



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2012**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Fourth Session**

**12:00 NOON**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Gordon Gosse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of order, in accordance with Rule No. 30(1) in regard to written questions.

Last session we submitted a number of questions. As you can see on the order paper, there are still about 36 of them that have not been answered yet, and I am just wondering, what is the response time on a question like that for written questions? I was wondering if maybe you could use your office to maybe push that one forward just a little bit, and I want to see what your response on that would be.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that under advisement and look at the rule and get back to the House at a later date. Thank you very much.

We'll begin the daily routine.

### **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

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

“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.”

I have affixed my signature to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The point of order kind of threw off my schedule there and I forgot to read the subject matter for late debate:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly acknowledge that we have the highest power prices in Canada and a commission is not needed to know that power rates are hurting Nova Scotians and damaging our economy.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Hants West.

### **[PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS]**

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause is:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Government of Nova Scotia to:

- initiate a Public Inquiry into the allegations of systemic physical, sexual and mental abuse of children who were former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children;

- to investigate the systemic issues which lead [sic] to the alleged abuses; and,
- to inquire into whether racism and discrimination played a role into the historic silence and inaction by the former Governments of the Province of Nova Scotia.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 1,057 signatures. I have affixed my name, and I wish to table it.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

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

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2304**

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

Whereas Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> is considered “dumping day” in southwest Nova Scotia as it marks the start of the lobster fishing season in Areas 33 and 34; and

Whereas these are the largest inshore fisheries in Canada and are the cornerstone of our coastal communities, employing thousands of Nova Scotians; and

Whereas ocean conditions at this time of year can be extreme and working conditions can be dangerous for our fishers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wish all lobster fishers a safe and productive season, and recognize the difficult working conditions they face at sea and the substantial contributions they make to the economy 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2305**

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

Whereas the Mental Health Commission of Canada recently presented six Canadian organizations with awards and the Capital District Health Authority, in partnership with Dalhousie University's Department of Psychiatry, received two awards for their mental health initiatives; and

Whereas the Capital Health Mental Health Program won an award in the Community Capacity category for improving the planning and delivery of mental health services by involving people with "lived experiences," their families, and service providers to support recovery and to ultimately improve the mental health care system as a whole; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program, also part of the Mental Health Program of Capital Health, partnered with the Schizophrenia Society of Canada to win an award in the Research category for their work in cannabis use and psychosis;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the important work of Capital Health and the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry in providing Nova Scotians with better mental health care, and congratulate them on their Mental Health Commission of Canada awards.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2306**

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

Whereas emergency management capability in all communities of the province is essential to keeping families safe and making communities better places to live; and

Whereas Nova Scotia's Emergency Management Office has worked with KMK, the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, to build that capacity and to ensure that the training for emergency management coordinators on First Nations is culturally appropriate; and

Whereas 13 people have agreed to receive training to become emergency management coordinators for their communities, a significant step that will provide vital links in emergencies like the one in Truro in September;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating KMK, the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, and the 13 people who will work to become emergency management coordinators on their leadership and their commitment to this initiative.

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 Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, before I introduce my bill, I ask permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. MORE: In the Speaker's Gallery I want to draw people's attention to Bobby Gillis - Bobby, if you could stand up. Bobby is a director with the Cape Breton Injured Workers Association. He has come to metro to support the introduction of the bill I am about to introduce. I ask everyone to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 151 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Workers' Compensation Act. (Hon. Marilyn More)**

**Bill No. 152 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Creation of a Legislative Internship Program. (Ms. Diana Whalen)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2307**

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

Whereas victims of the institutional abuse suffered at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children are looking to this government for justice; and

Whereas former residents, community advocates, organizations, and hundreds of supporters have signed their names to a petition calling on this government to commission a public inquiry into the institutional abuse suffered at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children; and

Whereas many victims of abuse will not see justice because of the government's limitation in civil cases, and the lack of corroborating evidence is part of this institutional abuse;

Therefore be it resolved that this government immediately call for a public inquiry into the allegations of institutional abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2308**

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

Whereas former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children have come forward to tell disturbing stories of abuse during their time at the home; and

Whereas the former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children want a forum to tell their stories so that they can heal and so that they can ensure that all children are treated with the care, kindness, and dignity that they deserve in the future; and

Whereas there is no legal impediment to convening a public inquiry to investigate what happened at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children at the same time as a criminal or civil action;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House call on the Premier to immediately convene a public inquiry to give former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children the forum they so richly desire and deserve.

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 Minister of Natural Resources.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2309**

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

Whereas Jeanne and Lyle Telstad of Meadowville, Pictou County are passionate about Orlov Trotter horses, which are a rare breed of horse from Russia; and

Whereas the Telstads have begun breeding and importing Orlov Trotter horses at their Black River Farm in Meadowville, and are the only breeders of Orlov Trotter horses in North America; and

Whereas Jeanne and Lyle Telstad are committed to preserving and promoting the Orlov Trotter and have made a significant commitment of their time, their energy, and their financial resources to breed the Orlov Trotter in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Jeanne and Lyle Telstad of Meadowville, Pictou County, for their dedication to the Orlov Trotter, and wish them every 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 Halifax Clayton Park.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2310**

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

Whereas the 11-member Nova Scotian equestrian team had the distinction of representing our province at the Canadian Interprovincial Equestrian Championships which were held from September 20 to 23, 2012, in Bromont, Quebec, at the International Bromont Olympic Equestrian site; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia team performed with excellence in Bromont for the second year in a row, taking home the silver team medal, behind the hosts, Team Quebec; and

Whereas Evan K. Phinney of Wedgewood was one of the Nova Scotian team members, riding her horse Bill Bailey, and Evan placed 7<sup>th</sup> among all competitors from across Canada in the jumping category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Evan Phinney for the distinction of representing Nova Scotia so well in Quebec as part of the Nova Scotian equestrian team, and wish her continued success in all her future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2311**

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

Whereas the Cole Harbour Lions Club held their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Speakout Contest for students in Grades 9 through 12 in Cole Harbour; and

Whereas the contest provided students with an opportunity to think about important current issues such as body image, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, and violence; and

Whereas this was only the first part of the four-level competition, with those who placed moving to the next level at the District N2 Speakout Contest, and the last being a multi-district level;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Cole Harbour students, 1<sup>st</sup> place winner Mairin Hogan, 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner Holly Inglis, and

3<sup>rd</sup> place winner Jordane Poulin, for their success at the Cole Harbour Lions Club 4<sup>th</sup> annual Speakout Contest.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2312**

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

Whereas the Jody Shelley Golf Fore Health Tournament took place on July 6, 2012, at the Clare Golf and Country Club in Comeauville, an annual fundraiser for the Yarmouth Regional Health Centre; and

Whereas this is the 8<sup>th</sup> annual event hosted by the NHL hockey player Jody Shelley, and \$39,000 was raised towards the purchase of eight heart monitors for the hospital, making it another great success - in eight years a total of \$257,500 has been raised for the hospital; and

Whereas 70 dedicated volunteers from the area were involved in hosting the Jody Shelley Golf Fore Health Tournament;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the Clare Golf and Country Club directors, staff, and all the dedicated volunteers who assisted in hosting this special event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2313**

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

Whereas today lobster fishermen from Eastern Passage to Digby kicked off the winter lobster season with Dumping Day; and

Whereas Dumping Day was postponed again this year for dangerous weather, but that did not prevent Nova Scotians from gathering before dawn this morning for the annual blessing of the fleet; and

Whereas this day signifies the start of one of the most lucrative industries in the province, accounting for more than one-third of the total economic returns for southwestern Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish the brave fishermen a safe and fruitful season and thank them for the hard work that they do in strengthening our economy.

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 on an introduction.



HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of all members to the east gallery. With us today we have members of the Capital Health and Dalhousie University mental health community; I read an earlier resolution.

I'm pleased to introduce Rod and Donna MacDougall, Ashwin Kutty, Dr. David Pilon, Dr. Phil Tibbo, Jessica MacDougall, Susan Hare and Maureen Wheller. They, at Capital Health and at Dalhousie, were recently recognized and received a national recognition of their work within the mental health initiative, so I'd like all members 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 member for Queens.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2314**

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

Whereas Jan Clattenburg of Liverpool began her figure skating career in Scotland, becoming a Scottish National Champion, and continued her dedication to figure skating upon her arrival to Canada as an executive member for clubs from coast to coast, as a judge for competitions, and as a coach, sharing her wealth of knowledge; and

Whereas Jan Clattenburg lost her battle with cancer in 2012 but her desire to have every skater be the best they can be resonates and lives on; and

Whereas the Jan Clattenburg Merit Award has been established in her memory to be presented to those who have exemplified the most deserving performance during the Sectional Competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the Jan Clattenburg Merit Award as a reminder of the many contributions Jan Clattenburg has made to figure skating throughout her life.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove on an introduction.

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the members' attention to both the east and west galleries today where we are joined by former residents of the Home for Colored Children and their supporters. I would ask that everyone please stand as their names are called so they can receive the warm welcome of the House: Tracey Skinner, Tony Smith, Harriet Johnson, Tessie Brooks, Carl Oakley, Tamorah Ash Clark, Chris Jacklyn Smith, Sheri Lynn Poole, Jean Desmond, Carol Desmond, Alwyn Kurts, Alice Colley, Paul Carvery, Margaret Brown, Clark Cromwell, Richard Chase, Olive Chase and Lenita Sparks. (Applause)

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2315**

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

Whereas former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children are calling for a public inquiry into allegations of abuse; and

Whereas a public inquiry will allow stories that have been hidden for so long to come to light and let victims began their healing; and

Whereas victims, supporters and hundreds of people who have signed a petition are calling for a public inquiry, and legal experts have said the inquiry can run concurrently with criminal and civil suits;

Therefore be it resolved that this government immediately call for a public inquiry into the allegations of institutional abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2316**

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

Whereas Father Norman MacPhee of French Road was recently presented the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Father Norman has been in the priesthood for over 55 years; and

Whereas Father Norman is a very community-minded man who spent six years in Honduras doing missionary work and he returns every few years to help a girls' home stay open there;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Father Norman MacPhee on receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and wish him continued success as he continues to put others first.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2317**

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

Whereas Annapolis Valley Health's Mental Health and Addiction Services is taking a unique, collaborative approach to opioid treatment, which is helping clients regain control of their lives; and

Whereas Annapolis Valley Health, recognizing that opioid addiction is a community responsibility, has created a model of treatment that involves a wide range of stakeholders including families, family physicians, social workers, addiction counsellors, psychiatrists, pharmacists and other health professionals who support clients throughout the assessment and treatment process; and

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Health's Opioid Replacement Program is having an overwhelmingly positive response from stakeholders and was recently recognized as a leading practice by Accreditation Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Annapolis Valley Health's Mental Health and Addiction Services program for its innovative thinking and success in creating the Opioid Replacement Treatment Program and applaud this multi-faceted and effective approach to the challenge of opioid addiction, which is helping make life better for clients and their families 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 member for Halifax Clayton Park.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2318**

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

Whereas the Halifax West High School World Involvement Committee has raised over \$1,000 for the Nova Scotia Gambia Association by running a car wash, and another \$1,500 more through daily fundraising initiatives at the school; and

Whereas this committee has maintained momentum and has continued doing great work, planning a bowl-a-thon to raise further funds for the Gambia Association; and

Whereas the students have taken a particular interest in helping to fund the drama troupe that travels through Gambia and Sierra Leone, providing education in schools about the prevention of AIDS and malaria;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank the students of the Halifax West High School World Involvement Committee: Dylan Flynn, Emma Swaine, Jenna Hartlen, and Mohammed Abdulhussain for their caring concern, financial support and active promotion of the Nova Scotia Gambia Association.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2319**

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

Attendu que le dimanche 14 octobre 2012, l'Église Saint-Pierre à Pubnico-Ouest a organisé une messe spéciale en l'honneur de Paul Saulnier pour commémorer ses 50 ans comme organiste de l'église; et

Attendu que Paul Saulnier est un enseignant, conseiller en orientation, conseiller de formation d'éducation et administrateur à la retraite qui décrit sa pratique comme une activité à cote étant principalement un pianiste et un compositeur qui a composé de la musique qui est maintenant chantée par deux chorales à la messe; et

Attendu que Paul Saulnier a déclaré qu'au cours des années qu'il a joué dans environ 2,600 messes hebdomadaires, 1,000 funérailles et environ 600 mariages et autres occasions spéciales;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée me joignent à féliciter Paul Saulnier pour avoir célébrer 50 ans comme organiste de l'Église Saint-Pierre et lui remercier pour son dévouement a son église et à sa communauté et lui souhaiter le succès continu.

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

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

Whereas on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, St. Peter's Church in West Pubnico held a special mass in honour of Paul Saulnier to commemorate his 50 years as church organist; and

Whereas Paul Saulnier was a retired school teacher, guidance counsellor, education counsellor, and administrator who describes his playing as a sideline, as he is primarily a pianist, as well as a composer, having composed the music that is sung by two choirs at the mass; and

Whereas Paul Saulnier stated that over the years he has played at approximately 2,600 weekly masses, 1,000 funerals, and over 600 weddings and special occasions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Paul Saulnier in celebrating his 50 years as an organist at St. Peter's Church, thank him for his dedication to his church and community, and wish him continued 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 Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage on an introduction.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, if I could draw the members' attention to the east gallery, we have a resident of Eastern Passage here today, a Nova Scotia developer - we've had many conversations around responsible development for meeting the many

needs of Nova Scotians - by the name of Neil Naugle. Neil, if you could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House today. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2320**

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

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 2012 celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada, while 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. Verne Lunan of Upper LaHave was presented with the Diamond Jubilee Medal;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the contributions of Mr. Verne Lunan of Upper LaHave to his community and his country, and congratulate him on receiving this recognition.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2321**

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

Whereas the Mel Hebb Hourglass Action Awards, launched in 1992, recognize Nova Scotians for their contributions to the lives of persons with disabilities; and

Whereas the Andre McConnell Award recognizes an individual who has gone above and beyond their duties as a provincial, municipal, or federal public servant who has demonstrated a commitment to person-centred service - always putting the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities first - and true dedication to supporting persons with disabilities to fully participate in their communities; and

Whereas Ronnie LeBlanc was presented with the Andre McConnell Award for all his devotion to help with his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ronnie LeBlanc for receiving the Andre McConnell 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 Cape Breton West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2322**

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

Whereas Chief Leroy Denny of Eskasoni was recently presented the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Chief Denny was elected Chief of Eskasoni First Nation in November 2010; and



Whereas Chief Denny is a dedicated leader and champion of the Eskasoni community who works tirelessly for his people and who is well respected by everyone who meets him;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chief Leroy Denny on receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and thank him for his hard work and dedication to the people of Eskasoni.

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 on an introduction.

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of all members to the east gallery. Here with us in the gallery is Gordon Earle, who is a former Member of Parliament and a candidate in the last federal election for the federal NDP. So I would like to welcome Gordon to the House and ask the House to give him 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 member for Preston.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2323**

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

Whereas Mr. Steve Giles of the Orenda Canoe Club in Lake Echo, was inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame on November 3, 2012, and imagine the dedication, hard work, and dreams that he endured to achieve this goal; and

Whereas Mr. Giles has made us proud over the years when he competed in the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney, and Athens, where he never finished

lower than eighth place and won the Olympic bronze medal in the Sydney 2000 competition; and

Whereas Mr. Giles competed in the world championships, winning gold in 1998 in Hungary, bronze in 1993 in Denmark and in 2002 in Spain, gold and silver in 1999 at the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg, and in 1989 won the bronze medal at the world juniors in Dartmouth;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize Steve Giles, his parents, family, and coaches for producing, in such a small province as ours, such an outstanding athlete who we can all be proud of, and wish him every success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

MR. SPEAKER: The time now is 12:42 p.m.; we will finish at 1:42 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN: PUBLIC INQUIRY - CALL**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the board for the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children recently expressed their support for a public inquiry into the allegations of abuse suffered at the home. The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, the African United Baptist Women's Institute, and thousands of Nova Scotians have signed petitions calling on the government to commit to conducting a public inquiry.

Legal experts have publicly stated that an inquiry can run concurrently with criminal investigations in civil suits, so my question to the Minister of Community Services is, will the government commit today to calling a full public inquiry into allegations of abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as you know this whole situation is one that has a lot of deep emotions and hurt feelings and it's a terrible situation. It is an historical situation so because of the fact that it's historical, it doesn't sit within Community Services, it actually sits with Justice, so I will pass the question along to my colleague in Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I too want to echo the words of my colleague about the sensitivity around this issue and the harm that has been caused in the community. As far as the various groups, we received a number of correspondences. We are listening, evaluating the situation, and we are waiting for further details from the RCMP and their investigation. There are a number of components to this matter. However, the sensitivity to it - and I want to assure the people in our gallery that we are listening and that we are hearing what you are saying. Thank you.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, many of these victims are coming forward and telling horrific stories of abuse. As children, they had nowhere to turn and nobody was looking out for their best interests. We should do the right thing. With legal support saying that we can go forward at the same time that criminal and civil suits are happening, my question to the Minister of Justice is, why is the government not doing so?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I don't come to this position without deep emotion on this matter. I want to assure anyone who has been affected to know that I personally, as a former police officer, have looked in the eyes of a child who has been abused. In fact, even the mere speaking of it here today causes me some concern from my past. I'm not going to succumb to the partisanship of the Opposition Parties to force us into a position. This requires clear discussion, listening to the community, and moving forward while respecting various processes. I want to assure all that in my role as Attorney General and as the Minister of Justice, I will give, and I am giving, deep reflection and understanding to the issues and I am hearing what you're having to say and I will continue to progress.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, at no time has anybody in this caucus used this issue for partisanship. Many times I know this government has gone over every word that I have said in this House and outside of this House on this particular issue. I said this is not to lay blame at the government's feet; they are in a position, though, to call for a public inquiry. All political Parties have been in power when this alleged abuse has happened. We have adults in our gallery today who, when they were children, nobody listened. This is our opportunity to listen to them and give them an opportunity of a full public hearing.

