Nova Scotia Power is asking for a 6 per cent increase in our power rates over the next two years. What we just found out recently, however, is that last week the chief financial officer of their parent company, Emera, told a Toronto audience that they traded a quarter point on their guaranteed profit in order to get a two-year increase prior to the next provincial election - and I will table that for the benefit of the House.

My question to the Premier is, why are the interests of Emera so closely aligned with those of the NDP?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think they'd see it that way given the legislation that is right now before the House, in which we set the table for ensuring fair power rates for the province.

What I will say though is this - as I understand it the general rate application that was before the board was signed on to by the small business advocate, by the consumer advocate, and by any number of parties, one of which was not the Government of Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that trade-off happened as part of a backroom deal that we opposed at the URB. I didn't see the NDP representative there to stand up for Nova Scotians who are not being well served by these backroom deals at the time. The chief financial officer for Emera says that the agreement that the Premier is describing results in a healthy increase in actual power rates. As we know, under the Premier's watch, power rates have gone up by 25 per cent. I will ask the Premier, why does the Premier allow these backroom deals to happen when they so clearly are not working for Nova Scotia families?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't assess whether they are working or don't work, they are before the Utility and Review Board, which approves or doesn't approve the agreements as they come forward. The reason why we fund a consumer advocate, for example, in particular, is to make sure that the interests of consumers are actually protected. When they sign these agreements, my assumption is, and I think the assumption broadly would be, that he signs on to them because he believes that they result in the best position for consumers vis-à-vis the power company.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Emera chief financial officer says that getting a two-year deal was important to them because elections are “distracting.” That is an insult to every member of this House and to every voting Nova Scotian - who, by the way, are also the customers of the power company.

Believing that elections are a distraction and they need to do a trade-off behind closed doors taints the entire backroom deal settlement process. So I will ask the Premier, will he order that the URB set aside this tainted deal and freeze power rates in their tracks right now?

THE PREMIER: I’m not sure, did he just say “taints the backroom deal”? Was that what I heard him say? (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, look, I’ll tell you something. First of all, there are a number of things. One is that there is a bill currently before the House that forces Emera to have multi-year deals, and I think those are a good thing. They should have multi-year applications so that people have a reasonable idea of what their position is going to look like over the years to come. That’s the first thing.

The second thing is, I read the comments of the CFO, and I have to say that I thought they were extraordinarily insensitive. They do not represent - especially for a company that when they are applying the decisions that they get from the Utility and Review Board, they affect the everyday lives of people in the province. To talk about increases being healthy or distractions - I mean, I think it is. I think in that much he’s absolutely right. It’s insulting and extraordinarily insensitive, but if you want to deal with that, then you have to talk to Nova Scotia Power. It’s not something that the government approves of. Unfortunately, they are a private company. They are a private company they created, so we have to deal with it on that basis.

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

**PREM. - PROJEX DEAL: CONSULTATION - LACK EXPLAIN**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier decided to lash out at the Opposition Parties. He didn’t like the way we questioned his deal with PROJEX, a deal that gives Nova Scotia tax dollars to an Albertan company to compete with Nova Scotia businesses. The engineering sector was not consulted with before the government made this decision or announcement.

My question to the Premier is, why didn’t the government consult with the major business stakeholders before making this deal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don’t know where the Leader of the Official Opposition gets his information, but I can’t think of a group that were in to see us more

times than the Consulting Engineers. The simple fact (Interruption) Yes, that's exactly right. We consulted the Consulting Engineers. They consulted us.

Mr. Speaker, I've got to say, this is about 440 jobs - jobs that will go to young people in this province, that will strengthen the labour pool, that will increase - the payroll alone on this will be about \$40 million or \$50 million a year. This is good for the engineers. It's good for young people. It keeps them here, and in fact, it brings people home from Alberta who otherwise would be doing the work there.

MR. MCNEIL: The Premier can make light of the concerns by the Consulting Engineers of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, but I think they at least deserve the respect of the members of this House for the work that they've been doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians - I want to remind the Premier - by growing their industry during the worst recession, at the same time his government has been failing to grow the economy of Nova Scotia.

The NDP blasted the Progressive Conservative Government of the day for using tax dollars to subsidize out-of-province competition against Nova Scotia companies. I think they might want to pay attention to this. On May 6, 2008, the Premier said, "When the Premier was first elected in 1999, his government promised it would never use public money to back enterprises that would compete with our existing private sector businesses." He continued and asked, "Orion has been blindsided by the announcement so I ask you, why did you not consult with a major business stakeholder before you made the Gateway announcement?"

So my question to the Premier is, why did the Premier demand that past governments perform such consultations while it is clear this government failed to do so?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, maybe he didn't hear the answer, but the reality is that the Consulting Engineers were in to talk to us about their concerns and we weighed them. The simple fact of the matter is we're talking about 440 well-paying jobs for Nova Scotians. There are advertisements up in the airports in Calgary and Fort McMurray, bringing home young people - who we have shipped off to Alberta for years - so that they can come home, start their families, raise their kids and be part of the economy of Nova Scotia.

The Leader of the Official Opposition complains about that but he has no answer, except to say you should just kill these jobs.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that sounds like the speech the Premier gave when he was talking about DSTN - remember the 500 jobs that were going to appear in Pictou County and the hundreds of Nova Scotians who were going to be summoned home for those jobs? Well his rhetoric is falling on deaf ears because Nova Scotians don't believe it anymore.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has wrongly insisted that the PROJEX deal is not subsidized competition. He needs to consult no further than his Party's past before making such outlandish statements. On November 7, 2006, the former NDP member for Dartmouth East said:

“Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Last September NSBI - Nova Scotia Business Inc. - announced payroll rebates for Crape Geomatics, an Alberta-based firm, to establish in Nova Scotia and hire 75 geomatics technicians. The announcement came as a complete shock to local companies, and they are still feeling the impact. Locally-owned firms have lost personnel to Crape Geomatics and their government-subsidized salaries. My question to the minister is, I'd like to ask you, why did NSBI not consult with the local geomatics sector before making this investment decision?”

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In 2006, payroll rebates to an Albertan company counted as government-subsidized competition, but today they don't. What has changed?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know one thing for sure, probably the most disappointed person in the province when DSTN landed their new contract was probably the Leader of the Official Opposition. They are opposed to success in Pictou County, they are opposed to any job. They wouldn't put any money into Port Hawkesbury, they would have allowed 1,000 jobs to go out the window there. They wouldn't put any money into DSTN, they would let the jobs there go out of the province. They won't put any money into PROJEX, they'd let them stay in Alberta. They criticize IBM.

You have to kind of wonder, what in the name of God would the Leader of the Official Opposition actually do besides criticize?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

#### **PREM.: IBM DEAL - TABLE**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the untendered deal signed by this government with IBM to take over the government's SAP computer system has Nova Scotians asking whether it's a good deal for taxpayers and whether their private information will be protected.

The NDP have never been a fan of outsourcing government IT work. On November 16, 2006, the former Finance Minister and member for Halifax Fairview said, while in Opposition:



“You would think the government would have learned its lesson about outsourcing the information technology function. The eMerge project has been, quite simply, a budgetary disaster, but the government can still not guarantee that this runaway train, which started with an unsolicited private sector proposal and which was continued without a public tender, won’t need more public money. Now, apparently, it’s too late for the government to back out.”

My question is, why won’t the Premier table the untendered deal signed with IBM so Nova Scotians can decide whether the NDP Government is making the same mistakes they criticized the Progressive Conservative Government for making in 2006?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it was kind of a mishmash of stuff so I’ll answer some of it and he can decide whether or not it answers his question. The simple fact of the matter is that the arrangement with IBM actually retains all of the government information on the government server, so that the protections for them are the same.

In terms of the operations, the standards associated with the operations for that equipment are either the same as were in place before, or were greater, Mr. Speaker, to protect privacy and to ensure that people have their information properly protected.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this Premier’s secrecy around these big deals could easily lead one to believe that his past statements while in Opposition about the importance of openness and transparency in government contracts were disingenuous at best. We know neither the Premier nor anyone in his government consulted with the government’s privacy officer - now we know why. Instead they paid Barrington Consulting Group \$34,000 for a report which they refuse to show us and we’re now left to ask whether the tender for Barrington Consulting Group was ever put out to tender or whether that was sole-sourced as well.

Mr. Speaker, it’s not just the Opposition who has concerns with this government’s action, now Mr. Darce Fardy, the former privacy officer in Nova Scotia, is speaking out against this government’s secrecy. Darce Fardy commented on the IBM deal and said: “There can be no good reason” for the Premier’s instance on hiding the IBM contract. He added: “It’s not unreasonable to suspect that the requirement for a formal application” - through freedom of information - “is a stalling tactic,” by the Premier and his government.

My question to the Premier is, why does the Premier continue to hide from Nova Scotians the untendered deal he signed with IBM that will cost Nova Scotia taxpayers over \$100 million?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I’d just point out first of all its cost-neutral to us; it doesn’t cost us any additional money. In fact, that was the very structure of the agreement. The contractual arrangement that has been made is a contract that, I think, exceeds 800

pages. It is being reviewed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy officers, they need time to be able to do that and that's a perfectly understandable, reasonable, and accountable way to do business.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that sounds a bit like the responses that we would have heard from the former Progressive Conservative Government, and the reaction from the NDP while in Opposition was that they actually took the government to court over freedom of information. In fact, the Premier's own director of communications, his chief of staff, brought legal action in Nova Scotia about the previous Progressive Conservative Government's refusal to disclose information in their freedom of information. Ironically, I should point out that their lawyer, their representative in that case, was none other than the member for Halifax Fairview, in fighting for openness in government.

Apparently that was then, this is now. The Premier stands in his place and tells us it's a great deal, yet as Opposition and Nova Scotians we have absolutely no means of judging the merit of his statements - and his secrecy, he knows, is causing that.

Mr. Speaker, in a case heard in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia in 1997, Justice William Kelly described as the basic purpose of our Freedom of Information Act is "to ensure the public has the information necessary to make an informed assessment of the performance of its government institutions."

Mr. Speaker, in light of that need for openness, if the Premier truly believes this is a great deal for Nova Scotian taxpayers, what are you hiding?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member for Richmond actually mischaracterizes almost every part of that. That was a decision that was associated with a post-Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy decision. So they went through the process and then denied the contract. All we are asking for, and I believe this perfectly reasonable, is to ensure that we respect the commercial nature of an agreement between a government and a company.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Office has the authority, has the oversight and responsibility - they would have us take away that responsibility and just throw it out the window, I suppose, but they have that responsibility and we're simply asking them to exercise that responsibility. When they come back, they'll make a decision on which - or perhaps all of it will be released, and we'll respect that decision.

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

**PREM. - POLICIES: POWER RATE INCREASES - EFFECTS**

HON JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on May 8<sup>th</sup> under questioning in this House, the Minister of Energy admitted that, “About 1 to 2 per cent is the cost of renewables on our electricity bill.” Apparently he thinks that is a reasonable thing to ask of Nova Scotians even though no one asked them. In fact, we know Nova Scotians have made it clear they cannot afford to pay more on their electricity bills, so my question to the Premier is, does the Premier agree with his Minister of Energy that his policies are in fact driving up our power rates?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, if you look back, it is actually the cost of fossil fuels that drove them up. So, every time we look at a general rate application we have to look at it in comparison with what the alternative would be. The alternative would be to continue to tie ourselves to fossil fuels that are erratic and would increase at perhaps a much faster rate than renewables would.

This is part of the renewable electricity plan; it has been vetted by experts in the area. It’s also just a very common sense thing, whatever decision you make is an alternative to what other decision that you might make.

I would ask one more thing before the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party gets back on his feet. When he stands up to ask his next question, perhaps he would tell which community’s renewable contract in Nova Scotia he would cancel. Which project would not go ahead if he had his way?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, every time that Nova Scotians look at an NDP pre-election promise from now on, they will have to look at what the alternative will be. The alternative is what the NDP actually do when they get into office. That’s what we’ve learned when it comes to our power rates.

Under the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act in 2007, this House, under unanimous agreement, set some important environmental goals and some important economic goals like growing our provincial economy at the rate of the national average or better each year - something the NDP has failed to accomplish every year that they’ve been in office. One of the reasons is the 25 per cent increase in our power rates. The president of Nova Scotia Power said at the URB just last month, “. . . we’ve been consistently reporting that the impact of the renewables program overall on a levelized basis is an increase in power rates of 1 to 2 percent per year over the timeframe of the program.”

Will the Premier help struggling Nova Scotians by instructing Nova Scotia Power to build as much renewable energy as they can within the current rates?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, power rates have been driven up, but they haven't been driven up by renewables. They've been driven up by the fact that we have been handcuffed to the international fossil fuel markets. Every time, when the cost of coal went up by 75 per cent, that was directly reflected in the cost of energy to consumers in this province. That is what drove up power rates in Nova Scotia - it is renewables that are going to stabilize them

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we have seen exactly what "stabilize" means under the NDP, stabilize means up 25 per cent and that is exactly the problem. Soon the URB will make a decision on the most recent additional 6 per cent that Nova Scotia Power is asking of all of us. They will make that decision on the basis of the NDP electricity plan, which the Premier's own Minister of Energy says adds 1 to 2 per cent of that 3 per cent every year for the life of the program onto the power bills of Nova Scotians.

So, right now the Premier has an opportunity to actually give Nova Scotians real power rate relief. I ask the Premier, will he freeze rates today by rewriting his electricity plan before the URB makes its decision?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps he just ignores this, but the cost of power went up because of decisions that were made by former Progressive Conservative and Liberal Governments. When they had Nova Scotia Power they built generating capacity, they built it on the basis of coal-fired generating. When the price of coal went up, that drove up the cost of energy to consumers.

Those were decisions that were made and at the time, why were they made? They were made because coal was a cheap fuel at the time. I'm sure that governments of the day believed that that was the right decision to make. The result was that they tied themselves to the international fossil fuel market and when it goes haywire all of us pay the price. That is the result of the policy that was put in place. We put in place a policy that has a fully-hedged portfolio of energy so that we can use some coal, we can use natural gas, we can use hydro, we can use wind, and as the various commodities change in price, we can ramp up one and ramp down the other and that provides rate stability.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

#### **PREM. - TRADE MISSION: AIRFARE - DETAILS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier. I'd like to give the Premier the opportunity to clarify some of the statements he made the other day in Question Period, when he was asked about his travel habits. The Premier - I will assume that he misspoke and I would like to give him that opportunity to correct himself.

On two trips totalling more than \$15,000, when the Premier was asked why he flew in executive class he said, "It's simply the ability to be able to sleep. That is the major

difference you get in that class of service.” Unfortunately, according to the Premier’s own calendar and according to his statements even to the media at the time - and I certainly don’t mind tabling that - he was scheduled to take the next day off when he came back from China so that he could sleep. I’m sure the movie was very good on that flight back, but if (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, this was the reason that the Premier gave to this House the other day. The quote was just right and we tabled that. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. That is unparliamentary. I would ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark, please. (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER: Get up on the record like the rest of us

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: I withdraw the remark.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East has the floor. Question, please.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. YOUNGER: I was . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. YOUNGER: I’m asking the question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. YOUNGER: Yes, the question is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Or I’ll move to the next one.

MR. YOUNGER: No, I’m asking . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Go ahead, ask it.

MR. YOUNGER: Why weren't you available to the media upon your return if, according to your staff, you had to sleep?

THE PREMIER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, to this House, I said no such thing, just to be clear. Secondly, as the chairman of the Council of the Federation, I work on behalf of not only the people of this province, but, of course, the people of the country. I led a delegation of all of the Premiers in order to be able to advance the trade interests of our country.

One of the things about the question that is being asked by the member is that he can ask that question because I table my expenses and he can see them. He can see them, he can go and have a look at them, they are tabled down in the Howe Room. He can see them and he can ask the question and people can decide whether or not these are reasonable things. Does he agree that that is appropriate for a public official?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my expenses are on-line every month. It's a simple question. I tabled the remarks by the Premier where he suggested the reason he chose to fly executive class - and that's his choice - was because he needed to sleep, and fine. But the question is - his own calendar and his own staff wouldn't make him available the next day. This is a Premier who asked people to accept a \$65 million cut in education, \$100 million cut from universities, a 2 per cent increase in the HST. He asked others to take sacrifices that he wouldn't take. Why didn't the Premier believe that he should take a sacrifice, just like other Premiers did, and fly economy while he was asking others to accept cuts?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, all the numbers that he quoted are wrong. That's the first thing, but that's not unusual. Secondly, the work that I do on behalf of the people of the province is important; it is not to be belittled or demeaned. Of course, we have many calls upon our time when we come back from trips, whether or not we're available to the press. Especially after we've been away, there is lots and lots of work to be done.

As I'm sure the member understands, this is not an eight-hour-a-day, five-day-a-week job. The work that we do - in fact, all the members of the government are on call constantly. That's just a fact of the life we chose, but I want to come back to this because he does get to ask these questions. He does because the Leader, the Premier of the province, has to be in a position to make sure that there is complete scrutiny of their expenses. They file them.

In fact, they put them in a binder right down by the press so that the press can have the opportunity to actually look through them and ensure that - there's nothing that he said, or nothing that he tabled in this House, that wouldn't have been available to the press. It is

from the day that it is filed. So does he agree that for a public official that is an appropriate way for a disclosure?

MR. YOUNGER: You know, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier is in Opposition after the next election, he'll get to ask all the questions he wants, but the Premier is not answering the questions he's being asked. What I do believe is that it's appropriate for a public official to actually answer the questions they're asked. The Premier has refused to do that this entire session on any issues.

It's really quite simple. This is a Party that complained about the coffee being used in the Department of Education when they were in Opposition, and now they're worried (Interruptions) It's unbelievable that the Premier would then criticize such a legitimate question.

My question for the Premier is - obviously, as the Premier said, there's lots of business to do. The other day I spoke and I said that many of these trade missions are important. The Premier also tends to travel with people, as we would expect the Premier to do. Will the Premier table in this House a list of all the staff who travelled with him - departmental or Premier's staff who travelled with him - and what class they flew in for these two trips?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that information is available through the various avenues, not the least of which is Public Accounts, that the member has. I point out the fact that we make sure that we provide all this information from my office for the reasons of transparency and so that these questions can be asked. I did that not just when I became Premier but for many years as Leader of the Opposition, so that even as Leader of the Opposition, people could see what it is that we spent on travel.

Mr. Speaker, before the member for Dartmouth East stands up again, maybe he might just lean forward and whisper in the ear of the Leader of the Opposition and see if maybe he will file some of his expenses, seeing how he hasn't filed a single, solitary one since the day he became the Leader of the Opposition.

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

**PREM. - N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN: COMMISSION - FORM**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has resisted calls for a public process to facilitate healing and uncover what happened at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: When I rule, I rule in the Chamber, the same as any other Speaker before me. (Interruption) Yes, and I'll rule on it. (Interruptions) I'll rule on it when the time

comes. My ruling is final. (Interruptions) Like any other Speaker before me in the House here, the Speaker's ruling is final. Am I right? Thank you.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes has the floor.

MR. BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, let me begin again. The Minister of Justice has resisted calls for a public process to facilitate healing and uncover what happened at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. The Premier continues to hide behind the ongoing court case. The Minister of Justice ignored Professor Wayne MacKay's expertise on the issue when he said that a public inquiry would serve a useful purpose. He pointed out that the law is pretty clear that you can have the two run in a parallel fashion.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has nothing left to hide behind, so my question through you to the Premier is, with the legal obstacles eliminated, will he finally agree to form a commission to develop a public forum for the former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if the member has a suggestion, I would be pleased to receive it. In fact, what I have said is exactly the same thing that the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children and the board of directors have already said; they said they were prepared to have an inquiry take place as long as it did not interfere with the investigation taking place of the criminal charges into the allegations made against certain staff at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, and as long as it did not affect the disposition of the class action suit that is currently before the courts.

I understand that it is before the courts for the purposes of certification at this point but it will go forward as full-blown litigation. What I have said is that any additional process would have to be appropriate, giving weight to those things that are also of concern to the board directors.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, if the member has a suggestion, if he has something that he thinks is useful for the government to consider, I would be happy to have him tender it.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, no one can call the inquiry but the Premier and the government itself. The commission can make a determination as to what is brought before the inquiry interferes with the legal cases before the courts. They can be the ones to decide but in order for an inquiry to take place it's up to the government to call that inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, not only have the experts weighed in and swept aside the government's excuse regarding the legal proceedings, the home itself, as the Premier has mentioned, is in support of a public forum. The Home for Colored Children issued a release yesterday indicating their support. It read, ". . . we have no objection if the Nova Scotia government decides to hold a public inquiry into these serious allegations . . ." so long as it didn't slow the criminal proceedings.



The Premier has not shown any inclination that he wishes to move the court proceedings along, so again, nothing stands in his way. The former residents themselves have waited so long. They have endured pain and suffering as a result of the abuse, for years and years. They simply want to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is, with the support of the Home, will the Premier stop stalling on this decision and allow former residents their voice?

THE PREMIER: I realize the member was a little bit stumped when he actually got the answer the first time I stood up, which was that the inquiries take all kinds of different shapes and sizes. They include all kinds of things, they exclude all kinds of things. The question is always, what is an appropriate response?

Now, Mr. Speaker, it should be obvious, from the things we have seen and reported in the press, that this involves a great number of people who are in pain. It also involves a well-respected institution in a community that has had the broad support of that community for many, many years. They state in their press release that they have this concern, that they would support a method of inquiry so long as it not interfere with the ongoing investigation into the allegations and so long as it did not affect the disposition of the class action suit that is before the courts.

Now those are two very important considerations, so if there is to be some kind of a mechanism, some kind of appropriate response to this, then it needs to take into account those facts. I simply ask the member if he is calling on us to do something. I'm not sure that he knows what he's calling on us to do but if he has some form of inquiry, if he has some terms of reference, if he has some advice about what that would look like, I would just ask him to tender it, and of course we're prepared to look at it.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is looking for some advice, here's some. The Premier could help the former residents in their healing process by developing a commission to look into the possibility of a public forum. It would become the commission's decision whether or not the forum would in any way impact the court proceedings. He wouldn't have to micromanage the commission in the same manner that he micromanages his backbenchers and his Cabinet. My final question to the Premier is, with nothing standing in his way and nothing to hide behind, will the Premier finally take action and tell the former residents they don't need to wait any longer?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that the one thing that is paramount in this discussion, which I think is necessary for all of us to understand, is that the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children in that community represented an iconic institution that provided assistance, help and guidance to many people. It may turn out, given what we have now seen, the allegations that were made, that there were some people

who were abusive in some form. Obviously that would be a tragedy for the individuals and for the home.

