



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>**Fourth Session****WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2012**

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
Energy - Hillside Boularderie Rd./Groves Point: Wind Turbine Proj. - Objections Address, Hon. C. Parker.....	4057
URB - NSP: General Rate Application - Deny, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4058
PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:	
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. R. Landry	4058
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. R. Landry	4058
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Auditor General's Report, The Speaker	4059

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:

Lbr. & Advanced Educ. - Workplace Injuries:	
Administrative Penalties - Review, Hon. M. More	4059
Health & Wellness - Travel & Accommodation Assistance	
Policy, Hon. D. Wilson	4062

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 2153, Finn Ctr. for Forensic Medicine: Value - Recognize,	
Hon. R. Landry	4066
Vote - Affirmative.....	4066
Res. 2154, Natl. Adoption Awareness Mo. (11/12) - Recognize,	
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	4067
Vote - Affirmative.....	4067
Res. 2155, Dill, Donna: Queen's Commemorative Medal	
- Congrats., Hon. D. Wilson	4068
Vote - Affirmative.....	4068
Res. 2156, Bon Portage Island: Acadia Univ./N.S. Nature Trust	
- Conservation, Hon. S. Belliveau	4069
Vote - Affirmative.....	4069
Res. 2157, Climate Change Adaptation Fund: Recipients	
- Congrats., Hon. S. Belliveau	4069
Vote - Affirmative.....	4070

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 143, Importation of Wine for Personal Use Act,	
Hon. Maureen MacDonald.....	4070

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 2158, Miller, David MacDonald - Birthday (101 st),	
Hon. P. Paris	4071
Vote - Affirmative.....	4071
Res. 2159, Merriam, Councillor Ratchford: Death of - Tribute,	
Hon. J. Baillie	4072
Vote - Affirmative.....	4073
Res. 2160, Antigonish Heritage Assoc. - Anniv. (40 th),	
Hon. M. Smith.....	4073
Vote - Affirmative.....	4073
Res. 2161, Big Red's - Anniv. (25 th): Swinemar, Rick, Derrek,	
Colleen & Joan - Congrats., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse	4073
Vote - Affirmative.....	4074
Res. 2162, Jess, Gaea & Linda: Dance Contributions - Congrats.,	
Hon. R. Jennex.....	4074
Vote - Affirmative.....	4075
Res. 2163, Lake-Crossley, Jessica: Queen Elizabeth II	
Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. J. MacDonell.....	4075
Vote - Affirmative.....	4076
Res. 2164, MacLeod, Marin - CIS Student Athlete Commun. Serv. Award,	
Hon. C. Parker.....	4076
Vote - Affirmative.....	4076

Res. 2165, Sherbrooke Old Fashioned Christmas: Return	
- Congrats., Mr. J. Boudreau.....	4077
Vote - Affirmative.....	4077
Res. 2166, Henderson, David: Queen Elizabeth II	
Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Ms. L. Zann.....	4077
Vote - Affirmative.....	4078
Res. 2167, White, Dot: Not-for-Profits/Serv. Clubs	
- Dedication Congrats., Ms. B. Kent.....	4078
Vote - Affirmative.....	4079
Res. 2168, Colp, Scot: CD Release - Congrats.,	
Ms. V. Conrad.....	4079
Vote - Affirmative.....	4080
Res. 2169, NDP Gov't. - N.S. Companies : Commitment - Applaud,	
Mr. C. MacKinnon.....	4080
Res. 2170, Kennedy, John F. - Assassination: Significance	
- Acknowledge, Hon. W. Estabrooks.....	4081
Vote - Affirmative.....	4081
Res. 2171, West Dublin Farm Market: Organizers - Congrats.,	
Mr. G. Ramey	4081
Vote - Affirmative.....	4082
Res. 2172, Admiral Insurance: Expansion Plans - Congrats.,	
Mr. B. Skabar	4082
Res. 2173, Sanford, Marie: Commun. Commitment - Congrats.,	
Mr. J. Morton	4083
Vote - Affirmative.....	4084
Res. 2174, Atherton, John/Northfield Elem. Sch. Green Team:	
Garden Harvest - Commend, Ms. P. Birdsall	4084
Vote - Affirmative.....	4085
Res. 2175, CFL Tailgate Party: RONA (Cole Hbr. Rd.) - Thank,	
The Premier.....	4085
Vote - Affirmative.....	4086
Res. 2176, Claydon, Jim & Edna: James & Edna Claydon	
Radiation Treatment Ctr. - Donation Thank, Hon. M. Smith.....	4086
Vote - Affirmative.....	4086
Res. 2177, Young, Tom: Death of - Tribute,	
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	4087
Vote - Affirmative.....	4087
Res. 2178, Blois, Barron: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal	
- Congrats., Hon. J. MacDonell	4087
Vote - Affirmative.....	4088
Res. 2179, Strait Area C of C - Pacific West Deal: Role - Congrats.,	
Mr. J. Boudreau.....	4088
Vote - Affirmative.....	4089

Res. 2180, Jakeman, Nancy - Hfx. Reg. Sch. Bd.: Election	
- Congrats., Ms. B. Kent	4089
Vote - Affirmative.....	4090
Res. 2181, Burns, Wayne: Film Work - Congrats.,	
Ms. L. Zann.....	4090
Vote - Affirmative.....	4090
Res. 2182, Queens Gen. Hosp. Ladies Aux.: Hospital Hustle Fundraising	
- Congrats., Ms. V. Conrad	4091
Vote - Affirmative.....	4091
Res. 2183, Polysteel Atl. Ltd.: Success - Congrats.,	
Mr. C. MacKinnon	4091
Res. 2184, Frontier Developments Ltd.: Halifax - Welcome,	
Mr. J. Morton	4092
Vote - Affirmative.....	4093
Res. 2185, Nickerson, Mr. Collin: Diamond Jubilee Medal	
- Congrats., Ms. P. Birdsall.....	4093
Vote - Affirmative.....	4093
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:	
No. 445, Prem.: Trade Ctr. Ltd. - Financial Controls,	
Hon. S. McNeil	4094
No. 446, Health & Wellness: Cost Savings - Auditor Gen. Proposal,	
Hon. J. Baillie	4095
No. 447, Health & Wellness - Auditor Gen.'s Rept.: IT Security	
- Adequacy, Hon. S. McNeil.....	4097
No. 448, Prem.: Infrastructure Deficit - Address,	
Hon. S. McNeil	4098
No. 449, Health & Wellness: Emergency Fund - Usages,	
Hon. J. Baillie	4100
No. 450, Prem.: Corporations/Schools - Funding,	
Mr. G. MacLellan	4102
No. 451, Health & Wellness: Electronic Medical Records	
- Privacy, Hon. C. d'Entremont	4104
No. 452, Prem.: Corporate Subsidization - Details,	
Mr. G. MacLellan	4105
No. 453, Educ.: Learning Disabled Students - Funding,	
Mr. E. Orrell.....	4107
No. 454, Prem.: Tuition Promises - Accuracy,	
Mr. A. Younger.....	4109
No. 455, Health & Wellness: C.B. Attendants - Layoffs,	
Mr. G. MacLellan	4110
No. 456, SNSMR: Salvation Army Good Neighbour Fund	
- Additional Funding, Mr. T. Zinck	4112
No. 457, Health & Wellness - OxyContin: Generic Version	
- Restrictions, Mr. L. Glavine	4114

No. 458, ERDT - Internet Service: Access - Details, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4116
No. 459, TIR: Independent Truckers - Cost-Effectiveness, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	4118
No. 460, Environ. - Bedford Waterfront: Pyritic Disposal Sites - Options, Ms. K. Regan	4119
No. 461, Fin.: Digital Media Tax Credit - Extend, Ms. D. Whalen	4120
No. 462, Prem.: Maritime Link - Cost Update, Mr. A. Younger.....	4121
OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:	
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
Res. 1466, Prem. - Corporate Handouts: Rethink - Cole Harbour MLA Urge Mr. G. MacLellan	4123
Hon. Maureen MacDonald.....	4128
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	4130
Hon. K. Colwell	4135
PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 103, Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act Hon. K. Colwell	4138
Ms. L. Zann.....	4139
Mr. A. MacLeod	4141
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., Nov. 22 nd at 12:00 noon.....	4142
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 2186, Weare Fam./Hollow Log Café: Queens Co. Bus. Commun. - Contributions, Ms. V. Conrad	4143
Res. 2187, Boo Boo's Pizza: Haywood, Jeremy/Briand, Patrick - Welcome, Hon. D. Wilson.....	4143
Res. 2188, Camano, Jim: Aurora ROV Systems Ltd. - Success Congrats., Hon. D. Wilson.....	4144
Res. 2189, Natl. Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims (11/21/12) - Recognize, Mr. A. MacMaster	4144
Res. 2190, Cochrane, Jason: Work Ethic/Commun. Spirit - Congrats., Mr. C. Porter	4145



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition signed by 275 Nova Scotians, Save Our Community from Industrial Wind Turbines.

“We, the undersigned, wish to register our objections to the proposed wind turbine project to be erected in the rural neighbourhood of Hillside Boularderie Road, Groves Point, Cape Breton, NS. We ask that the government address these objections prior to any work proceeding.”

Mr. Speaker, I too have affixed my name.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

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

“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, there are 85 signatures, and I have affixed mine to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 107 - Debt Collection and Management Reform (2012) Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 102 - Education Act.

Bill No. 119 - Cosmetology Act.

Bill No. 127 - Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act.

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

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: It is my pleasure today that I table the Report of the Auditor General to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, dated November 2012.

The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, if I might be permitted an introduction before I do my statement?

In the east gallery I'd like to welcome Duncan Williams, president of the Construction Association of Nova Scotia - Duncan, if you could stand - and also Rick Clarke, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour. I ask my colleagues to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to report that our government is continuing to make improvements that help keep Nova Scotia workers safe. The safety of Nova Scotia workers is a priority for this government. Every Nova Scotian who gets up and goes to work in the morning should return home safely to their family.

This government has many initiatives in place to protect Nova Scotians while they are on the job. With a mix of education, prevention, and partnership, we have seen our injury rate decline 5 per cent per year for the past several years, but that is not enough. One workplace injury or fatality is too many. That is why this government introduced administrative penalties in 2010. These fines act as a deterrent for employers and employees who break safety laws. They work to better protect Nova Scotians while they are at work.

This is our focus, Mr. Speaker: protecting Nova Scotians in the workplace. Administrative penalties are an important tool in accomplishing that goal. We need to make sure that those penalties are having the intended impact as we continue to improve safety for Nova Scotians, and that is why I'm announcing a review of the administrative penalties. It is now time to take a step back and evaluate what is working well and what can be improved.

The review will focus on ensuring that our current penalties are applied consistently, fairly, and appropriately, so that they are the most effective tool for achieving workplace safety. Previous governments were content with having a safety record that ranked middle of the pack when compared to other parts of the country. Nova Scotian workers and their families have told us that they want better and that they deserve better. This government agrees, and is standing on the side of workers. As Nova Scotians prepare for those good jobs and economic opportunities, as businesses prepare and expand, government is taking the responsible steps to ensure that worker safety is being protected. Mothers and fathers should be reassured that their sons and daughters are working in a safe environment. Children should not have to worry about whether Mom and Dad will come home safely after work.

Nova Scotians are ready to work together to make our workplaces among the safest in the country. To accomplish that goal, the province has partnered with the Workers' Compensation Board to develop a new five-year workplace safety strategy. Over the past several months feedback has been gathered from many employees, employers, and other safety partners for the strategy. More than 400 people participated in 26 consultations across the province; another 1,000 Nova Scotians shared their views on-line.

Mr. Speaker, the province undertook a significant consultation approach to ensure all partners had a chance to provide input into a strategy that will help change the safety landscape of this province. A strategy framework has been developed and consultations will continue over the next couple of months to ensure all the information is collected and that the strategy can be finalized later this winter. Nova Scotians told us that they would like to see the money used in a way that would directly improve safety in workplaces. Employers told us they support the penalties and would like them to be assigned in a more consistent way.

We are listening to our partners, including labour, and are taking a look at how the administrative penalties could be improved to better meet the goal of increased workplace safety for Nova Scotians. Nova Scotians agree that penalties have a place in the overall approach to support workplace safety. Many of our partners in the safety community, including the Federation of Labour and the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, have shared their support of the penalties but they also would like to see them better utilized.

Mr. Speaker, the review of the penalties will begin immediately. In fact, conversations with internal staff are already taking place. Our safety partners will have a say in the process, as the review continues in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of unprecedented workforce opportunity in this province and this review and strategy will help ensure our workplace is strong, skilled and safe. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the minister for her comments that were provided earlier today. I do believe this is a helpful step forward on this issue. Workplace safety is paramount in the Province of Nova Scotia. I know that every Party in this House wants a robust workplace safety regimen in the Province of Nova Scotia because we want our people to be safe. However, we have been hearing from businesses, as I am sure the minister has as well, that the way the penalties are currently levied aren't quite helpful. When you add those to the high power rates that we have in this province, the increased taxes as a result of this government's tax hike, increased user fees, it makes the business climate a bit less competitive here.

I think we've collected, as of July 2012, almost \$1.5 million in workplace safety penalties that have primarily been levied on the construction industry as well as the retail industry. The focus has actually been on these private companies. However, when you actually look at the injuries that are happening, the majority of them actually happen with employees who are working for government.

What we are hearing from businesses is that they feel targeted and they feel they are being treated unfairly by the penalties that are currently being levied. If we're going to collect \$1.5 million in revenues off these penalties, this caucus believes that we should invest those dollars in preventive actions instead of these penalties after the fact. If we want to make our workplaces safer in this province, we really need to focus on that prevention. Currently this money is going into general revenues; it is not being allocated to prevent injuries at the workplace.

It is my hope and the hope of this caucus that as we move forward with this piece of legislation, this will give the government an opportunity to actually address some of these concerns and make some of these changes. So not only will our workplaces be safer, but we'll have a more competitive business environment and one that does treat our private sector fairly. With those brief words, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness. (Interruption) Oh, I'm sorry, the honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, we know that boundary changes might be coming but I hope it doesn't affect Inverness and Victoria-The Lakes. I'd also like to thank the minister for providing our caucus with her comments ahead of time; it's appreciated.

In Nova Scotia we have a proud tradition of working hard, often at difficult and sometimes dangerous jobs. Education and awareness in the prevention of workplace injuries and fatalities is essential to ensuring Nova Scotia workers get home safely to their families, at the end of their work day.

Making progress in workplace safety involves making sure we're using the right tools, like education, to discourage dangerous behaviour. Far too often we are faced with the tragic reminders that more needs to be done to make sure Nova Scotians are safe and able to go home to their families. If we all work together towards prevention, I'm confident we can significantly decrease the number of workplace accidents in our province.

In some cases we have to resort to other tools at our disposal, like penalties for those who insist on breaking the rules. Mr. Speaker, it's on that note that I'll end my remarks and I look forward to hearing the results of the review of the administrative penalties. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Am I permitted to make a quick introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: In the east gallery today I'd like to draw the attention of the members, with us today is Chelsea White, her brothers Shane and Kylan, her mother Shannon and her father Duane. The Chelsea family is here to hear the ministerial statement but I would like all members of the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand before you and other members of the Legislature today to reaffirm our commitment to making life better and more affordable for Nova Scotians who must travel out of province to receive health care.

In April 2010, we made it a policy to provide assistance for anyone who has been approved to travel outside Nova Scotia for medically necessary care. This was a promise we made and was the right decision to make, even in difficult times this was a campaign

commitment that we kept because we promised to make life better for Nova Scotia families.

In the past, to help supplement the cost of travelling for care, families held fundraisers. Raising money is an additional worry when you are already stressed out about your health or the health of a loved one. It is time-consuming, tedious and difficult at times and I think all members will remember, or recognize, some of the fundraisers that happened in our communities across Nova Scotia.

With our travel and accommodation assistance policy we can support around 100 Nova Scotians for less than \$1 million a year. I know \$1 million is a lot but it's well received within those families that take part in this and I think it's a wise investment. (Applause)

We kept our commitment to implement this policy because it was in the best interest of residents. When we announced our travel policy, the Nova Scotia Lung Association said that it moved Nova Scotia from the back of the line to the front of class. Already we know that many families have taken advantage of this program and it was that improvement over previous practice of ministerial exceptions which, I would like to add, didn't cover the cost of travel and required patients to be away from their homes for longer than three months.

Not only did we keep our promise to provide Nova Scotians who require out-of-province care with the assistance they need, but we also developed a policy that best fits their needs. It's a policy that is fair, that's honest and that puts their minds at ease in a difficult time because when you require a lifesaving medical procedure that's not offered where you live you should be able to focus your time, and your energy, at home and not worrying about recuperating and the cost of paying your bills when you seek travel outside for medical attention.

Even further, Mr. Speaker, we realized that the very next year that we could do more to support ill Nova Scotians who must travel for care, especially when it comes to somebody like a child who needs to travel with an escort. As a parent myself I know that when your child is sick there is nothing more important than being by their side and I think Nova Scotians recognize that. They depend on you for hope and strength and that can make a difference, no question, in their recovery when they seek support outside our province. This is why on June 1, 2011 we expanded our commitment to the travel and accommodation assistance policy to include increased support for families. Now we also provide financial assistance to children and their families who have been approved for insured out-of-province medical care.