My question to the Deputy Premier is, why is the government refusing to call a full public inquiry into the allegations at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children and allow the healing to begin?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: We've stated many times in this House that there is an investigation by the provincial police force, the RCMP, there is civil litigation, and it's the

government's position that we want to see this healing begin, but there are other issues - and once those are complied with, then we will look at it with a different lens.

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

### **N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN: PUBLIC INQUIRY - CALL**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Mr. Speaker, we all want to live in a Nova Scotia where justice is done, where it is seen to be done, and where victims of crime have a public opportunity to tell their story so that it can never happen again. For residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, for former residents, they are being denied that opportunity. They want all Nova Scotians to know the truth about what went on at that home, and so do we.

My question for the Deputy Premier is, will he commit today to calling a public inquiry where former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children can publicly be heard and we can assure all Nova Scotians, to a new generation, that it can never happen again?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party - we understand the emotion of what's going on here, these accusations but, as I said to the Leader of the Liberal Party, there is some civil litigation going on, there is an RCMP investigation going on, and we will let that proceed before we take any further action.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, respected law professor Wayne MacKay told CBC Radio the other day: "The law is pretty clear that you can have the two . . ." - processes, a civil or criminal proceeding and a public inquiry - ". . . run in a parallel fashion." Even the board for the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children has said that they have no objection to a public inquiry proceeding at this time - the only roadblock to doing the right thing now is the NDP Government.

With all of this information, I now ask the Deputy Premier, will he stop the stalling, it has gone on for far too long, and give former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children what they deserve and desire, and that is a public inquiry to tell their stories and get on with the process of healing so this province can move forward in a more just way?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, this is not about stalling, this is about allowing the legal process to take its natural course of events. Again, we certainly empathize with the alleged victims, but what we said before and I'll say it again, what we need here is to see the completion of the civil issues and the RCMP investigation and then we will look at this with a clearly different lens.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, there are many experts who have said that it may be 2020 before any civil action is finally settled. This has gone on far too long already and it is not acceptable to tell people like former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children to wait until 2020 to have their stories told. The government should, today, appoint an independent, qualified person to draw up the terms of reference for a proper public inquiry that can allow both the criminal and civil investigations to proceed while the healing of a public inquiry also goes on at the same time.

Will the Deputy Premier today commit the government to naming a qualified, independent person to draw up the terms of reference for a proper and just public inquiry?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I regret that my answer remains the same. We wish to have the other issues that are in front of those other bodies dealt with first and then we will move forward from that point. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**JUSTICE - LIMITATIONS OF ACTIONS ACT:  
AMENDMENTS - CIRCULATION EXPLAIN**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in April 2011, the Department of Justice circulated a discussion paper and draft legislation to amend the Nova Scotia Limitations of Actions Act. The purpose of the exchanges was to modernize the existing Act and to bring Nova Scotia in line with the rest of the country. There was an exception however in the discussion paper as noted by Ray Wagner, a well-respected lawyer in Nova Scotia. In a submission to the Department of Justice he wrote, "There is one especially unfortunate exception: Nova Scotia's proposed legislation protects pedophiles."

My question to the Minister of Justice is, why did this government circulate changes to the Limitation of Actions Act that they knew would prevent some victims of child sexual abuse from obtaining justice in our courts?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, this government and this minister do not protect pedophiles in any way. Criminal behaviour and criminals need to be held accountable for their actions. There are processes in place to address that. Should the member have a particular specific example that he wishes to address within the legislation that needs to be re-evaluated, we're more than happy to look at it.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, let me help the minister. Former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children are being denied justice because of this government's unwillingness to lift the six-year limit for civil cases in this province. Every province except for Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Alberta has lifted the time limit on child sexual abuse claims. Victims of abuse are having their cases tossed because this

government will not remove this limitation - the very limitation that is protecting those who have sexually abused children.

My question again to the minister is, will the government allow these victims their day in court and commit today to lifting the limitation period on cases of sexual abuse in Nova Scotia?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the Minister of Justice, I'm very committed to ensuring that all persons who are responsible for a criminal act in this province are taken to account and if there are barriers to holding people accountable for that, always open to looking at those issues. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, this government could have taken care of this problem. They put out a discussion paper. They got feedback that told them that the six-year limitation period was preventing people who had suffered abuse from being able to bring their case to the courts. Most Canadian provinces have moved that limit to 15 years and yet, for some reason, we continue to lag behind. For the minister to claim that somehow this is a new issue that I'm bringing to his attention, he knows that is not the case. He had the opportunity before to do the right thing and it's never too late to do the right thing.

Today the minister knows this problem exists. The minister can take action to correct it. My question today is, will the minister address this problem once and for all and agree today to tabling legislation to amend the Limitations of Actions Act in Nova Scotia for child sexual abuse claims?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, once again I want to reiterate that if there are ways to improve our legislation to hold people accountable for their actions, I'm always open for those discussions and dialogue and the protection and safety of our children. I spent a lifetime in that universe and I'm still committed and will always be committed to do the right thing. Thank you.

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

#### **N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN - GOV'T. (N.S.): CABINET CONCERN**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are looking to this government to call a public inquiry into allegations of abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. The minister currently responsible for youth residential centres should have an interest in finding out truths and learning how our province can move on from this tragedy. A public inquiry can unearth systemic issues, right wrongs and help us heal from the ills of our past.

Will the Minister of Community Services please tell those victims who are looking to this government to call a public inquiry, who is acting in their best interests at the NDP Cabinet Table?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this entire caucus and Cabinet are very concerned about the issue before us. We are acting in the best interests, we are looking at every aspect of what took place historically - and I mention again - historically. Each and every day the Department of Community Services looks at what the situation is of today and how we can improve that situation and make it better for the people of Nova Scotia. That's very important to us and that's what we do every day. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about abused children, we're talking about institutional abuse. This government can do the right thing by these people but they refuse. Will the Minister of Community Services please tell members of this House and those people who are counting on her government to call for a public inquiry - along with the over 1,500 people who have so far signed a petition in less than a week - why this NDP Government refuses to stand up for justice, right a wrong and call a public inquiry?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as I explained before, there is a division between current and historical allegations. These are historical allegations and as the member opposite knows, it sits within the Justice Department so I will pass it along to my colleague from Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as stated, there are processes that are in place here. Through the criminal process there can be a full preliminary inquiry to bring out information in the civil process, there's discovery.

I do want to separate, because I am taking a bit of exception to compartmentalizing this as the NDP Government doing the right thing. I want to assure all that I am committed to doing the right thing and that we are working through the process. I want all to know and listen across Nova Scotia that I am focused on this issue, that I am aware and I am listening and that I am deeply sensitive.

At the same time, this is an historical issue that happened under other watches, that we need to look at the total package of legal matters that were caused under the other Parties' umbrella and we will definitely look into this and address it in its proper form.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I think both Parties on this side of the House have been clear about the historical nature of this particular problem; I think we have been very clear about that. The fact of the matter is there's only one Party that can call an inquiry right now and that is the NDP Government.

The job of the government is to support our most vulnerable. As children, victims at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children had nowhere to turn. As adults, they are looking to this government to call a public inquiry, drop the Statute of Limitations and support them in their healing. Will the Minister of Justice tell these people today that this government will support them in their healing and call for a public inquiry now?

MR. LANDRY: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, I will take responsibility for what we need to do to move forward, that is my job. It is my job to ensure that in our system of justice that allegations brought forward are fully investigated, that those who are accused have the right to be heard and have a fair hearing. We have two processes underway right at the moment. One is the criminal process, and I've made it very clear that I want to hear further from the RCMP in regard to this. We also have the civil process that's underway.

I also want to assure all that I firmly support moving forward, as we go through the processes and address the various issues, and that the health and protection of our children and of our communities are utmost and are part of my focus completely.

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

### **N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN: PUBLIC INQUIRY - LEGAL OPINIONS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier, I quoted respected law professor Wayne MacKay in my previous question when he said that the law is pretty clear that you can have the two processes run in parallel, both a criminal or civil proceeding and a public inquiry at the same time.

My question to the Deputy Premier is, why is his legal opinion better than respected law professor Wayne MacKay's?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I also know that Mr. MacKay said he understood why we were weighing the options. I don't know how many times I have to tell the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that we're looking at what's going on with the criminal investigation and civil investigation, and we have to weigh those things while we're weighing whether there should or shouldn't be an inquiry. I think these are the responsible ways to react to this situation.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you how many times he's going to have to repeat that answer, and that's as many as it takes to get to the right answer, which is to call a public inquiry. That's as many times as he's going to have to give that answer.

There are many, many examples in Nova Scotia and across the country where a public inquiry has happened at the same time as a criminal or civil investigation and



proceeding. In Nova Scotia it may be 2020 before this inquiry gets revisited again if the government continues down its current path.

All Nova Scotians know that justice delayed is justice denied, so my question to the Deputy Premier is, will he tell us why he believes it is okay to tell the former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children that they can wait from now until 2020 to get to a public vetting of what went wrong at the Home for Colored Children?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that the good people who are in this gallery and elsewhere today will not have to wait until 2020, that this government will do the right thing and will do it sooner than later. We'll do the decisive - we'll do the right thing.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if calling a public inquiry is the right thing, then I call on the government to do it now. Do the right thing now. The criminal and civil proceedings that the government points to will determine individual guilt or innocence. They will determine individual restitution or punishment or payment, but there are serious questions about the institutional nature of the abuse that went on at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, and only a public inquiry can deal with the institutional questions and the systemic questions that the people in the gallery today want to know the answers to, and that I believe all Nova Scotians want to know the answers to, so it can be assured that it will never happen again.

So I will ask the Deputy Premier, as he just said, if this is the right thing, why not do the right thing today and call that public inquiry?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I'll reiterate what I've said on at least three occasions this afternoon I've been on my feet. There are other issues - there's the RCMP criminal investigation, and there's a civil one. I respectfully would say I disagree with the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party's interpretation of that. We want to see that justice is done and it's done in the right way. So we will do the right thing.

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

**COMMUN. SERV. - CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES ACT:  
DEFINITIONS - CHANGES**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, in a letter dated September 11, 2012, the Council of Chairs for the Community Child Welfare Boards called on the Minister of Community Services to amend the Children and Family Services Act to include changes that community boards have been advocating for many years. These changes include changing the definition of "child" to include youth 16 to 18 years of age, to meet the service gap these kids face, and to "... produce better outcomes in the lives of children and families in Nova Scotia." I'll table that.

Will the minister please tell members of this House why she has not changed the definition of “child” in the Children and Family Services Act, as per those long-standing recommendations?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct that it has been years and years under their watch, under the Tory watch, that these same groups have asked for changes to the CFSA. It takes time because, if she understood legislation, it’s very complicated and it’s not just a matter of changing (Interruptions) And they know that. It’s not the matter of changing one word, it’s opening up that legislation and then you can look at the entire legislation.

We want to do the right thing by being methodical with it and to also consult with people who are opposed to opening it and also consult with those people who are supporting the opening of that legislation. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Community Services Committee unanimously passed a motion “. . . to consider the proposal to define a child as a person under 19 years of age, as opposed to the present regime, 16 years of age . . .” to which the minister responded, “. . . the CFSA is still strong and provides protection for children.” I’ll table those.

Mr. Speaker, the Community Child Welfare Boards across the province are calling on the minister to change the definition of “child” in the Act. Members of her own caucus supported a motion to change this definition and I guess maybe they understand legislation. However, the minister is dragging her heels on this critical issue and is denying those youth important services. Will the minister take the advice of community boards and members of her own caucus and change the definition to meet the needs of Nova Scotia youth?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member does not understand the fact that these changes can be very complicated. There has been no dragging of anyone’s feet. From the first day that I became minister I have been meeting with both the advocacy groups - we’ve been talking to those who have opposition to opening that legislation.

As I said, it is complicated. You do not just open it and change one piece of legislation. When you open that up there are many pieces of legislation. People have the opportunity and right, in our democratic system here in Nova Scotia, to express their concerns. We are not rushing in to making changes that will create issues in the future. We’re being very strategic in how we do that, something they don’t understand, bringing both sides together to be able to work out a solution. Thank you.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, this government changes language every day in bills. In fact, that’s mostly what all their bills are. That the minister should suggest that somehow asking for a change, which would better the lives of children, is not appropriate, or whatever, is beyond belief.

The minister refuses to listen to the Council of Chairs for the Community Child Welfare Boards. She refuses to listen to her own caucus members when they supported a motion calling on her to change legislation, to change the definition of a child.

In the September 11<sup>th</sup> letter sent to the minister from the Council of Chairs, it states, “Minister, to be able to offer services to youth 16 - 18 years of age in our province is the most humane and caring act the government could do for these children.”

Will the minister commit today - we don't ask her to do it today, we just ask her to commit today - to members of this House that she will follow through on the most humane and caring act she can do and finally change the definition of “child” in the Children and Family Services Act?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, as I already have said very clearly, we have been working toward that direction ever since I became a minister because I understand the difficulties, with respect. It's not just going and doing it, that is the inexperience that's talking across the way. It's complicated. I have met with the Council of Chairs - she can ask them that - I have been at their annual conference recently, they know my position, they know that I am working with them, along with . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable minister has the (Interruptions) Order, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the Council of Chairs knows that I am working very closely with them; I've met with them many, many times. I have spoken recently at their annual conference so I don't think, if they thought that I wasn't working with them, that I would have been invited there to speak to them. I'm also working with those from the legal side who have some issues with this so you don't rush into these things. They didn't bother with it, they had every opportunity, that legislation has been around for years and years, so they have no right to sit over there and criticize a government that has been in a couple of years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - DIALYSIS:  
E. HANTS/W. HANTS - FUNDING EXPLAIN**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Earlier this month the Department of Health and Wellness issued a press release about the funding for new dialysis chairs that will help 40 patients from Tatamagouche, to Truro, to Stewiacke. In the release the member for Truro-Bible Hill explained that some patients endure a life-saving dialysis treatment three days a week, four or five hours a day. Many patients are elderly and do not have their own means of transportation or have needed to find lodgings in Halifax to receive their life-saving

treatment, she said, and that's all true. I'll table that as I spoke from it, but that isn't just true of patients in the Truro-Bible Hill-Colchester area. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, why did government provide funding for dialysis in Colchester and East Hants, but nothing for patients living in West Hants?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We know that dialysis is an important service that Nova Scotians seek to gain access to. We recognize the burden that many Nova Scotians have when it comes to not only the time that is involved when you're receiving dialysis, but that travel time also is a burden. That is why we continue to invest in dialysis. We recognize the importance of satellite dialysis units across the province and I look forward to continuing to support dialysis services throughout Nova Scotia.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, Richard LaPierre of Ellershouse needs life-saving dialysis treatment. Richard and his wife, Frances, travel from their home in Berwick three times a week to get their treatment and they've been doing this for many, many years. This couple has maxed out every means of financial support that they have. My question to the minister is, why won't the minister provide the same peace of mind to the LaPierres that he has given 40 patients in Colchester and East Hants?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we knew that this was an area of service within the health care field that we needed to concentrate some efforts and some funding. I'm glad to say that we've invested more than \$1 million looking at some of the renovations that are needed to the current dialysis units, but we've recognized the need to get out into more communities and support those Nova Scotians who are seeking services like dialysis. We will be making more announcements as we move forward as it comes to dialysis and the services that they provide Nova Scotians.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister talks about investments and money because the Hants Community Hospital Foundation has committed \$80,000 to purchase dialysis machines for the use at Hants Community Hospital, so have others in the community come together to raise money for these machines. Despite this commitment the NDP refuses to consider expanding dialysis service to Windsor even if the machines are purchased by the foundation.

In his former profession I know the minister saw first-hand the mental, physical, and financial anguish dialysis patients suffer from, because I sat in that same ambulance with him while we transferred these patients around. I know he understands the situation very clearly, so I would ask again, why is the minister refusing an area that is ready, willing, and able to accommodate dialysis services with financial means and a physical location?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I know he's very concerned around patients in Nova Scotia who receive dialysis and those services. We

know that it has been a burden on many Nova Scotians over a number of years, especially the time taken to travel to seek these treatments. This is not something where you just receive one treatment and that's it. It's multiple days of travelling, and that's why we're continuing to invest in dialysis throughout the province.

We know that communities have offered funding for machines or certain material or equipment for dialysis, but there's more to it than just providing the capital funding for that piece of equipment. These are professionals who need certain training, and you need to ensure they have the number of patients in a certain area, to ensure they can provide those services and continue a continuity of care.