What we want to do is to be sensitive to all of the interests that are at play here. There are individuals who were staff members - whose families are still in that community - who would have passed away and the question of impinging on their reputation is an important one. The question of getting to the responsibility for the decisions that were made - we have no interest in thwarting a desire by our community. After all, it was not our administration, these were former Progressive Conservative and Liberal Administrations that made decisions years ago. If the governments of those days were not fulfilling their responsibilities then that is a legitimate question but the forum that takes is important.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS - COL. REG. HOSP. OPENING: BEDS - NUMBER**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, early last month the Colchester Regional Hospital was significantly challenged when all 102 beds in the facility were full. Delayed admissions, backed up emergency care, stretchers in the hallway and the cancellation of surgeries were the result of this early October bed shortage. Patient flow came to a standstill. This week the Colchester Regional Hospital is transferring to its new location, a new 124-bed replacement facility; however, we've been told that the new facility will open with 98 beds despite the fact it has greater capacity. Could the Premier please tell us how a hospital that had experienced significant challenges operating at 102 beds will be able to function at its new location with four fewer beds?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is a state-of-the-art facility but for a fuller answer on that, I'll refer it to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no question we're always concerned with ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to the health care service they need, especially when they enter into a hospital. I have full confidence with the large investment made in this new hospital that they will be able to service the people that utilize the services within that hospital as we move forward and as they transition to the new facility.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure the residents of Colchester and East Hants will be pleased with that entirely. According to an update to the community produced in August 2012 - and I'll table that - a complete outline of the number of beds totalling 98 was produced. The update reported that unit managers, physicians, and team members were working hard to plan for the bed configuration by looking at factors such as bed flow, available staffing resources, patient demographics, and approved funding from the Department of Health and Wellness. Could the Premier please tell us whether it was bed flow, available staffing resources, patient demographics or approved funding from the

department that resulted in a 102-bed facility becoming a 98-bed facility? Which factor is it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is a state-of-the-art facility; it has, in fact, more capacity. They will be able to, as I understand it, expand or contract in order to meet the need that is there for them. I don't know if the member has actually had the opportunity to go to the hospital to see it, but it is a remarkable institution. It is all designed to create better service to the patients of that region who have an opportunity to use it. I can tell you it was with immense pride that the population served by it came for the grand opening back a few weeks ago. It was with great pride they recognized not only the accomplishment of the government in investing in this facility, but also the investment made by the community, ensuring that they had a facility which will obviously serve them for many decades to come.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, 17 of the 98 beds at the new facility will be designated as alternate-level-of-care beds, beds dedicated to those awaiting placement in a long-term care facility. Less than one month ago there were 35 of the 102 beds occupied by ALC patients, which we know contributed to the chaos as a result of government's inaction when it comes to long-term care and continuing care. You don't have to be a mathematician to see that this just won't work. Given that the Premier and this government are not willing to fund more than 98 beds at the new facility, could he please indicate whether consideration was given to maintaining staff at the old Colchester hospital for the purpose of providing an alternative-level-of-care setting until such time as placements can be made in the community?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, since we've come to power we have, in fact, increased the number of long-term care beds by a factor of 1,000. We have replaced 900 beds in the communities around the province. This year alone we have put an additional \$22 million into home care service, in order to allow people to stay in their own homes. This is a commitment to the services that seniors require that, I believe, is unprecedented. But this is no question; there is a huge demographic push that is taking place in our communities. We are going to be at a point where we have more than 25 per cent of our population over the age of 65 by 2022 and that pushes up through each one of the demographics. It is going to be a challenge over the next number of years as we balance the need for balanced budgets, for lower taxes, and for greater services. This is the balance that the government is charged with the responsibility of making.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: LONG-TERM CARE - WAIT LIST**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thought maybe we could pick up where that one left off. The Minister of Health and Wellness is well aware of the plight of seniors in this province. While in Opposition he was very critical of the progress

of the Continuing Care Strategy and wanted to ensure that every bed was approved and open. His government since then has halted progress on the Continuing Care Strategy; the wait-list for long-term care is the highest that it has ever been. Today there are 2,228 seniors waiting for the minister's aid. He has left 371 seniors waiting in valuable hospital beds, which is impacting health care services across this province. My question to the minister is, will the minister explain today how and when he took his place as Minister of Health and Wellness, how did he forget about more than 2,228 seniors waiting for a safe place to call home?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite couldn't be more wrong in some of the figures he brought forward in his first question. No question, when we took over government we were (1) left with a financial mess, but (2) recognized that seniors, especially seniors in our province, needed to have options when it comes to long-term care and home care, something that they ignored for many years.

The reason we're in the mess we're in now, Mr. Speaker, is because governments ignored the fact that we needed to build and refurbish and renovate long-term care facilities. Today we're along the route to ensuring that Nova Scotians have options - not only for long-term care facilities but one of the most important options, and that's the option of staying home as long as they can.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: On November 9, 2006, while in Opposition, the member for Sackville-Cobequid painted a vivid picture of the seniors waiting for long-term care. He was a pretty good member back then. Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, at the time there were 1,035 fewer people waiting than there are today.

The member said, and I'll table that Hansard, "While this government plays political games with the nursing home beds, seniors in our communities across this province are waiting. They're waiting in hospital beds. They're waiting in transitional units. They're waiting in their homes for months and months."

When it comes to playing political games with the lives of seniors, nobody does it any better than this government. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the same question that the minister asked back in 2006, how much longer is his government going to make seniors in our province wait for the care they badly need?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I was right back then when I said they played political games when it came to long-term care facilities. I'm very proud of the fact that this government, when we took over, opened Collaborative Emergency Centres in Opposition ridings, something that I don't think we would have seen under a former Progressive Conservative Government. I'm very proud to ensure that we're addressing the issues in health care where and when they need it. It doesn't matter what riding they are from. We're going to continue to work to ensure that we not only replace long-term care facilities but ensure that seniors have options.

Their first option - if you ask any senior, they would rather be in their homes. That's why we invested an additional \$22 million this year for home care services and home care support. That's why we're giving more options for seniors, because yesterday I announced that we're going to roll out the Home Again program - a very successful program that was here in Capital Health - across the province. It's an intensive program to get people out of the hospital and into their homes, so they have support from home care services. That's what we're doing over on this side - something that they should have done when they were in government for 10 long years.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that answer, because it really underlines the issue of offering options to Nova Scotian seniors. The truth here is that the minister is ignoring those who need nursing home beds and insisting that home care is a one-size-fits-all solution, when we know full well that home care doesn't fit all situations, as they continue to try to say in this House.

We want to give every senior who is able to stay in their home the ability to do that. Of course we do, Mr. Speaker. However, the fact is that the Department of Health and Wellness has assessed more than 2,000 seniors as needing more service than that - over 2,000 seniors. To then say that home care is the answer for everyone is irresponsible. The minister is going against the professional assessments of his own continuing care coordinators. They have assessed those individuals to go to long-term care, and of course, they're waiting for that today.

We believe seniors deserve more than this government is willing to provide. My question to the minister is, will the minister admit to Nova Scotians that he stopped standing up for Nova Scotia seniors?

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period the Premier somehow suggested that I had not been filing my expenses. I want to be very clear with all members of this House that not only have I filed my expenses at any media outlet, some have come to my office and I have showed them my expenses.

I also want to remind all members of this House that the Auditor General reviewed my expenses and nowhere did he find a \$2,000 camera, two laptops worth \$5,000, or an expenditure for \$10,000. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader. (Interruption)

HON. FRANK CORBETT: If you review Hansard, Mr. Speaker, which I expect you will, that you will find that the question was his Leader's expenses, and if there is an issue with them he can table his Leader's expenses since his time being Leader of that Party today in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. It's not a point of order, it's a disagreement on facts between two members.

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 136.

#### **Bill No. 136 - Green Economy Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move that Bill No. 136, the Green Economy Act, now be read for a second time.

This legislation makes amendments to the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, or EGSPA, that will renew and allow us to continue working on its goals and that the changes reflect the recommendations of the Minister's Round Table on the Environment and Sustainable Prosperity, which is a volunteer committee legislated to conduct a review of the Act every five years. I want to thank the round table and our members for their hard work and their thoughtful recommendations to the government.

Mr. Speaker, we have much to be proud of. It is our achievements of EGSPA - so far 14 out of the 21 goals have been met and we work to continue on meeting the remaining targets that have deadlines between 2015 and 2020. During the round table's consultation Nova Scotians clearly told us that they want their environment protected for generations to come; they want to know that the growing of our economy doesn't come at the expense of our environment; and we also heard from some municipalities that told us that they are having a difficult time upgrading their equipment to meet the water and wastewater targets.

I am pleased to report that 86 per cent of the municipalities are meeting the drinking water standards and 91 per cent of the municipalities in our province are treating their wastewater. We also recognize that remaining municipalities need more time to make the changes needed to meet the standards. That is why we have moved the target date for drinking water standards and wastewater treatment to 2020, and we continue to lobby the federal government to provide funding to municipalities so that they can invest in the infrastructure needed to meet the standards.

One of the key recommendations by the round table is to make the connection between an environment and the economy even stronger in the Act, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we have added two new goals to EGSPA. The first goal is to develop a renewable energy framework that will help the province move towards a reduced dependency on fossil fuels for electricity. The second goal is to develop a strategy by 2014 to advance the growth of the green economy. This government has made considerable investments in our green economy and we are seeing results - companies like Daewoo, Carbon Sense Solutions, and LED Roadway Lightening are creating good jobs for Nova Scotians, while providing technology that helps our environment.

Mr. Speaker, by developing a green economy strategy we can build on our successes and create even more jobs for Nova Scotians. Martin Janowitz, the chairman of the round table, has said that the province has done a good job meeting the specific environment goals but now the Act will truly be part of our environment and our economy. If Nova Scotia wants to move forward, we need to change how we view the future so that the path forward isn't just about prosperity, it's about sustainable prosperity, and this legislation will help us get there. Thank you very much for your time.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, you know, the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act of 2007 is actually a very important piece of legislation - one of the most important pieces of legislation that has been brought before this House in the last 20 years. In fact, it received all-Party support at that time when it was passed into law.

Mr. Speaker, this same Act has been studied, admired, and copied and duplicated in other provincial Legislatures and other State Houses in the United States, and indeed in countries and in sub-national governments around the world. I know that certainly those of us in the Progressive Conservative caucus are proud of that piece of legislation and I believe many, many Nova Scotians are proud of that particular piece of legislation, and the bill that the minister is bringing today actually seeks to amend it.

Mr. Speaker, what the bill today does not do is strengthen it. In fact, it weakens it and that is the sad fact of the bill that is before the House today. The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act was very clear that it would set real meaningful targets both on the environmental side around renewable energy, around clean water, around waste

water disposal, around emissions into our atmosphere and so on. It also set some clear economy goals, specifically that Nova Scotia would strive to grow its economy at the rate of the national average or better each year.

Mr. Speaker, once again, we have an NDP minister rise in this House, changing the environmental goals, but silent on the economy goals. The problem with that is that one-half of this great equation, how we match our growing economy to a clean environment, has been lost under the NDP and that, of course, is the economy side because the NDP have failed, even once, they've failed every year, not just once, to have a growing economy in Nova Scotia at the national average. In fact, the most recent reports from Statistics Canada show Nova Scotia is near the bottom; in fact, for 2011 was at the bottom in economic growth, nowhere near the national average.

The government has an opportunity now that we're reviewing the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act to actually have something positive to say about how we're going to grow the economy and create jobs in the future, how they're going to address this dismal record of full-time job losses and poor economic results under their time in office, but yet once again today they have nothing to say about that because the record is so poor, Mr. Speaker. A review of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, as is required by law this year, at year five of that Act's existence, should properly review both the performance on meeting our economic goals, which it doesn't, which is poor, and how we're doing in meeting our environmental goals.

Even on that side of the equation, Mr. Speaker, the record is not very good. The minister points out, for example, he's adding two new goals to the environmental goals and I say to you, sir, that these are no goals at all. Even in the minister's own preamble to his bill, it says that when we add goals to this important piece of legislation, they ought to be clear and measurable and obtainable. Yet his first new goal is to develop a strategy on a green economy, meaning we'll have some goals in the future.

Well once and for all, Mr. Speaker, I wish this government would understand that having a goal to set a goal is not in itself a goal. Having a goal to have a strategy at a future date is meaningless and on such an important piece of legislation, on one that received all-Party support, on one that has been copied around the world, to weaken it with such a sad addition to the list of goals is to do a disservice to all of those Nova Scotians on all sides of this House and around this province who believed in this great agreement that was reached five years ago, to make sure that we had environmental goals and economic goals that work together.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what is happening here. The minister is relaxing the goals around waste-water management, in order to give our municipalities further time to figure out how to finance the infrastructure upgrades needed to meet these goals. What assurance do we have that at the end of this additional time that the minister is giving, those



municipalities will be any further ahead in figuring out how to meet the higher costs of these new standards that have been set?

Mr. Speaker, that's not to say that they shouldn't, because after all, higher water-standards are important and they were part of that great consensus that was reached five years ago. What we have is an NDP government that has made the financing of these projects by our municipalities harder and harder during their term in office, by downloading more costs on municipalities. When they ripped up the memorandum of understanding with those municipalities, they made it harder to meet these standards. By not working with other levels of government - federal government and municipal government - on programs to help pay for them, they've made it harder and harder to meet these standards.

The NDP answer today, which is a pretty weak one, is to say well we'll just push the deadline further into the future. We'll just give you more time but won't actually give you, as a municipality, more means to meet those standards. That's no plan at all, Mr. Speaker, and it further weakens a great piece of legislation like the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act.

Mr. Speaker, I just can't help but point out that the reason the minister gives for providing more time to municipalities on this target is that they can't afford the price increases, that it places too great a financial burden on our municipalities, that they deserve a break. Well that's exactly the argument that we have been making to the NDP on behalf of all Nova Scotians about their electricity bills. The NDP took this great compromise, this great balance of 2007 on renewables within a growing economy and they jacked up the renewable targets from 25 per cent to 40 per cent - without rebalancing the economy targets, accepting the crushing effect it would have on our economy and on jobs - for their own means, creating an unfair hardship on the backs of Nova Scotia ratepayers, both families who struggle to make the family budget work every month when they get their electric bill, and Nova Scotia employers.

Time after time Nova Scotia employers have come forward to say, one of the reasons we can't grow, one of the reasons we can't compete, one of the reasons that we have to lay off Nova Scotians is because we can't keep up with our power rate increases. That's exactly the effect of jacking up those targets and not looking at the economy side at the same time.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the NDP campaigned on lower power rates, then they got into office and the first thing they did was take steps to jack up our power rates. As long as the price of power is going up and up, because of the NDP electricity plan, all Nova Scotians have a hidden tax of 1 to 2 per cent every month on their power bills.

That 1 per cent to 2 per cent, by admission of the Minister of Energy - it's actually written right into their power plan - is going to continue on for years to come,

compounding and compounding every year - a hidden tax on our power bills that no one asked Nova Scotians if they were willing to pay for. In fact, they've been very clear that they can't continue along this road of ever-higher power rates, year after year after year, like we've seen under the NDP.

Why is it that the NDP and the minister speaking to this bill today are perfectly okay with saying, we're going to give some relief to our municipalities because they can't afford to keep up with the goal we assigned to them, but we're going to continue to push Nova Scotians further backward on their household budgets; we're going to put further strain on Nova Scotia employers; we're going to watch more Nova Scotians have their jobs be put at risk because we have a no-compromise approach to the ever-escalating price of their electricity bill?

If the minister had brought forward a proper review of the entire Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act that actually provided some rate relief to Nova Scotians, that actually addressed the glaring inadequacies of the economic goals under the NDP, we might be able to support it. But until that day comes, all I can say about this bill is that it falls far short of giving Nova Scotians the relief they need and it weakens a great Act of this Legislature of five years ago, that no one believed the NDP would do, but they are very disappointed to see happen here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, just a few words about this. It's interesting that many of the provisions in these amendments actually relax the original EGSPA legislation. I think many of the things that relax provisions in that bill are decisions that have already been taken by regulatory or Cabinet order. I guess this is just matching the legislation to decisions that have already been made.

In many respects, it would have been nice to have had this debate. Some of them there may very well have been good reasons for, but it would have been nice to have had this debate before the decisions were made. For example, when you look at things such as the wastewater - the wastewater is an interesting example, because my understanding was that the original target in the Act for having the primary treatment was 2008. It's now 2012. In 2008 the former Tory Government was in place, so they didn't deal with it either, and it was their legislation.

Then the NDP got in power and they didn't deal with it. So, as I said to somebody the other day - I was asked whether this is something that could impact public safety. Well, of course, there's always that potential, but by the same token, if a municipality hasn't begun any significant work, there's still only - we're approaching 2013, so there are really only seven years left to get that in place. Most of those projects often take that long or close to that long anyway.

That goal alone is not going to work unless this government is going to, either alone or in partnership with the federal government, establish some kind of infrastructure program to assist the municipalities. The very fact that they couldn't afford it before - they're certainly not going to be able to afford it now that the MOUs been changed, because some of the things they had hoped to have in terms of lower costs in the future now no longer exist. Unless the government actually comes forward with an infrastructure program of some kind, we're going to be here in 2020 having the same debate and pushing it ahead again. That's something that needs to be addressed.

One of the things that has been pointed out many times is that the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act is as much an aspiration of what you want to happen. I think there are some good goals. I don't have the same concerns that the gentleman who spoke before me has about the two new goals. I think they're fine goals. I'm not sure they're any different than what the previous Tory Government put in place when they were going to do a strategy. So that is what (Interruption)

My colleague would like to do an introduction, Mr. Speaker, if that would be okay with you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West on an introduction.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for Dartmouth East for giving me a moment. I would like to draw to the attention of the House and members to a former member who spent many, many years in this House representing the good people of Hants West. Mr. Ron Russell joins us this afternoon for a bit. So welcome, Ron, and give him a hand. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: I might add that the honourable member also spent three different terms in the Chair as Speaker here in this House of Assembly. (Applause)

The honourable member for Dartmouth East has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I was just thinking that and so now we are going to get Speaker's Rulings from two ends of the Chamber I guess today.

If you read the original Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, it was a collection of aspirations, and by this date we'll get this strategy done, and by this date we'll get this strategy done, so you had various things such as the wetland strategy and so forth. These two new goals, despite the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party saying that he was disappointed that the green economy one was just a strategy, that's all that was in the previous Act too. So I agree that you have to have something more than a strategy, and I think that's very important, but that has been the nature of that Act since it was first introduced by the former Minister of Environment.

It does raise the question of what happens and where do you get those strategies done. This amendment is oddly entitled the Green Economy Act and yet it doesn't actually provide anything related to the green economy other than a promise that some strategy will be done at some point in the future. You need to have more than that. You need to actually say how that's going to work out.

The other issue with this is we can put all the targets and aspirations we want but there are no penalties if you don't meet any of the provisions under the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. When the water strategy was released, I believe it was earlier this year - within the past year anyway - again, there were some very good provisions in it but it is yet to be backed up by legislation. It is yet to be backed up by anything that has penalties if things are not met. So it's very easy for the government to just not follow it because what can you do? There is no ability under that for a member of the public or an organization to seek remedies through the courts based on that Act because there isn't a remedy available in the Act.

I wasn't here for the debate in 2007 but I guess that is what all Parties agreed to, that this was an aspiration of what wanted to be achieved, and I do believe that at the time the intent was to try to match the demands of an economy with the demands of the environment. In many cases those things are linked and one only needs to look into the U.S. in the past few weeks with Hurricane Sandy to understand the linkages between the environment and the economy. I can't remember, there was some astronomical amount of money that they felt the economic impact of Sandy was, and part of that was related to the fact that they keep building things the same way.

There was an article - which maybe by third reading I'll find it again and I'll table it for the interest of the House - that talked about the fact that every time there is one of these storms and the power lines go down, and the gas lines get torn up, they go back and they build it exactly the same way. Well, we do the same thing here, Mr. Speaker. We don't go and say, well, you know, we're going to build this differently so that we can address these things in the future. Halifax Regional Municipality has done a lot of work around LiDAR to try to figure out where you could build homes and businesses and so forth as a result of sea level rise concerns, but there hasn't been a lot of addressing how you use that information and also doing it province-wide. We have an astronomical number of kilometres of coastline in this province and so it's a very real issue.

The other element to this that I think is important, Mr. Speaker, is that when you look at some of the goals, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party tried to make quite a lot about the fact that the current rate increases are related to the new targets in the government's legislation, and that's not entirely accurate in fact. If you actually look at what they are dealing with before the board at the moment they will be coming to deal with those new targets, there is no question, and yes they will have a cost and I think that's a worthy debate, but the costs that are actually being dealt with at the moment as they relate

to renewable energy are actually the original targets in the original EGSPA legislation which are stilling being met and have to be rounded out.

The new targets are going to have their impact coming along, but of course I read in the paper, and maybe the honourable member was misquoted, but I read that he said at a dinner on Sunday night the Party still supported the 40 per cent goal, so I don't understand how you do both. It seems to be two different messages there, one message on one bill and another message on another bill, or at a fundraising dinner.

At the end of the day when we look at this I think that what we need as we go forward - and maybe there will be amendments that come forward that address this - there need to be some hard and fast targets around this. If we're going to have a green economy strategy, we needed it yesterday. We don't need it in five years; we don't need another delayed strategy. There has been a lot of delayed strategy - we don't need that. The goals are fine in and of themselves as long as we know when it's coming, what it will achieve, and we know that it won't be just a bunch of meaningless words that aren't followed or that sit on a shelf. It actually has to do something, it has to balance the real opportunities that exist in rural and urban Nova Scotia with the fact that you have to have people at work; you have to have people who are achieving things.

And there are models around that world that we can look at - for example, if you look at Vermont, and obviously everybody has their own unique circumstances but Vermont has done a lot of work around taking a green economy and having a lot of more environmentally friendly energy sources and dealing with that in a way that actually has created jobs and different kinds of investment, and you actually see that. The difference there is that you actually see buy-in from people on a day-to-day basis; you see buy-in from businesses. They've been able to make a business case for that and that is what you need to do - you need to create a situation where people can actually create a business case around a green economy situation.

The last thing that I wanted to address was related to this - I think that when feeding into all of this is local agricultural and so forth, which I think feeds into this environmental goals and sustainable prosperity. I think we're all aware that there is a larger move towards more sustainable foods, more sustainable forms of agricultural, more local purchasing whether it's foods or products. Again, I'll use Vermont as an example. You go into many stores in Vermont and you look at your receipt and the receipt has two portions - on the top it tells you your subtotal of locally purchased goods and on the bottom is your total. So every purchaser is aware - here is what I bought that supported the local economy.

I think there are things like that that don't always need legislation, but there are things that government could be involved in supporting and maybe could be part of the green economy strategy, because that is something where people would go into a store every day and they would know whether what they bought was local. Now, yes, there are

all kinds of things that you have to decide what's local and what is not local and that's fine, but those can be worked out, that's a policy decision but there are things that we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be interested to watch this as it moves forward. I think that we have to recognize that it is what it is. It adds two goals that are really no different, they obviously add different things but they are no different in their tone or intent than the goals in the previous Act. I think it should be concerning and disappointing for everybody, whoever, that there were goals in there that were not met, and that in many cases this is adding things in that are related to the decisions that have already been made, so this is retroactive legislation in that respect.