Now under the policy, Mr. Speaker, costs are covered for a parent or a caregiver to go with a child who is approved for out-of-province medical care to their medical appointments, whether it's in Toronto or in San Diego. This policy has made a tremendous

impact in the lives of Nova Scotians. In fact, one of the first to benefit from this implementation was Shannon Price, and she called it a miracle. She said that the financial support allowed her to totally focus on her daughter Chelsea and her needs, without worrying about how they were going to pay the bills. Let me table that statement - and I'll table it in a minute, because I know it's under my book here.

Chelsea and her family are with us today, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that they were able to make the trip to Halifax. They're seated in the east gallery. I'm very glad that they could be here while I speak on this important topic. Because of this policy, Chelsea received her brain surgery in California with her mother at her side and returned home to play and grow, and not with an insurmountable travel bill.

You see, Mr. Speaker, we're making life better and more affordable for families. The travel and accommodation assistance policy is a great example of that. I appreciate having the opportunity to rise in the House to speak about this very important subject this afternoon and to reaffirm the commitments we've made to Nova Scotians, and I thank the family for coming today to see and hear what goes on here in the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place and respond to the ministerial statement around this very important issue. I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

On behalf of our Leader, the honourable member for Annapolis, as well as all of my caucus colleagues, I too would like to welcome Chelsea and her family to the gallery today. While today's statement simply reintroduces Nova Scotians to a program that has been ongoing for some time, I believe that as legislators we should give credit where credit is due. Through all of the to-ing and fro-ing that happens in this Legislature, we should never underestimate the power of one person to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians, and that one person is the late Marilyn MacKay.

Many people in this House would remember Marilyn. She was introduced to the people of Nova Scotia through the dedicated efforts of my colleague, the honourable member for Richmond. Marilyn spent the sickest days of her life waiting for a double-lung transplant, fighting the former Progressive Conservative Government for fairness, and she did make an impact. She became an advocate for all Nova Scotians who needed to travel outside of the province for lifesaving health care procedures. It was through the persistent efforts of Marilyn and the hard work of the Nova Scotia Lung Association that we are where we are today.

It's interesting: The ChronicleHerald article dated October 28, 2009, has put this whole ministerial statement in perspective. During that media interview back in 2009, Trevor Umlah, a double-lung transplant survivor, stated: "If it wasn't for Marilyn, these

programs would not be in place . . . That's what it boils down to. She was the one who put the face to the program."

If there is any lesson for us to take from this particular program today, it is that the voice of one person, even when they are experiencing their most challenging of days, can truly make a difference in the lives of so many. I know Marilyn fought for what was right. She was right for doing so and she was successful. As I stated from the outset, it's important to give credit where credit is due, and today is no exception.

On behalf of our caucus, I would like to thank the late Marilyn MacKay and her husband, Ken, and the Nova Scotia Lung Association for all they have done to make a difference. Chelsea, you may not remember Marilyn four years ago, but remember this - she was the voice that made all the difference to you. Always remember, Chelsea, that you and your family have made a difference in the lives of families as well by ensuring that the program was expanded. With those words, I take my place. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus, I too want to welcome Chelsea and her family here today. I want to do something that maybe sometimes doesn't happen so much in this House, in this Legislature, which is to thank the minister not only for the copy of the document but also for his continued dedication to this file.

This file is one that all Parties have had a hand in over the last number of years. I quite remember my time as minister, and thank the MLA for Richmond for his work on this file, for introducing us to Marilyn and Ken MacKay when their issue became so important.

All of us have our own experiences and our own friends who have had to travel outside our province for some time to receive some kind of health surgery, transplant or what have you. In my personal experience it was a childhood friend by the name of Gilbert LeBlanc. Gilbert was a CF patient and was in need of a double-lung transplant back in the early 1990s and when this file did come up and this issue did come up, it was one that was easy to try to find a solution to or to try to push forward. As much as we as politicians continue to advocate on behalf of our constituents, there's a whole bureaucracy there that sometimes needs a little bit of a push. In this particular case, I think, we were all able to find a method in which to push it forward in bringing up the ministerial exception and then from there to see the government push forward on its issue of a full policy.

I commend the minister for that; I commend both ministers for that because it was definitely a good move forward on this file. So on behalf of all those who did need to travel outside the province for this kind of service, I want to thank the government on this one; of course, thank all MLAs; and continue to push forward, doing the right thing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Earlier in the proceedings I wanted to advise the members that I noticed a petition that was tabled today that was the same as the one tabled on Monday. I had the Clerks check it, and it was discovered that a large part of the earlier petition was a photocopy of the one tabled today. I have instructed the Chief Clerk to return the portion that is photocopied to the member. Photocopies of petitions are not able to be tabled in the House.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 2153

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

Whereas the new Dr. William D. Finn Centre for Forensic Medicine, named for Canada's and Nova Scotia's first medical examiner, opened today in Dartmouth; and

Whereas the new facility will improve services for families, meet the growing needs for autopsies, and provide additional capacity in the event of many deaths at once; and

Whereas the building uses energy and water efficiently, uses advanced technology for its operations, and was built within budget and on time;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the value that the new Dr. William D. Finn Centre for Forensic Medicine will offer to Nova Scotians, and commend all those involved in the creation of the new facility on their hard work and foresight.

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. 2154

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 November is National Adoption Awareness Month, public attention is focused on the need for adoptive families for children and youth in the permanent care of the Minister of Community Services; and

Whereas children over eight years of age, children with African Nova Scotian or Mi'kmaq heritage, sibling groups, and children with special needs are waiting for a permanent, loving family through adoption; and

Whereas adoptive families across the province have chosen to provide loving support in traditional, same-sex, and single-parent families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize National Adoption Awareness Month and commend adoptive parents across the province as an inspiration for others to follow.

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.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, am I permitted to do an introduction prior to my resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: Joining us today in the east gallery is the director of Continuing Care, Donna Dill. With her are a few other members of the Continuing Care Strategy. Recently Donna has received the Diamond Jubilee Medal for her dedication really on ongoing work and continuing care here in the province and across Canada. So I'd like all members to give a warm welcome to Donna. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2155

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

Whereas this year marks the historic anniversary of the Queen's 60th year as Queen of Canada, and Her Royal Highness has issued a commemorative medal to honour significant contributions to society made by Canadians, to celebrate this occasion; and

Whereas recipients of the Queen's commemorative medal have come from across the country and province and done work in various fields, including contributions to home and community care; and

Whereas Donna Dill, director of Monitoring and Evaluation for Continuing Care in the Department of Health and Wellness, has received this prestigious award for her long-standing commitment to home and community care and her work in major initiatives to support caregivers and clients in home care, long-term care, and adult protection services;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Donna Dill for being named the recipient of the Queen's commemorative medal and for her dedication to providing better care for Nova Scotians in continuing care.

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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 2156

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

Whereas the province's natural beauty is a big part of what makes Nova Scotia a great place for families to live and work; and

Whereas the province, recognizing this commitment to legally protect 12 per cent of Nova Scotia's land by 2015, a commitment that is shared and supported by many; and

Whereas this past September, Acadia University and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust pioneered the conservation of university-owned lands on Bon Portage Island, a move that ensures these lands will continue to provide natural habitats for wildlife, educational and research opportunities, and a lasting legacy for future generations to use and enjoy;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the Legislature congratulate Acadia University and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust for their pioneering efforts and their contribution to Nova Scotia's commitment to protect 12 per cent of Nova Scotia lands, by 2015, for all 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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 2157

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

Whereas Nova Scotians can expect warmer temperatures on average, more extreme rainfalls and flooding, and more intense storms as a result of our changing climate; and

Whereas there is some of the great work being done at the community level by local organizations, communities, and individuals to address the effects of climate change right here at home; and

Whereas six successful applicants were awarded a total of more than \$79,000 from this year's Climate Change Adaptation Fund, for community-based research and awareness projects, bringing the total investment in climate change funding from this program to over \$138,000 since it was launched in 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House acknowledge the great work being done by the recipients of this year's Climate Change Adaptation Fund, and by others across the province, to help ensure that our communities and organizations are better prepared for the effects of climate change.

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. 143 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act, to Allow the Importation of Wine for Personal Use. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, before I read my resolution, I'd like to make a brief introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, this is truly quite a day because I want to bring the attention of the House to the speaker's gallery. Seated in the Speaker's Gallery today we have David MacDonald Miller. Mr. Miller, would you please stand - just briefly? With Mr.

Miller today is his daughter Lois Miller, granddaughter Christina MacDonald, and son-in-law Reverend Ian MacDonald. They are joined by family friend Walter Tingley. I would like the House to give them a warm welcome, please.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2158

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

Whereas David MacDonald Miller, of Fall River, this summer celebrated his 101st birthday at a party that he organized for over 200 family members and friends; and

Whereas Mr. Miller continues to own some of the lands for which his great-grandfather received a land grant in 1812; and

Whereas Mr. Miller served in the Navy during World War II, as a Fall River school board member, a United Church elder, as a long-time member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Masonic Lodge, Carpenters Union, and very recently a competitor in the Provincial Scythe Cutting Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly extend heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to David MacDonald Miller in this, his 102nd year.

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. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, may I do a few quick introductions as well?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. BAILLIE: Although none of these people are in their 102nd year, which I am truly amazed at, at this moment, Mr. Speaker, if I could draw the attention of the House to the gallery opposite, I just want the House to give a warm welcome to a couple of people who join us today. One is Shane Buchan, the president of Perry Rand Transportation who is here with us. As members know, we will be debating a bill on intercity bus service shortly so I want to welcome Mr. Buchan to the gallery. In addition, Irvine Carvery, in the other corner of the same gallery, former Halifax Regional School Board chair; and in between the two is Steve Hyland with Staples Call Center. I want to welcome them all to the House today through you, sir. (Applause)

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

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2159

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

Whereas today is a sad day in Cumberland County as we mourn the loss of long-time councillor Ratchford Merriam; and

Whereas Councillor Merriam was very passionate about his community and was a dedicated representative of the people in his area; and

Whereas Councillor Merriam will be sadly missed by family, friends, and the constituents for whom he worked so hard for many years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House extend our sincere condolences to Councillor Merriam's family and loved ones and let them know that he will be missed.

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. 2160

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

Whereas the Heritage Association of Antigonish began with a small gathering at H.M. MacDonald's home in Maryvale in Antigonish County in the 1970s; and

Whereas the Heritage Association was formalized in 1982 with a main goal of establishing an Antigonish Heritage Museum, which happened in 1991, on the site of the former train station; and

Whereas in July, the Heritage Association of Antigonish celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a gathering and activities at the Antigonish Heritage Museum;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House congratulate the Heritage Association of Antigonish on their 40th Anniversary and wish them all the best with their work in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2161

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 in the late 1970s two young men by the names of Rick and Derrek Swinemar, then of Gold River, who had a love of pizza and a desire to create jobs for themselves, approached a bank manager with the dream of opening a pizzeria; and

Whereas after many negotiations, a bank loan was acquired in the amount of \$7,500 to purchase equipment and the pizzeria known as Big Red's was born; and

Whereas Big Red's is now celebrating 35 years of quality food on the South Shore, with restaurants/pizzerias in both Chester and Lunenburg, and they still serve the same unique sauce and dough for their pizzas as they did when they first opened their doors, and it is distinctly Big Red's, and, yes, even wieners are a topping on their pizzas;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in extending congratulations to Rick and Derrek and their wives, Colleen and Joan Swinemar, on their 35 years of serving the South Shore delicious pizza, and long may their dough rise.

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. 2162

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

Whereas Gaea and Linda Jess of Cadance Academy have been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce in 2012; and

Whereas Gaea and Linda have been and remain tireless ambassadors for the art, sport, and theatre of dance, and the multiple social and health benefits that dance can offer; and

Whereas Gaea and Linda have successfully cultivated Cadance Academy over 25 years of hard work and entrepreneurial spirit, providing an annual highlight performance of *The Nutcracker* which showcases talent from all age groups, drawing large audiences from all over the Annapolis Valley;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the contributions made by Gaea and Linda Jess to the art and enterprise of dance in the Annapolis Valley.

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. 2163

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 Jessica Lake-Crossley of Mount Uniacke was honoured with the presentation of the 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 Jessica Lake-Crossley 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 Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 2164

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

Whereas Marin MacLeod of Meadowville, Pictou County is a fourth-year student at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario and a member of the Queens University women's rugby team; and

Whereas Marin MacLeod and her rugby team, the Gaels, competed in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport Women's Rugby Championships in Antigonish in November of this year; and

Whereas Marin MacLeod as a student, rugby player and as an active volunteer in her community was recognized by the Canadian Interuniversity Sport with the Canadian Interuniversity Sport's Student Athlete Community Service Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Marin MacLeod of Meadowville, Pictou County for winning the Canadian Interuniversity Sport's Student Athlete Community Service Award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2165

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

Whereas the Old Fashioned Christmas celebration was much valued and celebrated by Sherbrooke and area residents, community leaders and indeed all citizens of the St. Mary's Municipality; and

Whereas after two years' absence, a full Old Fashioned Christmas celebration is now returning to Sherbrooke on November 23rd to November 25th; and

Whereas there has been much desire and many dedicated volunteer hours invested by numerous individuals and organizations to help this signature event return to Sherbrooke;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to the community, the management and staff of Sherbrooke Village, the NSGEU, and the Sherbrooke Restoration Commission for their co-operative and collaborative efforts in bringing back Old Fashioned Christmas to the picturesque community of Sherbrooke.

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. 2166

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

Whereas Dr. David Henderson, executive board member of the Colchester East Hants Hospice Society, secretary/treasurer of the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians, past board member of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association and past president of the Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association has been awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Dr. Henderson, a resident of Bible Hill and the present medical director of the Palliative Care Program with the Colchester-East Hants Health Authority has received the honour at the International Congress on Palliative Care in Montreal; and

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal recognizes Canadians who have dedicated themselves to service, family, community and country;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Dr. David Henderson on receiving this distinguished award in acknowledgement of his life's work enhancing access to palliative care services.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2167

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

Whereas Dot White, long-time resident of Eastern Passage and now of Dartmouth, has been volunteering her entire life as an active member of the Eastern Passage community; and

Whereas her skills have made her a sought-after community volunteer for the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Summer Carnival Committee as treasurer, a founding member of the Athletic Association from its inception with her husband Lorne, a member of the

Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Holiday Festival Society, and a current board of director with the Fisherman's Cove Development Association; and

Whereas Dot is the current editor of the community newspaper The Beacon and has been for over eight years, which requires countless hours of dedication and energy;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Dot White for her years of dedication to several not-for-profit organizations and service clubs, and wish her many more years of volunteering success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2168

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

Whereas in May 2012, at the home of Scott and Vicki Conrad of Mill Village, singer-songwriter Scott Colp of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, gave a preview performance of his first CD *East Bound*, a collection of 10 original songs, to a private audience of 40; and

Whereas in June 2012, Scott Colp had an official launch of his CD, *East Bound*, at the Michelin Social Club, and in July he showcased a performance at the Big Ex Beer Barn; and

Whereas in August 2012, Scott shared the stage at the Lunenburg Opera House with Catahoula Brown and Laura Stevenson, and this weekend he will perform with other local musicians at the Riverbank Café in Mill Village;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Scott Colp on the release of his CD *East Bound*, and wish him great success with his music and songwriting.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2169

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

Whereas just over a year ago, Irving Shipbuilding was announced as the successful bidder in the National Procurement Shipbuilding Strategy; and

Whereas our government supported Irving Shipbuilding's bid to create thousands of good jobs for Nova Scotians by strengthening human resources, technology, and industrial development; and

Whereas in March 2012, the CEO of Irving Shipbuilding, Jim Irving, thanked the NDP Government for helping the company win the bid, saying: "Premier, your government, and your colleagues, you stepped up and made it happen for us. Because without that, I can tell you, we wouldn't be standing here today, no question about it.";

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature applaud the foresight and commitment of this NDP Government to working with Nova Scotia companies like Irving Shipbuilding, to create new economic opportunities to boost our economy and create good jobs right here in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 2170

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

Whereas 49 years ago tomorrow, on November 22, 1963, a generation lost its sense of innocence; and

Whereas on that fateful day President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas; and

Whereas many of us of that vintage can clearly remember where we were on November 22, 1963;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature acknowledge the significance of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy on November 22, 1963.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2171

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

Whereas two years ago a number of creative and dedicated individuals in the West Dublin area decided to organize a community fundraiser which was so successful that it became the West Dublin Farm Market; and

Whereas some of the folks who were key to making this happen include Kerriann Croft, Debbie Croft, John Croft, Christina Grevatt, Ty Grevatt - who, I understand, is a very small person - Alex Hickey, Sarah Morton, and a host of vendors who have turned this into a very successful farm market which is held every two weeks throughout the summer; and