I look forward in the coming months - I hope the member opposite recognizes the movement we've done so far on dialysis. We'll have more information around services throughout Nova Scotia of the investment that this government is making when it comes to dialysis services in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

### **FISH. & AQUACULTURE: PRICE - MIN. EFFORTS**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, today more than 1,600 fishing vessels left from ports in six counties for the start of lobster season in southwest Nova Scotia. I'm sure all members will join me in wishing the captains and their crews a safe and prosperous season. (Applause) A dangerous profession on a good day, these fishermen have set out not knowing what price they will receive for their lobster when they return to shore.

My question for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, what efforts is the minister making to ensure lobster fishermen in Nova Scotia receive the best possible price for their catch?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, it certainly is a very timely question. I certainly welcome the question to the floor of the House of Assembly. I know you alluded to the fact that - not to be long-winded, but I like to have the time to explain what we are doing.

First of all, we have financed the Lobster Council of Canada, which belongs to the Atlantic Provinces. We have most recently met and had a special meeting - the member opposite may be interested - we had a special meeting with the ministers from the provincial governments in the last three weeks dealing with this very topic. We're very sensitive to the issue of low prices in the lobster industry, and like the owner/operator policy, this is the first government - the first minister - to stand and make a public statement about owner/operator. We stood up to the federal government about that, and we're standing by our inshore fisheries during our lobster season. Thank you for the question.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure how owner/operator is going to help the price of lobster in Nova Scotia this year, but it's interesting - while the minister may claim he was vocal on owner/operator, I can tell you we certainly didn't hear much from him about the federal government's changes to the Employment Insurance Program that could have a devastating impact on the inshore fishery in this province.

The minister is well-versed in the high cost of running one of these fishing operations - fuel, gear, and other associated costs quickly add up - and recently lobster fishermen have not been receiving an appropriate amount for their catch. Higher lobster prices mean more money for fishermen and more revenue for our province. Can the minister advise what specific efforts his department has undertaken to assist in marketing Nova Scotia lobster?

MR. BELLIVEAU: I thank the member opposite for the question. We have been doing a considerable amount. We have been working with the industry - not only with the Lobster Council of Canada, who has an initiative in marketing and branding lobsters - something that the previous Opposition on both sides, both Parties, had an opportunity - I'll point back. I'm very familiar with this question, because I remember 20 years ago we were going for the same situation, and the member opposite may recall that both Parties had an opportunity to deal with those issues 20 years ago, and they failed to do any of the above. We are working with the industry, we have established the lobster council, and we are standing by the inshore fishing industry. Thank you very much for the question.

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago I was in high school so the minister will have to forgive me if I wasn't able to do anything on better lobster prices back then.

I find it unfortunate the minister would say that because he was a critic on this side when the previous Progressive Conservative Government and the previous Minister of Fisheries, the member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour at the time, led a delegation overseas and started a program where cooks from Nova Scotia were going all around the world to teach people how to cook lobster and eat Nova Scotia lobster. So for him not even to acknowledge that, I think, is certainly unfortunate, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, the landed value of lobster in Nova Scotia for 2010 was worth \$195 million and accounted for 49.2 per cent of Canadian lobster. So it obviously contributes a tremendous amount to the economic development of this province. Fishermen are not very positive about the price per pound that they will receive this year - most are saying they need at least \$5 a pound to be able to break even. There are certainly fears that it will be well below that.

So, again, my final question is, what plans does the minister have to assist and open new markets for those in the lobster industry, especially if the price this year is, again, well below what fishermen need to make ends meet?

MR. BELLIVEAU: I thank him for the question and, again, I want to relate to the member opposite, both Parties, that the fishing industry basically has been very successful in the last two decades, last three decades - actually the production has tripled in the last three decades. Also I want to take in the fact this is the first government that initiated the Lobster Council of Canada, I am very proud of that, and we are also working on international markets, yes there are opportunities there but we are also working with the industry. We stood up for the independent fishermen on owner/operator, we stood up on protection of Georges Bank, and we'll stand up on the fishing industry, the lobster industry of Nova Scotia. Thank you for the question.

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

### **ERDT - CORPORATE PAYROLL REBATES: LOCAL FIRMS - PROTECT**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, Robbie Fraser and Greg MacDonald, two young engineers founded Harbourside Engineering Consultants, the largest independently owned structural engineering firm in Nova Scotia. They wrote to the Premier concerned about the NDP's recent payroll rebate to a large Alberta engineering firm PROJEX. HEC's largest corporate challenge is retaining employees in a highly competitive marketplace.

So my question to the Deputy Premier is, will the Deputy Premier protect our existing Nova Scotia firms and make sure that the payroll rebate to PROJEX will not apply to engineers poached from existing Nova Scotia firms?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, what we will do is we'll protect good jobs coming to Nova Scotia. We'll take jobs from Alberta and bring them here, that's what we'll do.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, those good jobs are already here in Nova Scotia. Engineering firms like HEC will now see their own tax dollars used against them as they are forced to compete with a firm with an unfair advantage from this government. There is already a highly competitive market for engineering work here - shuffling an engineer from one Nova Scotia firm to another is not job creation.

So my question to the Deputy Premier: Will he make sure the payroll rebate to PROJEX will not apply to engineers poached from existing firms in Nova Scotia?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, if we missed this opportunity these jobs would have stayed in Alberta, but they are not. There are already 1,200 applications and of that, 700 are from outside this province. That's what I call job creation in Nova Scotia.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the market for engineers in Nova Scotia is highly competitive. The role of government is to create the right conditions so companies like PROJEX and HEC want to stay and grow here without government subsidies. One senior

engineer with HEC was offered almost 50 per cent more to switch to PROJEX. Local firms cannot compete with that kind of government interference.

So my question is, will the Deputy Premier get on with lowering taxes, stopping wasteful spending, and allow firms like PROJEX and HEC create more jobs in Nova Scotia without government subsidies?

MR. CORBETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only thing I got out of that question is they don't want PROJEX here in Nova Scotia. Well this government does want them here, this government will go ahead with people who will work in this province - as he has said himself, well-paying jobs that will pay taxes, that will allow us to look after our schools, look after our hospitals, and look after the most vulnerable. That's what we're going to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **ENERGY - MUSKRAT FALLS: ALTERNATIVES - OPTIONS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, lawyers for opponents of Muskrat Falls were in federal court arguing that the proposed project never got a full environmental review. The lawyers representing Sierra Club Canada and the Grand Riverkeepers of Labrador say that the joint federal-provincial panel did not complete the assessment, and therefore, the work can't lawfully support Ottawa's approval.

The opponents say that the panel failed to completely study the need for the dam and the power station - another alternative. Now, the problem with this is that the NDP and Emera have tethered Nova Scotia to this project to meet the renewable energy targets, and while the government claims that it's well intended, every day we hear of another potential roadblock that, even if it doesn't kill the project, may delay it. So it's increasingly apparent that the government needs a Plan B.

What alternatives is the NDP Government looking at in the event that the Muskrat Falls project is delayed or falls through?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls project is a part of our portfolio of energy sources. We're blessed here in Nova Scotia with many homegrown sources - not only hydroelectricity from our neighbouring province, which will add up to about 8 per cent to 10 per cent of our total electricity needs when it comes on-stream, but also wind, tidal, sustainable biomass, our own homegrown hydroelectricity, and even cleaner natural gas.

So it's a portfolio mix. Unlike past governments that have relied entirely on coal or entirely on oil, we're spreading the risk around, and unlike past Liberal Governments that have wanted to do away with Efficiency Nova Scotia, or want to deregulate the market, we



have a plan. We have a whole portfolio of homegrown sources that will supply Nova Scotia at reasonable rates for many, many years to come.

MR. YOUNGER: You know, Mr. Speaker, I would like to find out where the minister gets his fairy tales. He just called the Muskrat Falls project “part of our portfolio” today, which kind of presumes that the URB will approve the project - which he said is not presumed, yet the government is already relying on it.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this isn't the only hurdle. Although it's a serious concern that the environmental assessment - and that's why it's before the federal court - we also don't know things about the water supply jurisdiction with Quebec, potential damage to fish and other wildlife habitat, and so forth. This minister has called this a green project, and yet the environmental assessment hasn't been completed, and now there are serious concerns that have been raised about wildlife habitat. Today, we understand that while the Innu Nation has agreed to their land claim settlement, the Inuit and Metis communities are pointing out that as yet their concerns have not been addressed.

So, Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe in the principle that a project of this magnitude, and the benefits the NDP claim are there, should ensure that concerns of the Inuit and Metis people are addressed and that the federal environmental assessment should be completed prior to Nova Scotia taking energy from this project, or does he believe those concerns don't matter?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member knows, this issue is before the courts and will determine what they will find out. This project will be before our Utility and Review Board to determine what is fair and just for Nova Scotians, and I'm sure they'll determine that it is the lowest, fairest rates for our province - unlike the Liberal Party, which wants to deregulate electricity and put up the rates by 30 per cent to 50 per cent. Nova Scotians cannot afford that.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister can make up all the fiction he wants about what the Liberals believe in, but the other day he stood in this House and said it was our Ratepayer Protection Bill that causes deregulation. He clearly hasn't read it, and maybe he should take the time this weekend to do that.

The minister just agreed that it's before the courts, which is exactly why we need a Plan B: in case it doesn't make it through the courts. The URB has been constrained by time and by the fact that the government has no Plan B. Now we learn that analysts looking at the Emera stock are salivating over the profits this project will bring for Emera, and I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister more concerned about protecting Emera's profits than he is about making sure that Nova Scotians have answers that they deserve on this

project? Why doesn't the minister know the costs to ratepayers for this project now, before saying it's a good deal?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, all I know is that the Liberal Government put up rates in the past; they depended on coal; they depended on oil. They just had a one-track mind and all their eggs really in one basket, whereas this government does have a plan. We have a renewable electricity plan that was passed through this house in 2010. We're looking at hydroelectricity, certainly. We're looking at wind, we're looking at tidal, at sustainable biomass, clean natural gas and other sources that we're blessed with here in Nova Scotia. Unlike the Liberal Governments that want to take the HST off home energy, do away with Efficiency Nova Scotia, and they want to jack up our rates by 30 to 50 per cent, with deregulation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East on a new question.

### **ENERGY - RISING COSTS: MIN. - RESPONSE**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, you know I'm sure one day the minister will actually read the bills. Maybe he'll also read the independent international UN assessment on competition in the market, which has showed that in every jurisdiction it has been brought in, in the past years, rates have decreased. He may also want to note that Liberals have spoken against deregulation and spoken against returning the HST and we believe that Efficiency Nova Scotia should be paid for by shareholders.

Mr. Speaker, we learned from Statistics Canada - and I'll table it - that under the NDP power rates and energy rates have increased more than in any other province in this country. So why has the minister failed to do a single thing to stem the rising cost of energy in Nova Scotia?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, in fact we have done a good number of things to try to stabilize power rates in this province. First of all, when we came to power we took the HST off home energy; that's a 10 per cent saving right off the top. We have a renewable electricity plan, we have large wind projects, we have a COMFIT project, and we've worked very hard with Efficiency Nova Scotia to save low income Nova Scotians a considerable amount on their electricity bills - something the Liberal Government wants us to do away with. We want to keep Efficiency Nova Scotia within our province.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Energy Minister is slipping already but it's all right because a Liberal Government is coming after the next election. You know, this is the government that added a new tax to electricity bills. This is a government that changed the regulations so that Nova Scotia Power could earn more profit off ratepayers while they were reducing energy usage. This is a government that has stood behind Nova Scotia Power, instead of ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Premier from just a couple of years ago:

“What should be done, for example, with Nova Scotia Power? If the government really wanted to do a cost recovery measure, if they really wanted to get some of the money to be used in their budget or, perhaps, to be applied to their debt, because they have a debt this year, \$100 million debt . . . They would go back and they would look at Nova Scotia Power, and they would say, gee, we sold this \$141 million undervalue. Maybe we should bring in a windfall profit tax; maybe we should tax back, from Nova Scotia Power, some of that \$141 million that we gave away to them.”

That was a quote from the Premier in this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, what has changed?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, what has changed is we have a government with some vision, with a goal to get the lowest, fairest power rates in Nova Scotia. A great part of that is the Lower Churchill, the Muskrat Falls project which will bring lower, stable rates for 35 years. It will hold at that rate for that length of time. It will put us in an energy loop that will allow us, for market rates, to be available to Nova Scotians and it will help reduce our greenhouse gases and provide thousands of good jobs here in Nova Scotia.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, what the NDP claims to have done is about the same smoke and mirrors as the Leader of the Third Party - first claiming he would freeze power rates and then admitting, today, that that excludes the fuel adjustment mechanism where the majority of increases have come from.

What this government has succeeded in doing is having the highest energy increases in the country over their term. Mr. Speaker, for more than three years the people of Nova Scotia pleaded with this government to do something. They thought they voted for the NDP, it looks like they voted for Nova Scotia Power.

Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Finance defended Nova Scotia's rate of return and other Cabinet Ministers have done the same thing, yet even Nova Scotia Power agreed to a reduction in their rate of return and the board's consultants said it could have been dropped to 6.8 per cent. So why are the profits of Nova Scotia Power so much more important to the NDP now than they were when they were in Opposition?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, again, I'll mention the Liberal Party wants to deregulate electricity and really all that's going to do is create more head offices here, it's going to provide more executive bonuses, higher salaries, more profits. We don't need deregulation.

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

**ERDT: RURAL ECONOMY (N.S.) - REVIVE**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Deputy Premier. Rural Nova Scotia has felt the ill effects of the NDP and their job elimination policies more than anyone. Nova Scotia as a whole has lost 7,400 full-time jobs within the last three years. During the same time rural Nova Scotia's population has dropped by 8,200 residents. My question is, will the Deputy Premier admit that the time for study is over and it's time to take action to revive Nova Scotia's rural economy?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I suppose the member would disagree with me, but we can do more than one thing at a time. One thing is we are going to study the rural economy, but the other side is we're doing action. I would ask him to ask one of his seatmates over there if he disagrees with what we did around NewPage and Port Hawkesbury Paper. I think that was a strong investment and a strong voice in the Strait region that we support jobs in the rural areas. If he disagrees with that, well, I don't know, but we support rural Nova Scotia.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, according to a report that was tabled in this House last week, rural Nova Scotia is in a year of negative growth. The NDP policies have failed rural Nova Scotia so badly that they are in a recession. As an example of how devastated rural Nova Scotia is, Cape Breton has an unemployment rate of 16.4 per cent, that's unacceptable. Will the minister admit that the time for study is over and it's time to take action to revive Nova Scotia's rural economy?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the member didn't hear the last answer or just decided not to hear it. We have invested in rural Nova Scotia. We're taking jobs out of Halifax and putting them in rural Nova Scotia. We're helping people in various regions - I mentioned the Strait area, all over this province - but they refuse to see this. I don't know what more I can tell those members over there, but we are doing what they failed to do for years and years.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, taking jobs from Windsor and moving them to another part of rural Nova Scotia is not taking jobs out of Halifax, that's just shifting jobs around in areas that are already suffering.

Nova Scotia's rural economy is sick - it's sick. The only way that companies will invest in this province is under the job elimination policies that this government has put in place, it's through the bribes that they provide. Nova Scotia deserves better, lower taxes, end to wasteful spending and more jobs. Will the minister admit that the time for study is over and it's time to take real action to revive Nova Scotia's rural economy?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, the time is over for study, we're doing it. I want to again ask the member if he disagrees with Tourism going to Windsor, the seatmate right in

front of him? I think that's taking jobs out of Halifax and putting them in areas - a seat we represent. So these are issues that we're doing.

What has that group done federally? We see getting rid of Service Canada jobs, the call centre in Glace Bay, the golf course in Ingonish. We can go on, there's a litany of what the federal government has done - Louisbourg, all these icons of Nova Scotia. They're meeting here in Halifax today - why don't they go down and tell the people of the tourism industry who are meeting in Halifax today and say, I'm sorry for my federal cousins for doing it to the tourism industry in this great province.

AN. HON. MEMBER: You should be ashamed of yourself.

MR. CORBETT: I'm hearing the member saying I should be ashamed of myself. Mr. Speaker, I'll walk down any street in any town, any city in this province, and keep my head up and say we've done the right thing. I will do it. It's not a matter of being liked, it's about doing the right thing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

#### **TIR - CHERRYFIELD/E. DALHOUSIE/THE FORTIES: HWY. REPAIR - PLANS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the ability for Nova Scotians to travel our secondary roads has become increasingly more difficult, more treacherous, under the NDP Government. One in particular, which runs from Highway 10 to Highway 12 through Cherryfield, East Dalhousie, and The Forties, is in deplorable condition.

My question to the minister is what plan of action does he have to repair this stretch of highway in the very near future?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I should tell the member - and all members of the House - that we examine and review all of our roads on an annual basis, and with input from good members like the one opposite who bring to our attention particular needs, we are able to do an even better job because of people like him coming forward and explaining to us and showing us the need.

I want the member to know that before the House rises, I intend to have . . .

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

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

**PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 146.

**Bill No. 146 - East Hants Curling Arena Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: I'm sure members in the House would be aware, but certainly some years ago when the provincial Progressive Conservative Government actually was quite generous in contributing to the expansion of the East Hants Sportsplex in Lantz, and after we formed government - I think their original contribution was \$5 million, we gave another million, and one of the initial parts of that project actually was to have a curling rink surface as part of the expansion. I would say roughly a year or so, maybe two, prior to the funding announcement, that component of the project was dropped.