We just need to understand that that is what it is and move forward, but my hope is that the government has actually looked at this to make sure that the goals that are in this now are achievable, because the last thing we ever want to come and do again is to weaken a piece of legislation that was intended to be a model and, as many others have spoken to, has been a model in other places. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in my place to talk a little bit about this bill that is before us, the Green Energy Act. I think this is something that shows leadership for this government to bring forward to this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I know - and I've spoken to many Nova Scotians in the last three years, but in particular, before I was elected as well, people who really believe that the environment - that Nova Scotians do care about the environment. For many years we have lagged in the country in vision for the environment, and I think that we need to ensure that Nova Scotia is a leader. This is something that I think this bill does. As was mentioned previously, of course, through law we have to do a review of the Act. This is the five-year review that has been done, and these are the results of that review.

Some of the changes in the bill now are good changes for Nova Scotians. Linking our economy to the environment is something that New Democrats have been talking about for a very long time, and New Democrats are proud of pushing that issue forward right across the country. When you look at a province like Manitoba, for instance, where the NDP has been in government since 1999, that province has a whole host of mechanisms of green energy, that the economy is built around the environment. That's something that I think that New Democrats right across the country are proud of, and certainly this government is proud of as well, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to recognize some comments made around this bill, in particular, that when we were in Opposition the EGSPA was brought forward and was voted on in a minority government, so obviously it needed the support of at least one Opposition Party. We do know that all Parties supported that Act, which I think is a good thing, to know that

all three Parties in this Legislature recognize that the environment and how we grow our economy moves forward with that. Mr. Speaker, I did want to recognize that.

As well, I wanted to thank the round table for all the work they've done over the past number of years, doing the review and working on behalf of Nova Scotians. Oftentimes we hear about agencies, boards, or commissions in this province that do great work, and this one in particular, that they have been able to go out and consult with many different organizations across Nova Scotia, to talk to them about how we can enhance this bill, and as we have before us right now, the Green Economy Bill.

I'm proud to be able to stand here and talk a little bit about that, talk a little bit about what it means for our future, about why this is a good bill, as well as some of our accomplishments as a government in this regard and how we build the economy of the future. Again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, that's something that as a New Democrat, I've been proud to talk about, the many years that I've lived on this earth so far, of being able to talk about that. I think that's something that as a young Nova Scotian myself, a young adult in Nova Scotia, I think that decisions have been made in the past that may not have been the best decisions, but I know that we, all legislators in this Chamber, need to ensure that we have a direction forward when it comes to our green economy.

I wanted to talk a little bit about how Nova Scotia has been a world leader when it comes to the way that we recycle and we do our waste diversion. We'll give recognition where it's due, where past governments have supported that. I know that many different municipal units have moved forward with real leadership in that regard, so I do want to recognize that as well.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few things, just a few things, that former governments have done to protect the environment but I can tell you it's this government that will ensure a real future in protecting that environment. We know that past governments have kind of just set targets and then just sat back and watched greenhouse gas emissions increase.

We're taking action and we've actually exceeded that expectation, the targets that were set out for Nova Scotia. We set the first hard caps on greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. We were recognized, as a province, because of the leadership of this government - we have been recognized as a world leader. The United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in 2009 recognized Nova Scotia as a world leader. I think that's something quite impressive for a small region of less than one million people, to be able to be a world leader in greenhouse gas emission targets. That's something we should be proud of as Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, we came into power when wind power construction had stalled and 90 per cent of Nova Scotia's energy came from coal. Now I've stood on my feet many times and talked about what that did for Nova Scotians. Not only environmental concerns but it concerned people when it came to their power rates. We talked about that in the past, that

we have always had this kind of - as I say and the Premier has said, we were shackled to coal. I think that ensuring that we are able to at least diversify the energy that we produce in Nova Scotia is something we should do. We should diversify the energy that we produce to allow us to move forward, to meet certain targets.

As we've mentioned as well, we're the government that took a renewable electricity plan, that actually put in legislation that by 2015, 25 per cent of the power that we produce is renewable energy. One of the things that I think is also key to recognize is that as of April 24<sup>th</sup> this year, 20 per cent of Nova Scotians' power needs were met by wind power. That's leadership. It's something that, as I stand in my place as a proud New Democrat, that we are the Party of the environment. That's something that people like Tommy Douglas and Jack Layton would be very proud of. I think that is something that we should be proud of.

I believe there's someone who wants to do an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville for allowing me to make this introduction. I'd like to bring the attention of the House to the east gallery. In the east gallery today we have a former chairman of NSBI, actually this gentleman was chairman of NSBI when we came into government and I would like Mr. Hall to stand and receive the applause of the House. (Applause)

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

MR. WHYNOTT: I'm glad to see people coming down to take a look at democracy in action. As I was talking about our renewable electricity plan, our renewable electricity strategy that really is about turning our dependence on coal around. We shouldn't be shackled to coal anymore but at least diversify the energy that we produce in Nova Scotia.

I talked about the 25 per cent renewable target by 2015, that's in legislation. The other thing that is in legislation is the fact that by 2020, 40 per cent of our energy that we produce will be renewable energy. Mr. Speaker, I think that is something that puts us as a leader in Canada and around the world, something that will move Nova Scotia forward. Now, I know that I've stood in this place before talking about when you travel across Nova Scotia, and in particular when you're coming home, when you're away, maybe visiting New Brunswick, or you might be driving home from a shopping trip to the States, or maybe P.E.I., and you travel across the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border, when you see the Tantramar Marsh and you see the number of windmills - and I think there are 15 of them



there, 15 windmills - when you come back home and you see that, I see that as a picture of progress.

Not only when we come home from away, from New Brunswick or the other areas that I mentioned, but I also love to drive through Pictou County, when you look over the hills and you see the windmills. (Interruptions) We're talking about energy today, Mr. Speaker, not necessarily about pavement. So I think that's a good thing that this bill will allow us to move forward. When we see those windmills, it's a project of the future that allows us to - when you look there, it shows that Nova Scotia is progressing as a province.

Mr. Speaker, as part of that renewable electricity plan is the plan to ensure that Nova Scotians receive a benefit from Muskrat Falls. Muskrat Falls is again a project that I think will bring great benefits not only in the area of renewable electricity but in jobs. It's exactly what this bill has always been intended to do - to link our economic growth to a sustainable environment. That's something that we need to continue to do and that project will have direct benefits to Nova Scotians, allowing them to have stable energy rates for the future.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that was in that renewable electricity plan, something that this bill - the electricity plan certainly was a result of this bill - was the whole idea of a community feed-in tariff. Now, I know in my own constituency there have been talks with two groups in particular, one is in the community of Upper Hammonds Plains where there is a consortium of small companies that are coming together that want to create energy, and they want to put up windmills.

What I find is a very interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the group of companies that came together to produce wind energy - do you know what they did? They went to the community immediately. They consulted up front with an historic African Nova Scotian community and told them, this is our vision, we want you to be part of it, and I was glad to be able to be at the community consultation that they had, talking about it. There are some myths about wind energy, some myths and truths that I think that the community wanted to hear from the company, that they will have long-term benefit.

One of the interesting things, Mr. Speaker, about that community feed-in tariff is that wherever that community feed-in tariff project is, the profits from that, some of them, a percentage of them, need to go back to the community. So, for instance, I think that's a good thing and I think it's a sensible thing. So one of the things that they said was, well, let's talk about what that looks like. Do you know what the people of Upper Hammonds Plains said? They said let's invest that money into our community centre, so a perfect example of not only a net benefit for the people of Nova Scotia to meet their greenhouse gas emissions, but they are, in fact investing in the area in which that project is taking place. So I think that is something positive about moving forward on that exact thing this Green Economy Bill is doing for the people of Nova Scotia. I think that is just one example

of many projects across Nova Scotia that are allowing us to move forward with this whole idea.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other things that we talked about, not only in this bill, but in other things that we have done as government, is this whole notion - one of very first legislative bills was to enact the moratorium on uranium mining, an action that previous governments just didn't really do. I have an article back from October 22, 2009, and I find it interesting, though, because that was our very first legislative session as a government. I remember sitting in my chair, which is actually one chair over, and I remember sitting there and a member from the Progressive Conservative caucus stood up and introduced a bill around the same thing. But you know what, that member was in the backbench for many years, for three anyway I know of, and he didn't have the leadership to stand up and do it when they were in government, so I think that that is something that is important.

I'll read a quote from the president of the Citizens Action to Protect the Environment, who said, "Our group has worked to bring this issue to the attention of the public and we are extremely pleased that this government has followed through . . ." on their commitment during the election. I'd like to table that article for the members of the House, which I think is a positive thing that we should put out.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we did was an indefinite ban set at Georges Bank, something I know the member for Shelburne, the Minister of Environment, talked a lot about since he has been in this House, since 2006. He was not only the member in the Opposition, but he is also the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. He spoke about that during the 2009 election campaign and our Party committed to doing that. Again, one of the very first bills that we brought forward as a government was just that and a coalition of environmentalists, Aboriginal communities and fishermen said, ". . . is pleased with the province's direction on this issue." The same group said, "We applaud this forward thinking action by the premier and his government." Something that we committed to doing and something that we followed through on, so that is another something that we would love to do. I know that people talked about that being the story of the year, particularly in southwestern Nova Scotia and the fishers along that coast. That's another positive thing that we do.

The other thing that I wanted to mention around this bill of the green economy, something that we did do was around - we knew that previous governments didn't necessarily have the leadership abilities to bring forward good policy and good legislation that would actually make a difference in people's lives, but that whole question of restricting pesticides; our government put in place legislation and regulations restricting non-essential pesticides in Nova Scotia. These rules, when they took effect, the David Suzuki Foundation announced that in comparison of existing provincial pesticide laws across Canada, Nova Scotia now has the strictest laws in the country. That is something that we should celebrate, that whole question of our green economy and how we build an

economy for the future is just another example of how we've been able to move forward on that front, Mr. Speaker.

We know that some decisions aren't necessarily easy. We need to take time, we need to do it right. I think that's what Nova Scotians elected us to do, no matter what Party you're in. I think people recognize and want them to know - Nova Scotians want us to know that we need to take the time to make the right choices for them and their families. I know that I certainly do that on a day-to-day basis. We shouldn't just make decisions off the cuff, but, in fact, study it, take a look at it.

Again the Opposition today was talking about consultation - they were going on about something, they wanted consultation. You know, Mr. Speaker, the other day the Minister of Community Services stood up, and they said, oh well, we shouldn't be doing consultations, so again, it's just one of those things that the Liberal Party goes on about; Nova Scotians shouldn't really pay attention to what they're saying anyway.

Mr. Speaker, a few other things and then I'll take my seat. I'll recognize also ecoNova Scotia, so by 2012 the \$42.5 million ecoNova Scotia for Clean Air and Climate Change initiatives generated millions of dollars of wages, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 241,000 tons. That's the equivalent of taking 53,000 cars off the road. That is something that Nova Scotians should recognize and we should be out there telling them those things, and that we can do more, we can do more to protect our environment and I'm really proud that this government is doing that.

The last thing I do want to talk about is around this whole question of the Large Land Purchase Program. Now I know the Liberal Party will stand in their place and talk about that being buying dirt; they've said that on the record. Well, shame on them because I know in our caucus when we talk, and I hear from my colleagues from southwestern Nova Scotia and the South Shore, how important that is for that region, to ensure that we meet our target that 12 per cent of Nova Scotia's lands will be protected by 2015, and the Opposition calls it buying dirt.

Nova Scotia was at the bottom of the barrel when it came to that in the past, well let's move forward. Let's ensure that we meet those targets and it will be this government that meets that target, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are two other things that I did want to mention - of course I have some notes here. I did want to mention one issue - I think the member for Halifax Clayton Park and even the member for Bedford-Birch Cove might be interested in this. (Interruption) Well, actually I was going to mention something that our three constituencies might have in common and that is the whole question of Highway No. 113.

Mr. Speaker, I remember before I was elected, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the government of the day, put forward this whole question of

environmental assessment around that proposed highway. That's been on there for a while, been on the books for a while. It's interesting because one of the things they did was an environmental assessment. Under the environmental assessment regulations, they said that any road more than 10 kilometres long had to do more of a rigorous environmental assessment. So what happened is that by accident, I would assume, the highway came in at 9.9 kilometres long. Interesting, eh?

What happened was they decided not to include the off-ramps and the on-ramps, which brings it down below 10 kilometres, so they didn't have to do a rigorous environmental assessment, Mr. Speaker. I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts that if they had done an environmental assessment that was more rigorous, they would probably have found that the area in which that highway is proposed to go through is an environmentally sensitive area, probably one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the province. It's a beautiful place to get out and talk. So that's what the Progressive Conservative Party did when they were in government.

The other thing that I wanted to highlight, Mr. Speaker, and I will take my place, is around the whole question of C.P. Allen High School being built (Interruption) I hear the member for Bedford-Birch Cove saying, oh, here we go again. Well, you know, it's this government that's building that school. I see the member for Bedford-Birch Cove had a newsletter out late last week taking credit for the school. So, you know, I find it interesting when she goes on over there about that. What I will mention is that that school is of gold league standard, the first public school to be built as a gold league standard, something very positive, something that is creating green jobs in Nova Scotia and that will ensure a better future for all Nova Scotians. Thank you very much and I will take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'll take a few minutes to make a comment or two perhaps on Bill No. 136, and maybe a couple of other things along the way here. It's interesting and I'll get to this in a few minutes but, you know, I had a briefing eight or 10 days ago, a week or so ago now, from the Minister of Environment's staff on these proposed amendments to Bill No. 136, as we've seen it presented. You know, we talk about what's in the bill and really the importance of the bill and there are six slides there, three of them have nothing on them, and two of them say the same thing.

Even when the minister opened and moved second reading of this bill, I was sitting here pen in hand waiting to hear something more detailed about what the proposed amendments might be, about what the two new goals he set might be, but they're very brief and not much detail in any of that unfortunately. So I guess we'll figure that out as we go along like we do with a lot of other things.

I looked at the numbers he gave, I think they were 86 per cent for those that have completed the drinking water, the municipal units, and 90-plus per cent of the waste water

and, you know, I wonder, do we need to change the legislation or amend the legislation to be able to make it happen for the balance. That's a pretty good number, 86 per cent, 91 per cent, 90 per cent or so are pretty good numbers overall when we really think about where we've been in the last number of years and the struggles that municipal units have had financially, especially in the last couple of years, to be able to meet these demands. (Interruption) I was just looking for a correction there, 91 per cent, thank you, minister.

I'm wondering if we really needed to put forward legislation? Is there another way? When I was asked about this, I said, maybe there was another way, why aren't we sitting down with all three levels of government and maybe having a discussion? Do we really need to change the goals that were set because I was here in 1997 when this bill was put forward and if I recall, it was a bill that was passed unanimously with good debate. There was a fair bit of debate on it. It was a good bill and I think that most of us still agree that it remains a bill that was worthy of putting forward in this House, showing the leadership of the Province of Nova Scotia as we move toward renewables, as we've been doing a lot of different things by way of recycling. We are known for a variety of things when it comes to the cleanliness of our province and was there another way to sit down with these municipal units that existed and say, how can we get you where we need you to be in the timeframe that has been set out, because we felt it was important then but now we're willing to move on that.

What's interesting about that is we're willing to move on that, but yet just the opposite we went with our environmental goals with regards to what the member was just talking about a few minutes ago around energy. We have upped that and, you know, he talks about the renewable energy plan. Well, I can tell you, he talks about all the things that they're number one at, I'll tell you a couple of things they're number one at, Mr. Speaker, is increased taxes - we're number one there; job loss, we're number one there. Giving money away to corporations that a lot of people deem is wasteful, that is not benefiting them at all, not even in the short or long terms, we need to be better than that, but that member goes on and he'll give the political spiel that someone wrote a speech for him to stand up on his feet today and reel off over there in his spot. That's fine, that's what the government backbench does, I guess, in the current government; somebody has to do it and I guess he was elected today to do so.

You know, we look at Muskrat Falls - nobody argued in this House, ever - I've not heard one member stand in this House in his or her place and say that the idea of clean, renewable green energy is not a good thing. I think that every member in this House believes that that is, in fact, the way that we need to go.

I know that I've stood in my place here on many occasions, and I've asked in Question Period of the Premier and of the minister, what is the cost? Well, I can tell you we don't know the cost, yet the member will stand up and say, this is a good plan for Nova Scotia. The direction that he's heading and that Party is heading is bankrupting the

province, nothing more. When you don't know what the costs are - and we saw a week or so ago when costs jumped another \$1 billion or more.

The member can continue to chirp away over there, because he knows - unless he's got the answer. Perhaps he should be sitting in the front seat there, on the front bench beside the Minister of Finance. Maybe he's the guy who fell up in Guysborough-Sheet Harbour down there, because he seems to know any other time when he's asked what all the answers are, Mr. Speaker, but do you know what? He doesn't know. He doesn't know it all. If he did, he'd get on his feet, and I'll give him the opportunity to get on his feet if he wants. If he's got the costs and the breakdown and the answer to what the renewables in this province and the plan that the NDP has put forward is going to cost, then he should get up and tell all the rest of us, Party members and government, that he knows better than all of them who are working at all of this, but yet he knows the answer, because he's always right, I guess, in his opinion, anyway. Thankfully, it's only his opinion.

When we look at Muskrat Falls, we are not saying this project is not worthy of looking at. We're saying, what's the cost? What are the alternatives? Nobody wants to go there. One focus is all they have. That focus is the wrong focus. You need to be more than that. You need to do more than that. The people in Nova Scotia deserve better than that.

We have put forward ideas with regard to energy. We talk about a variety of different bills in this House, and they're all related. When you think about the long-term sustainable goals in this House, environmentally-friendly energy, they're one and the same when you really think about it. We've heard a bit about that today. They will all impact this Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. What do we see in the bill? Definitions of what "sustainable" means. How can that be?

Mr. Speaker, we need to be talking about the realities of life in Nova Scotia, and that is that it is hard times for Nova Scotians. They are struggling to pay power bills. We are saying, freeze the rates now, not in two years. That would be a great target.

You know, you want to talk about targets in this House, you want to talk about targets for environmental prosperity, goals that can be met? Freeze them now and allow people to benefit from that. Lower taxes, Mr. Speaker, and allow people to benefit from that. Will that have an impact in this province? We know that it does. We know increasing taxes does nothing to grow the economy; it slows the economy. We've seen it in the last two or three years. We know that. People are not spending. Two per cent may not sound like much, but it's a lot on those big purchases.

Now, we look at this bill, and the minister mentioned in his briefing, or the staff did, reframing objectives and adding key outcomes, adding two new goals related to cleaner sources, the sustainable use of energy, and advancing the growth of the green economy, he states on this slide. He didn't give much detail, Mr. Speaker, when he stood on his feet today and introduced this bill for second reading. As I said, I thought there would have

been more in it, but people are saying, what does that mean? There were comments and other documentation that was handed out - increasing horizontal governments. Most people would ask you, what does that mean?

Change how we report progress to include work happening in government that goes beyond the 21 goals. Reframing objectives and identifying key outcomes, amend the long-term objective would be more clear, measurable and achievable, but we're already seeing that we don't even know that the goals they are putting in place - i.e., the energy goals - are achievable. Right now they're not, not even at the current prices that we're allowing to move upward. They're not achievable. We won't be here long enough to worry about them being achievable. Many more businesses will be out of business, small and large. People are moving away from this province, unfortunately, every day.

We had a good meeting in Hantsport this morning, talking to the folks at Minas Basin about other alternatives. You know what they're saying? Yes, there's a few options in the long term, maybe, but what we do know for certain is that there will be people out of work by the end of the year. That is very unfortunate - tough decision, business decisions, hard to be in that industry, energy-related. Energy costs are one of their biggest factors, but you know what? They're leaving. There are people who will leave that place and will leave this province to seek out employment, because they have to be able to feed their families. That's reasonable. We know that. It's been happening for years. We're still seeing it and we're seeing it in even greater numbers now.

When we look at the bills going through this House, we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, what are we doing that is benefiting Nova Scotians? Most of the time when you look at these bills, some of these bills that we've seen go through have only been a few words to change a clause or amend something - they are doing nothing to bring employment to this province; they're doing nothing to create jobs; they are doing nothing to lower taxes but we just keep spending, spending money we don't have, spending money of your granddaughter, grandson, great-granddaughters and children beyond.

After you're long gone, Mr. Speaker, we'll still be paying for the mistakes that have been made in the last three years. That is taxes and those are the reality of the mistakes. Let's be honest, how much farther in debt is this province? Is it \$1.5 billion in the last three years? More debt every year. Can you imagine what people - people can't even imagine what \$1.5 billion means.

They'd be struggling if that were the only debt, wondering how we are going to pay that. That's okay, keep spending what you don't have. That's the idea. Keep spending what you don't have.

As we draw closer to the election, you see announcement after announcement, daily, on more money being spent. We know the election will come whether it's next year or the year after. Fortunately there is a limit to the time a government can stay with having

to call an election, fortunately that does exist in this province. Hopefully that will come sooner rather than later because people are waiting. I've travelled around this province and talked to people and they say, we supported that Party but I'll tell you, we'll never do it again.

There's a reason for that. They'll tell you those reasons. Broken promises are a lot of that, putting forward electricity plans that are unaffordable. It's the reality of people in this province. Those are the stories the people are telling us. Those are the real truths that are going on in this province. All of those members over there know the difficulties that members in their areas are having. This is not new. Every industry is struggling. We know that times are tough around the world, economically, and we should be working hard to do better.

Instead, we're willing to put forward bills that are two or three slides long or a few words. With any luck, the 14 per cent and the 19 per cent will probably see this as an opportunity to extend and give them a little relief from the financial pressures that they are going through. Having been a former councillor I can appreciate that, especially in small town areas where I know that's very difficult to come up with money. All you have is the tax base.

A good example, we are going to see huge tax losses in the Town of Hantsport. Again, we lost Fundy - that was a huge jump. We're going to see another drop in the tax base with Minas Basin closing. That's just one example. There are a lot of towns and municipal units that are losing that revenue, yet we're asking more.

This will be an opportunity for those municipal units, although I think we should have sat down and said, is there a better way? Is there another way that we can help you? It will be interesting to see if UNSM or other representatives from municipal units come in during the Committee on Law Amendments to speak to Bill No. 136. Perhaps they will, maybe they won't, maybe they are content with it the way it is, but it will pass through this House just like every other bill does, even when amendments are put forward, and at times good amendments get put forward in this House. Unfortunately we've seen that go by the wayside and not supported, not even considered.

I know from listening to my colleagues who sit in the Committee on Law Amendments, amendments are put up and amendments are shot down quickly because that is not what government wants. Government has their agenda. It has been set. It is frustrating to some degree that we can come into this House and stand and offer our comments on behalf of the people we represent, but to no avail because at the end of the day we really don't have any control over what the outcome will be. Government does not appear to be interested in listening to what the Opposition members have to offer in this House.

With those few words, I will say thank you and take my seat.



MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct your gaze to the east gallery and to recognize a dear friend of mine from the South Shore who has relocated to Halifax, Lucine Toomey. Lucine is known in my area as a very successful realtor and I became good friends with her when she joined the board of Second Story Women's Centre when I was the chair of that board. I ask everyone in the House to give her a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: I'm pleased to rise in my place to speak to the amendment to the Acts of 2007, the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. Mr. Speaker, I will probably echo some of the comments that have already been made by my colleagues and others in the Chamber about the importance of the environment to the majority of Nova Scotians.