Whereas this very successful farm market has become a showcase for locally grown produce, locally made crafts, locally produced pastries and locally developed talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kerriann Croft, Debbie Croft, John Croft, Christina Grevatt, Ty Grevatt, Alex Hickey, and Sarah Morton for starting this farm market, thank the vendors and customers for supporting it, and wish them success and prosperity in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2172

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

Whereas in April 2012, United Kingdom-based Admiral Insurance announced plans to once again expand its Nova Scotia operation; and

Whereas the expansion, in partnership with Nova Scotia Business Inc., could see as many as 400 additional new jobs added to their current workforce of 400 employees; and

Whereas expansions like this one are a key indicator of the success of the NDP Government's jobsHere plan which focuses on innovation, education and competitiveness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Admiral Insurance on their expansion plans, providing good jobs for Nova Scotian families.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2173

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

Whereas Marie Sanford is, both in her private and public life, a generous spirit with an insatiable curiosity in the world around her, a deep and loving commitment to family, and a passionate concern for social justice as an active and engaged citizen; and

Whereas Marie, along with her late husband Chester, added immeasurably to the vibrancy and quality of life in Kings County by becoming vital members of groups and organizations such as the Lakeville Women's Institute, the Gyro Club, the Co-op movement, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Fidelis House, the labour movement, and the Kings North and Kings Hants NDP riding associations where Marie served as treasurer for 24 years; and

Whereas Marie Sanford was recently honoured at a tribute dinner in her name, at the same time raising funds for the Chester Sanford Memorial Bursary, which was established to recognize a graduating student from Northeast Kings Education Centre who has demonstrated, like Marie, a strong interest in social justice;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House express their appreciation for the engagement and selfless commitment to community that Marie Sanford has shown throughout her life, and commend her for investing herself in making life better in Kings County and the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2174

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

Whereas three years ago West Northfield Elementary School started a Green Team, led by teacher John Atherton, a student-driven initiative that has seen participants literally harvest the fruits of their labour; and

Whereas the Green Team started with a dug out section of the school field and has grown into boxed-in raised beds with proper soil, featuring compost generated by the school and growing fruits and vegetables that are used in the school cafeteria; and

Whereas the students harvest everything from cherry tomatoes to pumpkins to sweet potatoes, with each classroom getting its own pumpkin to carve for Halloween, and while the students watched their harvest grow, this year alone they harvested over 3,000 tomatoes;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate John Atherton and the members of the West Northfield Elementary School Green Team for the success of their garden harvest, and commend them for taking a green approach to their 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 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party on an introduction.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I know this introduction will come as no surprise to the members of this House but I would like to draw the attention of the House to the gallery opposite, and the former member for Truro-Bible Hill, a former Minister of Health, Education and other things, Mr. Jamie Muir, a former teacher from Truro, along with Nick Langley, his accompaniment today. I just welcome them to the House through you, sir, and hope everyone gives them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2175

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, for my part I'd like to say it's nice to welcome the former minister back, and here he is, looking over my shoulder once again.

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

Whereas over the past 10 weeks the famous Grey Cup was on a cross-Canada tour with 100 stops, including one in my very own constituency of Cole Harbour; and

Whereas in honour of the visit, the RONA on Cole Harbour Road held a special CFL tailgate party for families and sports fans in the community; and

Whereas this great event included a bouncy castle for kids, an outdoor barbeque, and games and contests for football lovers of all ages, as well as a special appearance by CFL alumni Bruce Beaton and Eugene Belliveau;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House thank the staff and the management at RONA for organizing this fun event, and wish all the CFL fans across Canada happy viewing Sunday night when the 100th annual Grey Cup gets underway between the Toronto Argonauts and the Calgary Stampeders.

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. 2176

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

Whereas on October 11th the James and Edna Claydon Radiation Treatment Clinic, a joint initiative of the provincial and federal governments, the QEII Foundation, and Capital Health, was unveiled at the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre; and

Whereas Jim and Edna Claydon, who donated \$1.5 million toward the radiation treatment centre, raised their family in Ontario but have deep Nova Scotia roots, Edna having been born as Edna George in Queensport, Guysborough County, and later graduating from the Victoria General School of Nursing in 1953; and

Whereas Jim and Edna (George) Claydon's generous donation will mean that Nova Scotians living with cancer will have more timely access to the latest radiation treatment technology;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly thank Jim and Edna Claydon for their very generous donation towards the James and Edna Claydon Radiation Treatment Clinic, and acknowledge the efforts of all the partners involved in bringing the treatment centre to fruition.

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. 2177

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 in April 2012 the community of Bayswater lost a favourite son in Tom Young, the “Mayor of Bayswater”; and

Whereas one of Tom’s great joys was to walk to the beach, taking his lunch to spend the day talking to people and watching out for the welfare of the people and the beach; and

Whereas on Saturday, September 15th, a beautiful, warm, and sunny day, friends of Tom’s gathered on the beach to bid farewell to this kind gentleman and unveil a plaque in his honour;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly join me in honouring the memory of Tom Young and recognize the contribution that he made to the community of Bayswater, Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 2178

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 Barron Blois of Gore was honoured with the presentation of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his dedication and commitment to helping his community;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Barron Blois on his Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and acknowledge with gratitude his dedication and commitment to helping 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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 2179

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

Whereas businesses, staff, and volunteers with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce worked with the NDP Government to ensure thousands of jobs were saved by a new deal with Pacific West; and

Whereas the determination of the people of the Strait region during the difficult months leading to the September 2012 deal is both respected and appreciated; and

Whereas the co-operation and partnerships that grew between the people of the Strait region and our NDP Government demonstrate to all Nova Scotians that by working together we can make life better;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce for their role in the Pacific West deal, which saved thousands of jobs in the Strait region of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2180

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

Whereas in October of this year, through school board elections across Nova Scotia, many capable citizens put their names forward for representation on local school boards; and

Whereas the Halifax Regional School Board serves just under 49,000 students in 137 schools and is the largest school board in Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas recently, Nancy Jakeman of Cow Bay was elected to represent Dartmouth South/Eastern Passage/Cole Harbour/Westphal on the Halifax Regional School Board;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Nancy Jakeman on her October election to represent Dartmouth South/Eastern Passage/Cole Harbour/Westphal with the Halifax Regional School Board and wish her many years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 2181

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

Whereas Wayne Burns, a 21-year-old Canadian actor currently studying at Montreal's National Theatre School of Canada - and from Truro, Nova Scotia - was recently cast in a supporting role in the film *Blackbird*; and

Whereas *Blackbird* won the award for the Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival as well as claiming Best Atlantic Feature, Best Writing and Best Directing at the Atlantic Film Festival in Halifax in September 2012; and

Whereas Wayne Burns was also honoured with the 2011 Theatre Nova Scotia Award and starred in the romantic drama *Gravity's Pull*, which received an award for Best Upcoming Drama of 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Wayne Burns for his film work in *Blackbird* and *Gravity's Pull* and wish him continued success in his acting career.

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.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, first, thank you for assistance on my resolutions in the past.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 2182

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

Whereas the 2012 Hospital Hustle was held in Liverpool on September 15th to raise money for Queens General Hospital; and

Whereas the Hospital Hustle is an annual fundraising event organized by a subcommittee of the Queens General Ladies Auxiliary; and

Whereas the generosity of the residents of Queens resulted in the Hospital Hustle surpassing its fundraising goal of \$20,000 to be put towards the Queens General Hospital expansion;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Queens General Hospital Ladies Auxiliary for their fundraising efforts through the Hospital Hustle.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 2183

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

Whereas Polysteel Atlantic Ltd. announced in July 2012 it is investing in its Sydney plant; and

Whereas this investment will increase its productivity, allow product diversification, and create up to 20 new, good jobs for people in the Sydney area; and

Whereas this expansion, along with additional good jobs in the Sydney area, is recognition of the success the NDP Government's jobsHere plan is having on our provincial economy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Polysteel Atlantic Ltd. on its success and commend the government on its jobsHere plan.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2184

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

Whereas in August 2012, Frontier Developments Ltd. announced they would open their first office outside of the United Kingdom here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Frontier Developments Ltd. is a leading innovator in video game development and technology; and

Whereas this move to Nova Scotia is an example of a welcoming business climate, prime with an innovative, well-educated workforce which is supported by the NDP Government's jobsHere plan;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature welcome Frontier Developments Ltd. to Nova Scotia and acknowledge the success an innovative, well-educated workforce has in attracting such businesses 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 member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 2185

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 celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's ascension 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. Collin Nickerson of Mahone Bay was presented with the Diamond Jubilee Medal;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes the contribution of Mr. Collin Nickerson of Mahone Bay to his community and to his county, and congratulates 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.

Before I go to question period today, I've noticed that both questions and answers have been getting longer and longer, and we are not getting as many questions in the period as we should. There has been quite a bunch of disorder, which also lengthens the time used

for questions. I'm asking that all members keep both the questions and answers short and to the point.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTION PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 3:21 p.m. and end at 4:51 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: TRADE CTR. LTD. - FINANCIAL CONTROLS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Today the Auditor General released the Fall 2012 report and in the report the auditor writes, "Trade Centre Limited does not have an adequate internal control framework or sufficiently rigorous financial management practices." My question to the Premier is, how could the government give \$4.8 million to an organization with such weak financial controls.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General made a series of recommendations with respect to the operation of the Trade Centre Limited. We have, in fact, accepted those recommendations and that work is going forward.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report continues and I note: blank cheques were not adequately safeguarded, purchase orders were filled out after goods and services were obtained, purchases were made without the required purchase orders, spending wasn't properly tracked and not accounted for.

Improper financial management, wasting taxpayer dollars - this government's Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister is responsible for the oversight of the Trade Centre. My question to the Premier, what repercussions will the minister face for such a giant failure to protect taxpayer's money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the boards that were in place at the Trade Centre Limited and the practices that they developed, developed over many years, well before we were in government. In fact, it's as a result of the work that was done by the Auditor General and the changes that we have brought in to those exact processes that the Leader of the Official Opposition pointed out, which is going to make for a more transparent, open and accountable system.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, it's almost four years into the mandate of this government. You would think they would have dealt with protecting taxpayers' money a lot sooner.

This report says that market projects prepared by the Trade Centre Limited staff for the new convention center, “. . . lacks appropriate analysis and rigor expected for such an assignment. . . Important industry realities such as an excess supply of convention centre space, new competitors, and a stagnant convention centre market have not been adequately considered and assessed.”

In light of what the AG has to say, my question to the Premier is this: What is the government going to do to ensure that the people of Nova Scotia continue to have confidence in this new trade centre?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact there were eight different reports commissioned. They were posted on the website of the Trade Centre Limited for all to see at that time. What was expressed by the members of the Opposition was, why weren't we getting on with actually approving the Trade Centre agreement at the time? We took the time to go through it, comprehensively, to make sure that this was the best possible agreement for the province.

We believe that the one thing that is absolutely true is that, unfortunately, Halifax did not have a convention centre that was adequate to meet its needs and that the new convention centre will do that. It will have the opportunity to attract larger conventions from across the country. This will benefit not only Halifax but indeed all of Nova Scotia.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: COST SAVINGS - AUDITOR GEN. PROPOSAL

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Today the Auditor General reported that Capital Health had proposed a project to the minister's department that would save all Nova Scotians \$3 million each and every year. Mr. Speaker, that's a \$3 million opportunity for savings that could be put into actual better health care delivery but it was rejected by the minister's department. It's time to stop wasting these opportunities to save money and actually make health care better, so my question to the minister is this; can he explain why his department rejected an opportunity to save taxpayers \$3 million in health care?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Well Mr. Speaker, there's a lot I could say with that question from the Progressive Conservative Party. Anybody who has wasted money with health care - it was the former government. They have put this province in a financial position that has limited future investments.

I'm very glad and appreciative of the work that Capital Health does on behalf of Nova Scotians when it comes to health care services. This government will continue to make the right investments when it comes to capital projects here in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll just table for the benefit of the minister, the message from the Finance Minister for the financial statements for 2009 which reported that the province was in a surplus position of \$19.7 million when he and his gang took over.

To quote the Auditor General today, the Auditor General said, “. . . Health and Wellness is not fully exploring areas which could generate operational cost savings.” He gave one example which is that they were given a chance to save \$3 million each and every year, that could be redirected into more nurses or more long-term care beds or more of whatever Nova Scotians need, but instead, they rejected that report.

My question to the minister is, what other cost-saving opportunities has he rejected in his time as minister?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, what we rejected when we came into government were the practices of the former government. We recognize the importance of investing appropriately in health care. We've worked extremely hard over the last three years to ensure that we make the right investments, especially in health care but in all departments across government because we were left a financial mess. But we're going to clean it up.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the government inherited a surplus of \$19.7 million, according to the Auditor General - the same one who is now criticizing this minister and his department. It would be great if the minister would actually speak to his own term in office.

Mr. Speaker, in the Health and Wellness budget for this year, the Auditor General points out that the minister's department allocated a total of exactly \$0 for health equipment. Now that defies common sense because obviously we're going to need to buy health equipment year to year. This was pointed out by the Opposition at the time of the budget but the minister rejected the arguments that zero was the wrong number.

Today we find out, Mr. Speaker, that the Auditor General says that the minister had to raid money from the emergency fund to pay for health equipment. So my question to the minister is simply, when will he get serious about saving money in bureaucracy and actually put some of those savings back into front-line health care?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as usual, what the member opposite said is just not true. We've invested this year in investing in health care capital costs. The only thing that keeps me up at night is just wondering what we could have done with the nearly \$80 million of over-cost to the Colchester Regional Hospital because of the mismanagement of that project by the former government.

Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker, they didn't do the right job when they were in government. We're doing the right job, ensuring that we invest appropriately in health care services. We're ensuring that we reduce administration costs. When they were last in

government, we had one of the highest health administrative costs in the country. We were below the national average today and it is because of the hard work of this government.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - AUDITOR GEN.'S REPT.:
IT SECURITY - ADEQUACY**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, based on today's Auditor General Report, we have learned that the Health and Wellness Department's level of IT security is weak at present, "... an unnecessarily high risk from internal threats. The overall level of control is inadequate and must be improved."

My question to the Premier, why is the government so comfortable with what are clearly low levels of security currently guarding personal health information?

THE PREMIER: In fact, Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite is true. Shortly after coming into government, we undertook an analysis of just exactly these kinds of difficulties. In fact, we've passed the Personal Health Information Act, which is going to come into force in December, and it will resolve many of the problems that the Auditor General has identified.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the government did when they came into power, but the Auditor General said today that personal health information is not being secured by this government.

This government must be familiar with the province's level of IT security, considering it was, hopefully, just reviewed as part of the government's \$100 million deal with IBM. In fact, the province paid a consulting company \$30,000 to do a review - the consultant must have missed what the Auditor General found. The AG wrote, "Most of IWK's published policies and procedures are not up-to-date and there is no process to keep them current."

My question to the Premier is, with such security failings and shortcomings, why didn't the government ensure that the province's current practices are sufficient and secure?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite. As I pointed out to the Leader of the Official Opposition, when we came in, we actually brought forward legislation which we've passed. There is a program of implementation, that's underway. We're doing it to fulfill and to fix exactly the kind of problems that the Auditor General found, which he found after we found them and we implemented a program to make sure that they get fixed.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, as recently as Thursday the government stood in this House and said its security protocols were sufficient to keep Nova Scotia's data safe, but today the Auditor General said otherwise. I wonder who Nova Scotians are going to stand behind, that Premier or the Auditor General.

The Auditor General says there are critical security vulnerabilities in the management of health information. My question to the Premier is, with the government's decision to outsource to IBM, why should Nova Scotians feel their information is any safer?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no surprise at the misrepresentation of what the Auditor General actually said. What the Auditor General was concerned with is actually internal security where people who are working in the system have access that they shouldn't have. That is exactly the kind of fixes that we're putting in place. The overall security from people for outside was not part of the criticism that was being levelled in the AG's Report. As I pointed out, we actually did the work to identify this, we brought forward the legislation, we've put in place an implementation plan which we are implementing, and in December, I believe, we will be able to actually bring forward that legislation in full and resolve the very issues the AG has pointed to.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM.: INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT - ADDRESS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, today in the Auditor General's Report it was revealed that we will require \$600 million over the next 10 years in order to cover just the basic infrastructure needs of our health care system - \$60 million a year, every year, for the next 10 years, just to maintain the system as it now exists - with no improvements, just to maintain the system we have.

DHAs have been stretched to their limit when it comes to budget cuts from this government. To make matters worse, the new Conservative Health Care Accord will kick in soon which will see Alberta receive an additional \$1 billion from the federal government and Nova Scotia will receive less. My question to the Premier is, could the Premier tell us how his government plans to systematically address the \$60 million a year shortfall in the infrastructure deficit of the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, no surprise the information put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition is wrong. It's actually a floor, so what Nova Scotia receives will not go down, but nonetheless we are concerned about transfers and health transfers in particular. In this country it is the Atlantic Provinces that have the oldest population, and therefore the ones who are likely to see the greatest deal of stress on the system as we go forward.