There has been a group diligently working in the community to try to see that project rise again, so they have approached the Municipality of the District of East Hants for funding to help kick-start that project. I think the commitment by the municipality is \$600,000 and members are probably aware, certainly the Liberal Critic for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, being a former councillor, would be aware that under the Municipal Government Act the municipalities are not able to contribute funding to infrastructure that they don't own. Because of that requirement of the Act that impedes them from contributing to infrastructure that they don't own - and members might be curious about why that is in the Act or why not have this authority in the Act?

I think, slightly ahead of my time, at some point, it was recognized that for whatever project might come to the province, that municipalities would tend to try to outbid one another. In other words, because they wanted a particular project in their district or municipal unit, they would offer an incentive to try to get that project in their area and actually may work against another municipal unit for a particular piece of infrastructure. I think that was the genesis for a little more control on spending and this incentive to try to attract infrastructure, putting perhaps a richer municipal unit up against one that didn't have the same tax base and resources in order to compete to get the same piece of infrastructure.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, municipal units have to come to the province to get a piece of legislation passed through the House, in order to give them the ability to collect a levy that would be contributed toward the building of a particular piece of infrastructure. That, in effect, is really what this bill is doing, it is allowing the Municipality of East Hants to collect and spend funds on this project of a curling rink within the municipality.

I'd be curious if other members would be interested in engaging in this debate, Mr. Speaker. I guess I went off cue about Bill No. 146 being now read, so I'll move second reading of Bill No. 146, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. As he indicated, as a former councillor, I understand the difficulty of financing infrastructure projects such as the one he's talking about.

The only concern I have with that is to make sure - the council, I understand, has approved this and they want to move forward, which is very positive. I want to make sure that as the process goes through - and the minister would know this - if the community is on side with this as well because I've seen in my community area rates put on - and that's what we're talking about. An area rate, or similar to an area rate with no consultation in the community. Money is spent on facilities that indeed the municipality doesn't own.

In HRM it just happened recently here at a school where a community centre was installed at a school that the province owns. The municipality put an area rate on with no consultation with the community - absolutely none - and a substantial tax increase for the taxpayers, when indeed, we had a community centre in place that was satisfying the needs of the community, there was no need for the new one and a councillor took it upon himself to put this in place.

Probably the minister is well aware of this situation, which is a very unfortunate situation, but with the support of the council and with the community, I think it's wonderful to have a new facility like that in that community and indeed, we'll be supporting the bill as it moves forward and congratulate the minister for bringing it forward on behalf of his community.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his intervention. I want to make it clear that this is enabling legislation, this allows the municipality to do this. They'll have to make the decision whether or not they actually want to do it and go forward with it, and that will have to be in their own time and in their

own way around dialoguing with the community and ensuring that the council will actually be the body of elected members that will be responsible for ensuring that their community is onside with this.

With that, I move second reading of Bill No. 146.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 146. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 150.

#### **Bill No. 150 - Residential Tenancies Act.**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 150 be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to begin debate on Bill No. 150, an Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act. Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act will allow Nova Scotians who are experiencing domestic violence to end their lease early. Domestic violence damages people physically and emotionally. It can also hurt them financially, keeping them from moving forward with their lives.

In 2009, Madam Speaker, a committee made up of officials from the Departments of Justice, Community Services, Health, and Education met with community stakeholders to make recommendations for a government-wide strategy on domestic violence. I also want to indicate that my colleague, the present Minister of Education, when she held this



post as the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, was an advocate for this change in legislation and I would say was instrumental in helping us get it to this point.

That committee submitted a report with its recommendations to the Deputy Ministers' Leadership Committee on Family Violence. Madam Speaker, one of the recommendations in that report suggested that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations "Amend the *Residential Tenancies Act* to allow a tenant to end their lease without penalty if it is not safe for them to stay in their home because of the risks from domestic violence". Victims of domestic violence are already suffering enough without having to worry about the financial implications of getting out of an abusive relationship. They should not feel trapped in a lease or be held financially liable for a home they were forced to leave to escape a violent situation.

Madam Speaker, government understands the obstacles faced by victims of domestic violence and we are working hard to eliminate them. Currently tenants who are experiencing domestic abuse are still liable for their rent if they leave their home before the lease expires. Through these amendments, tenants who are experiencing domestic violence will be able to work with the Department of Justice's Victim Services to get out of their lease with one month's notice.

Madam Speaker, this is a complicated issue that is part of the government's larger attempt to help Nova Scotians who are experiencing domestic violence. With these amendments we are supporting victims of domestic abuse as they work to regain control over their lives and move forward. So with those comments, I look forward to the members opposite engaging in the debate, I hope, and seeing this bill move forward to the Law Amendments Committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, this is a good piece of legislation. I know that anything we can do in government to help people who may become in situations where they're vulnerable, we should be taking action, and it's good to see this bill come forward to the Legislature.

I was surprised recently. I discovered a situation that somebody was in and they were, Madam Speaker, basically trying to make decisions to - I don't know what the best word to use is - protect themselves, to sustain themselves, and oftentimes when people are in these kinds of situations, they may not know what protections are available for them. So I would ask the minister - and I'm sure he will look at this - to make sure that people become aware of this legislation and aware that this protection is available to them because many times people are not made aware, through no intent or mis-intent, but I think making people aware is going to be important with this new legislation.

I think oftentimes the people that may be in situations where they need help, unless there is somebody who is advocating for them or somebody who is being proactive to communicate the protections that are in place for them, Madam Speaker, they'll never know that they are there. I just raise that as a point of recommendation to the minister. Again, I appreciate that this legislation is going through and we hope that it does help people who find themselves in vulnerable situations where they may have experienced domestic abuse.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to this bill. As the minister knows, this is an issue that we had previously raised, in fact, my colleague, the member for Halifax Clayton Park, raised this issue in 2010 when the Residential Tenancies Act was being amended at that time. She spoke to this and said we need to move on that and so we are pleased to see that that has happened. Earlier this year I introduced a bill that would amend the Residential Tenancies Act to allow a person who is experiencing domestic violence to get out of their lease so I was pleased to see that the minister acted upon that and, in fact, I thought that you actually had one change in it that improved upon what I had introduced so I was pleased to see that. See, I can say nice things, ha ha. (Laughter)

I would like to echo what my colleague from the Third Party just said though, and part of it is that people have to actually know that this exists, so if I could, I would suggest that the government take some of the money from the advertising that they are doing on jobsHere - which doesn't provide information - and take money from that and use some of it to let people know that once this bill passes, if you are a victim of domestic violence and you need to get out of your lease so that you can move on in your life, you can do that and here is the procedure - because that is the other thing; I was doing a radio interview the other day and they asked me about it and they said well do you just sort of tell your landlord you've been the victim of domestic abuse? In fact, no, there is a procedure to follow. Having an informed populous is important and people who are in situations of domestic violence, chiefly women, need to know what the procedure is so that if it happens to them they will know what to do. With those few remarks I'd like to take my seat, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I, too, am going to make some comments on this bill. I think it's a very positive bill that the minister has brought forward. I know that the NDP is not used to me standing up saying they are doing something positive but this is something positive; in this case it is something very positive.

As my honourable colleague has indicated, I think that it is important that there is a mechanism to inform individuals that are caught under this unfortunate situation, whether it be domestic violence. Possibly the minister may look at the preparation of the standard

lease and if you could have it say that in the leases, when people sign them, you don't have to completely describe it but how to contact the department to find out what they have to do, because in most of these cases that I've witnessed, the people are very traumatized and indeed to have to go forward through a bunch of red tape - and it sounds like a bunch of red tape that people have to go through. Not that it's not justified, don't get me wrong, I think it's very justified, the red tape, but I think we need to make it as easy as possible for individuals in that situation to access the possibility of terminating their lease and alleviating the financial strain that they may have.

So with those few words I'd like to thank the minister for bringing this important bill forward. He has brought some other amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, and most of those have been quite good. He's made some more adjustments which have corrected some of the other problems that were created, both in the past and by the new bills that he had put in place, so I think the approach we've taken on this has been very, very positive.

We're slowly getting to a situation that satisfies both the needs of landlords and the needs of tenants. I think that's a balance that's very difficult to achieve. Indeed, we're closer to that than we have been, and I look forward to the minister moving this forward to the Law Amendments Committee and seeing what kind of response we have there.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Madam Speaker, I too will reiterate the comments of my colleagues. I think this is a good step that the government is making. Obviously it is responding with the domestic violence courts that we now have in place. What we have to realize in this situations is they are very traumatic for the individual who is at risk of having domestic violence brought against them or has experienced it. It's a detrimental situation for children who are involved.

Oftentimes we forget that a lot of domestic violence situations go unreported. They go unreported simply because the individual who is at risk or who has experienced domestic violence doesn't know their options, doesn't have the opportunity or the knowledge, as some of my colleagues had mentioned, of avenues that will help them get out of these drastic situations.

Over the last number of years I've spoken to landlords who have worked with our office on particular cases. Keep in mind that a lot of times when a victim is experiencing violence, there is very little window of opportunity to get them out of that situation. It's about coordinating services and rallying around the individual and the family and the children with a holistic approach. Having this one piece in place - and the minister spoke to the financial implications of it - it's more than the financial piece.

That plays a major role, obviously, but I want to make a comment in regard to a number of landlords who over the years have understood the ramifications of somebody who has experienced domestic violence. They've subsequently looked at trying to remedy the situation and work with that individual, especially in my community. They realize that this is not right when this happens to people; this is not right to the children who are involved. They have an opportunity to step up and help alleviate the situation.

Of course, they justifiably don't want it spilling over to the rest of their tenants. When somebody is a victim of domestic violence, everybody around them hears this, especially in the multi-unit dwellings. So I think this is a good opportunity - the awareness piece was mentioned by my colleague for Inverness, and again, when you're a victim oftentimes you don't know what steps are there for you to take, what avenues are there for you to take, and you're often scared. That's why a lot of it goes unreported.

I think if there's an awareness campaign, the director of Victim Services, people like Bryony House who run the shelter for women and children who experienced violence - once these folks get a handle on this piece of legislation, I think we're going to benefit from it.

If I was to make mention of one possible future piece of legislation the minister could bring in, one of the things I've experienced over the last number of years is families that have had a separation - the husband and wife or partners are on a lease together and there is a legal separation that has taken place, and oftentimes landlords will hold that person who chose to leave that home or that rental unit accountable. That's been a real issue. For an MLA to go in in that situation and try to coerce and navigate and negotiate with the landlord has been a lot more difficult. So if there's a legal separation in the partnership, I think in future we should possibly look at adding that in as a piece of legislation.

When it comes to the domestic violence piece, Mr. Speaker, I've had absolutely full involvement and full appreciation from every landlord that I've had to deal with in regard to these situations. Again, they understand that it's more than the dollar that they're going to collect from that family; it's more than the dollar that's coming out of that pocket of that individual who is experiencing it. It's their children, it's the whole situation of moving forward. So I've had success without this piece, but I think this is a good step to actually put it into law, but if you could take into consideration that other piece, because landlords are less apt to want to negotiate that piece, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I'll take my seat.

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

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in fact, with this bill coming before us today, I wasn't going to say anything on it at first. I think that the current Critic for the

Status of Women in the Liberal Party said it very well, as have the other members in this House who have gotten up to speak on the bill, but I think what's important is that very seldom do we get the opportunity to talk about domestic violence in the Legislature, and it's a subject that I know affects all of us in our ridings.

In discussions previously here in the House, the Leader of the Liberal Party has said that of all the issues he has dealt with as an MLA - and he was elected in 2003, as were quite a number of us here in the House - in all those nine years he said the most difficult issue has been domestic violence, when he has had people in his office, people that he was trying to advocate for, and for him to see it face to face, to come face to face with what it means to a family and to a woman, what's happening in their lives, the fear and the uncertainty and it can be and is, in fact, often a life and death decision to leave.

So being able to leave an apartment lease and to be able to seek some safety and not have the financial concern as well that your credit rating is going to be ruined and that you're running out on a lease, or that you're not doing what you're obliged to do, you know, it is something that it is only right that we take care of here today and move this bill forward, see that it becomes law because, you know, I think all of us can appreciate, we've had some experience with that.

As members of the House know, I had advocated for the domestic violence strategy that the government has subsequently put in place - we do have that strategy today. It was a bill that I had called for when the Progressive Conservatives were still in government. It had reached third reading, in fact. It went through second reading with good accolades on all sides of the House that we needed to have this strategy. It had speakers at the Law Amendments Committee in support of it and then, because of very petty reasons on the part of the then Justice Minister, it did not reach third reading here in the House - it was pulled. And I think it's worth remembering that, an issue as important as domestic violence - and I know there are members, men and women in the House, who remember that.

It was an affront to the issue that was at hand. It related to my not voting the way I was expected to vote in a vote at the Law Amendments Committee, that I voted based on each issue being separate, and I did not vote in the way that the minister wanted on one issue so he refused to call that bill here for third reading to become law where we were all in favour of it. I think it is really a travesty that that is sometimes the way this House works. You know, I don't accept it and I would hope that that wouldn't happen now with the current minister. I can't say for sure it wouldn't, because sometimes partisan issues become paramount in this House.

But the issue of domestic violence is an area where I think we can find common ground as members from whatever political persuasion we hold. This is an issue that I feel we need to talk about more in the House, that we need to see action in big and little ways, and this is one of those pieces that we can do that helps. It's not the major thing that's going to change society's acceptance, or how we regard domestic violence, it's not going to make

all the difference in the world, but it's going to help people when they're in crisis. It's going to be able to be one tool that will help people in crisis.

I just feel too often that the days go by and we read in the paper often, frequently, about women who have been injured, sometimes killed as a result of domestic violence. It happens every year in this province that we have women murdered, and it's based on intimate partner relationships. I think that it's an issue that if we don't raise it occasionally and speak here on the floor of the House, we might just feel that there's nothing we can do about it, or we're not addressing it.

I know we have a strategy in place; I mentioned that it had a difficult start. The bill did not pass in the House. In response to the public's demand for something to be done, you know, in the face of us getting expectations raised by going as far as the Law Amendments Committee, the minister at the time, the Justice Minister at that time, the Progressive Conservative Justice Minister, decided he would have his own committee, that he would strike it as a minister, that the committee would report to the minister, not to the House of Assembly.

My bill had called for the House of Assembly to be the place for an annual update on what we were doing as a province, what steps we've taken, how the statistics might be improving, hopefully. I was looking that we would actually get a handle on what the numbers are and how they might be improving over time. This bill is very important in moving forward on those things. I expect this year, when we have our update on the domestic violence strategy - I'm expecting that it will come on December 6<sup>th</sup> when we meet to commemorate a day of action against violence against women, a day that we think of the victims of domestic violence and we talk about what can be done and what has been done - I'm looking forward to hearing the minister's report at that time, on the Status of Women's report on how we're doing and what has been advanced. I would hope this will be one of the successes for the year that is also included.

I know a program has begun to talk about - I think it's a campaign to get people to speak, if you're a neighbour or a friend or have any contact with a woman who you know is being abused, to try to intervene and give people the tools to speak up, to talk to the woman and maybe to help, offer some substantial guidance. Many people don't say anything because they don't know what to say.

As a society we have been too accepting of the fact that there is domestic violence in every community. It doesn't matter if it's a wealthy community, it doesn't matter if it's a well-educated community, it happens in homes of all socio-economic levels. It may be that we're more aware of it where people have less money or fewer resources because they are the people who have nowhere to turn but our shelters or nowhere to turn but the social safety net. It exists in every community and it's important that as a group, as members of the Legislature, we all speak against this and condemn it and remember to do whatever we

can to pass bills that might improve the situation for women and their children when they're trying to escape this kind of situation.

As I said, this bill will fill one part of that, moving forward, and that improvement to the system that we have in place. But also the goal on the domestic violence strategy was to look at what other jurisdictions are doing and to try to find some best practices. I'm sure there are other jurisdictions that are doing more in this regard. I'm not the expert on it, neither am I the critic at the moment for this area, but I know there is a very strong component of people working in the Status of Women office and I'm hoping they are working diligently, as well, to research and explore what other things we can be doing here in this province. This is an issue that should matter greatly to all of us as members of the Legislature and I'm looking forward to hearing anybody who comes in support of this bill at the Committee on Law Amendments and to hear from other members, as well, as it goes through the legislative process. I hope to see this law by the end of this session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak at second reading of this very important amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act.

As members know, the Residential Tenancies Act was overhauled, for want of a better word, modernized just recently. This amendment took a little bit longer to come forward. I want to thank the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations for bringing this legislation forward in this session because I know there has been an awful lot of hard work that has been done by a number of people across government.

When I was with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and we were looking at the Residential Tenancies Act, this is one component that I felt was very important to add. Unfortunately, due to the legal aspects of the amendment that would have been needed and to make sure we did it right, this was in the hands of the committee, and I want to thank the committee for working diligently on this and also the people at the Justice Department who were working on this to make sure that when we put it in place, it was done correctly and laid out very clearly within the Residential Tenancies Act.

This was something that was brought forward when we first became government and I commend the members opposite for their diligence in bringing it forward too. It's always difficult, as you know, as members know with legislation, sometimes small pieces when it sounds like it can be simple are actually extremely complicated, to make sure that we do it right.

Again, I want to thank the Justice Department for working on making sure we had the proper language, that we had the proper measures in place to protect people who are living in abusive situations. When people live in abusive situations they have many

worries, and financial worries are paramount if you are in a situation with young children and trying to leave and worrying about the bills and how to move forward.