The environment is one that is near and dear to a lot of our hearts and most Nova Scotians will tell you that they value, respect and appreciate all of our natural resources. Certainly this province is blessed with many natural resources in our province and resources that have contributed to the economy of Nova Scotia for many, many generations.

Some of those natural resources, whether we are talking about our agricultural lands or whether we're talking about our forest lands, our fisheries and aquaculture, our minerals, whether we're talking about our coastlines, our river systems, our watershed areas that would include the many hundreds of lakes that are seen throughout our beautiful province, and whether we're talking about water or air quality, energy efficiency or renewable, sustainable energy production - all of these, this bounty that we have in this province of natural resources and needs through energy are ones that Nova Scotians appreciate and truly respect. Nova Scotians also understand the need to not only sustain our natural environment but also to sustain our economy.

Here in 2012, I think most of us can say that most people right across the globe now are talking about a green economy and how we can shift from the industrial age that saw much of the damage to air and water quality, we have taken a shift and we understand that we can no longer sustain ourselves environmentally if we are to continue on that destructive path of uncontrolled industries that have contributed much to our damaged environment. So we understand the need to find a balance between protecting and preserving our quality of life and our environment while at the same time prospering in our economy. I'm proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that this bill actually allows us to continue on the path that we have struck in attaining our environmental goals and sustainable prosperity here in the province.

I just want to highlight some of the goals that we have already achieved since coming into office in 2009 and under the direction of the Premier and the Minister of Environment and the other ministers that sit around the Cabinet Table play a huge role in our environmental sustainable goals and our economic goals. Some of those that we have achieved - we have tabled a Natural Resources Strategy that has been welcomed right across this province and that Natural Resources Strategy, Mr. Speaker, if you recall had the input of hundreds of Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other, Nova Scotians who clearly understood that we needed a strong strategy in place to start looking at how we can best utilize our natural resources here in the province.

We also rolled out the Water Resources Management Strategy and this is a strategy that is so important to the province because we have a vast area of watersheds across this province, we rely on our water resources for drinking, absolutely, it's important that we have a strategy in place that looks at managing our quality of drinking water here in this province. We also need to have that strategy in place to manage the rest of our water resources.

We see in many parts of the world, Mr. Speaker, where water is becoming a scarce commodity, and it is indeed a commodity. Many of us remember when water was rolled out in bottle form, and now a lot of people purchase water, and that seems kind of hard to wrap your head around sometimes, to know something that we take for granted. So having a Water Resource Management Strategy in place is very important here in the province.

Our Wetland Conservation Policy, Mr. Speaker, is a policy that I know has been in the works for a few years now. Many people have come around the table to really make a policy that speaks to the importance of our wetlands, and I'm very pleased that our government has achieved that goal in seeing that policy come forward.

We also have emission standards for greenhouse gases for new motor vehicles, and that's so important, as we see daily reports on climate and our changes to climate and how greenhouse gas emissions have been a contributing factor to our accelerating climate changing. So it's very important that we have put those standards in place.

We also have targeted the building codes in terms of the energy efficiency requirements now for new building structures, and this too is really important, because we generate a lot of energy here in the province. A lot of dirty energy has been generated for many, many years, and we not only need to get a handle on our energy use here in the province, but we have to understand our own responsibilities to looking at better, efficient uses of energy. So part of that is putting in place building code requirements for new builds so that new construction has already taken into account ways that we can increase our energy-efficient components in those new builds.

Mr. Speaker, we have all been riveted to the debate in this House around the Bowater Mersey lands. I'm pleased to say that not only is this government, my

government, in intense negotiations with Resolute in terms of acquiring those Mersey lands, but that my government has taken very seriously our protection goals of 12 per cent of Nova Scotia's land by 2015. This negotiated situation with Resolute and the government is very important to some of those lands and certainly could help us reach our attainable goal of 12 per cent protected lands here in Nova Scotia by 2015, but also those lands have much value in terms of the forest resource of this province.

Most of us are aware that the Bowater Mersey land is the single largest private landholding here in the province. So the government initiative in sitting down at the table and negotiating with Resolute into the potential possibility of this province acquiring 550,000 acres of prime forest land and also land that has the potential to reach our 12 per cent goal of protected lands here in the province, I'm very proud of my government for being involved in that.

Mr. Speaker, we also have put forward many great pieces of legislation over the past couple of years. One of them is the Non-essential Pesticides piece of legislation, and that was introduced and became effective April 1, 2011. That piece of legislation - prior to its becoming law, many people had written members here in the House and had contacted department staff people on the urgency of moving forward with this non-essential pesticide ban.

Especially in urban or suburban areas where homeowners live in fairly close proximity to each other, you can well imagine the stress for some of the neighbours who perhaps were not engaged in the use of non-essential pesticides to those residents who perhaps were using, quite frequently, pesticides that were more for - more or less - lawn beautification. The majority of Nova Scotians that were reaching out to members were signalling that this wasn't an essential need in a lot of communities. Indeed, pesticides have been known to cause any number of illnesses, from asthma to other illnesses. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at a couple of pages of notes here so I may be kind of getting a little off track here.

Another piece of legislation that this government has put forward is the anti-idling legislation. I think that's a very important piece of legislation that we were able to see move forward. It is the first of its kind in Canada and it requires that the provincial government, school and tour bus operators, and transit authorities, have anti-idling policies in place. When I travel here into the city from Queens and I'm coming into the rotary, the traffic is - I mean it's not the same amount of traffic that I see in the riding of Queens. When I'm sitting in traffic for periods of time, the exhaust that emits from idling cars is just incredible. This piece of legislation, anti-idling legislation, I think is a very progressive piece of legislation when you think of all of the vehicles that are on our highways and on our streets in our city here and in our suburban areas concentrated in hundreds of vehicles at early hour traffic and afternoon traffic, it's just incredible the amount of exhaust that is pumping into the air. So this was very good piece of legislation.

Georges Bank, I remember standing in my place and speaking to that bill in 2010 and I was very proud of this government for putting that ban in place to protect Georges Bank, which is one of the most sensitive marine areas and traditional fishing grounds here. Of course I had mentioned how important our natural resources are and fisheries being one of them. I was pleased back then in 2010 to speak to that legislation and I'm very pleased that legislation has been well received right across the province.

Churchill Falls and the development of Muskrat Falls is certainly something that we, on this side of the House, are looking forward to seeing come to fruition. I know that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, I believe in yesterday's paper - or it could have been in this morning's paper - the government there is looking forward to accelerating that project, and I think here in Nova Scotia we too are looking to have that project accelerated. That certainly will meet a lot of our goals in terms of reducing our greenhouse emissions. When we start seeing renewable energy to the degree that Muskrat Falls and Churchill Falls will see pumping renewable energy into our energy stream, we can at that point in time say that we are moving forward to sustainable, renewable energy and it will certainly benefit the economy during the production phase, during the design phase of that project; we will see many jobs secured throughout the many phases of that project. I am very pleased that this government has taken on the initiative and is partnering with Newfoundland and Labrador to see that project roll out.

Now the members on the opposite side of the House have not committed to standing up and agreeing with this particular project. In fact, some of them will argue that it is a little bit too big. "We haven't been given enough information. It doesn't meet all of our energy needs in the future". I would beg to differ, Mr. Speaker, I would say that indeed it does meet some of our needs for our energy future. In fact, I would say that it meets a lot of our targets for our energy in the future and it is renewable. That is something that we need to keep reminding not only the members on the other side, but we have to remind people that this is a renewable source of energy and we all know that other sources of energy that we have existed on for generations - coal is certainly a finite resource; natural gas is a finite resource; other types of energy sources are certainly finite. Energy being produced through the Muskrat Falls project and Churchill Falls is indeed a renewable resource and so I'm looking forward to that project being accelerated.

Over time I know that Nova Scotians will be looking forward to that because again, as I said in the beginning, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians truly do take pride and respect and value their natural environment and that includes energy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about our climate-change leadership that this government has demonstrated since we came into office in 2009. We were the first government to set hard caps on greenhouse gases in Canada, and Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada to place those hard caps in the electricity sector. That initiative alone, I'm very proud to say, has earned us awards at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen. That is a very important designation to have, to receive an award

from a United Nations body that truly recognizes leadership roles in addressing climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we only need to look around the globe to see how serious climate change actually is and that we, indeed, do have to address that issue aggressively. We only need to look here just a few short weeks ago when Hurricane Sandy swept through New Jersey and New York City and what damage such a storm can have on whole neighbourhoods and large cities.

Now of course, Mr. Speaker, some might argue, well, was Hurricane Sandy a direct result of climate change? Perhaps, perhaps not, but I think we can all agree that we have seen many global disasters over the last several years, to have some inkling that perhaps something is a little off with our climate, so we need to be mindful that we have to keep setting targeted goals for us, and this government is, indeed, on track doing that.

Mr. Speaker, we can look outside the window today and it's a beautiful sunny day; it's a little cool but nonetheless, it's a beautiful sunny day and we can look at the past several months here in the province and we have had record-breaking temperatures.

We need to start looking at ways that we can start to better facilitate many of our economies. I'm thinking of the agricultural industry that may need to adapt itself to changing climate here in the province, so we need to start thinking about those things and certainly this government has started thinking about ways to start addressing our changing climate through those hard caps on greenhouse gas emissions, and certainly programs like the Muskrat and Churchill Falls project also will address some of those emission targets that we need to reach. That in turn, over time, will take some of the pressure off of our greenhouse gas emissions, which indeed, at the end of the day, affects our climate.

Mr. Speaker, we are all responsible for our environment and we're also all responsible for how our economy emerges. Not only is it the responsibility for government to take leadership on how we protect and preserve our environment and at the same time looking at ways that we can continue to economically benefit from our environment, but there are many people in our communities who also have taken leadership roles in protecting our environment.

I just want to point out a few of my constituents, or maybe more than a few of my constituents, who have taken the leadership roles not only in protecting and preserving the environment but they are also looking at environmental protection through an economic lenses, if you will. These constituents have also partnered with government and other leaders over time and I just want to bring your attention to some of those people. The Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute in Kempton, Queens County, is a collection of staff, board and volunteers and they certainly understand the importance of a sustainable environment and how it relates to our economy.

I just want to highlight some of those individuals. Wendy Whynot, is the office manager of the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute; Amanda Lavers, who is the executive director; Jeffie McNeil, a project administrator; Tom Neily, who is a botanist; Alain Belliveau is an ecosystem researcher; Benna Keoghoe is a forest stewardship coordinator with the research institute; Lindsey Beals is an aquatic health researcher; Jesse Saroli is green technology coordinator and also a researcher on the species at risk, the ribbon snake; Brad Toms who is a wildlife biologist; Jane Barker, who is the community outreach coordinator and Hannah Blanchard is a research assistant with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute.

They have some current researchers on their staff. Anna Naylor is a researcher in old growth forest structure and composition; Christine Angelidis, is also a researcher in old growth forest structure. The current board of the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute consists of: Andrew Ross, a forestry teacher at the Nova Scotia Community College; Andrea Wegerer, and she is a present board member; Cindy Staicer, a professor at Dalhousie University; Colin Grey is also a present board member, a retired police officer, a local naturalist, and I understand that Colin is the chair of the board. We have Jill Comolli, a retired health administrator and a naturalist; we have Jillian Weldon-Genges; we have John Gilhen; we have Leif Helmer, who is with the Nova Scotia Community College; we have Mike Silver, who is with the Department of Natural Resources - and, as I mentioned earlier, the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute staff and board members do partner with government, and Mike has been with the Department of Natural Resources for many years. Mike, I have known him for a number of years now and he's just an all-round great guy and certainly has worked admirably in the Department of Natural Resources.

There's also Peter Rogers who sits on the board, Mr. Speaker, and Peter Rogers is a community member and also a retired business person; we have Pierre Martel, and Pierre is also a community member and he is also a park warden; Rob Cameron is with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment, Protected Areas; Ron Russel, a Saint Mary's University professor; Steve Mockford, who is a professor with Acadia University; and Tom Herman, he is vice-president academic of Acadia University, vice-chairman, and he's in Kentville.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other volunteers: Diane Clapp, she is the treasurer and she also looks after some of the research around the species at risk, the Blanding's turtle; Harold Clapp is also a volunteer and he helps with research in lichens, mosses, turtles, and cougars; and Jeff Craft, Jeff researches geology, natural history, and he does a lot of the maintenance and groundskeeping - Jeff is from Greenfield.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to highlight all of those individuals who have come together under the umbrella of the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, and congratulate all of those folks on their leadership in the environment, and understanding the need to protect our natural environment. They also recognize the importance of a green economy and how a green economy certainly works hand-in-hand with a preserved environment.

I also want to point to another interesting designation that Queens has recently been awarded. UNESCO has recently designated part of the riding of Queens - it's known as the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, Mr. Speaker. This piece of land stretches not only throughout Queens but it stretches into the Annapolis Valley and parts of Shelburne and in Digby, I believe. This tract of land is so incredibly important to southwestern Nova because it features the largest protected wilderness area in the Maritimes. That is huge - again, it is the largest protected wilderness area in the Maritimes.

This tract of land is so rich in cultural history and heritage landscape, Mr. Speaker, it boasts Acadian forest, drumlins, rivers throughout this large tract of land. Seacoasts, cliffs, and beaches are part of this wonderful landscape. This biosphere reserve features diverse and unique plant and animal species - it's just an incredible tract of land. Countless generations of Mi'kmaq lived off that land for generations. Those lands have seen, in past generations, the settling of Acadians and Loyalists, and those settlers farmed and fished those lands. When you think of those generations living off that land, that indeed is a green economy. It's incredible to walk on some of those lands and understand some of the cultural and rich heritage of that landscape.

The residents who live around that biosphere certainly understand the significance of that protection and what it means today in terms of our local economy. What I can tell you is that when Queens County was given the news that Bowater Mersey would be closed, the community immediately picked themselves up by their bootstraps and started talking about our economic destiny and what it would look like in the future without a pulp and paper mill in the economic mix. Some of the presentations that I have been at focused on our rich natural landscape, and part of that rich natural landscape includes this beautiful tract of land that is protected and designated as the Southwest Nova Biosphere. Some of those presenters started talking about how we can highlight the fact that this beautiful tract of land is protected, but also how we can look at what potential economic benefits it can have for us in Queens County and beyond.

Some of the suggestions that have been put forward - I know that right now, as we speak, some people are working on projects that can see some economic benefit from this protected land. What community members want to do is showcase these protected lands to the world. We have this designation, we want to be able to showcase these beautiful lands to people in the form of hiking, perhaps - hiking trails throughout some of those lands. We want to be able to share the culture and the history of those lands. We want to be able to stand up and be proud of those lands and say, this is what we have accomplished with the partnerships that have come around the table to see that designation.

This truly is about environmental goals and sustainability when we see such a vast tract of land that can have potential economic value. There are many people who are working to make that happen. The Southwest Nova Biosphere hosts a volunteer board of directors, which includes many advisers from five municipalities. There is representation from Annapolis. There's representation from Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Queens.

There are also members from the First Nations community. There are community members who have volunteered as part of the board of directors with the biosphere. Our regional development authorities have also come to the table around the biosphere. Local industry has expressed interest in the biosphere and wanting to be an adviser to the biosphere. Many NGOs are also around the table. We have organizations that are well versed in the culture and heritage of the area, and we have many educational organizations that also are partners to the biosphere, and of course, we have other provincial and federal government partners as well. We have the Department of Environment, both provincially and federally, the Department of Natural Resources, and Parks Canada is also an influential partner with the biosphere.

These partners are gathered around the table looking at how best we can showcase this attractive land to the world and how we can gain some economic benefit while at the same time protecting this pristine wilderness.

I guess in conclusion, what I want to say, I want to come back to more of the specifics of the bill and the fact that our government has certainly taken a leadership role. We haven't forgotten the vision of this bill. We haven't forgotten the importance of partnering our environment with the economy. We certainly understand that it is now, in 2012, where the green economy is no longer considered a catch phrase. The green economy is an economy that will grow, expand, it will be accepted. Most will agree that we need to have strong leadership to have the full benefit of a green economy. We're doing just that, we've taken on that leadership role, unlike the Opposition members who feel we need to take it a little bit slowly in terms of our renewable energy project, we need to kind of slow the wheels down a little bit.

Basically what I hear the Opposition members saying is they really don't see that there is a need to grow the economy while at the same time looking at preserving the environment. I need to scratch my head at that because I'm a grandmom and to me it's very important that we continue on the path that we are on and that we recognize the importance of preserving and sustaining our natural environment.

When my granddaughter, Ruby - she is three years old and she's cute as a button, she's the delight of my heart - I can tell you, when she reaches my age I want her to be able to look back and say, my Grammy was part of a government way back when that really did care about the environment and really understood that we could not only protect and preserve and sustain an environment but she can say we also saw economic opportunity at the same time. Most of us who are parents, some of us are grandparents like myself, and some of us may not be parents but all of us have some connection to young people, most of us can say we know a young child that is growing up in today's crazy world with its changing climates and uncertainty in terms of energy security; in some places of the world, water security.



I'm pleased to stand here and say that we are concerned about those very things for future generations. We want to see a better future for our children and grandchildren and all of the children that we know in our lives. This government recognizes that it is not easy, some of the decisions we're making, but they need to be made and we are making them.

I am soon going to take my place because I think I've filled my time, unless you want me to continue. With that, I will take my seat and I look forward to this moving forward.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to make a few remarks about the Green Economy Act. While most of the amendments, where they're striking out words like "environmental in Nova Scotia", are fairly innocuous, we find it odd that the NDP Government would choose to remove these sorts of words when the bill is supposed to be about Nova Scotia's environment. You have to ask yourself, why are these changes being made in the first place? It seems like it might be busy work for the government to do this but then again, most of the government's work on the environment, over the past three and a half years, has been just that.

A lot of days when I come into work, I come across the MacKay Bridge and there is a sign along my route and it talks about the NDP clear-cutting. It actually turns out to be a law student who was so frustrated, who so thought that the NDP would deal with this issue, that he has actually taken what little money he has to take out billboards and put them up. I think a number of members in this House received a letter the other day outlining that and showing some pictures of the clear-cutting. I know we were just discussing here in our caucus how surprisingly shocking those photographs, in fact, are. So this person who believed that the NDP would in fact deal with the clear-cutting issue has been so upset that he has actually taken to putting up billboards to try to shame this government into doing something.

You have to ask yourself, if this government is concerned about the environment, why did they relax mercury emission targets instead of forcing Nova Scotia Power to do what they were supposed to do, which is get their facilities up to snuff? I remember the former Minister of Energy commenting on that change, saying it would be cheaper for Nova Scotians, even though it put public health at risk and endangered our environment. In fact, it wasn't cheaper. We recently found out that Liberty's audit of the FAM resulted in an extra \$3.6 million being spent by NSPI because of the matter.

The minister boasts about 14 of the 21 aspects having been achieved. It's good, but a lot of them were late and some, like the wetlands strategy and the water strategy, lacked any true detail, any true substance, which brings us to another point on this bill, a point that was raised when it first came into the House five years ago, and that is there are no enforcement provisions attached to this bill. So when Nova Scotia Power decides not to

meet another target, there are no repercussions; there's no stick; and you have to ask yourself where are the teeth to make sure companies and all people meet the goals laid out in the bill? There's nothing there.

That's not a new thing with this government, particularly with Nova Scotia Power, and they've been the chief apologist for Nova Scotia Power. They relaxed mercury targets when NSPI should have met them in 2010. Every other province signed on to this agreement but somehow Nova Scotia couldn't meet or exceed our targets. Every other province did it.

It's a common aspect of life under the NDP that that's exactly what happens. It's not to say we don't support these amendments but they lack substance for the most part. You know, I think the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville was talking about the new high school that's going in my riding. I was through there for a tour, I think it was early October when I got to go for a tour, and it was great to see the steps they're taking to make that a green building. They're going to use natural gas and it was quite a different physical plan than you would normally see in a building that didn't have that kind of fuel, so they will be able to heat and cool with natural gas.

The member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville made a claim that I was taking credit for the school in my newsletter. So I just actually happen to have the newsletter here, and it says, "New Bedford High School Update. On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, I was pleased to lace up some steel-toed boots for a tour of the new community centre/high school on Innovation Drive. Each day, about 150 workers are on site building our new facility; they have lost very few days to weather so far." Wow, taking a lot of claim there.

Then I go on, "PCL Construction Superintendent Sharif Hashem took Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Chief Architect Terry Smith Lamothe and me around the school - showing us places like this soon-to-be-green roof, the outdoor bandshell, casual student workspaces, and classrooms that overlook the basin. I came away from the tour very excited about the high school our students will soon experience."

The replacement school for Charles P. Allen High School is on time and on budget, and is expected to open in September 2013. HRSB requested a school built for 1,200 students and that is what is being built. While this new school can accommodate up to 1,400 students, I remain concerned our new school will be quickly overcrowded unless another new high school is soon built. (None has been approved by the Department of Education at this time.)"

HRM is building a community centre and gym attached to the school, and has upgraded the field with Astroturf and lights. Bleachers and the scoreboard have yet to come, but it's pretty exciting to see that field ready and waiting."

I have a couple of pictures of the facility there. So I'm not sure how the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville got so confused - he may have actually confused that with the issue of the field storage, which I have mentioned previously in this House and for which I will take some small credit for keeping the government's feet to the fire. But certainly I have never claimed credit for that high school, even though the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville may have thought so.

I did send my newsletter to the Speaker's Office before I sent it out, so I could not have claimed credit for the high school because that would have been inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table my newsletter and, with those few remarks, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand today and talk to Bill No. 136, the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. I would like to introduce a word that is not often used in this Legislature and I will spell it after I attempt to say it, it is "netukulimk" - spelled n-e-t-u-k-u-l-i-m-k. It's a Mi'kmaq concept and what it means is achieving adequate standards of community and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity and diversity or productivity of our environment.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 136, the Green Economy Act, strives to do just that. Nova Scotians care about their environment and are world leaders in recycling and waste management. In my area, the Whynotts Settlement Recycling Facility led the way for communities across the province. When my children were young, this facility was one of the first in Nova Scotia and made trips all over the world showing all the different procedures they were doing. My children learned all the recycling principles, they toured the facility, and then came home and taught their moms and dads exactly what recycling was all about - and usually a very good way to teach grown-ups is by teaching the kids and then they shame their grown-up parents into learning how to do all those things.

The awareness around recycling in our area is really huge. When my daughter, Claire, moved to Toronto, she was really shocked to see the number of people who did not recycle properly and was very proud of coming from an area of small, rural Nova Scotia that was really leading the world, and certainly leading her friends and she, in fact, has shamed all of them into learning how to recycle properly as well.

Mr. Speaker, the government knows that protecting the environment is about real changes that we make in our daily lives, such as recycling, and our government has shown leadership in this area in achieving many goals and, as the member for Queens and the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville have already noted, our government has achieved quite a number of goals, some worthy of mention again. The Natural Resources Strategy, which is something that is very important in our area, many of my constituents

were very involved in that and actually in the Colin Stewart Forest Forum one of my dear friends, Paul Pross, was certainly a contributor to that document.