For example, we build 1,000 new long-term care beds and strengthen the long-term care system, but still we see increases in health care - costs associated with long-term care because more and more people are coming into the system. That's a very natural thing; it is what governments are going to have to manage in the years to come, as we are today.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, with that answer it's little wonder the Premier has said very little about what the federal government is doing to health care transfers to the Province of Nova Scotia. It's going down because it's not being adjusted for inflation. In any other place, that means it's going down and Nova Scotians lose.

The revelation today is around \$600 million. It hardly can be surprising. What we have seen is two successive governments in this province - the current NDP Government and the previous Progressive Conservative Government - that took a hands-off approach to health care.

My question to the Premier is, could the Premier tell us how his government plans to come up with \$60 million a year in order to address the health care infrastructure deficit which was allowed to develop due to failed leadership?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, the information just asserted by the Leader of the Opposition is wrong. In fact, the plan is to adjust for inflation. The problem is that inflation does not actually represent what the increasing costs in health care are. So that's part of the problem: it has been a retrenchment from the manner in which it has been done before. We, of course, have made this absolutely clear to the federal government, and certainly in my role as chair of the Council of the Federation - when we talk with all of the other Premiers, and I'm pleased to represent them in discussions with the federal government - we make these points regularly.

I would point out to the Leader of the Official Opposition that in this year alone, Mr. Speaker, the capital grants for health care in this province are \$72-some million. It exceeds the \$60 million figure that he points out, but it still is a challenge for us to balance the financial needs in all of the sectors with the financial needs in health care.

MR. MCNEIL: It isn't my figure, Mr. Speaker. It's the Auditor General's figure. He says there's a \$600 million shortfall.

I was simply asking the Premier what provisions there are to deal with the \$60 million shortfall a year, and he stands up supporting Prime Minister Harper's bill to reduce health care transfers to the Province of Nova Scotia. I wish he would stand in his place and tell Nova Scotians why he's endorsing the Prime Minister's hard line to remove health care dollars from the Province of Nova Scotia.

Can the Premier stand in his place and confirm with us what specific request he has made of Prime Minister Harper when it comes to addressing some of the unique challenges Nova Scotians face with delivering our health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, at absolutely every opportunity we have raised this in every form. Whether it is the Health Ministers forum through our Minister of Health and Wellness or through my chairmanship of the Council of the Federation, we have brought it up. When I have met directly with the Prime Minister, I have addressed the question of health care transfers with him, because we are concerned that there will be a diminished ability of the province to be able to respond to health care concerns in the province.

I might point out that a lot of this has to do with the fact that the system is labouring under the intense damage that was done by Liberal Governments back in the 1990s when they stripped out the money in health care, when they laid off nurses, when they closed down beds. The last time (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) Now you know why we take such a long time to get so many little questions through in Question Period. When the Speaker says order, that means order. So I would ask the honourable members to quit with the chatter after the Speaker says order. Thank you.

The honourable Premier on your answer.

THE PREMIER: The last time the Liberals were in power in this province, Mr. Speaker, they wreaked such havoc and damage on the health care system that after 15 years we have still not recovered.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: EMERGENCY FUND - USAGES

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Auditor General reported today that the Health and Wellness Department budgeted zero dollars for health equipment this year, a fact that just defies common sense, and as a result, the department has had to raid its own emergency fund to pay for health equipment needs across our health system.

My question for the minister, a simple one is, what programs is the emergency fund usually used for?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Yet again, Mr. Speaker, it's just not true what the member opposite is talking about. We've invested in equipment throughout the province. I just recently travelled to Yarmouth to see some of the latest technology in the lab section of the hospital, an investment made with this government's approval.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, just for the benefit of the minister, I will table the section of the Auditor General's Report where he criticizes the minister's department for having zero dollars allocated to health equipment and for raiding the emergency fund for just that purpose. It's not the only example. Ernst & Young was commissioned by the department a year ago, a \$100,000 report that found \$52 million in cost savings in administration at the Department of Health and Wellness. But the department rejected 80 per cent of those savings, \$43 million in potential money for front-line care that the department rejected in favour of its own bureaucracy. Today we learned there was another \$3 million that the department could save that they've rejected in favour of their own bureaucracy. My question to the minister is, why does he consistently reject cost savings that could actually go into improving health care in the province?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's very confusing listening to his answer. The one thing - and I think I said it earlier - that we have rejected is the way the former government provided health care service here in Nova Scotia. What we've rejected is the way they've invested in Nova Scotia, especially in health care. We have been working extremely hard over the last three years to ensure that we continue to invest in health care services.

No question, I would love to do more - this government would love to do more - but we've been shackled by decisions from the past that have created the mess we have now, not only the financial mess but the model of care that we have in health care. We are working extremely hard to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to health care services and that we provide the capital grants to ensure they have the product and the services and the equipment that they need. It is because of the former government that we are in the mess we are in now. We are going to clean it up.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what the minister is confused about is that he is the minister of the department today. It is his government that is responsible for health care now. But perhaps if you had nothing good to say about your own administration, you would have to reach back as far into the past as possible to come up with an answer, that's the problem with this government. Three million dollars a year that could go into health care today, \$43 million that could go into health care, according to Ernst & Young, rejected by his department, rejected by that minister. The Auditor General points it out today so I will ask the minister to set it right. Will he now commit to implementing all the projects that Ernst & Young identified and the Auditor General identified and put that money back out of administration and into front-line health care?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, we are working extremely hard with the district health authorities, but we are also working extremely hard with the volunteer boards from those district health authorities because they recognize the importance of what the needs are in the communities that they represent. If the member opposite had his choice, he would get rid of our volunteer boards across the province and only make decisions out of Halifax. That is not the direction this government is going to take. We are working through merged services to reduce administrative costs in the health

care system, so we can redirect that to the front-line health care services, something that the former government didn't do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM.: CORPORATIONS/SCHOOLS - FUNDING

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government has handed \$590 million taxpayers' dollars to six large corporations. All that money and now there are more Nova Scotians unemployed than during the recession. The NDP was not always so fond of such corporate handouts. On October 20, 1999, the now Deputy Premier said, "You should be ashamed, that much money going out to a corporation that can darned well afford to do this on their own, but you want to dole it out to your buddies . . . You should be ashamed of yourself, your Leader should be ashamed, your whole government should be ashamed." My question to the Premier is, if this government thinks they are fair-minded, I will ask the Premier, why is he handing out money hand over fist to corporations while taking dollars out of the classroom?

THE PREMIER: In fact, Mr. Speaker, the per capita funding for students in this province has actually gone up. It's the highest that it has ever been in this province. The reality is that the investments we are making are ensuring that there are more jobs in Nova Scotia, that there's actually an opportunity for young people to be able to stay in Nova Scotia, to make their lives here.

Mr. Speaker, just as an example, the assistance in Irving shipyard was made because without it we would not have won that contract. That means that some 10,000 jobs, many of them for skilled tradesmen in the shipyard, that means a future, and that means a career for many, many young people in this province.

If the member for Glace Bay had his way, Mr. Speaker, there would be jobs down on the waterfront, but they would be building condominiums.

MR. MACLELLAN: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what that means, so I'll move on.

On November 24, 2000, the now Finance Minister said "We have no difficulty as a province, previous governments and this government have no difficulty giving millions of dollars to profitable companies and corporations as a first priority . . ." Then the current member for Halifax Chebucto added: "These are public dollars; these are dollars that the government administers on a trust. They are not dollars that are there simply to be given away."

Mr. Speaker, \$590 million to six companies, 1,300 layoffs, and there are more unemployed than during the recession. Clearly this government is giving away money and

harming public trust. My question to the Premier is, with cuts to education and health care and with more unemployed now than during the recession, why has this government prioritized corporate handouts?

THE PREMIER: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I'll just correct what the member had to say. In fact, the amount of money going into health care has actually increased by \$100 million. The simple fact of the matter is that the per capita student funding is at its highest level in history.

As I pointed out, the \$300 million in Irving was a commercial loan for which they can earn forgiveness, but only if we have received some \$2 billion in increased tax revenue to the province. So this means there will be \$1.7 billion more that can go into health, education, roads, and all of the other services that we provide.

Now I know he said he didn't understand what I meant by the fact that they would be building condominiums down on the waterfront, that is because, Mr. Speaker, if he had his way, the shipyard would be closed.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government has failed to create good jobs that it promised Nova Scotians to the tune of 2,200 new jobs per year. This government gave \$590 million to six large corporations resulting in 1,300 net job losses. That money went to those corporations, that money stayed in their coffers, it didn't create jobs for the people of this province.

We were told the \$590 million would create more than 15,000 jobs, but there have been 3,400 full-time layoffs since this government took over in 2009 - \$590 million to six large corporations. What did it get us, Mr. Speaker? Layoffs, bankruptcies, and closures. Great for big business, but not for Nova Scotia taxpayers.

My question, is the member for Halifax Chebucto once asked, will the Premier "... explain to this House what his government intends to do now that his government's handout has actually brought fewer jobs?"

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's so disappointing that the member would attack companies, attack the government that is actually creating jobs in Cape Breton, like IBM that is going to have employees there, and right across the province, creating jobs in communities like Shelburne, in Digby - of course many of those are in the region of Halifax.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make this very simple point and see if the member for Glace Bay can understand it. After the greatest recession since the Great Depression, the unemployment rate in Nova Scotia is lower now than at any time that the Liberals were in government the last time - at any time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS - PRIVACY

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Electronic medical records is an important program that needs to continue to expand across the province, outside Halifax, but the serious risk to privacy of information identified by the Auditor General today needs to be addressed first.

Nova Scotians, of course, should be concerned about how their information is being handled and the privacy of it. Neither the Capital Health authority or the IWK have tested its disaster recovery plan for their data centre or provided training to staff about how to implement during a time of crisis. Mr. Speaker, how can the minister justify this serious lapse of safety of patient information and will he ensure the people's private information is safe?

HON. DAVID WILSON: No question that we take privacy and confidentiality very seriously and so do our colleagues in the district health authorities across the province. We welcome the recommendations that are made through the Auditor General around the information system to improve it and we're working with not only Capital Health and the IWK but all our district health authorities to ensure that patients in Nova Scotia can have confidence in the IT security that we have when it comes to patient records.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the NDP priorities were clear from the last budget update, on Page 5 it states that, "A land purchase of \$20 million for NewPage is almost entirely offset by reduced capital spending by the Department of Education for school construction and renovations, and by the Department of Health and Wellness for IT projects." I'll table that for the House.

The NDP chose to move \$20 million from school construction and the Health and Wellness Department IT projects that are now in question today and it used that money to purchase land from NewPage. Why are multi-million dollar handouts of a higher priority for this NDP Government than patient privacy?

MR. WILSON: That is quite a stretch the member opposite is trying to connect those two. The Health and Wellness Department takes very seriously the privacy and confidentiality of the information that our clinicians, our doctors, our nurses and our paramedics receive while they treat individuals here in Nova Scotia. We're going to continue to work with our district health authorities, we're going to continue to work with Capital District Health Authority, the IWK to ensure that any improvements that we need to make will take place.

I'm remiss not to mention it again that I sit up at night wondering what we could have done with an extra \$80 million because of the mismanagement of the Colchester Hospital from the member opposite when they were last in government.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I will remember the words of the Minister of Health and Wellness when it comes to the people of Truro and Bible Hill and Colchester County when he said they didn't need a hospital, so I will remember that.

The Auditor General found a lack of documentation, training and testing at Capital Health and the IWK. He suggested password settings had poor controls and permitted the use of weak passwords and the Auditor General was able to break into 363 out of 2,065 records with just generic software that can be found on the Internet, and in some cases past employees still had access to health records.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, how can the minister justify not putting patients first at the Cabinet Table and not fighting to protect their privacy when the decision was made to move \$20 million from Health IT projects to purchase land from NewPage?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I was glad to hear the Premier and the member for Truro-Bible Hill were at the launch of the new hospital in Colchester. No question, we support the people of Colchester County, that is why we continue to invest in it. What they want from their government is to be honest and up front and truthful when you tell them how much something is going to cost, they want that from their government and that's what we're going to do.

That's why one of the first pieces of legislation the former minister brought in once we took over government was to directly address the privacy concerns around health records here in our province and I want to thank the former minister for doing that. It was something that was needed in our province to ensure the security and the confidentiality of patient records in this province and we look forward to that piece of legislation fully taking place here in Nova Scotia for all Nova Scotians to have confidence in the IT information that we have.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM.: CORPORATE SUBSIDIZATION - DETAILS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier just signed a deal to subsidize an out-of-province company to compete directly with Nova Scotia businesses. This money is on top of \$590 million that this government has given to six corporations to lay off 1,300 Nova Scotians. On April 28, 2005, the member for Halifax Fairview said, "All they want from this government is for this government to get out of their way. Stop

subsidizing their competitors and let them hire Nova Scotians.” The same can be said for consulting engineers and the government’s deal with out-of-town firm PROJEX.

My question for the Premier is, if the NDP thought a previous Progressive Conservative Government should “get out of the way,” why is this government interfering so heavily?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the situation couldn’t be more different. The reality is that this is work that this company has that is being done in Alberta. They had a choice: they could hire Nova Scotians and have them work in Alberta or they could hire Nova Scotians and have them work in Nova Scotia. Frankly, we’d rather have them work here.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the consulting engineering sector in Nova Scotia is a vibrant, growing sector, and their biggest challenge is not contracts. It’s attracting and re-training good-quality employees, good-quality engineers. This is going to be a problem if a company is subsidized to compete against them.

On November 26, 2002, the now-Agriculture Minister said, “The minister doesn’t realize what an unequal playing field he creates when he gives preferential treatment to some people in this province and not to others.” The same could be said for consulting engineers. This industry was already highly successful in hiring Nova Scotians without government assistance. The government decided it wanted headlines and jumped into the industry, and the Premier’s need for attention put Nova Scotia companies at a very competitive disadvantage.

My question for the Premier is, why is the government competing against local entrepreneurs who are in the same business as PROJEX?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what PROJEX has agreed to do is to hire new graduates from our engineering schools around the region. This will be an opportunity not only for them to bring home people from other parts of the country but also to employ young graduates from our engineering programs who are going to be able to stay in Nova Scotia, live here, put down roots here. This is going to be good. It actually is going to strengthen the market for all of the consulting engineers. It’s going to bring more people into the market.

In fact, I believe PROJEX indicated that they have already received some 1,200 applications for the jobs in Nova Scotia. I believe 700 of them were from other parts of the country. The problem for the member for Glace Bay is that this is really good news for Nova Scotia and they just don’t like good news.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on May 14, 2008, when referring to companies that come to Nova Scotia for payroll rebates, the member for Halifax Chebucto said,

“That’s a company that doesn’t necessarily want to be in Nova Scotia, that comes here for the subsidies. That’s not the best use of public dollars.”

When the Premier rants about the message we send to business, we worry about the message the Premier’s actions are sending to business - \$590 million to six corporations who laid off 1,300 Nova Scotians. This Premier’s actions are telling businesses around the world that he’s willing to cut them a big cheque and that companies can threaten this government and get millions in subsidies.

My final question to the Premier is very simple, how many employees have been lost from existing consulting engineering firms and hired by PROJEX?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what we’re seeing is a very healthy market in the province for engineers, and it’s going to get even better over the years to come.

I’d like to address something that the member keeps doing. He keeps talking about less jobs, people leaving jobs - the simple fact of the matter is that this is the way this works. For example, had we not supported Port Hawkesbury, that community would have lost \$160 million a year in direct investment in that community, and the number of people working in Port Hawkesbury paper would be zero. The number of people associated with the forestry industry would be so greatly diminished. These investments support communities, they create work for people throughout the sector. Mr. Speaker, if they had their way, they would walk away from Port Hawkesbury; they would walk away from the Strait, and they would simply say to them, you are on your own.

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

EDUC.: LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS - FUNDING

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Education is the key to a confident and bright future for our young Nova Scotians. Canadians like me who support children with special needs are pleased by the judgment unanimously passed by the Supreme Court of Canada this month related to special education funding for a dyslexic boy in B.C. Advocates for the disabled said school boards that cannot furnish compelling evidence to justify underfunding must henceforth provide genuine help to children with learning disabilities.

My question to the minister is, will the minister accept that she must enforce the law of the land and she cannot justify underfunding help to children with learning disabilities?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, thank you for bringing that very important topic here today. It’s very important that we support all of our students. We have a number of students in our system who have learning challenges and I am very pleased to

say that our government supports the needs of our students who have very specific learning needs by increasing the budget for our special needs students, and we have protected that funding.

Earlier today I did have a meeting with someone in our department to see how things were going across school boards and to make sure that our students are getting the supports that they need, and I am getting positive comments from the school boards at this time.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, “Adequate special education . . . is not a dispensable luxury . . . For those with severe learning disabilities . . .” - Judge Abella said that with a nine to zero majority.

The lawyer for the family of the dyslexic boy who brought this to the Supreme Court of Canada said that the decision sets a national precedent and sends a message to all public schools. This is a warning to them that they have to comply with their duties under the Human Rights Code to ensure that students with learning disabilities have the same access to education as other students.