On that note, I just want to also thank all of the people across Nova Scotia who do take care of people who have left because of domestic violence. I know that in my own area Chrysalis House does phenomenal work and supports women in our community who have had to leave because of abuse. Sometimes it's very difficult for people to know what happens behind closed doors in a community, in any house.

Domestic abuse crosses many socioeconomic lines, and also it's embarrassing, it's stigmatizing, so sometimes people who are living in abusive situations don't speak up. This is one piece in an overall way of how this government is looking at ways that we can support people who are living in abusive situations to leave and to be supported. This is just one piece of work that we've done.

We created a comprehensive strategic Domestic Violence Action Plan, which was launched in December 2010. We launched a toll-free domestic violence information telephone line in October of this year. We've expanded the restorative approaches program in schools, which helps young people learn to properly manage relationships and conflict. This way of dealing with conflict and teaching our young people how to resolve conflict - we hope we'll see the end of domestic violence, because we're hoping that we were able to teach our young people, if you have a problem, how we can speak up, how we can resolve that together in a restorative manner. Also, in June of this year we opened a domestic violence court in Sydney to support families that are affected by domestic violence.

This is a very complicated subject. It is fraught with many difficulties, but we are moving forward in every possible way we can to support people who are in abusive situations. I have to say that the Residential Tenancies Act - having this amendment is just one piece to support people who are living with domestic violence, so that they know that when they leave they are not going to be encumbered by a lease that will hamper their ability to have a good credit rating.

On that piece, I know that many people who are in relationships, when they leave, they do not have a credit rating - and make sure that people look at that very important component to build your credit rating. This is one area where, when you leave, it will not be held against you.

So I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward. I want to commend all members of the House for supporting this amendment and supporting anybody who lives with any kind of abuse or violence in their life, so that we can support them, and at the same time, find ways to mitigate this scourge we have that we are dealing with.

With those few words, again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.



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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and also saddened to have to rise in my place today to talk about Bill No. 150, which is the Residential Tenancies Act. I'm pleased because we are making changes to it that will help the lives of people suffering from domestic violence issues, but I'm still very saddened that this is such a huge problem in our society today.

It's interesting that the minister previously mentioned a scourge on our society, because that is exactly the words I had written down. I find that domestic violence is a scourge in North America, in Nova Scotia, in our western civilization. I find that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century it is very hard to believe that this is still going on, and unfortunately, although it is not necessarily an accepted practice, something is going on that is making people still act in this fashion and feel that they can actually do it and get away with it, and perhaps get so taken up with their own emotions that their own emotions are more important than the life, feelings or the wishes and desires of another. Perhaps it's the "power over" syndrome which is also part of domestic violence. Oftentimes it's a power play that goes on and unfortunately it is a very, very sad situation.

Knowing quite a bit about domestic violence from my own life and from also people that I know, I believe that this Residential Tenancies Act amendment will be very, very helpful because when people - not just women, mainly women, but there are also men as well that suffer from this - have to face the fact that they need to leave their nest, their home that they have built with their families, with their supposed loved one, the one that they thought they could trust, that they could count on when they first got together with that person and built a life, when they first start to realize that there is a problem and that they need an escape, it's overwhelming, Mr. Speaker.

Many people, especially if they are in a financial situation where they are relying on another for their finances, there are just so many details to think about - how are you going to leave, how are you going to take care of your children, your business, your life - that people put it off. They put it off and they put it off, they don't do anything, they stick around, they think, well, maybe it will get better, maybe they'll change, maybe it's just my imagination, because a lot of the times what happens is a thing called "crazy making" where the person who is actually violent makes the person who is the victim feel that it's all them and it's their fault and that it's all in their head.

After somebody has been in a situation for a long time they start to believe it. They start to believe it's their fault, they start to believe that they feel guilty. I've heard it said that it's very much like putting a frog in a pot of water on the stove because when people say, well, now you're a smart woman, what are you doing in domestic violence, how come you are an abused woman or whatever. If you look at it this way, they say it's like putting a frog in some water in a pot on a stove. At first it's just room temperature so the frog stays in the pot quite happily in the water, but if you start to turn the heat up a tiny little bit at a time,

just a little bit, so that the frog is starting to feel comfortable, it's warm, doesn't really notice it bit by bit by bit until finally it is boiling, boiling, boiling hot, the frog will actually die in the pot, it won't get out. This is an analogy that has been used, I've heard in different group sessions as to why people stay in abusive relationships, because they don't notice it happening at first and finally they are almost brainwashed into staying in the relationship.

I've talked to many women and men who don't even know when they are being abused. They feel uncomfortable, they are not happy, they are actually quite miserable in the relationship, but they don't really know until you talk to them what abuse is. So for instance, if somebody is yelling at, snapping at, screaming at, calling names, this is abuse, this is verbal abuse; there is psychological abuse and I would like to say that psychological and verbal abuse are just as bad as physical abuse, and in some cases worse because again, the person doesn't really realize that it's abuse. I've heard some women say, if he only hit me I could leave, if he only did this then I'd know, then I know I can't put up with this anymore but if it's all mental and verbal and psychological then they tend to try to stick it out for the kids or they just think things are going to get better. It's a very sad situation, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I think that Bill No. 150 is good because it takes away one little piece of the puzzle of how people are going to deal with it if they are going to leave and get out while they can.

I would like to say that in a society and in a province where we still have a young woman being found floating down the Mira River in Cape Breton in a gym bag; where we have another young woman found in the trunk of a car in the school where she is a teacher; where we have another young woman found stuffed in the walls of her apartment where she lived with her husband; or four women found drowned in a car in the Rideau Canal in Ottawa supposedly by accident, then we have a serious problem.

One of the things this government did when we first came into office was to talk to our Justice Minister, to talk to the various ministers and say, what are we going to do about domestic violence, and I would say that this bill came out of that. I want to thank the MLA for Kings South, the Minister of Education, for starting it. I want to thank the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations for continuing it and making this become a reality.

I would also like to mention that people are doing things to try to bring attention to this around the province and one thing that I'm doing personally is - Joy Laking is a wonderful artist, a visual artist, in Great Village. She has actually written a play, her first play. It's called *Invisible Prisons* and it's about domestic violence because she said when you're in a situation of domestic violence, it's like you're in an invisible prison. You don't even know you're in it, but you've got to get out, but you don't know how.

She has written this play and it is 14 different monologues that she has gathered from different women who have suffered from domestic violence issues and two men who were also victims of domestic violence. I like the fact that the men are not the perpetrators,

they are also victims too, and I think that there are a lot of men who are in situations where they're ashamed or afraid to come out and speak about it as well. So it is a societal problem.

I'm going to be producing this play as the MLA for Truro-Bible Hill for International Women's Day next year - March 8<sup>th</sup> - at the Marigold Theatre in Truro. (Interruption) Yes, and who knows, maybe you can come or maybe it will come to a theatre near you shortly afterwards, but we're also going to take it to Nova women's prison. We've asked for permission and we've been given it. So we're going to make it free for students, anybody with a student card. (Interruption) We will have a captive audience, yes, indeed, but I think they will very much appreciate it, especially because when you really think about it, many of the women who are at the prison - why are they there? Many of them are there because they've suffered from abuse and violence. So I think we are going to take *Invisible Prisons* inside the prison for them to be able to relate to and enjoy.

The more we talk about it - I agree with my compatriot over there - all of us, it's nice to see us all in 'violent' agreement for once, and wonderful to see the House together on this. So again, with those few words, I will take my place and I'm really, really pleased to see this bill, Bill No. 150, come forward.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of the members who had comments on this piece of legislation. I appreciate the good words and I actually appreciate their efforts in trying to bring recognition of this issue to the House. I think the question around making sure that victims know that there is a process and what that entails, the Department of Justice, certainly through their Victim Services, encounter this issue every day and counsel victims on what is available to help them. So I want to assure members that there is no point in bringing about an amendment like this without doing the follow-up to ensure that the people who need the service can get the service.

I don't want members to think that although there is a process around this - actually, the Department of Justice's Victim Services will actually give a certificate. They'll do the investigation, give a certificate to the victim, and they can take that to their landlord. There will be no discussion by the landlord on this. In other words, when they show up with that certificate, that is the end of the story. It doesn't entail long contractual discussions about the events. It's very clean and for the benefit of the victim, that they don't have to engage in explanations to their landlords, which we think would be helpful for them at a very delicate, serious time for them and for their families.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 150.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 150. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 111.

#### **Bill No. 111 - Fur Industry Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I won't speak at length on this bill. I think members would be aware of the introduction of this bill - I think Spring 2010 - and would know the issue facing the fur industry and communities, particularly in the southwestern region of the province. This bill was really written and designed to ensure that the industry had a template for environmental protection, really, so that we wouldn't have an industry that was polluting the environment. I think the most recent amendments to that bill really were around applying an administrator for any issues of engagement between the sector and the Department of Agriculture, so that wasn't entirely left to the minister for their engagement.

Members would also, I think, hope that the appropriate regulation would be in place for this piece of legislation; I want them to rest assured that this is the case. Regulation to complement this piece of legislation has been a long time in the making. I think when my staff first indicated to me the process around getting the regulations written for this legislation, they indicated that we would be three years getting regulations done, and I told them they had one - and it has taken us two.

I have to take my hat off to the people at the Department of Agriculture who worked on this; they have done yeoman service. They consulted broadly - as a matter of fact, even when we thought we were at a place where we pretty well had the regulations written, we went back actually and revisited some issues raised by other communities and incorporated what we heard from them to tighten up the regulations.

I don't know if I want to make the presumption that they're perfect. This is new territory; I think it's probably new territory for any government in the country. Members may not be aware, but when it comes to guidelines around manure storage and the water running off a farm, in this province, and I think generally across the country, the conditions around that are really guidelines, the instructions are really guidelines. Now, for this industry, it will be in Statute what they can do around how they have to dispose of manure for their farms, and waste feed and carcasses. I think that is certainly unique for this industry, and I think unique for agriculture. Members may not be aware that half of Canada's mink production is in Nova Scotia. The genesis of that, back in the 1930s, was really the fishing industry in southwestern Nova Scotia. There was a lot of fish by-product from the fishing industry, and that allowed a few individuals to start keeping some mink and have a cheap source of food, and that industry has just grown incredibly.

I think last year somewhere in the range of 1,300,000 or 1,400,000 mink pelts came out of Nova Scotia. As far as farm-gate sales, the dairy industry in Nova Scotia was the big winner for years - \$100 million, or last year it might have been \$120 million - but the mink industry was \$140 million. It's a big enough industry that it surpassed the dairy industry.

I have to also give credit to mink producers who were involved in this process. They were very good to work with, considering we're regulating their industry, but they definitely were concerned about the impacts of their industry on the environment and in their communities. They were helpful in trying to encourage government along and to consult with as we sought information.

Every mink farm above - I think it's 100 animals - will need an engineered plan to ensure that the waste on that farm does not wind up in the environment, creating some negative impact. We really appreciate those new dollars into the economy of Nova Scotia, what that means, but certainly a lot of the individuals in this industry are younger farmers, which is something we don't see everywhere, so we're glad for that. It's also helping to sustain rural Nova Scotia and the economy in rural Nova Scotia.

With those few comments, I move third reading of Bill No. 111.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place today and speak to this bill. It is indeed one that's quite specific around a couple of additions to the Fur Industry Act. Those have been accepted and supported by the fur industry, and feel that those are also good measures to include.

I really just wanted to say today that when the four representatives of the industry came to the Law Amendments Committee, they weren't really too concerned about this piece of legislation. Rather, they were concerned that the regulations that are going to actually support the legislation and direct the future of the industry have not been brought

forward. Whether it was Simeon Roberts or Matt Moses or Dan Mullen or Henry Vissers from the federation, they all really were on the same issue and were certainly in accord around the fact that they want to see these regulations.

As the minister rightfully pointed out, it's an industry that has done very well, but its moving forward is challenged by the fact that many of those who want to invest in the industry don't have all the very specific and detailed guidelines on how they will expand or build new. We know that the environmental issues - and all of the four, a strong support to the industry, want to know what the environmental requirements will be for the industry, and they know that they're going to have to invest quite heavily to safeguard their industry. They do want to be good stewards in the area in which they live. In fact the farmers themselves talk about having best practices so that their neighbours were not in any way whatsoever negatively impacted by their business and their way of making a living through the raising of mink.

I think that was the message that came forward. There was a little bit of, I guess, concern around what again the very specific role of the administrator will be in carrying out his duties and, in fact, whether it will be one person or whether it will be an actual board or an office that would actually now look at the industry because of the way it has expanded and the way it needs to be regulated.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed all about the regulations, I think, from this point forward, and hopefully very soon we will see those regulations. Interestingly enough, and perhaps the minister did address some of those points as well, but many are already probably in full compliance with the kind of regulations that will actually be brought forward because the mink industry here supported by research at the Agricultural College in Truro - have already been doing, I guess, leading work when it comes to raising mink and have created a very sustainable, very viable industry.

It has, in the past, been subject to of course some of the swings of the marketplace, but I think they're taking a look at a very important industry and having it not grow to the extremes where they will impact themselves, but rather they will be monitoring what is happening in a global industry. When we say a "global industry" here, the real good thing about the industry, Mr. Speaker, is that it indeed is all new money that comes into the province and there are hundreds of jobs related to this industry - whether it is in the feed kitchens, whether it is working with the pelts, and the shipping off to the big central auction houses.

It is indeed an industry that I've been prepared to showcase, and in fact just a summer ago when we had a delegation of 35 Americans who came here to Nova Scotia as part of CSG, and leading an agricultural field trip to the Valley I was certainly pleased to take them to a state-of-the-art mink ranch near Berwick to see for themselves that it is being done very, very well. I think it bodes well for the people who are showing leadership in this industry, and I think all of us who were in Law Amendments Committee when these

four people were there are absolutely seeing first-hand that they want the regulations and they are more than prepared to live with these and make them part of their industry going forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm only going to take a moment, I'm not going to belabour this, especially here in third reading, but just to stand up and once again state what has already been stated I guess - that we do support that. We know the industry is looking for it and looking forward to how things play out by way of regulations, and hopefully they'll have a detailed part in how all this is done.

I think the minister certainly said that he is open to that, and at least what I hear from the other side, from those who are in the industry who want this to continue to be as successful as it has been in past years and continue to grow the way that it should because, as we all know, when it comes to agricultural opportunities in this province we really need to make sure that this works well.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: I just want to assure members opposite, certainly around the question that was raised around regulations, we couldn't bring the regulations to Cabinet without the bill being in place to allow for the regulations, as much as that has taken longer than I ever dreamed. With that said, when the bill makes it through the House, the regulations are pretty much ready to go and it will be my hope that they will get to Cabinet - I'd like to say before Christmas.

The industry won't have to wait long and actually the member for Kings West indicated that certainly there are producers who would be in compliance, or very close to compliance, with the regulations and we didn't want them engaging and expanding their operations. They have three years to comply with the regulations and so to spend money and then have to re-spend it, we didn't think was wise. We tried to have a fairly continuous dialog with them about what they should expect so that if they were going to be spending money that they wouldn't have to do that twice.

Anyway, I thank members opposite for their comments. I think this is a really good piece of legislation and the regulations will be helpful for everyone concerned. With that I move third reading of Bill No. 111, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 111. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 131.

**Bill No. 131 - School Board Members Duties Clarification Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I move that Bill No. 131 be read a third time. I wish to thank those who took time to speak to this bill at Law Amendments Committee and as I've said previously, Mr. Speaker, I believe school board members are working hard to support our students and these amendments to the Education Act are another step to help them be as effective as they can be in setting a vision and a priority for the good of students in their regions.

Last weekend the Cape Breton Post asked the chairs of both the Strait Regional School Board and the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board about this legislation and I'd like to share their remarks with the House. Mary Jess MacDonald, chair of the Strait board, said, "It's very positive to clarify roles when you are collaborating with other people . . . and it is very useful to know the roles the board members are expected to fulfil." And Lorne Green, the chair of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Board, said that, ". . . I think this is a clear, defined role for the board members and will put us all on the right track." And I'll table these remarks. Once again, I think they show that our boards consider this a very positive step.

Mr. Speaker, some of the members opposite have suggested that this legislation is redundant because Section 64 of the Education Act describes the duties of a school board. Well it does indeed but Section 64 did not make a clear distinction between the elected board and the operational staff. It was certainly open to misinterpretation and unfortunately we do know that there have been a few cases where board members did misinterpret those clauses. If the Education Act leaves any chance for confusion, any chance at all, we need to make sure that we take the opportunity to make things clearer and that is exactly what we've done with this amendment.

There is one other point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker. I did understand it came up at the Law Amendments Committee, and I've seen it repeated in the media that this



legislation has somehow changed the relationship between the elected board and the superintendent, and that is clearly not the case. Section 39 of the Education Act says that the superintendent is accountable to the school board and Section 42 says the school board is accountable to the electorate. This amendment doesn't change that relationship in any way. What it does, it makes it clearer. As I've mentioned, many school board members have said this is a very positive step and superintendents have expressed that as well.

It is in the best interests of our school boards, our parents and, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, to our students that we do everything we can to put students' success first. With that, I will take my seat and I look forward to seeing Bill No. 131 receive the support of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to make a few comments regarding Bill No. 131. I certainly did speak to this bill when it was first before the House and I've listened and read with interest the press release from the minister when she made the announcement, and I also listened with interest to the comments that were made at that time. Subsequent to that, I have read the presentations that went before the Law Amendments Committee and it certainly suggests to all of those people who have spoken to this and about this that the focus of the legislation should be on students.