The Wetland Conservation Policy is something that is also very important and it plays out in different ways. In my area there is a cranberry farm called Terra Beata and when you're starting to develop any sort of cranberry bog, if you're going to use land then you need to create another bog in another place. As a result of meeting with the people there, Mr. Ernst and his wife who are very ingenious people and have worked very hard to make their business a success explained a lot about this bill that really helped me understand how it works in practical terms.

Some of the other things that we've already achieved are sewage treatment facilities meeting guidelines. In Mahone Bay this is really quite significant, when you drive into my town there is a little sign that says "We love the beauty around us and we welcome you to share it." A number of years ago you didn't say we welcome you to share the beauty and not the water, because our little bay had raw sewage going into the bay. Our town of less than 900 people worked very hard to get a sewage treatment plant together, we realized that through public consultation; a lot of people in the town weren't for that, it meant raising taxes to deal with it, but we went ahead, bit the bullet and were one of the first small towns in our area to do such a thing. So now when we say we welcome you to share the beauty around us we also welcome you to share the water in Mahone Bay.

Some of the other goals that our government has already achieved: we have met the worldwide standard for airborne fine particulate matter; Canadian-wide standard for ground level ozone constituency has been met. The Building Code Act which includes energy efficiency for homes, in my area there is one of the first green communities in Nova Scotia called Hawthorn Hill and it is a hill and there were many many hawthorn trees on that hill, hence the name, and yet there are still lots of hawthorn trees there, but the development has gone into stage two which is building a new road and all the houses that are there are using environmental guidelines and people have come from all over the country to build their homes in this area and to live in the area. We're very proud that our constituent, Ian Startup, who started the project, is already in the successful stage two of the project.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the EGSPA legislation requirements a public review is needed every five years by a round table. The round table is a voluntary board consisting of members from legal, academic, industrial and environmental sectors who advise the Minister of Environment on environmental and sustainability issues. These people, when you look at the calibre and quality and breadth of this group, this round table, you can certainly understand that the kind of information that they will be bringing and sifting through will be of a very high calibre indeed.

Public engagement is a very important and key part of the EGSPA review. Over 70 participants attended the five public meetings that were held across the province and there

was great participation on the South Shore area. Over 80 written submissions were also received and from all this the round table was able to compile this information. The feedback that was provided by environmental groups, industry associations, municipalities and members of the public all contributed to this report. Mi'kmaq organizations, both on- and off-reserve peoples, also provided input and their unique look at a holistic vision of the world certainly gave another flavour to this review. This legislation on sustainable development has a broad support by stakeholders, and this integrated approach is certainly what this bill strives for. The goal of the Act is to “fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.”

The consultations that were part of this review revealed a wide variety of approaches and perspectives to improve the ability of EGSPA to achieve this integration. The round table's recommendations will guide EGSPA's success over the coming years, and some of their recommendations are as follows: they will focus more on the integration of environmental goals and the economy. That one was highlighted. It's really key, and it's what's informing a lot of our other strategies.

Another of the recommendations was to ensure that EGSPA aligns with and helps fulfill the government's core priorities by increasing awareness of the Act within government. Another recommendation was increasing the accountability of departments to uphold the Act, and providing mechanisms to encourage departments and sectors to pursue initiatives in accord with this legislation. Another recommendation was to include methods to evaluate and targets to adjust where necessary, and finally, to raise awareness and understanding and support of EGSPA among citizens of the province and communities and those sectors.

Blending continued economic growth featuring sustainable prosperity is the core concept of our government's approach. Our jobsHere strategy looks very closely at good environmental practices that can increase competitiveness for business and reduce cost. Innovative energy production and our renewable energy strategy will turn around our dependence on coal. This plan will take us to our 25 per cent renewables by 2015 and 40 per cent by 2020.

As part of the strategy, our Premier announced an historic agreement between Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia, which will give us access to 35 years of stable, renewable energy for all Nova Scotians. Our communities are now becoming very engaged in COMFIT programs, and one of my constituents, Keith Towse, has been working with First Nations and other groups to get a COMFIT plan happening in our area. The planning stages are well underway, and it looks like some ground-breaking work will actually happen very soon. I've spoken to many groups who are impressed with our government's achievements with environmental areas and look forward to us achieving more in this area.

I'd like to talk a little bit more about some of the things, the goals, that are in progress: legally protect 12 per cent of Nova Scotia's land by 2015: we're certainly well along that road to achieving that goal, and a lot of Nova Scotians are very impressed with how we're doing that. Some of the Opposition called it "buying dirt," but we know better.

One of the other things - municipal public drinking water supplies to meet provincial standards of 2008. In my town of Mahone Bay, a few years ago we just opened our water treatment plant. Again, for a very small town, not only do we have a state-of-the-art sewage treatment plant, but a water treatment plant which we're very proud of. Two years ago Lunenburg opened their water treatment plant, which is a wonderful thing.

Another goal that's in progress is primary treatment of waste water by 2017. We're reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 10 per cent below the 1990 level by 2020 and reducing mercury emissions by 70 per cent from 2001 levels by 2014.

We've heard a lot about this bill today. We've had a number of speakers talk about this, and I would like to say that the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, Bill No. 136, is moving our government and our province forward in many ways. To quote our Minister of Agriculture, "Environment is a requirement." Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: I'm pleased to join the debate because I was here when this Act passed through the House and it got the entire consent of the Legislature because we all know that sustainability for the province, sustainability and economic goals, when they are brought in harmony, is indeed a very good thing for our province. In fact, the last decade, decade and a half, maybe longer - I know when I was starting my teaching career, the environment started to become a major topic of discussion. We go back to the 1960s and a book like Rachel Carson's book was a watershed point in time where she brought, in very stark, real terms, what was happening in our environment - the myriad ways in which it was under attack.

From that point onward I know our school curriculum started to take a pretty strong look at how we could find a balance, how we could continue economic prosperity but also look after environmental needs, that ecological principles would, in fact, be part of the way in which we did good economic business. I think over the past several decades, as some of the discussion here has pointed out today, Nova Scotia has done a reasonably good job and one of the hallmarks, of course, is the way in which we look after our waste. We know that not just other countries - or states in the US - but many of our own provinces in Canada have a very weak effort in terms of recycling, reuse. With our garbage, with the things we discard, we have brought it to a whole new approach and our young people, in particular, have trained us as adults for even stronger, sound, environmental principles in our homes, around our yards, and in particular with waste.

So there are many areas that we could touch upon, but I think whenever this government leaves office, and that will be up to Nova Scotians to decide, one of the areas - and I noted in one of my first articles, after the election of 2009, a couple of areas that the NDP Government, after their time in office, would have that close examination and that real test as to what went on.

I was Natural Resources Critic at the time, and one of the developments that had started in the province was the development of a forest strategy. We know that all over Nova Scotia, in every county, our forests are a treasured resource in terms of all of the recreation uses, the unique habitats, the wildlife. Also, for generations Nova Scotians have used the forest to make a very good living, but our forests were under immense attack and we know that Voluntary Planning was one of the vehicles, one of the means in which we in Nova Scotia could get a very wide-lens view of what was happening in our forests.

Voluntary Planning, and their work across the province, brought to the table the scientific community, people who have worked in our forests. It brought the technicians. It brought all kinds of associations dealing with the environment, the wildlife federation - a whole range of people came together to speak about how they wanted to see the next 75 to 100 years shaped for the forests of our province.

We know that as a result, the plan came out - *A Natural Balance* - and we know that it set out some very, very strong recommendations as to how the forests of the future could be shaped. We knew that our forests were under immense stress, and possibly, many would say, reaching a tipping point. Before we lost one of our mills, we had moved to getting close to 10 per cent of our wood fibre having to be imported to keep our three mills going, because our forests were under that kind of stress to provide for the paper industry.

*A Natural Balance* was going to allow us to chart a new course. We all know that over the last couple of years we really haven't gotten down to the business of accepting the strongest recommendations. I just want to take a few minutes to point to one that I thought would be well underway by now, and that is that we would see a real difference in the amount of clear-cutting going on in our forests.

I know there are some wonderful examples of sustainable forest practice. We have some private woodlot owners, and I've gone to a few of these, to walk through some of their acres, or I've been taken through on a buggy, to look at what their operations are actually like. It's amazing when you go into a forest that has strong silviculture practices and also sustainable harvesting methods. There's a real difference from when you head into an area that has been clear cut and what it looks like afterward, and what it can look like for several years if you don't get some good management of the forest and you get the proper mechanical weeding in that forest. We all know what it can grow back to look like.

I think in the past week or so this whole issue - some may say, oh, it's just through the eyes of one Nova Scotian as he views the forest, but I think what Jamie Simpson put

before us as MLAs is something that we all need to take to heart. I know, yes, the member for Queens talks about the Tobeatic Wilderness, some of the Mersey lands and the riparian zones that need to be protected, but I've had the opportunity to fly over southwestern Nova Scotia and I can assure you that our forests in that area are not in very good shape. Once you take out Kejimikujik, the national park, and some other protected areas, there is tremendous devastation in that area of Nova Scotia.

I'm going to read into the record today - government is not going to like this, but I'm going to read Jamie's letter to MLAs. I think it is extremely relevant and it is something that we need to actually give some thought to:

"Dear MLA:

Three years ago I helped organize a rally of support for the NDP's promise to stop whole-tree harvesting and reduce clearcutting. People across Nova Scotia, representing a wide diversity of forestry interests, gave the NDP solid support to stop the destruction of our forest resources. The NDP put these promises in writing, and passed them through cabinet.

Sadly the NDP has, so far, failed to follow-through with these promises. These are strong words. But they are deserved. I'm a professional forester and woodlot owner. I've written a book on sustainable forestry, and I have worked as a logger. I've read every study and report on forestry harvesting methods in eastern North America. I've discussed forestry with woodlot owners, forest product manufactures and contractors across Nova Scotia. Please believe me that the NDP is complacent in the destruction of our forest and forest industry, and the people of the province know it. Simply put, every whole-tree clearcut the NDP allows eats away at the economic value and productivity of our forest resource. You are allowing the mining of our forest resource. Is this the legacy the NDP wishes to leave?

A professional logging contractor recently wrote to me (in response to the billboards):

*I moved to Nova Scotia from New Hampshire where I was a logging contractor. Almost all of my jobs were commercial thinning's [sic] and we left a good mix of uneven aged crop trees. I was proud of my work leaving the forest healthy and able to recut again in ten years or so.*

*When I moved here I was astounded by the horrible practices I saw. I could not believe this type of clear-cutting was allowed totally devastating the forest leaving a barren landscape and ruining*



*wildlife habitat with no good future for a healthy forest for a lifetime.  
It makes me sad.*

The NDP is failing to provide leadership on progressive forestry. The natural resources strategy review, which gave the NDP solid public support for progressive change, and comprehensive recommendations from the expert panel, appears abandoned. Worse still, the NDP recently redefined clearcutting. As a professional forester, the definition makes no sense to me. It seems its only purpose is to allow clearcutting to continue under a different name, and that is an embarrassment to our province.

I am dedicated to seeing Nova Scotia transition towards smart, sensible forestry policies that puts forest workers, communities, small business and the long-term viability of our forest industry first. I am always happy to discuss these issues. There are many solutions to this problem. All that seems lacking is political will to respect the wishes of Nova Scotians. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

Respectfully,

Jamie Simpson Registered Professional Forester . . .”

I'll table that for the House, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to go into an area with the member from Guysborough-Sheet Harbour; I went down to meet a couple of forestry operations there when I was Natural Resources Critic. I remember one of the walks in particular and the forester pointed out that this is crown land. When you come back, whether it is five years or 10 years, there is a good chance that a lot of this won't be standing. We're going to have to feed the 60 megawatt biomass mill and it isn't going to be by-product from the mill that is going to go in there. We're going to need a lot of hardwood.

He said, take this tree here for example, and he measured the circumference, looked at how straight the tree was, and he said this tree sold to the right hardwood plant is worth around \$250, one tree. I think it just points out that we have to look at our forest resource in a very different way than what we have been for several generations. When that document came out, *A Natural Balance*, and I read the work of Donna Crossland and Bob Bancroft. I said, you know, if we get about 50 per cent even of the recommendations in the direction of creating a healthy, viable forest, if we can get partway there, you know we will ensure future generations of Nova Scotians that they will truly be able to say we have made a difference. I think that was the golden opportunity that so far, and not just my view, but Nova Scotians are saying we now have a missed opportunity to make a difference in much of our forests across Nova Scotia.

I would remind the member for Queens that she talked about how her granddaughter will look at preserving some forest area but I think she'll also point out, my grandmother was part of a government that allowed whole-tree harvesting, the worst form of forest destruction that we can possibly ever have allowed to take place. This was something that I was pretty certain would come to an end. I thought this would come to an end over the past three years but we know it is still being practised in our province and it does, in fact, go against the best ecological principles, it goes away from strong forestry and an environmental balance in our forests.

So you know, we do need to make changes, there is no question about it. We have the blueprint, we have before us something that in fact is not available in some areas of the country that we could be in fact making sure that our forests for the next 100 years are well safeguarded and that all of us who have had a chance to fashion legislation, would have had a hand in making a strong forestry future in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take an opportunity to make a few comments, mostly in regard to the comments made by the member opposite. I'm quite close to the environmental concerns he raised around forestry. I think the member may want to go back further in history, to look at what the history of his Party is, in terms of forestry practices in this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: Make sure you speak about Don Downe.

MR. MACDONELL: That would be a very short conversation. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I want the honourable member and all members to be aware because I actually was the minister who was involved with the contract around the biomass plant at Stora, so the issue the member raised around the \$250 tree, that whole process is around highest and best use, so that trees that have that kind of value, at least the part of the tree that has that kind of value because it would probably be the butt log that has the most value, but certainly because the mill's responsibility to the Crown is to pay stumpage. Therefore, they're going to try to sell those trees in the best market they can so therefore, highest value.

Actually what was written into the contract is that they have to ensure highest value so that the high-quality trees are not chipped up and burned but more residual, lower quality parts of the tree, because you're certainly going to get into the tops and whatever that you may not get any significant good, straight, timber, so lower value certainly is the issue. The one issue around low-value trees is it provides a market that allowed them to get into stands that were mixed with fairly high quality, but low quality which were not feasible to take men and machinery into to harvest. This offered an opportunity to take the

higher-value components out of those stands and still sell that lower-quality material or make use of it, which would be in the biomass plants.

I think the member might want to think a bit - the letter he referred to talks about whole-tree clear-cutting, which is not actually the rule of thumb across this province. There are clear-cuts, for sure. Our whole-tree harvesting is not the rule of the day across this province. The issue around clear-cutting, to move to 50 per cent in five years, we all can debate whether that's low enough, and I think if you're comparing it to 97 per cent of the harvest being clear-cut in the province, moving to 50 per cent - that means if we assume a 10 per cent reduction year to year, in your first year you're going to have about 90 per cent clear-cutting, and in the next year you're going to have 80 per cent, and the next year you're going to have 70 per cent, until you get down to 50 per cent.

That allows the government the opportunity to evaluate just how this is going, whether our determination of site-specific harvesting will work. In other words, there are some stands where clear-cutting is a reasonable option when it comes to harvesting those stands, but we don't believe it's a reasonable option on all stands in the forest.

It is one where I think this government has shown foresight, vision, and action. Not only did they talk, but they walked the talk. This is one that I think - certainly with the Opposition on the other side of the House, and Nova Scotians generally - will be interesting to see in five or 10 years - did this really work? The government is interested to know what we put in place - has it achieved the goal we hoped it would? Then it's a question of if we should tweak this or do something different in order to get us there. I think Nova Scotians will help us do that. I think they truly will recognize that, when it came to change in forestry practices, this government did it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, first of all, to the members opposite, I want to acknowledge that in the discussion tonight - the recognition that all Parties supported EGSPA initially. Also there were some great quotes that came from the Opposition. I just want to highlight them for the record.

First of all, Nova Scotia is the first jurisdiction in the country to have this kind of legislation. This was acknowledged, and I want to recognize that. A couple of quotes from the Opposition, and I think my staff will probably be recording them as I speak, but what I made note of is that EGSPA is a copy that's used around the world. The second one: EGSPA has been a model used in other places. These are great quotes, and I'm sure my staff will be documenting them.

Just to conclude, I want to thank my colleagues here for their kind comments and remarks. I move second reading of Bill No. 136, the Green Economy Act. Thank you very much for your attention.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 136. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

#### **PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 139.

#### **Bill No. 139 - Sisters of Saint Martha Consolidation Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 139 - an Act to Amend Chapter 141 of the Acts of 1918, an Act to Amend and Consolidate the Acts Respecting the Sisters of Saint Martha - be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, for the most part this is a housekeeping bill but there are one or two substantive portions of it as well. With your indulgence, before looking at the bill proper, I would like to - I'm sure many of my friends in the House know the Sisters of Saint Martha and have had positive experiences with them; I certainly have. My personal experiences with the Sisters of Saint Martha are family related. Three of my mother's sisters, three of my aunts, were members of the Sisters of Saint Martha and I personally have been involved with the Sisters of Saint Martha since I can remember.

One of my earliest memories of the Sisters of Saint Martha was in Antigonish when my family travelled to Antigonish, to Bethany, the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Martha, to visit one of my aunts who was stationed there at the time. I remember being dressed in a blue serge suit. It was probably the first suit I ever had. I was probably seven or eight years of age. At that time the Sisters were totally self-sustaining. They ran a farm

from which they grew all their own food, meats and vegetables, and that kind of thing. When I said self-sustaining, they made their own clothes; they even made their own shoes; but, in any event, this Sunday afternoon I remember being there and I went out to the barn where the hens were kept and decided that I would help the Sisters by collecting some of the eggs for them. So I did take the eggs and I put them in my coat pocket and my pants pocket and walked from the henhouse back to the Motherhouse, and you can imagine what happened with the eggs.

So my history with the Sisters is a long-standing one and it has been a very positive one for me. They've been a tremendous support over my lifetime, really, in terms of the connections I've been able to have with them. But I want to tell the members of the House a little bit about the Sisters themselves. The Sisters of Saint Martha date their official time from 1900, from the year 1900, but in fact for a few years just prior to that, they were in existence. They officially came into being in 1900 but were not incorporated until 1907 and 1907 was when they had their certificate of incorporation. Following that, there were a number of changes made in their documentation but the last major change was in 1918. The bill that we're looking at today, Bill No. 139, is basically amendments to that 1918 Act.

As I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, the bill is basically a housekeeping bill. Because this is a 1918 Act that we're amending, some of the language in that Act is quite historic and quite - I guess archaic would be the best word to use for it, and I'll give you an example of that. If you look at Clause 2 of the bill, they talk about some of the kinds of things that the Sisters did in their time. They had a property tax exemption for the properties that they held, to do the work they did, and these are the kinds of properties that were exempt: a training school for nurses, hospitals, orphanages, infants' homes, infirmaries, sanatoria, reformatories, refuges and other charitable and - I'm going to have trouble with this one - eleemosynary institutions. So that's the kind of language that was in the 1918 bill and that's one of the reasons we're coming forward with this bill today. (Interruption) Eleemosynary is charitable work, charitable institutions.

So that is one of the reasons we're coming forward today. This bill is - as I said, there are substantive parts of it as well, one of them is that it contains in it a clause that allows them to wind up the organization. Of course the original Act would not have had that in it, but this new Act does allow that to happen, this bill allows that to happen - not that that's anything on the horizon, but it's kind of, again, as a housekeeping measure.

The Sisters of Saint Martha are still quite a lively organization. Although there's no one in the novitiate today, they do have some fairly young members and they are a going concern. That's one of the things that I wanted to emphasize.

This bill also deals with the Sisters amending their objects to comply more readily with the CRA requirements to establish or to maintain charitable status. The Sisters actually have, if you look at the objects of the corporation as is noted in this bill, one of the

objects of course is the relief of poverty; a second object is the advancement of education; a third object is the advancement of religion, of course; and the fourth object is other purposes beneficial to the community. Those are the four pillars, I guess, that you would call that the CRA looks at in determining whether an organization is entitled to have charitable status. The Sisters of Saint Martha have had that charitable status since their beginning and are maintaining it now, and are still active on all four of these heads.

People will know that the Sisters of Saint Martha have been an incredibly strong force in health promotion in the province. The original St. Martha's Hospital was built by the Sisters of Saint Martha and it was built on their property. In order to fund that hospital, they mortgaged their Motherhouse and the properties they had to raise the money to build the hospital. They built hospitals in Cape Breton as well and, actually, out West in Canada.

Later on, a second time, they mortgaged their Motherhouse in order to get the funds to build the R.K. MacDonald Nursing Home in Antigonish. That's the kind of work the Sisters have done, and are doing, and continue to do.

I could talk about the Sisters of Saint Martha in detail for a lengthy period of time, but I want the House to realize that us agreeing to have this bill go forward for them enables them to bring their incorporation documents up to date, to modernize them. Basically the old documents talked about the leadership being Mother Superior or Sister Superior, that kind of thing, and this changes the documentation to talk about the president of the company and the vice-president of the company and that sort of thing. It is really business language - I'm not sure if they're very comfortable with it, but the advice they have is that they should go forward with these changes.

I should say as well that the changes that were proposed had been vetted by CRA, and approved by CRA in terms of them being able to carry on with their charitable status.

So again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I could go on. There are a couple of points I wanted to make, I guess. Basically this bill does not give the Sisters any additional powers; it doesn't make any substantial changes that give them any more in terms of property protection or anything of that nature. Again, it's basically an update of old language at this time. I guess modernizing it is basically what I'm trying to say, particularly with reference to the dissolution clause that didn't exist previously. Those are the major changes here.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I would move second reading of this bill: an Act to Amend Chapter 141 of the Acts of 1918, an Act to Amend and Consolidate the Acts Respecting the Sisters of Saint Martha. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 139. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 97.

#### **Bill No. 97 - Fairer Power Rates Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today on third reading of the Fairer Power Rates Act, Bill No. 97. Today I want to reaffirm this government's commitment to making electricity rates fairer and easier for families to manage, as part of their household budget. I know people have been frustrated and concerned about power rates, in fact, in my own home town of Pictou I have been on the doorsteps and I've heard directly from people that it is a concern to them.

I just want them and other Nova Scotians to know, the government is ensuring the lowest electricity rates possible and that is exactly what we're going to do. We've brought this legislation forward that will permanently remove executive bonuses from being paid, even in part, by ratepayers. We're also recommending that executive salaries are capped at a level that is comparable with the senior civil service, with that of a deputy minister level in the public service. Anything above that level of compensation would have to be paid by shareholders themselves.

We're also recommending no further rate increase applications until 2015. On top of this we want all rate applications filed on a multi-year basis in order to reduce costs that are charged to ratepayers for that hearing process. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that a hearing can cost as much as \$2 million? If you cut down on those rate hearings, then that will save money for ratepayers in this province.