So my question is, will the minister accept that special education is not a dispensable luxury and that she cannot justify underfunding help to children with learning disabilities?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of things that our government has done to ensure that students with very specific learning disabilities are able to have supports outside of our regular school system. It’s very important that we support all of our students and especially our students with significant learning disabilities. We brought Succeeding in Reading so that we are able to be in at the Primary level to be able to pick up any significant problem a child is having with learning to read.

You are absolutely right. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the member opposite, this is very important and this government is supporting our students with significant needs with their learning.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, we brought that question up in the last session about transitional support funding for students outside the school system that she talked of. Dr. MacKay, a Dalhousie University law professor said that in his opinion, this may be the most important human rights case of the decade or so. This minister does not provide adequate funding for our special needs students, as we found out in Budget Estimates. The minister considers special education an expensive luxury rather than a basic human right. So my question is, will the minister take action to safeguard the human rights of children who need supports to succeed and help children with learning disabilities?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am offended by saying that anyone would consider that I would think that providing supports to our students is a luxury. It is a necessity that we are - and we have the responsibility as government to provide for all of our students, especially our students with special needs.

Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely making sure that we are doing the very best we can to support our students. It is not a luxury. It is our responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM.: TUITION PROMISES - ACCURACY

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Premier often expresses concern that when members of the Opposition, or frankly anybody else - the business community, the media, anybody - quotes him directly from Hansard, or from news stories, he says that isn't actually what he said.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to start by quoting from Hansard of last week, November 15th - not 11 years ago, not 10 years ago, not 20 years ago, but last week - and I just want to know if the Premier feels that the Hansard record of what he and I said is accurate. So, Mr. Speaker, as part of another question I said, “. . . the NDP came to power promising frozen tuition. . .”

The Premier responded by saying, “The simple fact is that when we came in we never said we would freeze tuition fees. It's something we did not say.” I will table that from Hansard. Does the Premier agree that that is what he said last week?

THE PREMIER: I absolutely do, Mr. Speaker, and that's absolutely true. The simple fact of the matter is that we laid out very clearly, in the last election, what our commitment would be on student funding. It was part of the commitment that is crystal clear. It's part of the check list and he can check it.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'll ask the Premier to explain another quote that appears on the NDP Party Web site, the Premier's own biography, currently. It appears on the NDP Party Web site in his biography and I will quote from that: “. . . Darrell supports a tuition freeze as the first step in making sure that all young Nova Scotians have equal access to post-secondary education.”

I will table that, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier explain why his Party says that he supports a tuition freeze as an important part of accessibility, but he says that he doesn't support a tuition freeze?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the simple fact of the matter is that tuition in this province is actually going down relative to the national average. That is the truth. In fact,

when we came to power, the end of the federal program meant that we had to start in this province by backfilling some \$30 million in federal money that was going out the door. Had we not done that, not only would tuition fees be going down, as compared to the national average, they would have gone up by some 15 to 20 per cent.

We brought in the new, graduate tax rebate. We brought in the cap on student debt, Mr. Speaker. We have done more on student assistance than any government in history, with the exception of the advent of the student loan program.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Premier can try and confuse the issue as much as he wants. The question was really quite simple. He said last week, and he agreed he said it, that he did not advocate for a tuition freeze yet the Party's own Web site, at least until yesterday - maybe they've taken it off now during Question Period - but as late as yesterday, and the time and date are on there, said that this Premier currently supports a tuition freeze.

Mr. Speaker, he has blamed the Opposition for misquoting him, he has blamed the media for misquoting him, and he has blamed the business community for misspeaking. Is the NDP Party right about what the Premier stands for, or is he right, or doesn't he know?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to advocate, in fact, is for lower tuition for all of our students. In fact what we would like to do is reduce student debt even further. What we would like to do is make sure that as many people as have the capacity and capability to go to university or community college, go. Those are the things that we advocate for, but we're in government. We have to make sure that we have the money to pay for it and that's what we're doing. We're balancing all the needs, the needs of the students, the needs of seniors, the needs of the health care community, the needs for economic development.

Mr. Speaker, that is the responsibility of government. I know that's something that they have no experience in.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: C.B. ATTENDANTS - LAYOFFS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Late last month six counsellor-attendants working in addictions and mental health within the Cape Breton district were issued layoff notices effective January 1, 2013. With a combined total of 95 years' experience, these six valuable team members were told the delivery model of care would be changing and their skills were no longer needed.

My question for the minister, does the minister feel that these layoffs will somehow improve treatment for the 250 people who need their help?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. No doubt we're always cautious and concerned whenever there is a reduction of employment for anybody in the province, we recognize that. One thing we did know after coming into government is that we went out and we consulted within the mental health and addictions field, with partners. We produced the first-ever - for our province - Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. No question, with that strategy comes a change of model of care and it's unfortunate that this does affect a small number of health care workers in this province, but I do believe with the change in model of care that the services that will be provided will better meet the needs of those who are seeking services within addictions services.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, as I know the minister is very aware, there is no "one size fits all" treatment when it comes to treating addictions. This is why it is important to have a number of tools available to us when it comes to treating these very devastating and dangerous addictions for families and those who are addicted. It's important to support Talbot House and its model because it works for some people, it's important to have appropriate treatments available when and where they are needed because that works for others. It is important to acknowledge that counselling is a vital part of treating addictions because, again, counselling works in some cases.

Holistic treatment options work and they need to be embraced, so having said that, my question to the minister is, does he support an entirely medical-based treatment program for addictions?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that question. No question, as a former paramedic, as a front-line health care provider, I recognize the importance of delivering health care services. When we made the decision to bring over recovery houses into the Department of Health and Wellness, one of the first things I did say to some of those who were running those addiction recovery houses is that I appreciate the work that they do and the model of care that they provide individuals.

I think we need a suite of options in Nova Scotia to address addictions services. We can't just have one type of service no matter what we're talking about in health care, but especially in addictions services. I support, no question, a suite of options for Nova Scotians who are seeking help when it comes to addictions services.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, a rally was held earlier this month outside the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. At that rally, Noelle Gouthro, a registered nurse, was interviewed by the Cape Breton Post and she said, "The counsellors are essential to the unit. When the clients come in, they look for the counsellors . . . it's a source of tremendous support for them. The clients are the ones that are really going to be affected."

This isn't a statement made by counsellors to protect their jobs and it certainly is not a statement made by myself to stand in my place and ask this question. The statement comes from a registered nurse who works in the addictions services unit and who sees the beneficial role these counsellors were playing in helping patients overcome their dangerous addictions. My question to the minister is, will he consider maintaining the counsellors outside of the new model of care so patients can still access this important support?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no question, as Minister of Health and Wellness one of the things you have to do is rely on those professionals who are out providing those services. As I said earlier, we did do wide consultation throughout the province around mental health and addictions services and we take that information back and the former minister and myself take that information and take advice from those professionals.

Even though I have a background in health care, I'm not a professional when it comes to addictions services or what is in the best interests of those. We rely on that information from those individuals who are experts and the advice to the department, to the government, to myself is that this model of care that we're implementing now will better serve those individuals here in Nova Scotia who have addiction issues. I hope that we'll see that as we unroll the new model of care in Cape Breton and across the province that those services will be enhanced by the model of care that we've chosen to take when it comes to addictions services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**SNSMR: SALVATION ARMY GOOD NEIGHBOUR FUND
- ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, today my question is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Today there was an announcement by the minister of an additional \$400,000 the government will provide to the Salvation Army Good Neighbour Fund. That is welcome news for those families who struggle obviously through the winter heating months.

Mr. Speaker, that program, as we know, only allows certain people to qualify, based on income levels and how many times over the years they have used it. Last year, the funding that the government provided to the Good Neighbour Program ran out very early, and I want to quote from a press release from the minister, dated February 24th: "Even though the province removed the provincial portion of the HST from home heating oil and even with help from the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, some families are still finding it difficult to afford to heat their homes." I'll table that.

My question to the minister is, seeing that last year's program ran out of funding and an additional \$400,000 was offered, is the minister prepared to write an additional cheque, seeing that the power rates are going up in January this year?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: I thank the member for my one and only question so far in this sitting of the House. I certainly want to get it right.

The member raises a really important issue. Evidence of our concern was today's announcement of giving \$400,000 to the Salvation Army for their fund. At this point in time we're not thinking of giving another \$400,000, I will tell him that. The money that we used last year with two donations of \$400,000 comes out of our Heating Assistance Rebate Program, so we will look to the future and we'll see what the uptake on the Heating Assistance Rebate Program - or HARP - is, but at the present time, we've made no commitment to the Salvation Army that we'll give an additional \$400,000.

MR. ZINCK: There is another local agency and organization here in metro. It's the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank, run by Mel Boutilier. We're all familiar with Mel and the efforts that he makes in helping families throughout HRM pay for heating costs and electricity costs.

I'm wondering today if the minister can tell me if he's entertained a conversation with Mr. Boutilier in regard to perhaps having some funding extended to that organization to help with families' heating bills recently, or would he entertain one?

MR. MACDONELL: This is, I think, an issue that was raised last year as well. I have not had any discussion with Mr. Boutilier. I think our thought is that there are a number of organizations that would like to have funding from the province, and I think some of you had indicated that maybe part of the \$400,000 should go to them.

At this present time, I have to say that we have a fair regard for the Salvation Army and how they administer their fund and the fact that they have such broad coverage across the province. Most other organizations are very local to a particular area, but the Salvation Army has a much broader sweep, so we feel that that is probably a more appropriate organization just because of its broader reach across the province. I would say that for this season I'm not anticipating a change in who we direct those funds to.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, I too recognize the efforts of the Salvation Army and the assistance that they provide my office with helping families in Dartmouth North. I want to say that I look forward to this coming season and working with this program.

In keeping with the comments of the minister, Mr. Boutilier does reach out to a number of individuals, and not just in HRM. We brought him a number of cases throughout the province as well, and I want to thank him. I think it's an opportunity for you as the minister to sit down and fully discuss the extent of his program, keeping in mind your

quotes from last year's press release around the HST rebate not totally affecting or having positive effect on a lot of families, and keeping in mind the 2,000-plus families that the Salvation Army program affected last year. That being said, there are a number of individuals who are still going to struggle this coming heating season with home fuel and with electricity.

My question to the minister is, have he and his government considered a direct program that would support and target specifically low-income families, and seniors on fixed incomes?

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't want my comments to in any way be seen as not valuing the work of Mr. Boutilier and his organization - or any other organization that works hard to look after the most vulnerable in our society. I would also like the member to take back with him my concern as minister and I think of this government for trying to reach as far and as wide as we can for anyone and everyone who has a particular need, that sometimes our programs - I think it's really difficult to design a program that gives the broadest reach that you want, but in some way you try to make it accountable for the taxpayers whose money you're using to support it.

I think I would always be open for some way to tweak a program that could possibly make it better, reach farther - do whatever. I don't want to mislead anyone, that my comments would make them think that somehow I'm going to open the vault in a much broader way. I don't feel I have the capacity, and I don't want Mr. Boutilier to think that I might. I'd be glad to meet with him and have a chat about his program, but at present time I would say we're going to stick with the program we have, but if it's possible to have a dialogue with him, I'd look forward to that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - OXYCONTIN:
GENERIC VERSION - RESTRICTIONS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, just 10 months after the brand name version of OxyContin was removed from circulation, Nova Scotia is in many ways back to the drawing board. With the federal minister's approval of the generic form of OxyContin, it will be only a matter of time before the number of prescriptions rise for the soon-to-be available generic. Earlier this year the Minister of Health and Wellness of the day issued a press release removing OxyContin and OxyNEO as a benefit onto the formulary and listing OxyNEO as an exception status drug for the purpose of prescribing - and I will table this release.

Could the minister please confirm whether he plans to keep these same restrictions on the generic version of OxyContin?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I don't agree with the member when he says we're back to square one because we've worked extremely hard over the last number of years to put in controls, put in services, and work with our partners when it comes to addiction, especially around opiates here in Nova Scotia.

We recognize it's a serious issue, not only here in Nova Scotia, but across the country. That's why I was pleased to be chairman of the Ministers of Health meeting here in Halifax this summer and that's why I was pleased to have all Health Ministers, including the Minister from Quebec, agree to ask the federal minister to hold off approval of the generic form of OxyContin.

No question, I can tell the member I was disappointed with the announcement of the federal government not living up to that, and going ahead with the approval of that. We're going to continue to work here in Nova Scotia with our partners in law enforcement, our partners with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, with the staff and students at the medical school, and our pharmacists, to ensure we don't see what we've seen in the past when it came to abuse of OxyContin in our communities across Nova Scotia.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we were all disappointed with the federal minister's decision; however, her inaction does not mean this minister can absolve himself of his responsibility. This minister has choices - he can ensure every health care partner is doing their part to stop the scourge of abuse related to prescription drugs; he himself can take an active role in reducing prescription drug deaths - and there have been 269 in Nova Scotia in the last five years alone; or he can point fingers.

Could the minister please indicate whether he has advocated to his federal counterparts that all opioids, including their generic versions, be tamper-proof before they are approved in Canada?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I don't think that may do any good, as we've seen with the most recent announcement on behalf of the federal government.

No question, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with our partners. We have a unit from Dalhousie that goes out and educates and hopefully works with - not hopefully, I know they work with - physicians across the province, ensuring that they have the most up-to-date information around the use of opiates, for example, for any of their patients who come in. We also have to recognize that there is a role for pharmaceuticals and opiates to play in health care services. We need to make sure we have the controls in place, like the Prescription Monitoring Program that I'm glad to say we extended to 24 hours, seven days a week, earlier this year. There's another tool that not only law enforcement but pharmacists and physicians use to try to curb the abuse of prescription drugs.

We'll continue to work with our partners. We'll continue to work with clinicians within the health care system to move forward on any approvals of any medication on our

formularies here in Nova Scotia but more importantly, to try to address and not have what we've seen in the past, when it comes to the addiction of opiates like OxyContin.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that the role and responsibilities of this minister is to ensure he is doing his part to stop the scourge of abuse of prescription drugs, not just step back. Earlier this Spring the Auditor General issued 17 recommendations to address a prescription drug monitoring program. According to the AG's statement around the Prescription Monitoring Program, significant weaknesses in control and monitoring processes open the possibility that misuse or abuse of monitored prescription drugs continues undetected.

Could the minister please provide an update as to where we are when it comes to improvements in monitoring and control systems and in the development of more responsive on-line technology that will better track prescriptions, since we don't have a just-in-time system?

MR. WILSON: Thank you for the question. We're working extremely hard with our partners. As I mentioned earlier, just by extending the availability of the Prescription Monitoring Program to our partners helps with one aspect of dealing with this issue. There are many more that we need to continue to work with. One of the number one ways we could ensure that we can tackle this issue in our communities across this province is to discuss it, to ensure that especially our young people recognize the dangers of mixing prescription drugs and alcohol, for example.

We know - with recent deaths in our province - they seem to be around those young, university-age individuals, people who don't have an addiction problem. So not only do we have to support and provide services to those who find themselves addicted to opiates or other pharmaceuticals, Mr. Speaker, we have to educate our young people, and all Nova Scotians for that matter, on the importance of not mixing pharmaceuticals and alcohol, for example, because there's a danger in that where you can ultimately, by taking one pill, die from that result.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West, on a new question.

ERDT - INTERNET SERVICE: ACCESS - DETAILS

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the province embarked on a \$75 million project to provide complete access to high-speed Internet across the province, yet it is well-known in rural communities there are still many Nova Scotians without this access.

My question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, will the minister tell this House how many Nova Scotians are currently without access today and when he anticipates that all Nova Scotians will be hooked up to high-speed Internet service?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I've got to say that in the Province of Nova Scotia we are one of the most connected jurisdictions around the world. Unfortunately, as much as we would like to see everybody have access to high-speed Internet, I can stand here in my place and say that the number without it is considerably less than 1,000.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, lack of access to high-speed Internet is not simply an inconvenience, for some it is a detriment to business and is affecting local economies in rural Nova Scotia. Mr. Michael Innis has been struggling to connect to high speed for over three years now, and his frustration level is reaching its peak. Connecting to dial-up in order to check e-mail for his business takes, on average, 20 minutes or more. During the time when he is connected he can't even answer his telephone. If he's on the Internet for 20 minutes or two hours to try to retrieve information, he cannot receive calls from clients.

Mr. Innis had contacted the Premier, the Premier passed him on to the minister, and the minister passed him on to a department official. My question for the minister is, what actions will this minister take to ensure that Mr. Innis and all remaining Nova Scotians are connected without further delay?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, right now, as we speak, broadband Internet is available to 99 per cent of Nova Scotians. When anyone calls, whether it be the Premier's Office or my office, we act accordingly, we get back in touch with them. The service provider - and I think the gentleman who the member is referring to - is EastLink. We are working with EastLink to try to complete - you know, we're at 99 per cent. It's not a bad thing, but for this government, it's still not good enough.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, for a business when your competitors all have access to high speed and you do not, it is a serious impediment. This issue is a serious concern for many Nova Scotians. It has been, and continues to be, a source of great frustration. Nova Scotians are asking this government for an indication of when there will be full high-speed connectivity.