To suggest that school board members do not have students as their priority, I think, as I've said, is disrespectful to those school board members. There are people in this House who have served as school board members and they let their names stand to sit on the school board because they wanted to have students as their priority. They wanted their focus to be in the best interest of students.

So when you listen to the comments made by the minister at the press conference and in her press release, it simply repeats that and, you know, the government did do a little bit of a trip around the province to talk to people who were interested in serving on school boards. Then following that, this legislation came in and people are wondering, well, what is different now than what we heard in our orientation session or our information session? So when you look at, when you put the litmus test to any bill that comes from the Department of Education and comes before us, that litmus test should be how does this make things better for the kids in our classroom? When you apply that, then you know that if that is proving that this will make a positive difference, then you know that you've shown leadership and that you know you've acted in their best interest.

This bill does not pass that litmus test. It's redundant in that many of the things that it speaks to are already included in the Act and many of the things that are referred to are responsibilities that board members have, otherwise they would never be interested in serving on a school board. It's the same with other bills from Education in the last couple of

years - there is really no substance to them. I would welcome an opportunity to debate a bill that does make a difference for kids.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise here to say a few words this afternoon, I'll be brief. I did sit in on the Law Amendments Committee, as well, and from the people we heard from at the Law Amendments Committee, this bill is not going to do anything to help the kids actually in the classroom. It's taking away the voice of some of the elected officials and transferring it to the superintendent so that the superintendent has the final say and the elected officials cannot equally represent the family, the taxpayers, or the communities. From what I can see, this bill is already enacted in legislation as it is in the Education Act and it's disappointing to see that this is being debated, that the money is not actually being spent on people in the classroom. So with those few words, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak briefly on third reading of Bill No. 131, the School Board Members Duties Clarification Act. As many of my colleagues may be aware, in 2011 there were issues in my region related to the operation of the South Shore District School Board. An independent inquiry was conducted, which ultimately led to the dismissal of the board and its replacement with a one-person overseer, Ms. Judith Sullivan-Corney.

Mr. Speaker, I believed then, as I believe now, that the intentions of the board members were admirable, but however at least part of the problem, I think, involved the fact that members were not completely aware of their duties and responsibilities. Indeed, the independent investigation confirmed that there were a number of board members who were unsure of their exact roles; for example, in some cases board members saw their roles as being similar to those of a municipal councillor or an MLA.

What I mean by that is that they felt they were representing sort of constituents in a district, as opposed to being a member of a group that was mandated to oversee in a holistic way the educational issues in the district, and that they should be looking perhaps at participating in decisions affecting the entire board and not a perspective really that involved parochial decisions affecting just their specific district.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion that these issues arose at least in part because of a lack of direction to the board members, and the Education Act itself. This was pointed out to me, well, about a year ago by a good friend and constituent of mine, Mr. Brock Junkin who suggested to me that I investigate the possibility of having the Act amended to provide more clarity in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I did exactly that; I passed the information on to the Minister of Education whom I am very pleased to say agreed with me and acted quickly to bring forth the amendments we see today. I believe these amendments will add clarity to the issues surrounding the duties and responsibilities of school board members, and I thank the minister for acting so quickly to address this issue.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, a new board has been elected and a new chairman is in place. I would like to congratulate all the newly elected members of the South Shore District School Board, and I further hope these amendments will help them perform their duties with a greater sense of clarity and purpose.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important issue, and with those words I will take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise for just a couple of moments to speak in support of Bill No. 131, the School Board Members Duties Clarification Act.

I want to speak in support of it because I was struck when I listened to members of the Opposition initially speak to this bill and describe it as something without substance and describe it as something that might be disrespectful to current or past school board members. In fact, I would like to say that having a chance to work with members of the school board in my area, both recently and in the past, I have a great deal of respect for those people who step forward and are interested in serving students and parents and families in that way. I have every reason to think that those people who do step forward do so with the best of intentions.

I've had certainly the wonderful experience over the last three and a half years to work with school board members on some significant projects in my area, and particularly I've had an opportunity that I would like to mention, the late Jenny White who, I think, maybe exemplifies some of the virtues of an effective school board member, who understands the roles of administration and understands the roles of governance.

My main reason for wishing to stand today to speak to Bill No. 131 is just to make a comment about the value of the bill as it relates to governance and administration. I've had the occasion in my life, probably because of my social work background, to work on a significant number of non-profit boards. As an administrator I've worked for boards of directors and I've had occasion to actually organize training sessions for board members, and I can tell you that there is a difference between governance and administration. It's really essential that those people who serve on boards understand the difference if they're to accomplish the most successful outcomes. I think that Bill No. 131 addresses that.

There is a particular trap for members of boards. One trap is that they can become rubber stamps or simply parrots of administrators who do all the work. Or there's the converse difficulty that board members often fall into of meddling in the day-to-day management or administration of an organization. Both of those activities are pitfalls for boards and they are common pitfalls. They're not isolated pitfalls; they are something that happen quite regularly.

The point that I wanted to make, and I'll sum up with this, is Bill No. 131 helps clarify that the roles of members of school boards are different from roles of administrators. They set the stage from which that kind of orientation can be done and I would like to congratulate the minister on having brought this bill forward and thank you for the opportunity to comment in this way in support of it.

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

The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill No. 131.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 131. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 133.

**Bill No. 133 - Inter-city Bus Service Act.**

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

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 133, the Inter-city Bus Service Act. Given the comments of my friends across the way, I won't take very long in speaking on this.

I was pleased to introduce Bill No. 133, the Inter-city Bus Service Act on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Mike Cassidy, president of Maritime Bus, representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students and Students Nova Scotia, and the Department of Seniors

were kind enough to join me to show their support for this bill. Members will remember that those persons attended and were in the gallery when the bill was introduced.

The Inter-city Bus Service Bill will help to support reliable bus services here in our province. This bill responds to concerns we've heard from many bus travellers and from the operators. Nova Scotians want to know they can depend on a reliable bus service and bus operators want to be successful. This bill strikes that balance.

With those few words, I move that Bill No. 133, the Inter-city Bus Service Act, be now read a third time and do pass. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 133. Our caucus is in support of this bill. This bill was introduced as a result of Acadian Lines closing down their operation in our province. As we're all aware, this coming Friday Acadian Lines will be closing their operation.

Mr. Speaker, the bus industry in our province has struggled for many years with economic challenges. Prior to this legislation, companies had to apply to the Utility and Review Board and attend public hearings, and naturally to attend public hearings, they had to hire lawyers to assist with applications, including requests for changing tariffs and schedules and routes. This process was certainly time consuming and very costly to these companies.

Under the piece of legislation that's before the House, these responsibilities that the URB once had will now be shifted over to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to allow bus companies to make timely, reasonable changes to schedules and routes and tariffs without the cost of hiring lawyers and attending these public hearings.

We all recognize that bus companies need some flexibility to respond to market changes and demands with the general public. Also, we understand that the industry has lobbied government for these changes, and that the Utility and Review Board is also onside with these changes that are proposed in this bill. So with those few words, the Liberal caucus is in support of this bill to move through third and final reading.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the PC caucus, we're glad to see that these changes are coming forth to the inter-city bus routes to make it easier for students and people in the province who need bus service, in the rural areas especially. It will enable them to travel throughout the province in a fairly reasonable manner and allow the bus companies to maintain that service here in the province. With that, I'll take my seat.

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

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, it's nice to acknowledge the members on the other side saying that it's possible that we can change their minds from time to time. It doesn't seem possible most of the time. (Interruptions)

It's a delight to be able to stand up here for a few minutes to say a few words about the Inter-city Bus Service Act. As you know, my constituency includes many, many students. I have six universities within the confines of my constituency. I've got a number of seniors' buildings. We've got a number of people travelling in and out of the City of Halifax, a lot of university students, many people coming to the city to get essential treatment and services, so it's important to the members of my constituency that we have a reliable and safe transit system.

I know we were out on a caucus outreach not that long ago and we talked to a number of people, and I must say it didn't really occur to me that there were so many vulnerable people who relied so much on the bus services. There were people who needed to bus their way into the nearest urban centre to get essential treatment. One of the people I spoke with had cancer and was travelling with her spouse to go to and from, and when the bus service collapsed, they had no way of going in. They were taking a taxi, which imposes another huge burden, and they had to stay overnight. It's just extraordinary, the amount of hardship that it imposed on people.

Mr. Speaker, we had students who were trying to go back to their homes, many students who come into the city and go back to their rural communities. We had a number of people who needed to go to and from work, and they were using the inter-city bus services as a way of commuting. So the collapse really reminded us of how important inter-city bus service is to so many communities, and so many people are vulnerable to the loss of service, so I must commend the minister for bringing forward this legislation and for creating the conditions for making sure that as many Nova Scotians, as many people who need this service, get it in the most efficient and most cost-effective way.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, builds on the flexibility that the Utility and Review Board introduced when it ruled on an application from Maritime Bus to take over from Acadian Lines. It streamlines the regulations, which was one of the complaints, that it was too cumbersome to make changes and to respond to the market and to respond to possible cost savings.

This makes it easier for bus operators to succeed in the province, while protecting the interests and safety of the travelling public. Bus operators now, under this legislation, will be able to make timely and reasonable changes to the tariffs, the schedules, the routes, without incurring the costs of going through a very heavy, cumbersome, and difficult regulatory process of hiring a professional or hiring a lawyer to represent them at a URB

ruling. This will allow us and allow the operators a much more timely response to requests for routine changes.

Where there are significant changes, there will still be the opportunity for public input and where the minister feels a more thorough review is warranted, the application might be referred to the Utility and Review Board for a fuller assessment. In other words, Mr. Speaker, this legislation strikes a fine balance between reducing red tape and making a much more streamlined system that is able to respond to changes in circumstances, to changes in public references, while at the same time making sure that larger issues relating to health and safety are dealt with in a much more rigorous and much more careful way.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again that we have a number of people in our community who have come forward and said you've got to do something about the inter-city bus service; you've got to make it possible for people to make their way to health appointments; you have to make it possible for people to go to their jobs; you've got to make it possible for students to go back and forth to their homes, for people who do not drive, for people who are environmentally conscious and feel that using public transit is a way of reducing their carbon footprints.

There are a number of advantages to this, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we want to anchor the inter-city bus service in a very stable and reliable and safe way. With those few words, I want to again thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for bringing this forward. I want to thank the many people who came to us and said that something needs to be done to protect those vulnerable people. We believe that this bill takes us in that direction and puts public transit in a much safer, much more reliable footing and hopefully it will lay the foundation for a much broader system that is more accessible to more Nova Scotians. Certainly our constituents are demanding better public transit and this puts us on that road. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to as well thank my colleagues across the House and the colleagues on this side of the House who have risen to speak in support of this bill. I would now again move third reading and request that this bill do pass.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 133. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rose a few minutes ago to speak briefly on Bill No. 131, and I got such a favourable reception from my fans on this side of the House and my fans over there that I felt inspired to speak again. (Interruptions) I heard somebody say, what's not to love? I'll have to let my fans deal with that.

It is, as always, a great pleasure to rise and speak a bit about the place from which I hail and the people I represent in the House of Assembly. I am, of course, referring to the beautiful constituency of Lunenburg West on Nova Scotia's equally beautiful South Shore.

Mr. Speaker, I think many of you know this in the House - not all people may know - that Lunenburg West is that part of Lunenburg County from LaHave River West to the Queens County line, north to the Queens and Annapolis County lines, and south to the Atlantic Ocean. Again, I suppose many people know that the major town in the area is Bridgewater. It's about 7,500 residents, but there are many, many small and beautiful villages scattered throughout that region as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: Name two.

MR. RAMEY: My colleague here says "name two." I can name about 40. They are beautiful villages with beautiful names, names like Pleasantville and New Elm, West Dublin and Dublin Shore. I could go on and on, but I did that once before and I was accused by the member for Timberlea-Prospect of doing the Hank Snow tune "I've Been Everywhere." So I won't go through them all, but they are gorgeous communities with equally lovely people in them.



The community of LaHave is the oldest settlement in Canada, and for a long time it was the capital of New France. Some people don't know that. Our area was settled by waves of immigrants from Europe - Germans, French, British, Irish - and their influence is reflected in the names of our communities and by our surnames. A cursory glance, for instance, at the South Shore phone book in the New Germany, LaHave, Chelsea, or Bridgewater exchanges will attest to the veracity of that statement. I can hear people naming off surnames of my constituents while I'm standing here.

We were an area that was settled by immigration, and that's why I'm so pleased that after years of inactivity on the immigration file by many previous governments, the Premier of our province has seen fit to negotiate higher immigration limits for our province. We need more of them and we want them to come here.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we have an aging and in some rural areas a declining population, and as a result, given the significant work done in creating new job opportunities for our citizens, we will need every available worker in order to fill these vacancies. Opportunities created by our government related to the shipbuilding project, the Muskrat Falls project, the Nova Centre project, and the offshore oil exploration projects recently announced by both Shell and BP will require many person hours of work to bring them to fruition. As I said before, we'll need lots of folks to help us do that.

Perhaps even more significantly, we are starting to see businesses that wish to come to Nova Scotia to set up shop in our region. In the past few months, and I guess this was reported probably both by the television media and also in the news, Air Canada Jazz has announced a move from London, Ontario, to Halifax. Baskin Robbins has announced a move from Peterborough, Ontario, to Truro. PROJEX has moved from Calgary to Halifax, and more recently, IBM has decided to locate an analytics centre in our capital city here. The last two alone that I've mentioned involve about 900 jobs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, after 20 years of stagnation (Interruptions) I hear the member for Richmond over there chirping away at me, but after 20 years of stagnation (Interruptions) and flat growth - they know I love him anyway - after 20 years of stagnation and flat growth in this province, we finally started to kick-start the economy. Finally. Finally we started to get there. After years of failed attempts to grow the economy by both Parties on the other side, we're finally on the move in the right direction.

I know this - this is a hard pill for those in Opposition to swallow, and so daily in this House we listen to bleating and blustering and whining and that sort of thing by that group who can't seem to stand the prospect of prosperity that wasn't created by them, because that would point to the failure that I just referenced a few minutes ago. Since they failed for lo these many years in job creation and growing the economy, they have what can only be described, I think, and I will describe it this way - as sort of an anti-business, anti-growth attitude, which is manifested in the most bizarre ways.

Mr. Speaker, if you don't mind, permit me to give you sort of a nasty example of that of which I speak. Earlier this month in this House the CEO of PROJEX, a business bringing about 440 good jobs to our province, was present in the gallery. It was in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, the CEO was present there when the Premier welcomed PROJEX to Nova Scotia from his place here in the Chamber. Both Opposition Leaders were - the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Third Party - what I would describe as overtly rude and disrespectful to this businessman.

Some of my colleagues, who have been in this House much longer than I, expressed shock and dismay with regard to this behaviour. I have to say that my constituents do not want visitors, particularly ones bringing good jobs, who come to our province to be treated in such a way. As a matter of fact, I heard about that when I went home. Rather in the spirit of what Nova Scotians are all about, folks in my area expect us to welcome visitors with open arms.

Constituents of mine want jobs, not just for themselves, because we're not selfish in Lunenburg West - not at all - not just for themselves but for all Nova Scotians. They want prosperity and the Opposition Parties should, if nothing else, get out of the way and let this happen. If they can't be part of the solution . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I'm sure the member for Lunenburg West would not want to be misleading Nova Scotians in the speech that he's giving, his statements about the comments made by both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party regarding PROJEX. But he may want to read [allnovascotia.com](http://allnovascotia.com) today to see the letter that was submitted by Harbourside Engineering Consultants, a Nova Scotia company . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. Order. There was no point of order, you just started in your remarks.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West has the floor.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to proceed after that interlude. I think what I was saying before I was interrupted there, my point was if they can't be part of the solution, at the very least they should not be part of the problem. That's my point. (Interruptions) I'll speak to that point. It's ironic that they couldn't create jobs when they were governing and now in Opposition they want to continue to foster that culture of defeat, or whatever - I think culture of defeat, and make sure our government is fettered as we strive to develop and grow the economy of the province.

Now, Madam Speaker, they can try all they want but the past has shown us they will fail, and we will get on with it. Our NDP Government will drag them, the Liberals and

the Progressive Conservatives for that matter, kicking and screaming into a brighter future and we will leave it to them, leave it to the member for Argyle who's chirping away at me over there, we'll leave it to them to explain why they want to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution, and why they do not want to be part of growth and progress. That's what they'll have to explain at some point.

Now, Madam Speaker, I have sat and listened, I have sat and listened here because I do that a lot, for hours and hours, hours and hours in this place, to criticism by the Opposition Parties on a number of issues, and I would be the first to agree that that is their job. Their job is to criticize. However, I have to say that the quality of the criticism often leaves much to be desired and allow me to elaborate just a little bit.

Madam Speaker, for literally months on end our government was criticized, and I think just recently the other day in a resolution by the member, I think it was for Kings West. We have been criticized over and over again for the cancellation of the Yarmouth ferry. Now, I recognize, I absolutely recognize that this is an important issue for all residents in my region of the province and I want you to know that I have a great deal of respect for all those folks living in Queens, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties, and I would also say that I spend a considerable amount of my time in the summer visiting the communities in that picturesque part of the province. The member for Argyle, the member for Yarmouth and the member for Shelburne, I am in that area a lot in the summertime because it is beautiful there.