I know the Progressive Conservatives want to freeze electricity rates and move to renewable power over a much longer period of time but I think that's really chaining us to the past. On the other hand, the Liberals have introduced their Ratepayer Protection Bill that would see deregulation as well as end the stakeholders' ability to come to a mutual settlement agreement.

It is important to remember that the Progressive Conservative Party were the ones that privatized Nova Scotia Power and then it was the Liberal Government that followed up on that and again the practice of having ratepayers pay those high salaries and executive bonuses in the first place went through Emera - the establishment of Emera. We just don't think it is fair that ordinary Nova Scotians - ordinary ratepayers, the families of this province, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet - have to pay those executive bonuses and high salaries. This bill will end that, permanently.

This government has a plan to address the rising costs of electricity. Our plan is focused on making sure that Nova Scotia does not repeat the same mistakes that past governments made. It is focused on protecting the interests of future generations while also protecting our environment. It is focused on helping Nova Scotians, in the short term, as we move to a more stable, diverse and cleaner electricity system.

We're standing up for Nova Scotians. We're standing up to ensure they get the lowest, fairest rates over both the short term and the long term. To do this we must change the way that we power our province. The status quo is no longer acceptable. The cost of imported coal has gone up about 75 per cent in the past seven years and for too long previous governments ignored this issue and clung to an electrical system of the past.

We need to take action, and we need to take action now to address this. That's why we're developing local, more renewable sources of energy to get us off expensive, imported coal. We're blessed here in Nova Scotia with many good sources of home energy from wind, tidal, sustainable biomass, hydroelectricity, and so on. It's why our government is today saving Nova Scotians 10 per cent on each power bill by cutting the provincial portion of the HST from electricity - something the Leader of the Official Opposition called bad public policy in a debate that he participated in in 2009. I don't agree with that at all. I think it is a good public policy, so we're removing the HST from home heating. That already saved the average Nova Scotian more than \$700 on their home electricity bill.

Not only would the Liberals put that HST back on the home heating but they would also ensure rates go up, because they are promoting deregulation. Deregulation will cost 30 to 50 per cent more than what it is presently. It has not worked in Alberta; it has not worked in Ontario; it has not worked in California; it has not worked in Maryland. It has not worked anywhere it's been tried. Our proposed legislation will also cap salaries that are charged to ratepayers, will limit the number of costly rate hearings, and ensure board-ordered savings reviews on Nova Scotia Power.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask you what the Liberals have done. Well, the Liberals introduced legislation that would force Nova Scotia Power to set performance standards around reliability and impose a significant fine to Nova Scotia Power when they aren't met. The fact is that there is already a system in place that will protect Nova Scotians. The URB already mandates Nova Scotia Power to maintain a reliable and high-performance electricity system. I'm surprised the Opposition wasn't aware of that.



A reliable electricity system is important in our daily lives. It's important for our economy. Regulators have set standards for reliability for utilities right across North America. Nova Scotia Power is obligated to meet all of these mandatory North American industry operational and planning standards. It is already subject to independent third-party audits by the regulatory authorities, including our own Utility and Review Board. It must meet rigorous standards set out by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation and also the Northeast Power Coordinating Council.

Nova Scotia Power is also required to remain in good standing with the Maritime Reliability Coordinator, which, as we know, is the New Brunswick system operator. Third-party audits are carried out by each of these organizations to ensure compliance, and Nova Scotia Power has been found to be constantly compliant. Furthermore, the URB can conduct independent audits and benchmark it on Nova Scotia Power's electricity service reliability. The URB can initiate - and has done so in the past - third-party audits and Nova Scotia Power's electricity service reliability benchmarking of both their system and of their performance.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition is touting deregulation as way to reduce electricity prices, and I don't believe that Nova Scotians can afford that. As I mentioned, it has failed in Alberta, it has failed in Ontario - it has failed anywhere it has been tried. All it has done is caused huge rate spikes in those provinces or states. Nova Scotia Power is obligated by law to serve all Nova Scotian loads at the lowest possible cost while meeting the system reliability and its environmental obligations. The Utility and Review Board, an independent body, ensures that that happens.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Opposition of how we got here today. Nova Scotia has a history of using imported coal as the main source of fuel to generate electricity. Coal is dirty, it's expensive, it's imported, and it's a polluting source of fossil fuel. We understand that the path of the future is through renewable, local, and regional sources of clean energy - sources like wind power, tidal power, sustainable biomass, local hydroelectricity, and even cleaner natural gas is an alternative.

In 2010 our government released its Renewable Electricity Plan to promote and develop both large-scale and small-scale renewable electricity projects, but we didn't stop there. We also put into place renewable targets that would see 25 per cent renewables by 2015 and 40 per cent by 2020. We've also placed hard caps on greenhouse gas emissions in our electricity to help meet both our environmental and our energy objectives.

I should mention that we were recognized as a province for being a world leader at the Copenhagen Summit in 2009, recognized by the United Nations Commission on Climate Change.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our plan is working. We're also bringing in measures to help Nova Scotians save energy in their own homes, while adding green jobs to our

economy. Programs through Efficiency Nova Scotia have saved Nova Scotians across this province more than \$200 million in energy savings. I know the Liberals want to eliminate that program but it's working for Nova Scotians.

As I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker, our electricity plan takes us out to the year 2020 and we are confident we are on track to meet both the renewable targets and the greenhouse gas targets that we have in place. I think that's a good thing that we did because the new federal coal regulations have set an emission target out to 2030 that would have us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by a further three megatons over the 2020 target. That means that we, as a province, must tap into more sustainable sources of energy in order to meet that target. If not, the federal government is going to do it for us and they'll do it their way and that would carry a substantial price tag, somewhere in the range of an estimated \$1.3 billion.

So getting off coal is no longer simply a choice, it is now a federal requirement. That is where hydroelectricity from the Lower Churchill comes in. The Lower Churchill will ensure the lowest, fairest rates over the long term. It will provide Nova Scotia with access to renewable power at fixed rates for 35 years. It will really put us in an energy loop, instead of being at the end of the line. This means that we will have more choices; we will be able to take power from multiple directions at market rates.

Mr. Speaker, the hydroelectricity from the Lower Churchill will also be a reliable energy source to back up our increasing use of intermittent energy, energy like wind and tidal. Of course this project will create good jobs for Nova Scotians right here at home.

So we know the impact of the cost of imported coal and electricity bills right across this province and we're doing something about it. Mr. Speaker, we're standing up for Nova Scotians to ensure that we have the lowest, fairest electricity rates possible, while we pursue the lowest cost option for stabilizing rates over the longer term.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the time and for the members' attention and I look forward to what other members may have to say. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the minister like to move third reading?

MR. PARKER: I move third reading of Bill No. 97.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise again to speak on Bill No. 95, the Fairer Power Rates Act. (Interruption) No. 97 - I want to thank the honourable minister for that, it's like so much of this bill, it really doesn't mean a whole lot to ordinary Nova Scotians so the number, whether it's 95 or 97, probably won't make a lot of

difference either, but I understand for clarification in the House and for recording in Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, I hear some people talking over there. I'm looking forward to the opportunity when they get up and chat about this particular piece of legislation that actually does nothing to the power bills in the Province of Nova Scotia. As a matter of fact, it will have zero impact on the people of Nova Scotia except for the fact that power rates are going to increase 3 per cent as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. This minister has been unable to act and defend the ratepayers of this province, yet he stands up in this House, time after time, and defends the status quo of Nova Scotia Power.

Mr. Speaker, the executive compensation package that the minister seems to be talking about in this bill has been dealt with for quite some time. As a matter of fact, in the last two rate hearings before the Utility and Review Board, the executive compensation package was not part of the rate hearing. It had been set aside and was being covered outside of the rate hearing and being covered by the company. We do support the concept that that should be taken completely out of the rate and be legislated, that the executive compensation should be capped and that the bonuses should never be part of any future rate hearing is a positive thing, one that I know the member for Dartmouth East has talked about time and time again. As a matter of fact, he has introduced legislation in this House that would have legislated that a year and a half ago if the government had seen fit to recognize it then, and really, if they had asked him, many of these pieces of this bill would have been part of some of the solutions facing Nova Scotians.

It was interesting for me to listen to the minister stand and talk about the fact that audits are available now as a tool for the Utility and Review Board to use. Mr. Speaker, a year and a half ago, I would say, the minister and the Premier stood in this House and told all members of this House that the Utility and Review Board could order a performance-value audit if they wanted to, but what do we have now? A piece of legislation that would actually put it in place, because they now have realized that it wasn't an option for the Utility and Review Board. But instead of legislating the fact that that should happen every year or two, that in fact the cost of that audit should be borne by the utility, what the minister has done is actually laid in place and just made the option available to the Utility and Review Board.

So technically, Mr. Speaker, what he has done here is put another tool in the hands of the Utility and Review Board without any measurables around it, without forcing this company to undergo a performance-value audit. It has been the view of this caucus that there should never be another rate hearing that brought an increase in the Province of Nova Scotia until we do a performance-value audit of this utility to ensure that all of the tough decisions that every other small business and every other business operator in this province has had to make inside of their own operation - that this utility does the same thing.

We know they have a history of not doing that. They have a history of quite a substantial amount of largesse inside of this utility and expecting ratepayers time after time after time to pick up the tab. It was only about a year and a half ago that I had the privilege to be in front of the Utility and Review Board asking the president of Nova Scotia Power questions about the executive compensation, and he made it very clear that it's not in the interest of Nova Scotia Power or the executives to look after shareholders. It's in their interest to look after themselves. When he laid out the fact that they reduced the number of executives from 12 to eight but the compensation package remained the same, it clearly tells you that they are not on the side of consumers in this province. They are on the side of themselves and their largesse and the shareholders of that utility.

Mr. Speaker, when the government sits idly by and allows that to happen, it tells you what side of the equation they're on as well. It's not on the side of Nova Scotia ratepayers. It's on the side of shareholders and not ratepayers. If this government stood for ratepayers, this bill would be completely different. There would be no rate increase until a performance-value audit was done on this utility. It's pretty straightforward. The minister has the ability to do that today. The minister has had the ability to do that. Forcing the Utility and Review Board to do a performance-value audit of Nova Scotia Power would be a small gesture on his part before he allowed them to increase any power bills in the Province of Nova Scotia.

During his remarks, the minister spoke about reliability and how this utility has met every benchmark that has been put in front of it. I'm not sure that Nova Scotians would agree with that, that they would consider the reliability of this utility to be top-notch. If this minister was serious about making sure that the reliability of the asset was top-notch, they would put measurables in place to make sure that this government reached standards that were being set. It's interesting - if the minister goes down to any rate hearing, in any rate increase, if he looks at when this utility starts negotiating, which aspect of the rate increase that they're going to give away, take away, if they reduced by a point here or a point there, the first thing they attack and the first thing they go toward is vegetation management.

Mr. Speaker, anyone in the utility business, whether it's in this province or any other province, recognizes reliability. In order to have serious reliability in the province, vegetation management is at the forefront. Many of the outages that happen in this province are the very fact of poor vegetation management. The utility acknowledges that and utilities across the country acknowledge that, but where is the first place they go when it comes to shaving a few dollars off here and there? It's not the executive compensation packages; it's not the bonuses being handed out; it's toward the issue of vegetation management, which directly speaks to reliability of their service.

One of the other things that the minister spoke about is the utility's responsibility to find the lowest cost options to meet their responsibility to ensure that Nova Scotia customers are not being - I'll say gouged. It was refreshing, recently, to hear the Utility and Review Board say, you know what? The biomass plant in the Strait area is not the cheapest

source of energy that this province could acquire nor is it necessary to put it on-line to meet the goals of the sustainability Act that is before this House. They said to the government, you're going to have to legislate it. It was refreshing to hear them say that and I'm looking forward to that discussion, whenever that happens during this session, because the Deputy Minister of Energy and the Minister of Energy have made it clear that they're going to put that source of energy production on-line. That is not the cheapest source of energy that could be acquired for this province; just ask the Utility and Review Board.

The minister's issue of saying they are going to move toward legislating with a biomass plant in the Strait area means he's prepared to drive power rates up; there's no other way around it. The Utility and Review Board have said straightforwardly, they can find cheaper energy and this government is going to have to regulate it.

One of the things that has been talked about an awful lot in this province is renewable energies. There has also been talk about this monopoly that we have that really is the only game in town, so to speak. One of the things, as we are moving toward the renewable energy sector, there were things called IPPs that were being out, independent power purchase agreements. Part of that document and part of the regulations around the IPPs was that Nova Scotia Power was not supposed to be part of any of those IPPs. It was an opportunity for renewable energy producers to be able to access the energy market in the Province of Nova Scotia.

In the infinite wisdom of the Premier they've now allowed Nova Scotia Power to have partial ownership of some of these IPPs. Recently there were two announced, each of them were 49 per cent owned by Nova Scotia Power. When you say it that way, you wonder what impact that is having on the rates of Nova Scotia Power and what it means to Nova Scotia customers. What it means is that 49 per cent of those two renewable energy projects are going to end directly on the equity sheet of Nova Scotia Power, which means that Nova Scotia customers are going to pay a 9 per cent return on that.

The equity of this company has grown substantially, almost 20 per cent in the last four years, which means an additional 9 per cent is being borne by the rate base in the Province of Nova Scotia, unnecessarily. If this government had had the courage to stand by and not be bullied by the utility - not be persuaded by the utility might be a better choice of words, to follow the company line - what we could potentially have - and this is a very diverse renewable energy sector in the Province of Nova Scotia being owned by the private sector, being able to sell that energy back to Nova Scotia. As a matter of fact, the most recent renewable energy agreement, I think, signed kilowatt around 7 cents? Would that be somewhat accurate - around 7 cents? Pretty good deal, the only problem with it is the utility owns 49 per cent of it, so we're not only paying for the energy, we're going to pay a 9 per cent return on 49 per cent of that, so we're getting hit in both directions.

If this government had only had the courage to stand by the IPP, the original intent, which was really to diversify the energy production in this province and allow renewable

energy producers to sell directly into the marketplace, to sell to our utility and force them to buy it at a reasonable rate, Nova Scotians could be purchasing reasonable renewable energy power today and not paying 9 per cent rate of return on that agreement. That's where we are. And do you know what? Until the government finally says to Nova Scotia Power, you are not going to set the energy rules for the people of the Province of Nova Scotia, we're going to continue to be held at ransom by this utility, no matter what happens.

The minister spoke about the efficiency tax that is on every power bill in the Province of Nova Scotia - some people refer to it as the NDP electricity tax - the minister knows and the Premier knows that prior to the last election they believed that should be paid for by Nova Scotia Power and its shareholders. That's what they believed in May 2009 - as a matter of fact they believed it in the early days of June 2009 - and it wasn't until late June 2009 and early July after Nova Scotians had voted that they changed their mind and decided that tax belonged on every power bill in the Province of Nova Scotia.

What you have is a tax being borne by every ratepayer in the Province of Nova Scotia, regardless of your ability to pay. Regardless of your ability to access the programs you're still being forced to pay; in other words, low-income Nova Scotians who can't pay the power bill, who arrive at the door of every constituency office in the Province of Nova Scotia looking for help, are paying an efficiency tax so that the wealthiest in our province can access efficiency programs. How is that fair? How is that fair? (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I will give it to the member for Hants East when he talks about taking the HST off, but what I'm going to tell you is it completely disingenuous for any member of that government who went and knocked on doors and said they're going to take HST off and then, right after they voted, slamming an efficiency tax on top of the power bill. That is completely disingenuous. (Applause) It's one thing to stand on the doorsteps to tell Nova Scotians half the truth, maybe next time they'll knock and explain the full truth: that we will give with one hand, but we're going to take a lot more with the other hand. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, it was 8 per cent. They also didn't tell they were going to increase the HST by 2 per cent on every other consumable item in the Province of Nova Scotia. They didn't tell them that. We'll give them that, but the rest of the story is (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order.

MR. MCNEIL: But the rest of the story is that while they may have taken \$36 million off of every power bill with the reduction of the HST, they've added \$46 million to the power bills across this province with the NDP electricity tax - and that's not what they told Nova Scotians before they voted. It's something that they delivered to them in the month of July, after they had voted.

We believe in the efficiency programs, the question is, who should pay? It's Nova Scotia Power who should pay, not every ratepayer. I hear a member saying "on the rate base." The problem is they don't have the courage to tackle the rate of return. That's the problem. They think it is okay for Nova Scotia Power to take \$130 million out of the pockets of hard-working Nova Scotians and funnel it out of our province, funnel it out to build their energy portfolio somewhere else. In Maine, St. Lucia, they've invested in Ontario, in the northeastern pipeline - why are they so afraid to say some of that \$130 million belongs in the Province of Nova Scotia and should pay for the efficiency programs that your customers could benefit from? This is about ratepayers. Unfortunately for that group, it's only about shareholders and the utility. (Applause)

This bill, Bill No. 97, does nothing to protect Nova Scotia ratepayers today, and it will do nothing to the power bills that are going to arrive in the mail next month and the month after. It will do nothing to help Nova Scotians be able to afford the NDP electricity plan.

The minister talked about Lower Churchill, talking about that is going to be the answer for all that ails the Province of Nova Scotia. I'm looking forward to the day when the minister can stand in this House, or the Premier, and tell us actually how much that project is going to cost and what it will mean to the power bills.

They can't. In the absence of any real solution to deal with the power problems in the Province of Nova Scotia, they're trying to grab onto what is going on in Newfoundland and Labrador, and hope that when it arrives here it comes in somewhere reasonable.

Before we attach ourselves to it - and we're interested to see what is going to happen - we think they should look at it. It's an important project, it's one that we should be looking at. But before we assign our full commitment to that project, you would think the government would want to understand the cost of it and what it would mean, but then again, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has written large cheques to corporations without any idea of the amounts and just let them fill them in at some later date.

We should be cautious about this. It's my hope that as the minister moves into the holiday season, as he starts his new year, that he starts looking at other alternatives, looking at the option of bringing in renewable energy from Quebec. As you know, Point Lepreau is down in New Brunswick - I think it's around 600 megawatts. That energy was being purchased from the Province of Quebec. Why aren't we asking, what about purchasing that? The Province of Quebec just signed an agreement - I believe it was with Vermont - for six cents a kilowatt. Is that too cheap for us? We only want to buy high-cost energy? It was at Point Lepreau, it's coming into New Brunswick, why not explore the possibility of bringing that energy in?

Mr. Speaker, let's move away from the idea that the only people in this province who can deal and solve our energy problems is Nova Scotia Power. The best thing we can

do is break that monopoly and allow competition in the energy market, the very thing that the IPP was supposed to allow to happen, allow renewable energy producers outside of the utility, who weren't going to be held to task by the utility, they were going to build their projects, they were going to be able to bring a power purchase agreement and sell that energy into the grid. What's wrong with that? Why are we opposed to that?

Mr. Speaker, the most recent one was at seven cents. If we can deliver Lower Churchill power to Nova Scotia for seven cents, I think the president of Emera and Nova Scotia Power would have let us in on that little secret long before now.

Mr. Speaker, this is about trying to provide relief for Nova Scotians. If this really was about trying to provide relief for Nova Scotians, they would have prevented the rate increase that is going to go forward in January until a performance value audit was done on Nova Scotia Power. They would allow renewable energy producers to sell directly to customers, to allow competition in a highly regulated market, to allow Nova Scotians to have some choice. That can't be a bad thing, to allow Nova Scotians to have a choice, that's what this government should be pushing towards, not bringing in legislation that would allow Nova Scotia Power to have a rate increase this year and a rate increase the year after.

Mr. Speaker, I've said this before and I'll say it again, look out for the third year, when all the deferred costs that they've been allowed to push off, come back to roost because there will be a bill to pay if we do not change the way the government deals with this utility. We need to start forcing this utility to take responsibility for its own decisions and pay some of the freight when it comes to delivering energy costs to the people of this province. They can't take all the gravy and expect the ratepayers to pick up all of the scraps. It is time that the Government of Nova Scotia brought in meaningful legislation that would have a true impact on the ability of Nova Scotians to pay their power bills now, not in 2015 or, shall we say, after the next election, to quote the chief executive officer of Emera. That relationship between government when he talked about how wonderful it's going to be that we will be able to - we were prepared to shave off half of our point, one-quarter of our point.

AN HON. MEMBER: Chief financial officer.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I don't know, if someone wants to correct - did I refer to somebody wrong? Do you want me to correct it?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's Chief financial officer.

MR. MCNEIL: I'll correct it, if you like - chief financial officer from Emera. So they got that right, Mr. Speaker, so they know him quite well, they got that part right. The fact of the matter is (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, that Emera knows who is buttering their bread in this House, and it's the government of the day. They know this government is going to allow them to run roughshod over the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. They know that



it's the NDP Government that will be unwilling to stand up and defend them. Do you remember during the last election when the president of Nova Scotia Power said it would be good for the utility if the NDP got into power? I know why, because they have allowed Nova Scotia Power to run roughshod over the ratepayers ever since. It's time this government did its job and that is to protect the ratepayers and not the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power.

Mr. Speaker, I want to finish off by telling you - and I'm looking forward to part of this debate - this bill will have zero impact on protecting Nova Scotia customers from the 3 per cent increase that is coming this January, and the 3 per cent coming later on. It will have zero impact to help protect the customers against the increases coming from the FAM. This government has done nothing to protect the ratepayers, but what they have done is they've allowed the chief financial officer of Emera to go to Ontario and go to the money markets and say, don't worry, our government will make sure that our share doesn't drop, our Government of Nova Scotia, the NDP Government, will make sure that we protect the interests of Emera over the ratepayers. That's what we've got, is the utility, Emera, the chief financial officer going into Ontario saying, the NDP Government will make sure that if you give us your money you'll get a healthy return on it because the ratepayers of Nova Scotia have no choice because the Government of Nova Scotia won't stand up to help them, they are only going to make sure that Emera has its money.

Mr. Speaker, if that minister wanted to do something to help Nova Scotians, if he wanted to do something to help the rate base in this province it would be to put a halt to what is happening in the Utility and Review Board and force a performance value audit of Nova Scotia Power and deny any rate increase until that audit is done. With those few words I'll take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I am pleased to have a few minutes this afternoon to take part in this debate, on Bill No. 97, something the government would like you to believe and the minister and the Premier would like you to believe is fair for Nova Scotians when it comes to power rates. I guess it doesn't matter if I talk for five minutes or 55 minutes, the unfortunate piece is nothing will change because that's the way it is in here with a majority government and they are going to see the bill through. We've heard quite a bit in the last few minutes, but when I think about fairer power rates I think about those people out there - I'd like us to go out - and we stand here in our place on behalf of all Nova Scotians, we brought amendments forward to this bill in an effort to make it better, stronger, things that we feel that should be done from both the Liberal caucus and from the Tory caucus.

We think that there were some things worthy of further debate. I know through the Law Amendments Committee, unfortunately, things were immediately shot down although our honourable members made efforts to see some amendments made and perhaps brought back to make this a better bill. I've heard others talk about bringing bills

forward. I know, Mr. Speaker, as do others, that I have brought bills forward in this House that we could have debated long ago, but government chose that that was not worthy of debate although here we are today talking finally about fairer power rates it's just that it's missing a wee bit of substance, quite a wee bit, as a matter of fact.