My question to the minister is, what steps is the minister taking to ensure the remaining Nova Scotians have access to high-speed Internet without further delay, and not up to 2014, as he has indicated in some of his recent correspondence?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we inherited a situation where the previous government made a commitment to have high-speed Internet through the service providers in the Province of Nova Scotia. There was a time frame under the terms of agreement that was set to meet that condition. We had a meeting as recently as yesterday with EastLink. We understand, we appreciate, and we will endeavour to make sure that EastLink fulfills their obligation for high-speed Internet in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR: INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS - COST-EFFECTIVENESS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Independent Nova Scotian truckers make a valuable contribution to our economy. They provide cost-effective delivery of services to fix and build our roads. For maintenance, and now with the government's new paving plant, this government is choosing to do trucking internally at a cost of \$84.88 per hour, per axle, for a 10.6-ton load, when it could be paying independent truckers \$59.67 for a 16-ton load.

Can the minister tell us how this government expects to pave more roads when they're paying 40 per cent more to haul 30 per cent less?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying we actually are paving more and paying less. That is basically because of what we are doing with our chip sealing and our asphalt plant.

Specifically with reference to the trucking, as the member will know, we have depots that have trucks that are used up until now, in part, seasonally - plowing and that sort of thing. We've been able to use some of that equipment now through this time of year during the paving season as well. We are taking idle equipment and we're using it. That is an advantage to the province. We're going to continue to be as frugal as we can with our budget monies so that we can continue to pave more and pay less.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, as I've highlighted, it is an inefficient use of equipment. Our independent truckers provide better value for our tax dollar. The trucks this government is using to pave roads, with the NDP road-paving plan are actually designed to plow snow. They have extra heavy-duty frames which limits how much material they can haul when working on paving projects. My question to the minister is, when will the minister end this experiment into road paving and leave this work to the people who can do just as good a job for less cost?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the member will know, this is the first year that we've engaged in the asphalt paving and, coincidentally, we've started paving in his neck of the woods - up in Cape Breton. We were up there earlier this summer and paved, I believe it was 28 kilometres of road in the Victoria County area.

So what I want to say is that we don't intend to stop this. He's suggesting we stop this process. We don't intend to stop it at all and when he's asking for an analysis of how much it's going to cost, we were very open and transparent with the people of the province and we said at the beginning, we will look at this after three years, determine how it's progressing and assess it at that time.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the more pavement I get for my constituents, the happier I am, and the less it costs, the more we're all going to get. So this summer this government was once again slow to get tenders out for paving projects. Getting these tenders out earlier in the year allows bidders to optimally plan their construction season and bid on more tenders. More bids would bring us lower-cost paving and that means we would all see more roads paved. Truckers sat around at the start of the summer with no work, they told me that themselves, only to be swamped with work when this government finally got all the tenders out.

So my question to the minister is, will the minister commit to getting paving tenders out well in advance of the 2013 construction season so we can get more paving completed and so that these independent truckers have an easier time making their living?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank the member for that question because it does give me an opportunity to advise that we have been looking at this issue. It is an important issue to get tendering done as early as we can. We are looking at that. I anticipate that we will have an improvement over what happened up until now in terms of tendering. I'm not going to give an exact date but I know that through my staff we've been looking at this issue, and I am anticipating that tenders will be issued earlier this year than has been the case in the past.

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

**ENVIRON. - BEDFORD WATERFRONT:
PYRITIC DISPOSAL SITES - OPTIONS**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Bedford Waterfront Development Corporation approved a plan to infill and develop a 39-acre site on the Bedford waterfront back in 1985. The community group, Save the Bedford Waterfront, is concerned this infill plan will envelop Crosby Island and the adjacent reef. This is a well-founded belief because the plan the Bedford Waterfront Commission presented to Bedford Town Council back in the 1980s shows quite clearly that Crosby Island would be engulfed under this plan, and I'll table that.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. What other disposal sites for pyritic slate, other than the Bedford waterfront, has the government identified?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite for that question. I can tell you that the site that you're talking about, the Bedford infilling, the slate there is something that has been approved by the federal government. It's something that we are monitoring and I can tell you that that material is approved and we'll continue monitoring the situation. I thank you for the question and the member opposite has raised that question before in the House, and I thank you again for that.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, are there any plans to stop dumping pyritic slate into the basin and if so, when would that be?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, this particular material has been approved by our federal government. It's something that we approve of and this project is ongoing. Again, I thank the member opposite for bringing this question continuously to the floor of the Legislature, and thank you again for the question.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I think I can promise I'll keep bringing it until I actually get an answer. I don't know if any of the ministers have been by the waterfront recently, but much of it resembles a moonscape. It is ugly and dusty and the residents there are sick of looking at the mess. So my question to the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister is, are there any plans to mitigate the moonscape there until such time as development starts, if indeed development is approved?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure and as the member is well aware, there has been a lot of public consultation with respect to the infilling at Bedford Basin. Actually, it was just a matter of weeks ago - well months now - that we put a halt to the infilling to allow for further consultation and continue with our due diligence.

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

FIN.: DIGITAL MEDIA TAX CREDIT - EXTEND

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in the face of massive NDP handouts of hundreds of millions of dollars to big corporations, the NDP has refused to commit to extending tax rebates to companies that are here in Nova Scotia and employing people in an industry that traditionally pays an above-average wage. The Digital Media Tax Credit has helped companies in the industry, and in our province, but it expires in a little over a month. My question for the Minister of Finance is, will the Minister of Finance commit to extending this valuable tax credit past January 1, 2013?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Digital Media Tax Credit is indeed an important support for what I, and my colleagues here, consider a very important industry that makes a significant contribution to the province. I have said that I am looking at the credit. I understand it has an expiry date and I will have something to say on that in the not-too-distant future.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my problem is that it is already November 21st and this credit will expire at the end of January, so we are within almost two months of that time. This is an industry, as in every other industry, that requires some planning and some advance time. Companies can't operate with that level of insecurity so that is my biggest concern. I don't hear an answer from the minister. I'm not pleased to hear that we have to wait longer on that.

There is also a problem that they are not using a clear and informed process to evaluate applications and by many accounts this process isn't being handled properly within the Department of Finance. They are not using digital media experts to assess these applications; they are using internal accountants or others to judge the merits of an application for the digital media industry. So my second question for the minister is, why has this minister put in place accountants and financial advisers to judge whether companies are actually operating in digital media?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: We don't have too many filmmakers working in the Department of Finance; we do have accountants. It is a tax credit and the criterion that applies to a tax credit is, in fact, a financial calculation. However, let me say that the current tax credit costs approximately \$3 million this year. Since it was introduced more than \$10 million have been spent on this tax credit. That is not an insignificant amount of money; it's a significant amount of money. It has provided support to about 130 different productions and, as I said, I will have something to say, quite soon, in terms of the future of the tax credit.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that there are not any film makers on the provincial payroll. The difficulty with this industry is that we are using a definition for digital media that is not the industry standard. A company named Stitch Media was recently here in the province and was hiring people. They've had to leave the province after actually taking the government to court, and winning in court. A ruling that said, and I'll table this, Mr. Speaker: "In an oral decision judge Kevin Coady ruled that the Finance Department's ruling failed to meet the necessary criteria for being justifiable, transparent and intelligible (sic)."

So basically the tax rebate was not given to this company, even though it would be allowed in Ontario and in Quebec, and the company has since left the province. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, will she consult with the digital media industry experts and fix the flawed application process?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It is the case that I'm looking forward to meeting with members of the industry. I have met with members of the film production industry. This is a very particular subset of that industry and I will certainly take the opportunity to meet with them after this Legislature has risen for this season.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM.: MARITIME LINK - COST UPDATE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Over the past few months, the past year I guess, in discussions over Muskrat Falls in this House, in the media, in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Nova Scotia, there has been

considerable conflicting information from various sources. So I think the Premier must understand by now that there is a need and a desire by Nova Scotians to have accurate information about this project. The Premier continues to say that this is a good project and yet has been unable to provide the information to back that up and therefore, it cannot seek all-Party support as a result.

My question for the Premier, is the Premier working as closely with Emera as he seems to be lately with Nova Scotia Power, to release an updated cost of the Maritime Link portion of the project?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, certainly the energy future not just of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador but of the entire region, will be affected by the Lower Churchill project and then ultimately what will happen on the Upper Churchill and of course the expiry of the agreement between Hydro Quebec and Newfoundland.

What this project does is it looks out to the future for energy consumption in the province. What we are doing is we are working to ensure that this project gets an appropriate vetting, that the information that is required is there. Of course there is a process whereby that will go through the Utility and Review Board. We are, of course, anxious to have the first requirement satisfied. The very first requirement is to have this project approved in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous hurdles even in Newfoundland and Labrador. If I heard the Premier correctly just now, he said the first step is to have it approved in Newfoundland and Labrador. I think we all know that the Premier there has now introduced a Private Member's Bill, which will only allow two hours debate on it there, so I'm sure that will get approved by their government.

Mr. Speaker, the agreement, upon reading it, shows that there is no ownership - the ownership of the Maritime Link goes to Nalcor, after the term, and there is no guaranteed amount of energy. Reports in Newfoundland and Labrador, both from the Newfoundland and Labrador government and from private sources have indicated that much of that energy will be required by the nickel mines, which will be in production at that time.

Mr. Speaker, has the Premier looked into the issue that much of that energy may be required by the nickel mines and we may need an alternate source after the 25-year or 35-year period in the agreement?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course as you would know, Muskrat Falls is supposed to be phase one of that project, with Upper Churchill being the second part of it. We will of course look forward to that complete development taking place. Of course, we understand that after 35 years the projections that we have seen suggest there will still be power that we would be able to take, not only what was initially committed, but we'll be

able to take at the New England price, less transmission. It would be the cheapest available power for Nova Scotia and continue to make up part of the portfolio.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, with only a few seconds left, maybe I'll ask the Premier to table that information if he's able to do so at some point in the next few days since the information from Newfoundland seems to suggest the opposite. Thank you.

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

Before we get down to the Opposition Members' Business today, I noticed that earlier the member for Pictou East had put an attachment or tabled something with a resolution. You're not allowed to table attachments or anything with that. I'm therefore directing the document which the honourable member sought to have accompanying the notice of motion be struck from the record of the House. It does not form a part of the record of the proceedings of this House. Thank you.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1466.

Res. No. 1466, Re Prem. - Corporate Handouts: Rethink - Cole Harbour MLA Urge - notice given Oct. 26/12 - (Ms. D. Whalen)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to rise in my place here and talk about Resolution No. 1466. The operative clause reads:

"Therefore be it resolved that the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage remind the Premier that he cannot grow the economy by simply writing blank cheques to big corporations and that he must end his corporate handouts and begin work on growing the economics of this province."

Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is directed particularly at that member. I think that it's about the government side in its entirety and all members of the House to push that message and make sure that we understand that the path we're on and what we've been doing with economic development hasn't been working; \$590 million and counting and we haven't produced even close to the jobs that have been promised because when you're

talking about \$600 million tax dollars and 15,000-plus in promised jobs that obviously haven't materialized - because if 15,000 all of a sudden hit Nova Scotia's economy, certainly we'd be seeing that activity and people would be back to work immediately and not in Fort McMurray. I still have a hard time getting my head around how the government will continue to suggest that things are getting so much better and the economy's recovering and all these investments have been good for Nova Scotia because clearly they haven't.

I think it's important to note and just to set the tone I will read some of the quotes from years gone by that members of the government - when in Opposition - were shocked and appalled by some of the corporate handouts from the previous government. I think there are a few in particular that I'd like to note and one was October 20, 1999 from the Deputy Premier - my friend, the Deputy Premier. He said:

“That is indicative of how these guys are doing Economic Development - it is three-card monte - you switch them around, you tell the people of Nova Scotia one week, no more handouts to large corporations, then you go and cut a deal with a billion dollar company while people cannot get help at the food banks and the disabled are not getting access to buildings. But you will pompously sit there and tell people that is moving this province forward.”

The second quote I'd like to table is from the current Minister of Finance and this is from November 24, 2000:

“We've had our priorities in this province a little mixed up for far too long, Mr. Speaker. We have no difficulty as a province, previous governments and this government have no difficulty giving millions of dollars to profitable companies and corporations as a first priority, where people with disabilities who require technical aids, just your basic ability to get around in a wheelchair, have no access to the kinds of supports . . . We are simply saying get your priorities straight.”

Finally, as a tone-setter for this discussion, from October 23, 2003, the member for Halifax Chebucto who is a very talented and bright guy, in my opinion - someone who I certainly enjoy seeing on his feet because he has a lot of intelligent things to say. Back at that time, he was questioning some of the slush fund contributions and handouts from the Tory Government and he said, “Will the minister explain to this House what his government intends to do now that his government's handout has actually bought fewer jobs?” And I will table that.

This is kind of what we're looking at. It's hard to understand, from the government side, what truly has changed, and I think that's the question that many Nova Scotians are asking. What has frightened me more than anything, as we listen to these debates, is that the Premier and the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister are

suggesting - and I'm still waiting for an explanation how it's possible that two individuals who have so much influence over a majority government in this province suggest that giving handouts in a particular industry sector doesn't affect competition.

That's something that I really can't grasp and I will read, for the House, a line from the Premier that he stated here with respect to forestry, he said that New Brunswick, they're getting 5 to 50 less a cord in New Brunswick than they were getting in Nova Scotia. When the House tried to push him, he said that we realize this is a difficult time, but there is a bright spot in the industry. He said that the bright spot in the industry is the government.

Of course, that received a rousing applause from the government side here. (Applause) Right. And I do appreciate that applause, because then I can add my next line - you are absolutely, fundamentally wrong if you think that industry should be controlled and impacted and influenced by government. If that is the way you feel and that is why you clapped, then, Madam Speaker, we are moving in the wrong direction - absolutely in the wrong direction.

We are wrong there, and we are wrong with DSTN Trenton. That \$60 million, that if this company who were given the money to build and sell and market wind turbines - naturally, we have abandoned that plan now and we're diversifying into oil and gas, and I'm not sure where that's going to end up. In any event, we don't know where that's going and the only thing we do know is that should they compete with Nova Scotia businesses, then they've been given a \$60 million leg-up. That's very concerning and it's a similar situation with projects, with the engineering firm and if the House wants to hear our perspective on this and certainly hear my perspective, I will do that.

First off, I have spoken with the Consulting Engineers of Nova Scotia. I know where our position is and I think I understand where the Progressive Conservative Party's position is on this. This is not - absolutely not - about projects. This is not about their operations; it's not about them being from Calgary; it's not about anything other than the deal itself. We are not looking to insult. The consulting and engineering sector here is not making this, whatsoever, about projects. They don't blame them in any way. As I've said before, if you put \$11 million on the table, any company will look at coming here and relocating here - so it's not about that whatsoever.

A quick example - and I know that there are many, and they're mounting - from this sector of the Nova Scotia economy, consulting engineers. There's one story that we received and I know that the Premier's Office received it, and I'll give a very general breakdown, but I know it's certainly available, if any of the members would like specifics, Madam Speaker, I can certainly provide those.

A young and extremely bright engineer who graduated from Dalhousie University, started his own engineering and consulting firm. Started off with four people - and I know that there are many members in the House who have private sector and small business

experience and certainly, that all-important entrepreneurial spirit that drives people along. I know that exists and when you have that, you choose a difficult road because when you're developing a business and you look at the logistics of setting it up, the taxes you have to pay, the red tape that you have to go through - whether that be in pretty much any provincial jurisdiction, the amount you have to go through, it's very tough.

There's a lot to consider. For a young, brilliant, structural engineer, he would have been much better served to jump on with another company, work nine to five, not have to worry about employees and their well-being, not have to worry about paying taxes and benefits and those types of things, not have to worry about securing contracts. He said no, he wants to do this on his own; he wants to be his own boss. He started out with five employees a few years ago and now he's up to 25 - 25 employees.

It is a growing sector, as I said to the Premier in Question Period today this is a vibrant, growing part of our economy. There is no reason for government influence and government plays and, again, I want to make this very clear with respect to this topic and to this particular investment by the government, the challenge to this industry and I said this to the Premier, so please, this is what's important - it's not about the contracts; it's not about securing work. There are mounds of contracts and work for consulting engineers in Alberta, in Atlantic Canada, and across the world if you've got access to those markets.

This is not about the contracts, Madam Speaker. What this is about is attracting and retaining good-quality employees. This is what the government is impacting, and I will go into detail on how that is, but this is affecting this entrepreneur who went on his own, who has never had any help, and who has done this with his own dime. I asked the question to the Premier, the final question of that session today in my topic, and I asked him how many engineers, how many in this industry so far, have left current Nova Scotia-based engineering consulting firms to go to PROJEX. There are several so far.

So we talk, we use the talk - it's brand new, it's bringing people home - but already engineers have been plucked from credible engineering firms. They've already moved over to PROJEX, and if you don't understand how this works, PROJEX has been given an \$11 million advantage by the Province of Nova Scotia. If you have \$11 million, you can provide that, you can put that to any way you want.