Now, the implication conveyed by the Opposition in this House, and particularly I would say by the member for Argyle and the member for Yarmouth, is that the cancellation of The Cat, which is what the boat was called, and I think everybody knows that, was some kind of a unilateral decision by the province with little care or caution and that somehow it was a decision that I guess we pulled out of the hat or something, without due diligence.

Now, Madam Speaker, the implication is (Interruption) And they are still saying exactly what I'm pointing out. So I hope the chatter can be heard on this side of the House but, anyway, the implication is that this was a totally made-in-Nova Scotia decision and I want to clarify that, and I want to clarify it for the record. First of all, Atlantic Canadian ferries between major ports are part of the national transportation system and, more specifically, the ferries on major routes in Atlantic Canada are jointly funded - and everybody on that side of the House knows it. Newfoundland and Labrador ferries are cost-shared by the Nova Scotia Government, the Newfoundland and Labrador Government, and the federal government. The Prince Edward Island ferries are cost-shared by the Prince Edward Island Government (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It's becoming increasingly difficult to hear the member.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West has the floor.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I don't know, I must be poking the ant nest there or something, I don't know. Somebody is making these guys - we just had, did we have the Bee Act in here today because it's all a buzz over there. (Interruptions) Oh, and that's such a bad pun.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, as I was saying, I'm back to Prince Edward Island where my colleague, the member for Timberlea-Prospect, has a cottage and talks about it all the time. Prince Edward Island ferries are cost-shared by the P.E.I., Nova Scotia and federal governments. The Digby ferry, which we often hear about, is funded by the Nova Scotia Government, the New Brunswick Government and the federal government. So having sort of reviewed that, the salient feature of these arrangements - in case anybody missed it - is that they are cost-shared by three partners - three.

So, Madam Speaker, the federal Liberal Government, and this is not a criticism of the provincial Liberal Government, I am saying the federal Liberal Government cut the subsidy to The Cat, to that vessel, in the mid-1990s and it was actually under the Honourable Paul Martin. Hence, we lost - for anybody who (Interruptions) It was a previous ferry, okay, but hence we lost our federal partner and Nova Scotia was left to go it alone.

Now when we approached the Governor of Maine for help, because that would be logical to do that because let me see, the boat went from Yarmouth to Maine, okay, so when we approached the Governor of Maine for help he asked us to present the business case, after which, Madam Speaker, he respectfully declined support.

Madam Speaker, you'll recollect that I noted earlier that the other major ferries in the region have three funding partners. Now it is important to realize that three more significant events happened which contributed to the ridership of this particular ferry declining by over 70 per cent in a few years.

AN HON. MEMBER: Try not to laugh.

MR. RAMEY: Well I'm finding this amusing, I mean I'm finding this - whatever is going on over there, I find that amusing and kind of entertaining in a sick sort of way.

Anyway after 9/11, Americans, Madam Speaker, were required to buy passports to get re-admitted to their own country if they travelled outside its borders. Now many Americans considered this a form of tax and refused to purchase one. This of course eliminated the possibility of travel to countries like Canada, because they'd need a passport, because of Homeland Security, to get back into their own country.

Another thing that happened, Madam Speaker, is that gas prices skyrocketed, discouraging them from summer travel at around the same time, and finally when the United States and Canadian currencies reached parity, this caused a further problem. So

simply put, many American visitors chose to stay at home, and they usually do that, I might add, when they do not receive 20 cents back on every dollar that they spend here in Nova Scotia.

So, Mr. Speaker, what happened? Ridership on The Cat had been declining prior to 2009. We had no funding partners - none. I told you there were normally three, we had no funding partners, meaning the entire financial burden fell totally on the Province of Nova Scotia. Now this, as all members on both sides of this House really know, was unsustainable and untenable. Did the current federal government, the Conservatives, offer to reinstate the subsidy?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No. No.

AN HON. MEMBER: Harper was cutting everything.

MR. RAMEY: No. Did the Governor of Maine offer to fiscally support the service?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, and that, Madam Speaker, meant there was one and only one funder for service that was, as I pointed out, in steady decline for a number of reasons, which I've also pointed out. The Province of Nova Scotia was on the hook and I submit to you that it was not sustainable.

Now knowing this, what would a responsible government do? Well, Madam Speaker, they would work with the community to try to find the right boat, at the right price, with the right schedule, to make the service sustainable. That is exactly what we did. As of right now we have \$21 million on the table over seven years and we are actively trying to make that happen.

The Liberals, and particularly the member for Yarmouth, if he'd like to comment, might want to examine why his federal cousins cancelled the subsidy in the first place, and the member for Argyle may wish to contact his federal cousins and ask them where their contribution is towards reinstating this service. Constantly we hear about how important it is, and we agree, so we'd like to know that. (Interruptions)

The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island is saying those cats never came back to the table, and they have not. So what I would like to see is show me the money, not empty words.

These members spent countless hours in this very Chamber, as early as just the other day, reading resolutions on this issue. I had to sit here and listen to them. They berated the Premier, they berated the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and

Tourism for hours on end, even though they know that every effort was being made and is being made to resolve this issue. I already indicated what they could do to be helpful.

Now simply put, Madam Speaker, they followed that same old partisan path they use when they oppose us on creating jobs and growing the economy. They long for the good old days, which saw the economy of this province stagnate for the last 20 years. When the real story is told, most folks understand why we couldn't go it alone.

Now I'd like to turn a little bit to the rural economy, because that's another area in here that much has been said about. We know that historically we have some challenges here. We don't mind admitting that, of course. We have seen and are seeing declining populations, out-migration of young people, and perhaps most troubling, in a way, an aging demographic.

Here is an area where the Opposition Parties could really get involved. In my area we have had some serious blows to our economic base, and I think the members of this House, my colleagues on this side and on that side, are well aware of what most of those are. Most folks know that when Resolute had serious issues related to the sustainability of the mill in Brooklyn and their other assets in the region, our government was there to support them. The people in my area and in that area are most appreciative of that.

So what did the Opposition Parties do to support a major employer in my area? Well, the Liberals, in typical Liberal fashion, were for it on the streets of Liverpool, against it in the House, then kind of for it, then kind of against it, and I think they're still kind of against it, because you never really know where they stand on things like this.

The PC Party, to their credit, was much clearer. The PC Party was extremely clear. Madam Speaker, they summed it up in a few words, I believe: the Leader of the Third Party asked us why we were buying dirt. I think that's what he said. Now, my guess in my area of the province is he'll get his answer about that in the next election. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that statements like that are not appreciated by my constituents and the hard-working citizens of the South Shore affected by the closure of that mill, but in the old, partisan tradition of that crew, I have to say it was expected.

One would think that after turning their backs on the rural Nova Scotians in my area, they might have taken a bit of time for reflection - that's what makes you wise, time for reflection - and decided that a laissez-faire policy by government in relation to the support of rural jobs might not be the best policy. Well, as the member for Preston so often says in this House, guess what? They did it again to the people of Port Hawkesbury. I couldn't believe it, but they did.

On the South Shore when something like this happens, we say we got gobsmacked. That's the term we use down there. Well, Madam Speaker, I was gobsmacked, and so were the people in my constituency. There apparently were no lessons learned by any members

of the Liberal or PC caucuses or their commanders-in-chief - I hesitate to use "leaders" there - involving the support of our rural citizenry. For example, the member for Richmond was silent. He said nothing in support of help for that mill, but as is often the case with the Liberals, he had lots of disparaging remarks to make about it in the House.

Similarly, the member for Inverness had little to say by way of support either - again, quick to criticize, but no positive substantive suggestions. Although in fairness - I believe this is correct, and I'll stand corrected if it's not - I believe that the member for Inverness did say in the House recently that he liked seeing steam come out of the stack when he drove by. So I'll take that as a bit of a positive. It's probably in Hansard. I guess we might take that as a bit of a positive comment.

Now, Madam Speaker, I can tell you who did something for that rural area and those rural areas - we did. We made a choice to support the men and women in that part of our province by keeping that modern supercalender mill in operation so that the citizens and the businesses there could have a brighter future and if any of them are hearing me now I want them to know that this Premier and this government have been with them, and will be with them, every step of the way. Both Opposition Parties were silent when we were trying to help, vocally critical once the deal was done. Once the deal was done - very critical.

Another serious and troubling trait that I see manifesting itself in those on the other side of this House is the distinct inability, or perhaps lack of desire, to see things from a global perspective, or in a global context. For instance, let me give you an example, Madam Speaker, when it comes to the world economy of which we are a part - and I hope nobody is saying we're not part of the world economy. When it comes to the world economy of which we are a part, there seems to be a lack of understanding by those on the other side that we have been for some time, for a few years, in the worst recession since the Great Depression. I mean, the governor of the Bank of Canada will point that out, everybody will point that out, not defending the federal Parties but both of them agree on this, so that's that case.

Even folks with a rudimentary understanding of economics acknowledge this. I think that the average citizen would assume that a member who sits in this House would, at the very least, have some knowledge of global economic and financial forces that are affecting our county, and of course, our province. Even if one is not an avid reader or cognizant of micro and macroeconomic concepts, or a follower of the economic paradigms of Keynes or Friedman, one would assume that by watching television newscasts there would be a basic recognition of the economic woes affecting Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, the U.K., the United States, and I could go on and on but I won't.

There would be some kind of rudimentary (Interruption) Well somebody says what about Canada - and what about Canada? Thanks to a Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Chretien, I think we are in pretty good shape. I remember when they wanted to open up the - it's true,

credit where credit is due - they wanted to open up the Canadian banking system to foreign banks and he said no, and good on him that he did. As a result, you know what about Canada? Well I think we are doing among the best of the G7, and I think we're doing among the best of all countries in the world, and as a result we're able to be in a pretty good position to move forward.

Now, surely I would expect by watching - let's go back to TV, the thing that I don't watch very much but some people do. Surely by now most people would have heard, whether they ever heard of it before, of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the subprime mortgage fiasco, the debacle affecting firms on Wall Street and the most recent threat, the so-called financial cliff.

Now Madam Speaker, during the absolute best of economic times, the Parties opposite - the old style Parties there, the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives - failed to grow the Nova Scotia economy. As a matter of fact we have been under the leadership of those Parties at the very bottom of the economic pile in Canada for the last 20 years. That approach has not worked and they know it and I believe they harbour - I don't know, from what I'm hearing over there - some kind of irrational hope that maybe we'll not be able to succeed where they failed. I hope that's not true.

Simply put, they seem to be like contrarians and obstructionists and their approach is simply to say no to everything proposed by our government. Well, Madam Speaker, that won't work either. The people are watching and they are slowly figuring this out. In the absolute worst economic times since the Great Depression, acknowledged by many people - not our Party necessary - acknowledged by people, our government has created jobs; saved jobs; managed departments in a fiscally responsible manner, bringing them in under budget in most cases; and attracted new businesses to the province like Air Canada Jazz from London, which I already cited; Baskin Robbins from Peterborough; PROJEX from Calgary; Wooshii from the U.K. There are literally hundreds of examples of these things, now and moving into the future.

Now, Madam Speaker, one can only speculate on the carnage that would have been perpetrated on the populace had either of those old style Parties been in charge of managing the economy of this province in the economic conditions which currently pertain in our province now. We have been able, somehow, to navigate these troubled waters through a combination of factors, including sound fiscal management by two able Finance Ministers; the generation of thoughtful and careful plans related to important issues affecting our province like health care, roads, forestry, for example; and through strong and capable leadership by an experienced and capable Premier. This was brought home to me recently, when I made contact with some businesses in my area and was told by an RV dealer, for instance, that his business was up 20 per cent over last year, and by the owner of a car dealership who said he sold 10 more units this October than in the same month last year.



So this view was expressed to me, and this has been the view that has been expressed to me by the business community in my area, that businesses grow because of strong management skills and the application of modern business principles. I was told that businesses which do not change, or that use outdated technologies and outdated practices, are doomed to fail. Well, Madam Speaker, this was good advice and it applies to governments as well, which is why we have been successful creating jobs and growing the economy.

With that, I will stop there. I'm sure these people are getting tired of listening to me on the other side. (Interruptions) I will adjourn debate with your permission, Madam Speaker, and continue on another day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West has the floor.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to have a few minutes today to bring a few words in Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: One second, please.

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. PORTER: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to bring some comments for a little while this afternoon. It's been interesting this session, you know, so far, we've called hours and more hours and different hours, and extended hours, and today at 3:00 p.m. the business of the day was done. But yet again today, as in previous days, here we are, continuing on. (Interruption) My light is still on, I guess that means I can continue.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, the debate had been adjourned and agreed to, and the member for Lunenburg West is the one who would continue. He adjourned debate. (Interruptions) No, no. He adjourned debate so that was very, very clear, very clear, and he will be back another day, as he indicated.

MADAM SPEAKER: I'm just going to take a moment and get some advice on this one, from the Clerk. Just give me a moment, please.

Okay, I have clarification. Because the member moved to adjourn debate, the next step would have been to call for the question on that motion, so we will now proceed with that.

The motion is to adjourn debate. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I defer to the Opposition House Leader. The hours tomorrow will be from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. First, I should point out that, as you know, the hours today were set from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. It's currently 3:52 p.m. We have numerous Opposition bills that we'd be more than happy to debate this evening. In fact, I believe there are even some members who would like to speak on Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Once again, we're at a loss as to why this government continues to call hours and then everyone goes home early because the government doesn't wish to continue to do business.

Anyway, we'll let Nova Scotians judge, but we're more than happy to stay here until 6:00 p.m. and do the business of the people of Nova Scotia. Apparently the government is not interested in doing so. Now that that point of order is finished - did you want to rule on that point of order first? Go ahead.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, I'm going to rule on that one. That would not be a point of order.

The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for taking the time to rule on that point of order.

I do want to advise that tomorrow is the Official Opposition business day. The hours are from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., as pointed out by the Deputy Government House Leader. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Resolution No. 2275, which deals with the Yarmouth ferry and neglect of the economy in rural Nova Scotia by the government. The second item will be Bill No. 103, the Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act.

With that, I move that the House now rise and we meet again tomorrow from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly acknowledge that we have the highest power prices in Canada and a commission is not needed to know that power rates are hurting Nova Scotians and damaging our economy.”

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

#### **ENERGY - N.S. POWER RATES: CANADA'S HIGHEST - ACKNOWLEDGE**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, I guess I'll get a few minutes to talk today on something very important to Nova Scotians - more so than wasting our time in this Legislature talking about absolutely nothing. I've never heard so much verbal sewage flowing in all my life as I have from that member over there.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the member to retract as those are unparliamentary.

MR. PORTER: Unparliamentary?

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes siree, Bob.

MR. PORTER: I guess unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I'll have to. Although those are the words that were meant, I will have to retract it, based on your wish and so done.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. PORTER: You know we stand in this place, we have an opportunity to talk about important things and what do we talk about? The non-important things and waste the afternoon away here.

You know what, Madam Speaker? Let's talk about where we really are in this province. We really are on the bottom, that's where we're at, except a few points, highest taxes, highest power rates in the country and there are reports that will show, that have already been filed, that we are indeed paying the highest taxes and the highest power rates, in this province.

What are they doing? For the Party that said, we are the better deal for today's families, they're far from that. Look where things have gone, and they've got the audacity to stand up in their place and criticize Parties that have been in power in the past? They make it sound like you know what? They make it sound like every government that has ever been has purposely wanted to put the wood to Nova Scotians and do nothing for them, do you know that?

I can tell you there was a lot of good done in the 10 years of previous government, Madam Speaker, but they would never want to admit that, they're too busy - well, I can't say those words either (Interruption) Trying to justify their existence, well put, probably better than what I would have said.

Do you know what? The reality is that the power rates in this province are too high and we're doing nothing to resolve them: talking about plans that will never come to fruition. We see them deal with Newfoundland and Labrador and that deal is by far nowhere close to being secured. We're a long way, Madam Speaker, from securing power rates or any kind of a deal from Newfoundland and Labrador and they're saying - it's interesting to say that they want to do the long-term, stable, power rates, but they've got no prices on it. They want to provide fairer power rates but they're not looking at options. What are they doing? Focused on one deal, one deal that they don't even know what it is going to cost.

We continue to see capital projects rise, we're going to continue to see more of that. The history shows that, it's there. We're already paying 15-plus cents per kilowatt hour in the Province of Nova Scotia, we're going to see another potential 6 per cent get resolved in the coming weeks now; as the year comes to an end, there'll soon need to be a decision made.

What are we doing about it? Standing in this House, wasting time talking about blaming other Parties from years gone by, instead of focusing on what the real needs of Nova Scotians are, talking about creating jobs. What are they doing? Creating nothing.

I mentioned a few minutes ago what exactly he created for the last half hour, 40 minutes, what flowed, Madam Speaker. Do you know what? There's a lot of good that can be done in power and instead of focusing on all members and bringing forward good ideas and maybe bits and pieces of legislation that the Opposition does put forward, because I believe on this side of the House, although we are in Opposition, we do want to do the right thing for Nova Scotians, we do want to put forward good things on behalf of the

constituents that we represent, unlike what that member just described. He would have you believe that we are here to do nothing more than be critical of government decisions. We are critical when we need to be critical and we support multiple things that have gone through this House this session so far already, without being critical. But that doesn't matter, this is about something else altogether, really.