When we think this bill is so good, if the minister thinks this bill is so good, I'd like to bring him down to Hants County and I'd like to introduce him to seniors that are out there that when I say to them I don't know how you live on that income and they say you know what, Chuck, I don't, I exist. Part of our struggle is this and I'm going to tell you every one of them mentioned the same thing, and I know we all face that around rural Nova Scotia and different parts, health care issues, et cetera, and so on, for these folks trying to pay their rent and now on top of that we've seen increase after increase after increase in their power bills. They are wondering where it will end.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the answer is nobody really knows at this point in time because the government is going to allow again this Fall, 3 per cent, maybe, depending on what's resolved, and again the following year another one. They could have stopped that now. They have the power to stand here and introduce a bill like this, they have the power to step on them and say enough is enough, let's take a time out here. Let's review and let's say that this is good.

We talked a lot about Muskrat Falls in the days leading up to where we are now in this House, Mr. Speaker. We know that this is not a done deal yet, but the government is adamant to push it through without even thinking about the alternatives. We have asked how many times - I don't know how many times, many times I know that I've asked and others have asked - what's the cost? You know, people are asking, what's this going to cost us? This is a big deal. They're reading about it in the media, they're doing this and they're doing that but they're not getting all the real facts.

I looked at a review this afternoon from Newfoundland and Labrador, from the Public Utility Board, that has been going on for some time. It's far from a done deal there and depending on which media source you listen to and watch in Newfoundland and Labrador, you'll see that it's not altogether maybe the greatest thing on behalf of some Newfoundlanders and Labradorians They're concerned about issues over there and rightfully so. This is a big deal for Newfoundland and Labrador as well as for Nova Scotia potentially and, you know, there's nothing wrong with looking at renewable energy sources and we've said that many times, we'll continue to say that, at a pace that's affordable.

When the minister stands up, Mr. Speaker, and he said that their government wants to put something forward that is the best rates, fairer power rates for Nova Scotia, but yet you can't determine what a fairer power rate is, I think Nova Scotians have a hard time buying into that and accepting, you know, that this is a real opportunity when they really don't know what the opportunity consists really of and when it comes to prices, people

want to know what their budgets are. Many people are living paycheque to paycheque, who are working every day, both parents are working, or both people are working in the family, sometimes more (Interruptions) the working poor sometimes referred to, and a lot of people refer to themselves as being part of that group, and in this province times are hard, they realize that. They know what the economy is like, not only in Nova Scotia but around the world. They know how things are.

They still have hope, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a better time as we move forward this year, next year, and the years afterward, but it's hard to instill that hope and believe in that hope when you continue to see things like your power bill going up with no real end in sight. The minister talks about 2015 here perhaps and putting a freeze on, or making some kind of review then. It's going to be too late for businesses. We've already seen businesses, unfortunately, speak clearly to the fact that we're closing because one of the key problems is the very high power rates we just cannot afford to meet; those financial strains, they can't do it. That is very unfortunate and we're seeing companies go out of business that have been around a long time, or parts of companies that go out of business that have been around a very long time.

We worry about those people and their families who are working there, and I've referred to this a couple of times - I'll refer to it today - a good meeting today in Hantsport. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism was there and I credit him for coming down. He said last week in this House, he committed that he would be there, and he was there. We had a good discussion today when we were there, but I can tell you, you know, we talked about some of those employees going over to CKF, that's great, that's a wonderful thing, maybe 40, maybe a little more, but, do you know what, it's going to take some time to get there, but there's still a large number of people who will see their employment in this particular place come to an end.

You can't tell me, Mr. Speaker, that those people aren't thinking about their families and how they're going to make ends meet and how they're going to pay their bills. Yes, you know, there may be some kind of severances maybe, or pension, some will be of retirement age perhaps, a few. Others may find work in other places and I'm sure they're looking now and have been, but there will be others who are going to end up on EI. We all know that that only lasts for so long and we know from other experiences in this province, when people have lost jobs, that sometimes EI comes and goes and they still don't have a job. Then they end up on another system, the Community Services system, social services' system and, again, it's very hard for these families, not only when they're working but when you think about it, and they see an even lesser income going to EI, and then Community Services, those that may end up there, and we know, unfortunately we know inherently some will unfortunately end up there.

We work hard to make sure that they don't. They don't want to be there, but then they get down, life becomes very hard, even harder than it is now. How do you get back out of that? You get back out of that by treating people fairly and what was amazing about

today's meeting was the company insisted, and still carries the message, we're doing everything we can to make as much of this as easy as possible. Their families and their workers are considered family members. They care about those workers. They're doing the best they can for them.

Government needs to take a little page out of that book and say, do you know what, it really does matter, the people in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, they really do matter. That's the reason that we stand in this place and we try to put forward things that are worthy of debate and things that are good for all Nova Scotians, but this bill doesn't do that.

We should be talking about cutting rates, freezing them, and going back if we want to review things then and have a look and say, what will the costs be? If you want to talk about and you want to promise something, don't promise something when you don't know the answer to it, number one, and then take it away later.

People are not fooled by these things. They know that power costs money. They know that it's expensive. It's expensive now at 25 per cent in the last three years or more that it has grown, and it's going to grow another 4 per cent to 6 per cent. We know that. Here we are. They have come to accept that things are costing more money. In all honesty and reality, they still have to deal with and try to figure out how they are going to exist, because a lot of them will tell you, we're not living - especially that senior population who are pensioned off, those single parents who are trying to work. I know some different families who are struggling, who are on social services at the present time and some who have worked hard to get off it and some who continue to work hard to get off it, but life becomes more difficult every day when we keep hearing about increases, increases, and more increases in everything, unfortunately.

The bill does nothing to take these people aside and say, this is good for Nova Scotians and this is good for you. People are asking, when they hear the minister stand up and say, we want to provide or we are providing the fairest power rate for the people in the Province of Nova Scotia, and they say, what does it cost? How can you tell me that you're doing that when we don't know what the long term really does mean? We don't know.

What happens if Newfoundland and Labrador doesn't come to pass? Have we thought about what those other markets will be? I know we've offered things in this House. We talked about a regional energy market whereby we can buy from other companies. I heard Point Lepreau mentioned a few minutes ago, coming back on-line, and Bayside, I believe it's called, in New Brunswick was generating energy for pennies - very few pennies, two or three cents a kilowatt hour. Why were we not out there? Because we are bound by 49 per cent. We're bound by Nova Scotia Power's rules and Emera's rules, by which we see more money come into their pockets and we see more money leaving the Province of Nova Scotia. They take it and invest it in other places - and we've heard this for some time. This is not new. They've been investing for years - \$100 million plus. I know

we've done the math over the years, and we see what happens. The big company keeps getting bigger and bigger.

The problem is that they're buying and selling with one hand and then the other. You would almost look at this as perhaps declaring a conflict of interest in some ways. I think that we really need to focus more on the everyday people of this province who are working hard trying to make this province a better place to live. If we really want to do good things we need to look at how energy is affecting our families. We know that it is, and I've given a few examples here now. Like I said, everyday hard-working people - the "working poor," my colleague called them, and they'll admit to that. They'll call themselves that, because that's what they're doing. They're working just to barely survive. They don't have extras. They'd like to have a few extras, they'd probably like to have a little holiday now and then, but they can't or they won't, for fear of what might happen next. They know that times are tough. Some of them are very good at planning and managing; others are not so good.

We know that there are people who struggle at the best of times, who have a hard time managing and trying to get through budgets and the stress of coping with everything as it is, and then we keep throwing more stress on them. It becomes very difficult. We see that within families, and over the years in my past career I have seen what stresses can do to people. When you talk about people who are stressed and can't pay their bills, I can tell you that does some incredible things to people. It takes them a long way from reality sometimes. They struggle, they worry, they wonder, how will I survive tomorrow? That's the reality in the Province of Nova Scotia. We don't stand here and make these things up. We talk to these people as constituents in our offices regularly - more regularly now than we have in the past. As times get tougher and more jobs are lost we talk to them more and more and try to direct them to other places for other educational opportunities, perhaps other employment opportunities.

There was a time not too many years ago whereby if somebody lost a job or was looking for a job and they were short a few hours or a week or two for EI to help get them through, there were four, five, or six people who I could call up and say, hey, I have a guy or a gal who needs some work, can you put them through and you know, they were able. Things were a little more reasonable, affordable, so they were able. Do you know what they say today? I don't have any of those people anymore. They're not there. Why? Because they're struggling themselves; some of them don't exist anymore in business, unfortunately. Some of them have gotten old and retired. We'll continue to see that happen. As everything begins to cost more, those people who are elderly and are working are saying, why bother? What reason is there? I might as well retire. I'm no farther ahead. There are no advantages, only disadvantages - more taxes, higher power bills. Everything is higher, as we know.

If the government wants to do something, wants to do the right thing, the government should take some of the amendments that were offered - it's what they should

have done in this bill - from whomever, taken pieces of every bill that has been introduced with regards to energy in this House, taken a little piece of every bill and looked at it and then gone to Nova Scotians and said, what should we do with this? Is this good?

Where are those groups? Should we be talking to people who are low income families? Should we be talking to clients who are unfortunately on social services at the present time? Should we be talking to seniors and pensioners, Mr. Speaker, who are affected by these increases that will come in January and again in the following January? God knows where we'll be after that, what will come next, and the big question we're all counting on in this House and promoting - not all, I shouldn't say, that side of the House is promoting. They are worrying about Muskrat Falls in Newfoundland and Labrador. Perhaps we should be worrying about community A, B, C and D and all the way through in Nova Scotia and all the very fine residents who represent what we call home, Mr. Speaker. With those few words I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to make some comments about this bill. It's interesting that in his remarks the minister referred to the Liberals' Ratepayer Protection Bill and had he bothered to read it, he would actually know that it really didn't reflect anything that he talked about. That Ratepayer Protection Bill had three provisions and I just wanted to go through those three provisions.

It was introduced on October 31<sup>st</sup> of last year. One provision prohibited bonuses for executives and I can see that the minister hated that provision in that bill so much that he included it in this bill. Another provision in it required audits and spending reviews. The only difference, and it's a significant difference, but the only difference between what was in the bill that we proposed over a year ago and the minister's bill right now, is ours were mandatory and the minister's are optional. I think there's a fundamental difference there because I think they should be mandatory.

I might add, as the Leader of the Official Opposition had stated earlier, both the minister and the Premier spoke against both of those provisions for over a year before introducing their own bill with a version of those and insisting that they were already the case. So I am troubled by the fact that the minister would stand here, before this House, and suggest that the Ratepayer Protection Bill, which he has now adopted parts of, is actually deregulation. If that is the case, then I guess the NDP have now just become the champions of deregulation.

These are his own words. Just a few minutes ago, he said that the Ratepayer Protection Bill brought forth deregulation and this is the minister who has just adopted two of the provisions from that bill.

The only other provision in the bill, which I guess must be the one that he's concerned about, was to require that all settlement hearings be held in public. I guess it must be, and we obviously tried in Law Amendments Committee and we tried in Committee of the Whole House, to have that provision added to this bill.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because it must be that the NDP are so opposed to public settlement meetings that they had to vote it down not once but twice and that they refused to include that in it. So here we have a government that is now moving forward with a bill that they say will change electricity and save people money and yet they refuse to make the audits or the spending reviews - whichever words you wish to use - mandatory, and they refuse to prohibit secret meetings. In fact, they voted against prohibiting secret meetings. I have trouble understanding that.

The minister then goes one step further and to me there are - I mean obviously while I would normally be reluctant to speak for the Tories as well, judging by the legislation they introduced, I would suggest that they probably are also supportive of the provision like we are, that removes executive bonuses in the bill.

Both these Parties, after all, had introduced legislation to do just that last year and the Premier and the minister spoke against it at the time saying it was absolutely unnecessary. Now, apparently, it is necessary.

However, there are issues that make this bill unsupportable despite trying to adopt a couple of provisions from our bill in particular, the Ratepayer Protection Bill. One of those is the fact that the minister and his caucus have now twice voted down the prohibition on the secret meetings. The second part is the mandatory nature of those reviews. I think the mandatory nature is very important because that review would have been required as it moved through the process.

The other issue in this is that the minister has specifically excluded from the prohibition on rate increase hearings, or GRAs, fuel adjustment mechanism hearings which many of the interveners at the board over the past weeks have been speaking about the need to actually get rid of and move away from. Yet the minister doesn't seem to agree with the interveners. The Premier thought he was agreeing in Question Period earlier today with the consumer advocate and unfortunately he somewhat misrepresented what the consumer advocate said and I'm hoping I can find his comments here so I can directly quote - here we go.

The Premier earlier today suggested that the consumer advocate was quite happy with the settlement agreement. While it is true that he signed onto it, he signed onto it with a proviso that even he indicated has never come from a consumer advocate before. I'd like to read a couple of quotes and then I will table that. He noted that, "Extending out the period to two years . . ." which is in this minister's bill, ". . . brings with it the increased difficulty of predicting with accuracy relevant data in the second year. . . . The two-year

plan proposed by Nova Scotia Power . . .” and now proposed by the NDP, “. . . would avoid the utility having to come before the UARB in 2013 if it intended to proceed with its request for a rate application applicable to 2014.”

“The Consumer Advocate also believes strongly that a significant influence in keeping rate applications at a minimum is the ‘regulatory discipline’ that results from Nova Scotia Power knowing that it must go through the application process in order to obtain a rate increase. That review process should be as uncomfortable as possible for NSPI to ensure that they minimize the requested increase. This ‘discipline’ . . .” he goes on to talk about it and then he follows up by saying, “The Consumer Advocate is also concerned that at what point is it more beneficial to postpone inevitable cost increases . . .” and had there not been this procedure and had there not been the FAM, had there not been a settlement agreement “it might result in a more vigorous search for a lower increase.”

The Premier today said that the consumer advocate was all onside with this and he’s absolutely correct that he signed onto it but he signed onto it saying that his problem is that he doesn’t have the ability to look at the information.

It says, “It must be remembered that from NSPI’s perspective, they have nothing to lose by having a deferral in the rate recovery.” Yet, that’s exactly what the minister is now proposing to legislate is something where Nova Scotia Power, by the consumer advocate’s own statement, has nothing to lose. I’ll table that statement. I’m sure the Premier and the minister have read it before.

This bill has no impact today. As the Leader of the Official Opposition said, on January 1<sup>st</sup> if the settlement agreement is approved - the analysts seem to think it will be - then what will happen? The rates will go up. Interestingly enough, even Nova Scotia Power agreed to not doing a fuel adjustment mechanism for the two years as part of their rate increase and the minister couldn’t even include that in his own bill. They will still go up, you will still see an adjustment to the Efficiency Nova Scotia charge, you will still see a rate of return, if this settlement is approved, we don’t know if it will be, that is above what the board’s own consultant recommended it should be. It doesn’t change any of that. There’s no impact on rates, and there’s no impact on rates conceivably until the 2014 application. Now, what’s significant about that? The 2014 application is also when one would expect some of the Muskrat Falls charges to start coming through, but there are a lot of unanswered questions about that, and the Premier and the minister want to stand up and say, well, you guys are against, whether it’s Muskrat Falls or whatever else - I mean these guys call everything a game changer lately. I don’t know how many times the game is going to change before they get it right, but the thing is, you know, let’s take that one for now.

So you take Muskrat Falls and the minister and the Premier stand up and they say, well, you’re opposed to that, you’re opposed to that. Well, how can you be opposed, or in favour, if you can’t get the information out of these guys? That’s what Nova Scotians are



asking for; they're asking, what's it going to cost? If the Premier and the minister think they can stand up and say this is a great deal for Nova Scotians - well, maybe it is, but to know that they have to know what the cost is. Now there are a number of questions that are being raised in Newfoundland and Labrador, and elsewhere, by some regulatory agencies and it seems every week there's another one coming on with another question.

You know, we've talked about the water rights issue. We've also talked about the fact that actually it turns out that as much as the Premier has talked about a number in that agreement - I don't remember the exact number off the top of my head that Nova Scotia is entitled to - it is actually, what that agreement says is that Nova Scotia is entitled to that number, or 20 per cent of the available power. It could actually be a lower amount and the Premier and the minister seem to have no backup plan should that either be delayed, not come to fruition, or not be available.

There's also only a provision in that agreement for, I believe it is 25 years - I might not have the years exactly right here, but 25 years and then 35 years. So what happens at the end of that? There's a reason why Nalcor owns the Maritime Link at the end of 25 years. There's a reason; they didn't just make that up. It's because if you look at the nickel mines in Labrador, the nickel mines in Labrador at that point start to need that power. There's a reason why Nova Scotia Power doesn't have the guarantee of 20 per cent at the end of that agreement; it's because that 20 per cent may be needed in Newfoundland and Labrador and they just had a story and - you know, the member for Hants East is laughing about that, but that has now been reported in a number of the news organizations and by their own regulatory agency. So, you know, if he doesn't like what they're saying, well, I don't know what to suggest to him. They're raising that as a possibility and Emera in their conference calls are saying, yes, that's why the agreement is there, because we don't know what the usage will be.

You know, the member over here seems to be okay with that, and so when you ask what's the plan beyond that 25- or 35-year period, the 25 year when you no longer own the Maritime Link - and that's in the agreement that we don't own it - then what is the plan after that point? It's a simple question. All Nova Scotians are looking for, all we're looking for is answers to those questions. When the answer comes back, to say oh, you're against it - no, it's a question and I think it's a legitimate question to actually want to have an answer for it. If the government has an answer, then it's simple, just provide the answer. But, by not providing an answer, it suggests that they don't have one to those questions either. I don't see how it could be taken any other way than assuming that they don't have an answer if people ask these questions over and over and they're not answered - and now some of the other regulatory authorities are asking the same questions and not getting answers.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there was an opportunity here to actually make this bill stronger, to make it actually have more of a meaningful impact. I am disappointed obviously that the NDP, on two occasions in this bill process, voted down the

prohibition on secret settlement meetings; I'm disappointed that the spending reviews that they opposed so long they wouldn't make mandatory and they just put in there as optional; and I'm disappointed that the minister in his remarks stands up and once again seems to think that - in fact he points to the Ratepayer Protection Bill by name and says that that shows Liberals support deregulation, when he has yet to actually point out anything in that bill that is deregulation since the three items in it are: removing the bonuses from executives; the mandatory audits, not the un-mandatory ones; and the third item was the public meetings. I'm not sure which one of those he thinks is deregulation, but I think he's probably got a bit of research to do on that.

I might add that since the minister might have some time, after this bill is through, while we wait for this legislation on biomass, which I assume will come this session since the board ordered it, that he might want to go and read the latest report of the International Energy Association, which showed that in every market where competition has been increased in the past few years, rates have actually decreased. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this evening to speak on Bill No. 97. This is the time of year, unfortunately, when we as rural members hear - I can speak from my experience - that the Fall and the cold weather are coming and where we hear more and more from constituents who are having a hard time paying their power bills because this is when they're getting the notices from Nova Scotia Power that they're going to be disconnected. This is when families start to truly panic because, as the weather is turning colder, there is the fear of what that will do, not only for themselves, but more importantly, in many cases, there are children involved.

Even as of yesterday I was working with one family that was in that exact situation and it's a reminder, again, of how difficult it is for families to make ends meet and too often their power bill is one of the areas that they tend to fall behind when they are unable to continue to make their payments. Any chance that we have to discuss power rates and that we have an opportunity to raise the issue, I think is a good one.

What has been a bit unfortunate with this bill is that it's interesting because in one sense the government says to the Opposition, tell us what you would do differently and as a government you have two ways of reacting. You can say okay, let's look at what their suggestions are and let's have an adult discussion about that and see whether it makes sense or whether there are elements of that that could be incorporated into legislation. What this government has done is they've cherry-picked some elements of what we've been proposing, having gone as far as what we would have suggested, but on the other hand have taken the opportunity to make allegations against our Leader and against our Party and try to scare Nova Scotians from having an adult debate on Nova Scotia Power. That is extremely unfortunate, especially for a Party that spent its entire existence in Opposition prior to the 2009 election that are now in government, that's how they would treat the

Opposition who is trying to bring forward ideas and bring forward positive suggestions on behalf of Nova Scotians.

I believe the government is seeing that their approach is not resonating with Nova Scotians and that they are being reminded on a regular basis that Nova Scotians expect better and that they're being attracted to responsible political Parties that are putting ideas out there, having town hall meetings, and having discussions on this matter. You can tell just from the reaction of the government, even on this discussion, the sensitivities that they have around it.

In second reading I had the opportunity, I believe I quoted the current Minister of Finance and gave some of her quotes when she talked about power rate increases in the mid-2000s and the impact it was having not only on those who weren't working but even on working families. As I said in second reading, her comments back then still apply today, yet for some reason the government now that is in office has somehow forgotten about the impact this is having on not only the poor but on working Nova Scotians as well, who are having a hard time making ends meet.

Rather than having an adult discussion about possible solutions, instead they have resorted to the approach of Chicken Little, with the sky is falling approach and suggesting that power rates are going to increase by numbers they simply can't justify, but instead would try to scare Nova Scotians from believing that something can be done better to try to rein in power rates here in this province.

One of the other things I spoke about in second reading, which I'm still waiting for someone from the government to explain, was the letter that was submitted by Dan O'Connor, who is currently the chief of staff to the Premier, mere days before the 2009 election, where he suggested on behalf of the NDP that the Efficiency Nova Scotia charge should be paid by Nova Scotia Power shareholders and not ratepayers.

I have yet to hear anyone on the government side - Minister of Agriculture or anyone else - explain why Dan O'Connor was wrong. Obviously he had to be wrong, because the government did the exact opposite of what was their position prior to 2009. It's a fair question. I don't think anyone would say it's not a fair question to ask what changed. What was it that Dan O'Connor said on behalf of the Party prior to the 2009 election that no longer applies today? I think Nova Scotians want to know that as well, and I think the government has ample opportunity to address that, because if there is legitimate reason why that can no longer be done, that it's not a possibility, let's hear it. But rather than address that, the government and the minister even again today said that the Liberals want to get rid of Efficiency Nova Scotia. He knows that's not true. Nova Scotians aren't buying it either.

What we've said, basically, is exactly what Dan O'Connor said in 2009: let the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power pay for this. In fact, I believe the letter - I read it at

length - actually argues that it's in Nova Scotia Power's best interest and on the bottom line for Efficiency Nova Scotia to work, and that's why he argued that they should pay for it. Yet somehow something has changed and the NDP no longer support that position, but they are not prepared to tell us. That's one of the main concerns that we have, and that I think Nova Scotians have, with this government: they are not big on telling us much.

Earlier today in Question Period I had the opportunity to ask the Premier, why won't you simply table the agreement you signed with IBM to take over the SAP function from the Department of Finance so that Nova Scotians - not just members of the House, but Nova Scotians who are going to pay for this, over \$100 million - can say, is it a good deal? Ironically - and I think we pointed out today - when in Opposition, the NDP said that these type of discussions should be aired openly and that government should have to defend them prior to even entering into them. Yet we now know that this government has been in negotiations with IBM basically since the time they were elected. So that's three years they've had to tell Nova Scotians, here are the discussions, we're prepared to answer any concerns that you have, we're prepared to have a debate on this, and we want to make sure Nova Scotians are comfortable with the decision we're making.