So what can they do? They can bid low. They can use this money to leverage their costs and leverage their expenses and make bids on contracts that local companies could have gotten, but this may be the difference. Sorry? (Interruption) Yes, absolutely, of course Alberta. That's where the market is. Our cost to competitive advantage in this sector is that we have cheaper wages in Nova Scotia than Alberta, so of course, I would say to that minister, that's exactly how this works. Absolutely. He shakes his head, but he's wrong. He's absolutely wrong.

They can bid low and they can pay high. They can use that money to leverage salaries and pay more to attract engineers who are already working in this province. If you don't agree with that, then I don't know what to tell you, minister, because you don't understand it. So you can shake your head, but this is exactly what's happening. We've chosen to use tax dollars to get into an industry that is already robust and growing - one of the few in our Nova Scotia economy. The Consulting Engineers of Nova Scotia represent 60 firms in this province - 60 firms and 4,000 employees. That's what the Consulting Engineers, CENS, represent. Last year they added up to 150 new jobs to our economy. You talk about good jobs, about high-paying jobs? This is it - 150 last year.

So to date, as many as 20 PROJEX employees have come from Nova Scotia firms. That's not my information. That's coming from the industry. That's coming from this sector group.

In the past few years - again, as I had mentioned - companies have come from other places to locate their consulting engineering firms in Nova Scotia, Stantec being probably the largest example. It's certainly one of the examples. Why is that? For a number of reasons. Number one, they've got access to Dal and NSCC programs, so they've got immediate access to job-ready students and job-ready employees. That's number one. Number two, Atlantic Canadians, of course - and many are in this room - want to stay home. That's the whole point, that we want to stay here. So that's another competitive advantage that we have. Number three, Atlantic Canada, as I have mentioned earlier, has cost advantages. We are a cheaper place to do business relative to Alberta when you're talking about consulting. So that gives us an advantage.

I don't understand why that's so complicated, but that's the way this works, and when we've got a growing, vibrant industry here, why are we interfering? I'm not really sure. The consulting engineering sector, they import their services elsewhere. So, of course, they're in the oil and gas sector, and again with this huge wage imbalance, it comes to skill, it comes to experience, and it comes to what specific things you're competent in. Of course, it also comes to the dollars, the amount of your contract, the amount that you provide, and the amount that you state as how you do or do not get work.

So up until now, Nova Scotia firms competing in Alberta had that competitive advantage, but with respect to PROJEX they no longer do because you've got an Alberta company coming this way and receiving a subsidy. You can call it a weight subsidy, you can call it a contract subsidy, you can call it whatever you want, but when you provided money to compete with local business and DSTN - I'll repeat this - it's no different. You've been given an advantage. It's like they've sold \$11 million and made \$11 million in contracts. So that's the difference.

Your expenses and your profit are why you are in business and that's revenue minus expenses. So when you have additional revenue to the tune of \$11 million, or \$60 million in DSME's case, then you have been given an advantage. I know the government

suggests that we don't want them here; we don't want these jobs. Of course we do, but this is a sector that is growing and I've heard from them, and I'm sure many members of this House have heard from the consulting engineering sector, because they're worried about this.

I'm not sure why we didn't consult with CENS to say, look, we're looking at this kind of subsidy, this kind of agreement with a Calgary firm. What do you think? I also don't understand why, as a payroll rebate, why NSPI wouldn't understand that this is direct competition. You're giving a leg up to competition in a business, in a sector that's already competitive in this province. This is a growth industry that's . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm really pleased to have an opportunity to join into the debate here. I think this is a very important topic. The Opposition may be surprised to hear that I actually would very much agree with their resolution, if it were true.

The problem with the resolution, of course, is that it is a complete Liberal Party fabrication and a distortion with respect to the reality of what is occurring, Madam Speaker. I think everybody in this House would agree that a priority for government, regardless of the political stripe of the government, the Party in power, has to be growing our economy. If we do not change, if we do not overcome the record of the past 20 years - let me remind members what that record is, in terms of economic growth for this province - the Province of Nova Scotia has been dead last in economic performance of all of the Canadian provinces for the past 20 years, dead last in terms of economic performance.

When we came to government, that was the situation - 20 years of the worst economic growth of any province. We were additionally confronting a structural deficit that was projected to grow to \$1.4 billion. Revenues from Sable were falling dramatically and the world was coming out of a recession, but we've seen that the recovery from that recession has been anything but a recovery. Europe has slipped back into recession, the Americans are just barely treading water and we don't know where things will go with respect to their so-called fiscal cliff that is in front of them.

The high Canadian dollar has had a tremendous negative impact on manufacturing, for many of our provinces. It has particularly hit the forest sector very, very hard and has had a significant amount to do with what has occurred in the pulp and paper industry in our province, but in other provinces as well.

We also struggle with decisions that were made, again, by previous administrations that have left very high energy costs that business has had to contend with in this province.

On top of that, we have the problem of demographics: an aging population, falling birth rate, out-migration of often the best and the brightest. So these certainly are facts that are well documented and are challenges for any government and they are the challenges that we have had to address.

Nova Scotia has many positives as well, I don't want to focus on the negatives. We have many, many positives and one of the first things we did was, as a government, we secured the expertise of Donald Savoie who is well known, has worked with governments across the political spectrum in terms of economic development. Dr. Savoie did a report a called *The Way Forward for Nova Scotia*, he subtitled that report *Invest More, Innovate More, Trade More and Learn More* with 23 or 24 recommendations. Many of his recommendations, in fact, have formed the basis for the Economic Development strategy that we have embarked on as a government. The jobsHere program of government is a program to improve the productivity of companies and businesses in the Province of Nova Scotia and to improve the skills of our workforce. Through that, we have invested in many, many businesses: large, medium-sized and small, throughout the province. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, is much more capable than I am of providing all of the details, with respect to the specifics of the very many companies that have been invested in.

I want to say how disappointed I am in members across the way, when they attack companies that have shown their faith in the future of this province and have demonstrated a commitment and a belief that our workforce is a workforce that they want to have as a part of their industry. The way they have demonstrated their interest and their commitment in our universities and our community college sector, for example IBM. The Liberal Party talks inside this Legislature and outside the Legislature in a negative way about the IBM contract. They say that these jobs are short-term jobs and they are insignificant. The member for Glace Bay essentially made IBM sound like a sweat shop on the floor of this Legislature. It's one of the largest IT companies in the world. It has been identified repeatedly as a top 10 employer and I know that for staff in my department, for example, who are looking now at the offer that they have been extended to IBM, I mean, perhaps members would be surprised to find out that members of my staff have asked me, some of the staff that have been identified as staying back to manage the SAP system, if perhaps they couldn't go to IBM because of the opportunities that they have for greater pay, for better career opportunities and training, they very much have looked at and understand the opportunities that are in front of them.

You know I grew up in the Strait area. My family still resides in that area, the Havre Boucher area, my mom still lives there, and I went to school with a lot of people who work at the pulp mill. My friends, my neighbours, my mother's friends and neighbours are families that surround those communities.

The investment that this government made in NewPage supports that community; it supports the people who live in that community; it supports people who work in all of the

small businesses that depend very much on that particular industry. It is an anchor industry in the Strait of Canso.

I know the member for Richmond knows this. It's unfortunate that he hasn't been able to convince his Party colleagues that this is an industry that was worth investing in, worth giving a second chance, that would have an opportunity to continue as we work with that community to look at what the other possibilities are for a diversified economy.

I listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party, around the NewPage mill and I have to say I just shook my head. I was shocked at how little he seemed to know about the Strait area. He talked about how there should have been an effort to diversify that community. He seemed to be unaware that there had been a gypsum plant there, that there had been a call centre there, that there had been a heavy water plant there, that there had been numerous attempts to diversify and provide economic opportunities, many of them that no longer exist, but the one thing that still exists in that area is the mill - the most modern super-calendar mill in all of North America, surrounded by forests.

As a friend of mine said, when we talk about pulp and paper as a sunset industry, you can't blow your nose with an iPad, Madam Speaker. As far as I can tell - I actually don't think they said blow your nose - but we still do have the need for paper products in our society. Yes, newsprint is taking a serious hit but it is very disturbing how the Liberal Party, in particular, has just written off a whole industry. Five municipalities, communities that for 50 years have seen their livelihood rest on that industry and, Madam Speaker, has time ahead of them when that industry will be there to support the families because we had, and do have, the belief and the hope and the vision to support industry in that area.

You know economies require a mixed economy of economic opportunity. It is the case that if you place all of your eggs in one basket, you make yourself extraordinarily vulnerable for the kinds of unforeseen - or trends that you can see coming. It would be foolhardy to do that. That is why we have a very diversified portfolio in terms of the kinds of things we're investing in. We are investing in traditional industries, but in a way that will help those industries transition to a new kind of economy, one where productivity and a trained workforce are really at the heart of economic development in this province. (Applause)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I think the number that has been batted around the last while - it's up to about \$600 million in corporate handouts the last while. I think it begs the question, is our economy really that bad? I guess we need to ask, why do those companies need that kind of money? I was listening to the Minister of Finance speak, and sometimes I write my speeches based on what I hear on the other side -

it's a lot easier that way - but the minister mentioned that decisions made by previous governments have left this government dealing with high energy costs.

Madam Speaker, if this government was in charge 10 years ago, making the decisions they're making now, saying that they are doing such wonderful things to control the future costs of power, we need only look at the cost of what they're moving toward today and compare it to what the costs were in the past. They always talk about coal - and if they're so firm about it, why don't they just completely get us off coal right now, if they really believe it?

They can't and they won't, for two reasons. For one, 58 per cent of the energy input in the province to generate electricity is coal; and two, it's also very cheap. If this government had been in charge (Interruptions) The members opposite don't think that it's cheap, but we have had it established at the Public Accounts Committee that, next to Wreck Cove, it has been the cheapest source of power for the province.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice says "shame," but his constituents are dealing with the high cost of power. They can thank that member and his government for a blind move toward renewable energy. (Interruptions) Now, renewable energy is not a bad thing, but we must move to it carefully and we must recognize that there are economics behind it. The Minister of Finance also talked about exchange rates, and true, that's not something we can control in this province, but the point I would like to make to that Minister of Finance is that we must control the things that we have control over. This government has control over power rates. Their energy policy dictates what Nova Scotia Power does when it procures electricity, and this government is forcing the most aggressive targets on our province.

There's a cost to that, and I wish the members opposite would also table some numbers. I tabled numbers in some of my recent remarks showing how the price of coal has come down, showing how the price of natural gas has come down markedly, coming down from being over \$12 at one point to hovering around \$4 the last while. That proves that this government, when they say what they are saying around energy costs, is not backing it up with the numbers. If they paid attention and if they looked at some of those numbers, they might think twice about some of the arguments they make in the Legislature here. They would be doing Nova Scotians a world of good, because they might see that there is error in their ways and the energy policy that they're enforcing on the province.

Madam Speaker, I would say to that Minister of Finance, start controlling what you can control. I also wonder if the government is going to be able to balance the budget by 2014. They've got an extra \$300 million to \$400 million a year in HST, in revenue coming in, because they jacked that up. (Interruption)

I'm glad the minister is talking about royalties because that was the next thing I was going to talk about. They now have - we heard the announcement that Shell is going to be

conducting about a billion dollars' worth of activity and just last week British Petroleum, they are going to be conducting about a billion dollars' worth of activity. (Interruption)

Why is that, my colleagues are asking? Well, that is because the previous government, who this government slags all the time, the previous government made a decision to invest in research data that was made available to the industry and what did the industry do? Both Shell and British Petroleum are going to be doing \$2 billion worth of activity out on our Nova Scotia offshore. Madam Speaker, I think that's worthy of a hand in this Legislature. (Applause)

Now the members opposite like to take credit for this today but they, Madam Speaker, railed against that investment. They railed against it. (Interruption) I don't know, the Minister of Health is saying he doesn't remember this, and the Minister of Finance, she's going to remember this, after today at least, because she's just been told.

Madam Speaker, hopefully for all our sakes, that is going to make it easier for this government to balance the budget because it should mean increased royalties in future years for the province.

AN HON. MEMBER: He just said we're going to be in government in 2017.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, I didn't say who was going to be the government - I said "the government". It could be us, Madam Speaker; that's certainly my hope.

I also want to point out something else. This government always pats itself on the back for giving small businesses in the province lower taxes by reducing the small business tax rate. We support that, Madam Speaker, but I want to remind them, the money that they are still taking from these businesses, whether it's in small business tax or whether it's in personal income tax they are paying in their household, that money is being used as part of this \$600 million being handed out to Irving, and projects, and IBM and other companies. I'm hearing from a lot of these small business people and they are not happy, they are not happy with the government's decisions on these matters: they don't feel that it's fair.

Madam Speaker, I tend to side with these small business owners because they are not looking for handouts. They are going to work every day, making payroll, creating work for other Nova Scotians and to me, they are fighting the battle fair and square. They have competitors but they are finding a way to make their businesses work, without having to come for handouts. I think those Nova Scotia business owners deserve a hand from this Legislature. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, what these corporate handouts are is about picking winners and losers and I know the Minister of Finance also talked about IBM and about things that were said in this Legislature but we need to remind the government, as I sat down to a luncheon, I guess it's about week and half, two weeks ago now, and I was told by a Nova Scotian

entrepreneur that he was not happy about the contract that was sole-sourced to IBM and that IBM was also being given a contribution from the government, a payroll tax rebate. So there is a Nova Scotia business owner who was upset by this and that needs to be revealed in the Legislature.

I think there is a very good point that the member from Victoria-The Lakes has raised with me, at this moment and that is that there are lots of small business owners who are dipping into their savings. Their businesses may be struggling in the economy we're in right now. They may still be paying taxes and those taxes are being given to other larger companies that are often - their head offices are located far away from here and the money is going into their pockets. That bothers those small business owners, that's a very good point.

I know I've said in this Legislature, what could we be doing that wouldn't cost anything, that would support some of these business owners and I think of Michelin, when they came in to tell us not to pass the first contract arbitration and I know the government hates when I bring this up but they hate it because, Madam Speaker, people don't like pain and people whine when they're feeling pain and I think they're feeling the pain when I'm talking about this, and now they're trying to be quiet because they're trying to suggest that's not the case but the reality of it is this government is picking winners and losers and if they don't figure that out before the next election, it may be too late for them. I think it's too late already, but that's something for them to deal with, not me. I already know where I stand, and I certainly know how I stand when I'm speaking with my constituents and when I visit small businesses in my area.

I think we need to talk a little bit about NewPage. I know the members opposite would love to hear my thoughts on that. I've certainly not been shy to speak about it. We're all very happy to see the mill back up and running. (Applause) Madam Speaker, how much time do I have left? Five minutes. When I drive along Route 19 and I reach the rotary, I see the steam coming out of the air, and of course it's very little pollution that's coming out of that plant now. It's a very modern plant, and I'm happy to see the steam coming out.

I think about how the minister was talking about what a modern plant it was, and I was thinking, yes, it is probably the most modern mill in North America, and it's surrounded by trees, but it is struggling. One of the reasons it's struggling is that its number-one cost is power. We've talked about power rates, and I think we need to put on the record that the mill didn't want to pay for the expensive renewable energy that this government keeps forcing upon us. What did they do? They applied to be exempted from having to pay for that.

Obviously, again, more economics, which I know this government has difficulty understanding. They would much rather stick to philosophies, because they're light and flighty and they don't have to really get to the heart of the matter. They can make it seem all right in their own minds.

I think that's proof. If the paper mill doesn't want to pay for it, why would small business want to pay for it? Why would anybody else want to pay for it? This Party that always claimed to stand for people who were marginalized and suffering in poverty, here they seem to forget about that when it comes to energy policy. That's sad to me. I wish they would rediscover their roots.

I'm going to get back to NewPage. I know there are a lot of people who are happy in my area. I think about all the retail businesses that were happy because the mill is a big part of the economy. A lot of those businesses were suffering from a lot of uncertainty, because if that mill did disappear we would be in very bad shape. I remember the evening that it was announced that the mill was finished. Then the next evening I was out and I got word that the mill was alive again. (Interruption) It pretty much was a resurrection. I felt bad for all the emotional strain that people were under, and I certainly don't think it was intentional, but I know at the time I was thinking, wow, it's bad enough that they have to face the possibility of the place shutting down, but to have to go through the emotional strain of being taken from a low to a high was pretty rough on people.

AN HON. MEMBER: Better than the alternative.

MR. MACMASTER: Better than the alternative, no question. There were a lot of sacrifices made. We mustn't forget the workers who capped their wages for the next 10 years. We mustn't forget the people who are cutting wood out in the forests, including the private wood contractors, who claim they're not really making anything right now. In fact, some of them are not even bothering to cut. They've put their machinery aside, because if they were to cut and supply the wood, they'd be doing it at a loss. We mustn't forget about them.

We mustn't forget about the pensioners, who I have fought for in this Legislature. Their pensions, at last count, are 63 per cent of what they should be. And, Madam Speaker, I know this government seemed to be very slow to react to my amendments to their bill, to give them some potential relief by freeing them up from having to put their pensions into an annuity, immediately, if they were going to be wound up. I am glad that the government relented and . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: They took your advice.