We should be thinking about some of the ideas that have been put forward to reduce power rates, if that's possible, or to at least stabilize them with fair prices. Is that possible? We believe that it is. We believe we should be freezing power rates right now. That's the right thing to do, and let's analyze it, if we're going to take some time to look at what alternatives might exist. There are some opportunities to look at other ideas, but unless you are on that side of the House, the ideas don't matter. That's really what it boils down to, Madam Speaker. No one on this side of the House, in their opinion, or at least in the opinion of the member for Lunenburg West, has anything of value to put forward. I stand here in my place to say that that is absolutely incorrect.

It is not that we are not working hard for our constituents because I can tell you, every day that I meet with constituents who are struggling with power bills. Everywhere you go you hear about power bills, you hear about the highest taxes, you hear about no jobs. I need only drive down to Hantsport; we could introduce the honourable member for Lunenburg West to the residents of Hantsport and to residents from Minas Basin. He could tell them all about how good he is and how wonderful things are in the NDP Government - all the great things he has done.

What has been done there? Job losses for the second time around, 150 jobs from a couple of years ago under this watch; if they're so wonderful in their watch, 150 jobs went, nothing, not a word, no support, nothing offered, no meetings. But I'll give credit where it's due, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism did come down to Hantsport Tuesday, met with folks there, we talked about any number of things.

These are the real people, those 90, 135, whatever the real number might end up being here, are the people who are going to be worrying about their power bills. They're the people who are concerned about the highest power bills in the country. And what's being done for them? Nothing - that's what's being done.

Talk about a wonderful project called Muskrat Falls - if there was a price tag maybe put on it, they may have some comfort; there's no price tag. We've talked about things that are reasonable in this place and, do you know what? We talked about rewriting the electricity plan, taking the time that is required, let's look at it. Is this the only - we have one-sided vision, across the water to Newfoundland and Labrador, that's all we're locked into right now but, Madam Speaker, there are other opportunities.

What about the regional opportunity, regional market? Oh, no, that's just silliness according to government. They're not even willing to look at it. Why is that? The minister, perhaps he'll stand in his place today and tell us all how wonderful things are and he'll talk about fossil fuels from 100 years ago. He'll blame governments from days gone by and he'll talk about how coal is so expensive, but yet they're bringing it in. Coal is at, what's the price at now? Down considerably to what it was. Instead of looking at that and using it, no, we're still blaming that (Interruption) at 5 cents per kilowatt hour.

We have jobs in Cape Breton that could be mining coal. What are we doing? We're bringing it in from other places - and you care about jobs? We talk about jobs in this place. Do we really mean that? You know, you talk about members are standing in their place and ideas that get put forward and what's meant and what's really not meant - well, Madam Speaker, there are a lot of things that we hear in this place that represent the terminology that I used earlier, that I retracted but, do you know what? They say things - why, is it just about getting re-elected? Is it about standing in this place? If you really meant what you stood for in this House, and you should all stand for something, stand on your feet and give your opinion. That's fine; that's allowed. That's a privilege of all members in this House.

Yet we've seen it shut down. Not long ago in my opinion, called the hours until 6:00 p.m. so we can talk about things like high electricity bills - and that was my intent today to get on my feet and talk about a lot of things like that but yet, no, but there will be another day. There will be another day and I will get that opportunity. That's coming, don't worry, you'll get the lecture. No worry, we'll talk about the real people in the Province of Nova Scotia who are struggling, who can't pay that high power bill, who can't pay their taxes, who can't pay their municipal taxes and their houses are going up because they can't afford it.

Why can't they? They can't afford to put food on their family's table. Christmas is coming for some; for others, that's just a word that will mean nothing this year - nothing. That's the real issues that we're faced with in the Province of Nova Scotia. Why? Because of the high power rates. High power rates (Interruption) Do you know what? Because of high power rates, yes, well, I can tell you something right now - the Minister of Energy should be open to ideas from all Parties and all members in this House, and there are a lot of good ideas that have been put forward that I've already said, Madam Speaker, but yet the members on that side of the House will stand in their places and say, ah, those guys over there don't know nothing. We don't want to hear their ideas. They were already there once and, do you know what? They didn't do anything good for this province.

We know that is incorrect. We know a lot of good has been done; we know a lot of good is yet to be done. There are a lot of good ideas from a lot of good members who represent every area, every corner, the people of every corner of this province, who care about what our high power rates are, who want to see long-term stability in power rates. We're not getting that when you're focused on one entity. You need to look outside the box, step outside of the spectrum you're in.

What are the other opportunities? We're not looking at those. We're not looking at them at all. (Interruption)

AN HON. MEMBER: Tidal.

MR. PORTER: Yes, tidal, talk about that. We'll get to tidal on my next speech probably. (Interruption) Yes, we've seen where that has taken us. The only thing that we've seen, let's be honest before I close - I know I've only got a few seconds left - the only thing that we've seen is the Government of Nova Scotia and the Premier of Nova Scotia in bed with Nova Scotia Power. That's what we've seen in the province. We've seen the deals getting done. That's the appearance.

If that's wrong, I look forward to others standing in their place and telling me that that's not right, Madam Speaker, because that's what people are talking about. That's not me, that's what the people in this province say.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise here today to speak here in the House on a very important issue that's affecting Nova Scotians, the price that we pay for electricity, that we all pay on our power bill. I know there have been many debates in this House since we came to power here in 2009, and I'm sure long before that that other governments were dealing with this issue.

Madam Speaker, the one thing that has remained constant is the facts here in the case and certainly the facts don't change. The price that we pay for electricity in this province is similar to other jurisdictions that rely heavily on coal, and that's because the fact is the price of imported coal has increased 75 per cent in the last seven years, and that's the real reason that the electricity rates have gone up.

We, on this side of the House, are certainly not responsible for that. That is market rates around the world that have affected this year. The rates that we have today are the direct result, I believe, of inaction by previous governments, by Liberal and Progressive Conservatives Governments in this province. The price of coal certainly did not happen overnight. To continue to rely on coal for most of the province's electricity generation is really just not an option. Coal is expensive, coal is dirty and the federal government will no longer allow us to continue down the same path anyway. Those are the facts.

Recent federal regulations require us to reduce the amount of electricity that we generate from coal out to the year 2020 and even out now to the year 2030. Generating electricity in this province must change. We all know that. All members are aware of that.

I'm sure the members opposite also know that. So the question really is, Madam Speaker, what do we do from here? What direction do we now take?

Our government is focused on making sure that we do not repeat the same mistakes as previous governments. We do not want to be in the same position now that the previous governments could have looked at, and be here. Where will we be 10 years from now, for example?

Our government has a plan to address these issues and to bring stability to electricity rates for Nova Scotians. That's why we are developing local, more renewable sources of energy, to get us off of coal. We're just truly blessed here in Nova Scotia with many good, natural resources like wind, some of the best wind regimes in North America; tidal power, probably the best in the world. We have identified that getting off of coal is a focus, is a priority, and to get on to renewable sources of energy, as I've mentioned, such as wind and tidal, sustainable biomass, hydro-electricity, both here in our province and from our neighbouring province of Newfoundland and Labrador, those are the things that will help stabilize our electricity rates in this province.

I think those just make a whole lot of sense. The combination of renewables, demand-side management and conservation is the lowest cost-path for Nova Scotia's electricity future. It will get us to where we want to go. Not adding deregulation - that's exactly where we do not want to go. Deregulation, as we all know, will drive up electricity rates by 30 to 50 per cent. It doesn't really make any sense at all. That is the Liberal plan.

Madam Speaker, this morning I read in an article on [allnovascotia.com](http://allnovascotia.com) - I have the chance to read that news source every morning when I get up - and there was an article in there that noted that prices in Alberta can change a great deal from one month to the next under deregulation. We all know in this House why that is. It is because the former Progressive Conservatives in Alberta, the Ralph Klein Government, deregulated the electricity market in that province and when they did, guess what happened? Rates skyrocketed by more than 50 per cent in a single month and that was in October of last year - 50 per cent in just one month. I know that's hard to believe but those are the facts - 50 per cent in a single month.

When reviewing the impact of deregulation on electricity rates, a well-known source, RBC Dominion Securities, had this to say: "In unnerving similarity to California's experience, this process has resulted in Alberta's power prices increasing from amongst the lowest in the world to among the highest prices in North America." Madam Speaker, I will table that, in case those on the Opposition benches want to have a look at this.

Alberta's experience has forced them to back away from their deregulation scheme. Same thing really happened in the Province of Ontario where, in that province, they saw rates increase by 30 per cent in less than a year after they opened up the energy markets - something that the Liberal Party has promised is the road to take Nova Scotians down. We



know that hasn't worked for Canadians in other provinces. Ontario's long-term energy plan has this to say about the Liberal deregulation scheme, that it is a tried and abandoned policy. I'll quote again from that long-term energy plan:

“A brief market-deregulation scheme saw electricity prices spike an average of over 30 per cent in just seven months. The government of the day was forced to cap prices for residential and small business owners - an unsustainable policy. The cap just masked the underlying problem of rising cost pressures in an electricity system in need of renewal and additional supply.”

I'll table that as well, Madam Speaker. The Government of Ontario was forced to set artificial caps for electricity rates. They spent taxpayers' hard-earned money, subsidizing their failed electricity scheme to the tune of guess what, about \$900 million a year. The Hamilton Spectator, a well-known paper in the Province of Ontario, reported that that was equivalent to \$3.4 million per hour, and I'll table that for the Opposition to have a look at as well; it outlines it very clearly. The Government of Ontario was forced to set those artificial caps, which we knew was very expensive for the taxpayers of that province.

On the other hand, our government is standing up for Nova Scotians to ensure they get the lowest, fairest electricity rates possible while we pursue the lowest cost option for stable electricity prices over the long term. It's why we rolled back the Progressive Conservative tax on energy and as a result, we're saving Nova Scotians 10 per cent on each power bill. Removing the provincial portion of the HST from electricity is what the Leader of the Official Opposition called bad public policy at that time - imagine that. The fact is, that we know that removing the provincial portion of the HST from home energy, has saved the average Nova Scotian family more than \$700 on their bills since that time, in fact the correct figure is \$719.

Those are real savings for real Nova Scotians; they see that on their bill every month. I know the members of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative Parties voted against that. Why would the Opposition members vote against that? Why did they want to put this financial burden back on the ratepayers of Nova Scotia? Well, I'm not sure, perhaps they can explain that themselves but it's important to note the national surveys comparing the costs of electricity across provinces don't necessarily take this rebate on electricity in this province into account.

Madam Speaker, in 2010 our government released the Renewable Electricity Plan that put into place renewable electricity targets to help us get away from coal and toward more renewable, local and sustainable sources of energy. I believe that we are very much on track to meet our renewable targets of 25 per cent by 2015, and 40 per cent by 2020 using the Lower Churchill. If our government wasn't already on the path to producing more renewable energy, the new federal regulations requiring us to replace coal-fired generating plants would have been a huge issue for Nova Scotia - it would have cost us

over a billion dollars. Our renewable energy plan has helped us to negotiate an equivalency agreement with the federal government which allows us to meet the federal coal and venous gas reduction targets and we did it our way, the most cost effective way for Nova Scotians.

Our energy strategy is about building a diverse, a secure, a sustainable and an affordable electricity supply. We are creating jobs, we are growing the economy. It is why we partnered with Newfoundland and Labrador on Lower Churchill and that is an important 35-year deal to get the lowest possible rates over that period of time. It will provide backup for intermittent power and it will put us in an energy loop. I know my time is just about up, Madam Speaker, but this government is doing much to help reduce and get the lowest, fairest rates for Nova Scotians, thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'm pleased today to rise in my place and participate in late debate, once again, a very important topic of power rates and the economy. One of the things that is now very clear to Nova Scotians is that year over year we have the highest power rates in Canada. That is what is imbedded in the minds of Nova Scotians and this, in fact, is why the current Minister of Energy and the NDP Government are trying to provide rationalization and explanations for what they are trying to do.

The reality is, in fact, Stats Canada documents now show that Nova Scotia rates climbed 7.88 per cent between October 2011 and October 2012. There is no other jurisdiction in Canada that had that kind of increase during that time. As well, as reported in allnovascotia.com today, Halifax now has the highest residential property power rates in the country, surpassing Charlottetown. These are realities that have not been addressed by this government. We all knew that some renewables were going to be coming into the system. It just had to be based on legislation.

Our problem is the monopoly of Nova Scotia Power. That is what has created the dilemma, and unless we break the monopoly of Nova Scotia Power, we have no chance of getting stabilized power rates, much less any kind of reduction - or could we ever get by a year without a power increase.

Well, the petition that I have been putting forward, Madam Speaker, has been asking for that. The Nova Scotia Government, this House of Assembly, the NDP - they have the power to rescind what the Utility and Review Board is putting in place, but we all know now that there was no chance of even a small increase or even of no increase in 2013 and 2014. We know that the NDP cooked a deal with Nova Scotia Power to limit it to 3 per cent for 2013 and 2014, when in fact there would be an election in one of those years. So this is what is taking place in the province.

We know, for example, that rising power rates are crippling business across the province. What we have seen in this House so far in the three-plus years of this government is, in fact, the NDP - they do little, then apologize for Nova Scotia Power's monopoly. I go back to what I consider to be somewhat of a watershed moment in this House, Madam Speaker, when through the Spring session, after we saw a 10 per cent increase in power rates in January, the 9.2 per cent rate of return - in fact, bonuses that came at a time when we could say that they were not just objectionable to Nova Scotians. In fact, they were quite obscene to Nova Scotians, those obscene bonuses - a 23 per cent rate in the CEO's salary. The Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia stood in his place and defended all four of what I have just said. That's what we saw from this Premier and this government. We all know that the relationship has been way too cozy and that there's been no critical element brought in to what Nova Scotia Power has been doing to us for quite some time, but in particular, during the last three and a half years.

The Energy Minister speaks of us going down the road of a deregulated system. Well, I can guarantee that what he is talking about is nowhere near what a Liberal plan would be in breaking the monopoly. I look to one of the little communities in my riding, the community of Berwick, that has the lowest power rates in Nova Scotia. They have a rate 10 per cent lower than the rest of the province. What they do is produce some of their own power and sell it to the utility and buy in bulk and get a better rate.

Well, guess what, Madam Speaker? There are a number of companies that will, in fact - even if we went no further with legislation, but we know we're going to go further with legislation, and allow all kinds of people to put power into the system. But even if we just went through the six utilities that remain, there are companies that will sell power at a regulated price, 10 per cent below what is currently being offered by Nova Scotia Power, so that we can provide competition. We know that is absolutely doable in this province; it's been done in other jurisdictions and our hope is that we would change the way that Nova Scotia ratepayers continue to be hit by Nova Scotia Power with the kind of rates that we currently incur.

When we talk about having a commission set up to look at rural Nova Scotia, I'm not sure where the commission will take us and what they'll recommend, but I certainly know that somebody like Ray Ivany who's trying to work out a better deal for Acadia on whether it's power or whether it's getting natural gas to replace Bunker C, I know one thing, Mr. Ivany will be very honest with whatever government is there. I know he will not be intimidated by Nova Scotia Power in terms of going hard at them for the way they have treated Nova Scotians. This is a government that has simply supported Nova Scotia Power and have not challenged them along the way.

I would say that the skyrocketing power rates continue to plague the individual homeowner and businesses right across this province, and there's one certainty that we can be guaranteed and that is Muskrat Falls is not our answer. Muskrat Falls is a huge

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investment that is guaranteeing Nova Scotia - what the NDP are guaranteeing is 25 years of continuous rate increases. We know it's a very, very expensive proposition.

We could take a look at a whole different regimen of power production. If you take a look at what Germany did in the year 2000, they're on the path to get rid of every one of their coal-fired plants and their nuclear power plants, and what did they do? They allowed every German to produce power; that was the law they brought in in the year 2000.

In Nova Scotia, the minister is right, tidal power, wind power, geothermal, biomass - we have a phenomenal range of possibilities and we should go to small-scale technology that will solve our problem here in Nova Scotia with energy production. This is exactly where we need to be because we have a whole range of five to ten ways in which we can start down the road of looking after and securing our power future. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time allotted for late debate has elapsed.

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 4:23 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2324**

By: Ms. Kelly Regan (Bedford-Birch Cove)

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

Whereas Matt Hume, a tropical fish keeper all of his life, has recently joined the Bedford business community with his new aquarium and tropical fish business called The Golden Guppy; and

Whereas Mr. Hume was previously a manager of Aqua Creations in Halifax, where he earned the reputation of helping tropical fish owners bring ailing creatures back to health; and

Whereas Mr. Hume brings a uniquely artistic touch to his aquariums with the use of driftwood, real stones, and live plants, and wants to encourage the idea of home aquariums as living pieces of art;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matt Hume as he strives to make his new business the hub of the tropical fish industry on the East Coast.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2325**

By: Mr. Andrew Younger (Dartmouth East)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Talent Trust was created to support the career of contralto Portia White more than 65 years ago; and

Whereas since 1944 the NSTT has given out more than \$1.8 million in scholarships to over 1,900 recipients; and

Whereas the 2012 Annual Portia White Award concert will be held at Faith Tabernacle Church this coming Friday night;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly commend Nova Scotia Talent Trust Executive Director Jacqueline Steudler and Scholarship Program

Coordinator Andrea Dymond on their commitment to developing artists and all this year's talented recipients of NSTT scholarships.