That, I would submit to you, is what a responsible government would have done. That, I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what the NDP asked when they were in Opposition, yet today the Premier said no, no, no, we're going to send it to the Freedom of Information Office so that it can follow the proper protocols. Again, this is a Party that took the freedom of information officer to court. They wanted more government information to be made available on behalf of Nova Scotians.

Now that they are in government, they could simply table that agreement so that Nova Scotians can judge for themselves, so that we can have an open debate on it. Instead they simply throw back the criticism to us that "you're against the deal." Well, it's hard to be for a deal when you don't really know what it is. I don't know what the government is prepared to share in their one-minute answers in Question Period. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians expect more when you have a deal that is going to cost almost \$100 million to taxpayers.

The Premier today said that the cost is going to be neutral to taxpayers, but how do we know that? The Premier and the Minister of Finance say that the cost was about \$8.4 million a year, but we've yet to see a document brought in this House that shows that. How can we say, yes, we agree, we've looked at it, and the numbers you've provided make sense; it is \$8.4 million, so there is no added cost. You can't expect us, on behalf of Nova Scotians, as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to sit there and endorse deals when we have no details, and the government knows that. For some reason they don't want to share that deal with Nova Scotians or with this House, and that veil of secrecy that is showing up more and more in this government is of concern to Nova Scotians.

When we talk about power rates, my colleagues spoke a bit about the deal with Newfoundland and Labrador over Muskrat Falls. That is a deal that could have significant financial implications for this province. Within mere months the cost of that project increased by billions of dollars - mere months, and we're still in the planning phases. Today in Newfoundland and Labrador a rigorous debate is trying to take place, yet the government of the day there is trying to do exactly what this government has done on so many other deals, they don't want to talk about it and they don't want to justify it.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Nova Scotians are open to any idea that is going to somehow lower power rates in this province or stabilize them, but they expect there to be an adult discussion where all of the details are put ahead of them. For this government to suggest that we should move forward and that the Opposition should somehow endorse a plan that is going to cost potentially billions of dollars to Nova Scotians when we still have so many questions left unanswered, is completely unreasonable.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear, history of these megaprojects in Nova Scotia and in Atlantic Canada tend to go over budget. That's not new and it's not a criticism of the existing government, this happened under other administrations as well, in every Atlantic Province, so if there's anything we should do, it is learn from history and say, let's make sure this time around that we have as much information available to Nova Scotians, that we are entering into the best deal possible on behalf of taxpayers, and that we can say that Nova Scotians have a reasonable level of confidence that this is the right way to go. Instead, the government chooses not to share that type of information.

Mr. Speaker, again as I've said, they have yet to explain to us why the position taken by Dan O'Connor prior to the last election is no longer policy of the NDP and that it's not even a possibility to even look at it. Instead of having that debate, they accuse us of wanting to get rid of Efficiency Nova Scotia, which is simply not true, and they know that. Instead, when we talk about allowing independent power producers to sell directly to consumers, rather than having a discussion on that as well, they choose instead to just make these allegations and to say the sky is falling and it's the end of the world.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians expect better because the NDP were in Opposition and joined us after the 2005 Electricity Marketplace Governance Report saying, why are we not allowing communities that want to build a wind turbine to be able to sell directly to their community? So let's have that discussion, but rather than have that discussion, the government turns around and says, oh you want deregulation. The Electricity Marketplace Governance Report never suggested deregulation, nor have we. But instead of having that adult discussion, the government resorted to playground tactics of just trying to cause fear where there's no need. Fortunately, I'm happy to report, all indications of testing the political winds of Nova Scotia are that the government's efforts are not being successful in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much more that could have been put into Bill No. 97 and yet somehow the government has chosen to only take baby steps to address a problem which is of increasing concern not only to Nova Scotians in their own residences, but certainly to the ability of our province to be able to grow our economy and attract manufacturers or any other businesses that rely significantly on power rates as part of their business.

Mr. Speaker, there's much more discussion that can be had on this. One would have hoped that the government would have wanted to enter into a debate on this to allow all Parties and all Nova Scotians to have such a discussion but I believe there'll be some more opportunity for that. In light of the hour that we have reached, I would be happy to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97 until we have another opportunity to continue that discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes our business for today. I'll hand it over now to the Liberal House Leader for business for tomorrow, Opposition Day, when the hours will be from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Tomorrow following the daily routine and Oral Question Period, we will consider the following business, which I've already shared with the Government House Leader, the Progressive Conservative House Leader and yourself, Mr. Speaker. It will be Resolution No. 1466, which relates to corporate handouts and Bill No. 103, Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Clare:

“Therefore be it resolved that the priorities of the Nova Scotia NDP have changed drastically since they were in Opposition.”

### **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **NDP: PRIORITIES - CHANGES**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place this evening and speak about how the priorities of the NDP in Opposition were often very clearly stated, passionately delivered on this side of the House, and how in government there has been that 180 degree turn. I thought I would take some of those examples from the past few years to speak to this evening.

One of the first areas that the NDP Government decided to make a change in plans was Voluntary Planning. I can remember many members of the NDP extolling the values of this great democratic process whereby government would establish a committee that would go around the province and deal with issues that are often very controversial and needed to have the voice of many people to make a determination on the course of action on government policy, potentially on legislation. We all know, for example, that the ATV issue, the off-highway vehicle issue was very controversial, very disturbing. There had been deaths and injuries, destruction of property, and going into sensitive areas like the Tobetic.

Voluntary Planning went around the province and did a first-class job. Also, in relation to the future of how we would use our natural resources, in particular, forestry, that the government would lay out a plan that would be sensitive to many needs, through the process of Voluntary Planning.

A second area that the NDP had as a priority, when they came into government, was that there was really no need for a tax increase. There had been successive years when there was a balanced budget in the province and during their time in Opposition, and in particular highlighted by the provincial campaign of 2009, when they came into office, there would be no tax increase.

We know that the HST moved from 13 per cent to 15 per cent and for all Nova Scotians, this has been a significant tax increase. Of course, for middle-income earners, it has been particularly difficult. Government did bring in some relief for low-income Nova Scotians, but with the cost of living that has certainly been erased, so we have the HST.

Also there was a change in the income tax structure whereby a new wage-earning area was now included in the income tax structure and this led to an increase in taxes. Not dealing with bracket creep means that the NDP have been very accepting of a natural bracket movement that allows for additional tax increase year over year. This was, again, in Opposition. They spoke very strongly that balanced budgets were the way to continue forward in Nova Scotia, and we get the first or the second budget in the Spring of 2010, and contained in the Financial Measures (2010) Act was a provision to do away with balanced budgets in Nova Scotia. So again, preaching one course of action while in Opposition and then going a different route once in government.

Over the last year in particular, an area that really struck with the NDP on this side of the House, as I saw from 2003 to 2009, was constantly hitting government any time there was a corporate handout or there was a major amount of money, even sometimes through the rebate program or a direct grant. The NDP, member after member, stood in their place in debate and were against such a course of action.

We now see, however, that we've hit a high point in Nova Scotia history, with \$590 million given to six corporations; two no longer have a place in Nova Scotia; one has had one contract in 12 months; and in total, we have a net loss of 1,300 jobs. We have hit a new historic low when it comes to corporate welfare, and again, this is what has disturbed the base of the NDP. I can't think of anything more that has really upset them, and that is these corporate handouts.

It's interesting that in Opposition - and in fact, my colleague, the member for Halifax Clayton Park showed me just yesterday an article from what used to be a local newspaper in the Clayton Park area. She showed me a picture of the Premier and the member for Halifax Fairview in public, getting people to sign a petition against high power rates. Last Spring we had the unbelievable in this House, where the Premier, on eight successive questions to him, stood in his place and defended Nova Scotia Power. It's one thing to provide some rationalization and so forth, but this was a full, intended defence of Nova Scotia Power, that the 10 per cent increase in January was fully justified, that the rate of return was perfectly fine, that the bonuses were deserved. All of these areas the Premier systematically defended in the House, and in Opposition the Premier - and again, another member of his Party, the member for Halifax Fairview - took up petitions against power rate increases.

One of the areas that we know the NDP pushed hard on in Opposition was for poverty reduction. We now see, with the HST, with reports that have come out recently, that one in 13 seniors in the greater Halifax area is living in poverty. We have an increase in the use of food banks. So we have a number of areas where, again, the barometer for measuring poverty is showing that the NDP and what they promised and what they supported in Opposition have not stood the test of the last three and a half years.



One of the areas that the NDP loved to get on its feet and challenge the Progressive Conservative Government on was accountability and openness. We know that the Freedom of Information Officer, regarding the Anielski Report and now the IBM deal - we don't have that accountability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure, actually, to rise in my place today to speak to this late debate topic.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's a well-known fact that democracy as we know it has existed in Nova Scotia for 254 years and responsible government has existed since 1848, which makes it 165 years. Of those 254 years of democratic government, the New Democratic Party has actually only been in government for three of those years. Now, you know, I oftentimes wonder how people expect a new government of three years to change what has been going on for 254 years in this very House. It's difficult. There are many, many problems and challenges going on around the globe, around the country and, of course, in this very province. So in the face of all of this, I have to say that I'm quite proud of this government's attempts to try to change the course of the province on many, many fronts.

For one thing in particular, Mr. Speaker, just recently, in my own riding of Truro-Bible Hill, we had a terrible flood and there were a lot of people who were displaced, who had their homes and basements ruined, a lot of people who cannot get insurance because of the continuing floods, and our Premier came the day after the flood, the morning after the flood, at 8:30 in the morning, to view the flooding situation and to meet with the people in the Ford Street area, which is our Black community, and he had a plane to get on that day. The Opposition keeps harping on about that, about his trip to China. He had a 20-hour flight to China that day but he took time out of his busy schedule to come to see us in Truro, to meet the people and speak to them, and go into their basements and talk to them about their flooding issues. (Interruption) It was the very day after the flood, at 8:30 in the morning, yes, it was; it was the day after the flood. It was September 11<sup>th</sup> actually.

Mr. Speaker, he promised the people of Truro-Bible Hill that he would put together a group of experts to talk about flooding issues and see what could be done to help to try to alleviate the problem and, in fact, to mitigate it and prevent future flooding. He has done that. He has kept his word, and there are now several different departments involved as well as the municipal officials in that flooding group. They will be reporting to him very shortly and, in fact, I have a meeting with some of them and with some of the municipal mayors to talk about what they have discovered to try to help our problem in Truro-Bible Hill. (Interruption) Yes, thank you, and a good Premier.

This is the kind of Premier people are looking for, Mr. Speaker, somebody who actually cares about the people on the ground, somebody who's not just up there spouting out numbers and figures and whatever. He is actually in the trenches, on the ground talking

to people. This is the kind of Premier I signed up to work with and I am very proud to say that I am working with him and alongside of him.

Now, although our NDP Government has had a lot of major challenges in these past three years, not the least of which has been trying to balance our budget in a prudent fashion during a major global economic recession, like all governments around the world; however, as social democrats, we have been doing this while trying to remain true to our long-standing ideals. Now, to this end, we have endeavoured to balance the budget without cutting the majority of public social programs that we New Democrats believe are all important.

We also continue to do it without destroying the collective bargaining rights of any union or creating legislation making it illegal for them to strike, which is something that not only the Republicans in the United States have been doing, Mr. Speaker, but both Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments have been doing this lately, right across the country, and I think that is a shameful way to behave. Unions need to be supported and the workers of this country are so important and we respect the workers and we respect their rights to collective bargaining if they belong to a union. (Interruption) It is about workers.

You know, in order to keep our economy sound and growing we've also had to reach out to small, medium and large businesses, increasing the small business tax credits twice, 20 per cent - and that's the first time this has happened in 20 years. We've also created more incentives, loans, and opportunities for companies of all sizes, as well as increasing the opportunity for these companies to improve the skills of their workers. Of course, we're trying to attract new businesses to Nova Scotia, while dealing with two very heavy blows to a large number of our province's workforce, which severely affected our GDP, which was the sudden closure within one year of two of our biggest pulp mills.

My ex-husband, who is a very dear friend, happens to work for IBM in the United States. When he heard that IBM was opening a global centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia - he works in New York - he was amazed and he was thrilled. He works on Big Blue, which is the fastest computer in the world, the one that beat the amazing Russian chess player. He said the idea that IBM has chosen Nova Scotia to come to and make it their global centre is just an amazing feat for Nova Scotia to have accomplished - and I'm very, very pleased about this. (Applause) Thank you.

These types of things are very exciting for Nova Scotia, and if you want to listen to the Opposition Parties or even to the media sometimes, the "fog of negativity" as my colleague likes to call it, people outside of Nova Scotia look at us and go, wow, they're doing amazing things. When they look at the things we've accomplished in three years, I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, their minds are blown.

One of the things that we're doing - we have many, many firsts - we have our first housing strategy; we have an early childhood development strategy; we're building a framework for a disability strategy; we have a new domestic violence court; we have a new, first-time mental health strategy; we have autism support for every child; we have a university debt cap; we have a five-year road plan; we have a domestic violence action plan; and it took an NDP Government to pay down the provincial debt for the first time in 50 years. How is that for prudence?

Our NDP Government has faced some incredible challenges, as I've said; however, this Premier and this NDP Government have done much outstanding work. The Ships Start Here, the shipbuilding contract, is not only tied to creating 11,000 local jobs, but it also has placed many local communities in a good position to be part of the supply chain and for our \$300 million loan, which will be paid back if it's not tied to the jobs, with interest, we will actually make \$3 billion, which will be returned in tax revenue to be used for health and other social programs including education. I call that a good investment.

We have cut ER closures by 50 per cent within three years and established the first Collaborative Emergency Centres in Canada, open 24/7 to bring care sooner to rural Nova Scotians. We have also helped 300 Nova Scotia companies upgrade the skills of 30,000 employees. I call that, again, good investment for our money.

The new Affordable Housing Strategy which will be rolled out this winter is very exciting, Mr. Speaker, and I have to say that breaking the cycle of poverty is the strategy of this government. Over the past three years we've made significant investments - \$300 million to help improve the lives of thousands of single parents, seniors, low-income Nova Scotians, because we know that the best way to help someone out of poverty is to try to create jobs for them and to try to get them education for the rest of their lives, and this is what we're doing.

Finally, I have to say that as somebody who has been a long-time member of the Party, my parents are long-time members of this Party, I am very proud that our NDP Government has done so much good in such a short space of time - three years out of 254 years. Although you don't hear much good news from the mainstream media or from our Opposition Parties, this Party is determined to try to do the very best we can with the cards we've been given - and these Parties did nothing in comparison to what we have done in just a short three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: There we go. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to tonight's late debate. I have to thank the member opposite for such a vigorous debate and presentation of a bit of a story, the story of a government and all the great things that it is trying to do.

Mr. Speaker, to hear the member opposite come and talk about this 200-year legacy - 254 years - well, do you know what? There has been a member in Shelburne since 1742. There has been a member for Truro since that time, all belonging to different Parties. Do you know what? Previous to the NDP - the NDP has been here for 40 years now, sitting in Opposition benches - before that time there was a Social Credit Party that was sitting in before that. There have been different iterations of different political Parties in this province. There have been Liberals, there have been CCFs, there has been a whole list of different Parties in this province that have all had an opportunity to be part of government and other ones who have not.

You know a lot of times the government will stand here and talk about all the good things they are trying to do and I'm sure that the Liberal Party can stand and list off a length of things they did that is just as long. I know we can stand here and list off another length of things we've been able to accomplish for Nova Scotians over the last number of years. We are all here, Mr. Speaker, for the same thing: we are here for our constituents, we're here to make sure that their voices are heard, and we're here to make life better for all Nova Scotians.

I think it is a little disingenuous for the member to stand here and say that they are the only ones here for Nova Scotians, that they are the only ones here that are fixing things, that they are the only ones here. Do you know what? I've been here for 10 years and I think I've done some good things for my constituents and to have someone suggest that I have not, I think is disingenuous and I think maybe she should reread the speech that was provided to her.

Mr. Speaker, what we're really getting at in this resolution today is not so much what they're doing but it's what that Party was over here. You know I remember in my time here, an Opposition Party that had a lot to say about a lot of things and now that they're sitting on the government side, they're saying something completely different - I didn't say that, that's not true, that's simply not true. The favourite line of the Premier today is, that's simply not true, I didn't say that. That's what the Premier says almost every single Question Period when we ask a question, when the Liberals ask a question, and now when the media asks a question.

The Premier has been outside these doors and has said to the media, well, that's not true, why are you asking that question, how dare you? I mean I can accept that as an Opposition member, that's kind of what we do, but for them to bring that to the media's attention and calling them out on things, you've got to be kidding me. That's simply not true, is what that Premier continues to say.

I'm hoping that the Minister of Energy or the Minister of Fisheries or the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour or the member for Truro or Pictou East, will say, you know, I hope they don't pick up on that because I think they're honourable members and I think they have a lot to offer to this House of Assembly as well.

The member for Truro wasn't here in those days. She didn't hear all the things that were said - and, Mr. Speaker, this is no slight to you either because I know you did spend some time over here, never had a problem with you, sir, so I'm not going to say anything there. You know the member for Truro brought up an issue of the first government to pay down on the debt. Well, I'm sorry, our government did do that. We had the Crown share. We had over \$800 million that went directly to the debt, so maybe whoever helped her write that or provided her with that information, should try to get that fixed because maybe I should say that's simply not true.

Mr. Speaker, during the previous government, during the election, they said on the HST, and of course budgeting, that they would not raise HST, that they would balance the budget. Well, we know that simply wasn't true. They've now taken about \$1,000 out of everybody's pockets by raising the HST by those two points. We know they haven't balanced the budget - they've tried three years in a row now to balance the budget and they haven't been able to do it. I can only guess what they're going to do come this Spring. Are they going to balance it or are they not going to balance it?

Maybe the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour wants to tell me whether or not they're going to be balancing the budget this time; maybe he knows, maybe he doesn't. I'm guessing he doesn't. I know what a lot of people have been speculating is that they are not. They said they were going to, but I'm going to bet they're not. Either that or we would have had the member for Halifax Fairview still sitting in the seat for the Minister of Finance - I'm just wondering what's going on in the background there.

I also remember Health - boy, do I remember Health when I sat over there - and I had the member for Sackville-Cobequid asking me questions. I remember during the election when they talked about keeping emergency rooms open 24/7 - all emergency rooms open 24/7. Well, what a hollow, hollow promise that one made. Of course the government has had more than 18,000 hours of emergency room closures - I'll be happy to table that information. There have been closures already in the much vaunted Collaborative Care Centres, and I will table that one where Tatamagouche has been closed despite opening that Collaborative Care Centre.

Again, we talk a lot about the long-term care plan of opening beds. They say, look at all the beds we opened, the 800 beds. Mr. Speaker, they're about 200 short of what they should be having at this point, and we already know today that there are 371 patients sitting in the hospital waiting for long-term care placement, yet they have nowhere to send these people. We were going to do more for seniors, and yet what seniors have gotten is a little bit of nothing - over 2,228 seniors waiting for long-term care placement across Nova Scotia.

In Opposition - this is the best one, and we we're talking about the power rates as well - the Premier tabled a petition with over 30,000 signatures against rate increases. He

spoke out about the hardship power rate increases had on families and people. Now the Premier has driven up power rates, on his own, by about 25 per cent. I'm going to read - this is from March 10, 2006, "Opposition Leader says that 32,000 people who signed the NDP's petition to stop power rate increases until they received help with reducing electric consumption will be very disappointed with today's power rate increase decision."

Yet we know that this year the power rates are going up by 2 per cent or 3 per cent and it's going to go up next year by 2 per cent or 3 per cent, and then there's no rate increase, but by 2015, which is exactly what Nova Scotia Power has been saying all along that this will not be happening.

What I continue to hear across the province as we do get out and about and talk to different communities - I know talking to my colleagues, talking to other colleagues, something I continue to hear is the issue, that's not my NDP, that's not our NDP, that's not the NDP we heard from during the last provincial election. Those are not the things that were talked about by the Official Opposition last time. They really have a long way to go, a long way to fix the damage that they've now created across Nova Scotia with a lot of indecision, with a lot of corporate handouts, with a lot of bad decisions, whether it's Bowater, and now this decision with IBM.

We wouldn't know if IBM was a good deal or not, because we haven't seen the deal. If it's a great deal then maybe the member for Truro-Bible Hill can help us out and try to get us the deal, so we can decide whether it is or whether it is not; lots of money going out for very little help, and a lot of jobs lost in this province. We are in a recession in rural Nova Scotia - this is not our NDP.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to thank all the honourable members in the Chamber tonight for an excellent debate, and we will continue this again tomorrow.

The motion for adjournment was made earlier. We will sit between the hours of 2:00 and 6:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 6:30 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2148**

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

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

Whereas today is the Transgender Day of Remembrance; and

Whereas this day memorializes those who have been killed as a result of transphobia and hatred; and

Whereas since its creation 14 years ago, this day has served as both a time to remember the lives lost and to raise awareness so we can someday eliminate such prejudices;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize today as the Transgender Day of Remembrance and encourage all Nova Scotians to help defeat such irrational prejudices and foster peace.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2149**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas Bank of Montreal's Team of the Week celebrates sports at the grassroots level, recognizing members of youth soccer teams; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Storm U12 "C" Boys were selected as a BMO Team of the Week and became one of the teams vying for the \$125,000 grand prize to refurbish their field; and

Whereas the members of the Dartmouth Storm U12 boys have proven themselves winners not only on the field but by hosting food drives for Margaret's House in Dartmouth and hosting a clean-up party for their local playing field;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Dartmouth Storm U12 "C" Boys and coach Sam Tohme on their efforts and wish them all the best for the upcoming season.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2150**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Heritage Museum was established formally in 1967 as part of the Canadian Centennial Project; and

Whereas this year, the DHM's annual Historic Homes Tour featured eight heritage properties representing different eras of Dartmouth's development; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Heritage Museum raised \$8,140 through sponsorship and ticket sales through this year's event;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly commend all the staff and volunteers of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum on their efforts to hold such a well-received event and on their dedication to preserving and celebrating Dartmouth's historic past.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2151**

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Cape Breton West)

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

Whereas Acadian Seaplants Ltd. is the largest biotech manufacturer of seaweed products of its type in the world, exporting premium products for people, animals, and plants to over 70 countries; and

Whereas Acadian Seaplants Ltd. was one of three finalists in the Over 100 Employees Category at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Ethics Awards held by the Atlantic Provinces Better Business Bureau at the World Trade and Convention Centre on Wednesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas Acadian Seaplants employs 300 people in seven countries and provides seasonal earnings to over 500 fisher-harvesters who harvest seaweed along coastal areas of Atlantic Canada and Maine;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jean-Paul and Louis Deveau from Acadian Seaplants for being named the best company with employees over 100 people for Business Ethics and wish them continued success.



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**RESOLUTION NO. 2152**

By: Mr. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

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

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

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

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