MR. MACMASTER: Took my advice - I may say that, I don't know - maybe they took their own advice. But they certainly didn't vote for my idea when it was put forward initially, Madam Speaker.

With that, Madam Speaker, I am going to conclude; thank you for the time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's quite an interesting topic we have on the agenda here this afternoon in Resolution No. 1466. We talk about corporate handouts and I listened with great intent as the Minister of Finance blamed past governments for the poor economic conditions that this government is, after almost four years, not taking any accountability for.

We see \$560 million in corporate welfare handed out with very, very poor results. We see companies closing, some going bankrupt, and we see a loss of over 1,300 jobs. That's all invented by this government, all on that side, the NDP Government. We see things happen such as first contract arbitration. We haven't forgotten about first contract arbitration. Right now, as we speak, Michelin is building a new plant in the southern United States. They indicated that they can't build them here anymore because of this bill. (Interruptions)

Well, the members across here may laugh, they may laugh, but indeed, they indicated that it's not a good place for investment in Nova Scotia. That's a solid company that has been here a long time in Nova Scotia, for a long time paying very high wages, treating their employees very well and, indeed, they have no choice but to take and move any new developments and expansions into other countries. That's not positive for Nova Scotia. Hopefully this first contract arbitration won't shut the plants down here as time goes on.

This government blames everybody else for all the woes that they have and all the problems they have but I can tell you, I've been here a long time, a long time, and I have never seen a government perform this badly, in this short a time. It's unbelievable. They basically added \$560 million, \$560 million, taken out of the taxpayers, the individual people in this province, and given it to big corporations and most of it - and I won't use the terminology I'd like to use because it would be unparliamentary in this House - most of it has just gone. It's gone. It's absolutely gone - \$560 million. How are they going to pay for that?

One way they've proposed to pay for this is the 25 per cent increase in the GST, the 2 cents they put on, a 25 per cent increase. That's really good for economic development, it really helps. It takes a big chunk out of every family's ability to buy things in the province, hopefully some of the things will be made in Nova Scotia, if companies were still thriving here but they're not. Branch companies are moving to Moncton where it's cheaper to do business. It's cheaper to work; there are fewer regulations in Moncton, in New Brunswick, than there are here. That's only a local company and I've talked before about competing. It's a world market now that people have to compete in. Anyone who thinks anything else has absolutely no idea about business.

There is some talk about the new oil exploration off the coast, which is really good news. There is an agreement in place - \$150 million of offsets that are supposed to be spent in Nova Scotia. A Nova Scotia company is supposed to get this. I asked two separate

ministers of this government in the past, in Question Period, about that offset agreement and neither one of them had any idea what I was talking about, none.

I talked to the businesses that are in that business and a company from the United States came into Nova Scotia. It's got an office set up in Burnside, with a desk, a telephone on the desk, and nobody there. The calls are all forwarded to Newfoundland and Labrador, where they've set up their business and hired some Nova Scotia businesses, people from businesses here, highly skilled people, moved them to Newfoundland and Labrador and put the local companies at a disadvantage. There are so many issues that this government has not addressed properly, so many issues.

The Minister of Finance gets here and says that some of the people who used to work in the SAP system, with the big contract that IBM has put out, are now going to go and work for IBM and make more money. Now, if you're going to save money - you pay a private company that's going to make a profit from this and you're going to pay your employees more than the government paid, there's no way you're going to save money. There's absolutely no way possible. People may think that sounds great, but it can't possibly happen. It just can't happen.

When you look at what this government has done, they've fallen down on economic development. If you've got a small business in this province and try to get some help from this government, they basically tell you there's nothing we can do to help you - nothing, absolutely nothing. Talk about some productivity initiatives, but if you've got a small business you can't meet the criteria for it in most cases. That means those businesses can't expand, and they can't become more efficient. Efficiency in small business is what makes the economy go.

Yet at the same time, this government puts \$560 million into big companies outside of this province, and helped the money go outside of the province. So if I was sitting home in my living room thinking about what this means to me - it's difficult to understand how all this works together, but basically what has happened is we've taken money out of Nova Scotians' pockets and put it in big companies' pockets, and those big companies have either gone bankrupt or disappeared, and they've laid off over 1,300 people. That's not a bad deal for \$560 million.

When you look at that, it makes you wonder. It's just over \$1 million a job that we've lost. Not a bad investment, I guess, if you sit on that side of the House - the NDP, who really don't know anything about developing jobs and creating the economy. The Minister of Finance also said, when she was speaking, that all the young people are moving out. No wonder they're moving out, there is - Madam Speaker, I have until 5:45 p.m. Yes, 5:45 p.m.

When you look and see what this government has done and how it has negatively impacted on the economy in Nova Scotia, we're going to be paying for these bad mistakes

that this NDP Government has made for the next 50 years - for 50 years they are going to be paying for these. The worst of it is that our economy is going to be in such bad shape when they leave government - which hopefully is after the next election, that people in Nova Scotia realize what's going on, that's what's going to happen, and I think they're starting to realize that - we're going to be in such bad shape when that time comes that it's going to take forever to get it straightened out again. It's going to take forever. Many laws are going to have to be changed. We're going to have to look at a new way to do economic development, because the economic development that's going on here sure isn't working.

You look at the way that things are happening, and you see young people leaving the province. We have one of the highest tax rates in the country, and if you're going to create jobs and get people to work here, you're going to have to have a tax structure that makes it attractive for businesses to come. You dropped the small business tax, but it doesn't mean a thing. If you know how to do your books properly and you know how to invest properly in your business, you never pay that tax anyway if you're in small business.

If you've got a good accountant and you do things properly - and I mean by the book, no other way - you don't have to pay taxes very much, unless you grow and grow the economy. The way the economy here is growing is not growing, so most of these small businesses are struggling. They're struggling just to survive.

My colleague from the PC caucus indicated that a lot of these businesses are taking their savings to keep their businesses going while they try to get through this time that this government is here. I talk to business owners - I know, and I won't say what they say to me about this government, but I guarantee you, they're not investing in Nova Scotia anymore. When they have a choice, they're moving out of Nova Scotia to another jurisdiction where they get better tax structure and they get better laws that help them become more efficient and make more money.

We look at the power rates that this government really has control over, but the government does nothing about it - absolutely nothing. It doesn't do anything to ensure that we're more competitive, and that has to change. We have one of the highest gasoline prices, and that costs businesses money. We have so many issues that this government has created in just the short three or four years they've been there that it's going to take years to correct it when they're finished. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 103.

Bill No. 103 - Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Madam Speaker, unfortunately I only have five minutes to speak about this and this is a very serious situation. We hear a lot of lobbying from the other side over there, the NDP, and they don't like what I say but they are hearing it in their communities; they are hearing from their own people; they are hearing from their own businesses. They want to listen carefully because when the next election comes around, the people are going to remember all this stuff and they're going to make sure they put it on the ballot.

We talk about accountability in economic development. We asked for information on the IBM deal. Now, it doesn't make any sense. You bring IBM in, plus you pay them a wage subsidy to compete here, with no accountability for how the contract was written. We take staff that have been there for a long time and indicate that maybe they're not doing a good job. We'll bring IBM and do the job because they're a big company - actually they're worth more than the Province of Nova Scotia - and let them come in and do what they're going to do.

We heard at the Public Accounts Committee the other day - today actually - about how there is no safe way to secure the information. The Premier got up the other day and said, well, IBM will do just as good a job as the province is doing. Well, that's a scary thought; that's a scary thought. So all this information is going to be in IBM and we're going to see that information transferred to who knows where, electronically now. Are they going to move the jobs offshore when they finally figure out it's so expensive to do business in Nova Scotia and it's not worth being here? That's very possible.

When you see how the economy is suffering here, it is suffering. All our smart young people are leaving. You bring an engineering company in here to steal employees from existing companies and to take work, and you subsidize them, this is negative economic development. If it's that good to do business here, and if a Calgary company wants to come here to work, you don't have to give millions of dollars in subsidy and wage subsidy to get them to come here, you just have the right kind of environment.

We heard the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister today when he was asked about high-speed Internet over the province. Well, he couldn't really answer the question, which shocked me. He should have been able to tell us exactly how many people weren't served, when exactly they would be served, and what the difficulties were with servicing them. If you don't have high-speed Internet, that is a detriment to developing business in the province. All these things add up. You've got to put everything together to make it attractive for business. You have to have an attractive tax structure. You

have to have well-trained employees. You have to have an environment where you can compete outside of Nova Scotia. In other words, you have to have the equipment and technology to do that and you have to have the tools, the communication tools, today. If you don't have high-speed Internet today, that's one of the biggest marketing tools you can have.

Years ago you had to do literature and mail it out, and you had to go to trade shows. You still have to do some of those things, but now with the Internet you can go on and you can see what a company has, you can get all the information. If you're setting up a place in rural Nova Scotia, where we really need to move the economy along, not shift everything into HRM, jobs in HRM are very good and very valuable, but if we get the rural economy going and make sure the rural economy is going, we have to have things like high-speed Internet, proper telephone service, and all the things that go along.

This government doesn't even know when it's going to all happen. They don't know where the issue is with this. They don't have an understanding of what this means to business and they just say, well, it's nice, you know, it will be a little while and we'll have it done. That's not good enough for business. It's not good enough. We have to get it done. It has to be done right and it has to be done now. I realize there are some issues with high-speed Internet, but, again, we've got one of the best companies in North America right here in Nova Scotia, a local company, which employs a lot of people, that can provide this service, and indeed they do at a very good rate.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my comments with that and the final thing I'm going to say is this government has done a crappy job of looking after the government.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. I would ask the member to withdraw that last remark. It is unparliamentary.

MR. COLWELL: I will do that and I will change it to . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Just withdraw it.

MR. COLWELL: . . . doing a very poor job of looking after Nova Scotians.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, I have to say, them's fighting words.

In spite of being government during the worst global economic recession since the Great Depression, I would say our NDP Government has done a lot of good, in a very short space of time. Three years, out of 254 years of government by other Parties. Although you don't hear much of this good news from the other Parties, instead the other Parties are

becoming increasingly desperate in their attempts to attack our initiatives, our legislation, our investments and even our Premier. They take every positive thing that we do and they turn it into a negative.

Actually, as a professional actor in my former life, I often find myself somewhat dumbfounded as I watch members of the Opposition Parties attempt to portray themselves in a role of quasi-Norma Rae. However when they were in government previously, they did nothing, absolutely nothing to help the very causes and the people that they now profess to show they profoundly care about. (Interruption)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. Order.

MS. ZANN: No, quasi-Norma Rae. However, we actually, as the NDP believe strongly in our causes and we believe in many, many different issues and many initiatives which we have been actually pushing since we got here. We have very major core values and we will continue to stand up for these causes in which we believe. We will continue to create legislation and invest in the important initiatives and the important businesses that we feel Nova Scotians need and that will be successful here.

Our goal, as the first-ever NDP Government, is to build a stronger, healthier, greener and much more successful province for all people, from all walks of life. That will be something new. In order to keep our economy sound and growing, this government has reached out to small, medium and large businesses. We've created more small business tax credits, we've also invested and had loans and opportunities for companies of all sizes and increased their opportunity to improve the skills of their workers.

The other thing is that these provincial investments we've done have generated more than \$80 million in the past seven years - that's tens of millions reinvested in the services that Nova Scotians rely on, like health care and education. We've helped protect 1,400 jobs in the Strait region, hundreds of men, women and families, small businesses who didn't lose their jobs, who didn't close their doors and who didn't have to move out West. Something the Opposition doesn't seem to understand.

Now, I heard the MLA for Glace Bay over there, I heard him repeat an accusation that in fact the Liberal Party seems to be repeating over and over again these days. The assertion that the province gave \$590 million to six companies and laid off 1,300 people. Those numbers are fiction. The honourable member has been given false information, I'm sorry, from his researchers.

Here are some real facts . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Order. The assertion of false information is unparliamentary, could you please retract that? The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill is asked to retract those remarks.

MS. ZANN: Okay, I said he was given false information, but I will retract that if that's unparliamentary language.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Reword it.

MS. ZANN: That's okay, I'll just skip that part. Here are some real numbers. The shipbuilding contracts actually promised 11,000 jobs during peak production and \$2.8 billion in additional revenue over the next 19 years. The province has therefore invested millions to actually earn billions in tax revenue.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Your time allotted has elapsed.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, before I start, I would like to put the name of the member for Truro-Bible Hill forward for an Academy nomination, for an Emmy, for that performance because that's exactly what it was, a performance - pure fiction.

Madam Speaker, 8,600 less jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia, 13,000 people going out West to find work, and then I hear the Minister of Finance talk about how people are talking about IBM and how they have so much faith in them. The trouble is that we on this side of the House have faith in the Nova Scotians who were doing that job in the first place, the Nova Scotians who were doing that job and making sure that it was kept confidential, and people in this province were getting their dollar value. What does this government do? They take it away from our own taxpayers and they give it to a company outside, an \$86 million contract - untendered, I might add - plus an incentive on top of that for another \$11 million for a payroll rebate. That's how they treat Nova Scotians, that's how they treat the people they were selected to govern and to give the best foot forward.

I heard the Minister of Finance also talk a little while ago about the pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury. Well there are a number of small business people there - they are called producers, pulp producers that this government has left out in the cold, people who made their living year after year supplying fibre to that mill. And when it came time that they needed help, what did this government do? They gave \$100-some-odd million to a company in B.C. and left the people here high and dry, saying to them that it's a free market and you should be out there making money - you should be producing wood at a loss, so that we can keep this mill open.

Madam Speaker, what about the pensioners who've seen a loss in their pension? Why was it that the Province of Nova Scotia, that government that cares so much about Nova Scotians, couldn't find any way to help them? Instead, we have \$600 million to give to companies from outside our province, but never looked after the people who are here, the people who are actually paying the taxes, the people who are paying their salary and our

salary. They're using their money to provide subsidies to companies from outside of here; they are using the money of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia to take away jobs from the people who are working with SAP. That's hard to believe - that this is a government that actually cares about the people of the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the Opposition business today. I'll now turn it over to the Government House Leader to give the business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, after the daily routine, tomorrow we'll be calling the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 97 and 125; Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 140 and 143; then go into Committee of the Whole House on Bills, Bill Nos. 102, 107, 119, 127; and, if time permits, we'll do Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise, to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 5:59 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2186**

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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 the Weare family of Caledonia, in addition to operating R&C Weare Logging Ltd. have established the Hollow Log Café; and

Whereas the Hollow Log Café opened for business on September 17 in Caledonia;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes and congratulates the Weare family of the Hollow Log Café in Caledonia for their entrepreneurial spirit and contributions to the business community of Queens County.

RESOLUTION NO. 2187

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Jeremy Haywood and Patrick Briand are residents of Lower Sackville; and

Whereas 25 year old Jeremy returned to Sackville after losing his job at the Point Tupper Mill and called on his previous experience from working at pizza restaurants since the age of 16, to partner with Patrick in opening Boo Boo's Pizza on First Lake Drive; and

Whereas Boo Boo's Pizza fills a gap in the area serving local schools and businesses;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House welcome new business owners, Jeremy Haywood and Patrick Briand and congratulate them on the opening of Boo Boo's Pizza on First Lake Drive in Lower Sackville and wish them future success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2188

By: Hon. David Wilson (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Aurora ROV Systems Ltd. is located in Lower Sackville and is owned by Jim Camano; and

Whereas Aurora ROV Systems distributes underwater remotely operated vehicles and side scan sonar; and

Whereas Aurora ROV Systems Ltd. was awarded a contract from the Canadian Navy valued at \$1.7 million for the purchase of six underwater remotely operated vehicles in April 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Jim Camano on the success of his Lower Sackville company, Aurora ROV Systems Ltd. in receiving a \$1.7 million contract to provide six underwater remotely operated vehicles to the Canadian Navy and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2189

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

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

Whereas today is the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims; and

Whereas this day is set aside to remember those killed or seriously injured on Canadian roads; and

Whereas too often these accidents are sudden and avoidable, and while we remember the lives lost, we must do everything we can to encourage safety on the road;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize today as the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims and urge all Nova Scotians to exercise safety and responsibility while driving.

RESOLUTION NO. 2190

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas Windsor firefighter Jason Cochrane recently became only the 7th Nova Scotia firefighter to be presented with a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Jason was presented with his medal by the national president of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association at a ceremony in Ottawa on September 8th for his untiring dedication to community volunteerism; and

Whereas Jason's full-time job is that of an advanced EMD paramedic, but he has also found time over the years to be a junior firefighter in Brooklyn and a full-time volunteer firefighter in both the captain and lieutenant roles in Windsor, where he has participated in a variety of functions, while still having time to volunteer at the Canada Winter Games in 2011, be a Big Brother, help organize the Hants Community Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament, and assist at the Canadian Senior Men's Fastpitch Softball Tournament in 1998 in St. Croix, while also being the duty supervisor when the Aberdeen Hospital was evacuated due to a bomb threat in New Glasgow a few years ago;

Therefore be it resolved that members in this House of Assembly congratulate Jason Cochrane for his outstanding work ethic and community spirit in wanting to help any time of the day or week, and wish him nothing but continued success.