



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:</b>	
N.S. Home for Colored Children: Public Inquiry - Initiate, Hon. K. Colwell .....	4434
URB - NSP: General Rate Application - Deny, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4434
<b>PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:</b>	
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. R. Landry .....	4434
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. R. Landry .....	4434
<b>TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:</b>	
Health & Wellness: N.S. Emergency Depts. - Accountability Rept., Hon. D. Wilson .....	4435
<b>STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:</b>	
Health & Wellness: N.S. Emergency Depts. - Accountability Rept., Hon. D. Wilson .....	4435

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 2326, Keating Fam.: Fossil Discoveries - Congrats., Hon. L. Preyra.....	4442
Vote - Affirmative.....	4442
Res. 2327, Order of N.S. (2012): Recipients - Congrats., The Premier (by Hon. Maureen MacDonald).....	4442
Vote - Affirmative.....	4443
Res. 2328, Science Olympics: Participants - Congrats., Hon. R. Jennex.....	4443
Vote - Affirmative.....	4444
Res. 2329, Nature Conservancy (Can.) - Anniv. (50 <sup>th</sup> ), Hon. C. Parker.....	4444
Vote - Affirmative.....	4445

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 153, Community Interest Companies Act, Hon. J. MacDonell.....	4445
No. 154, Education Act, Mr. E. Orrell.....	4445

## NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 2330, Connolly, Pat: Death of - Tribute, Hon. S. McNeil.....	4446
Vote - Affirmative.....	4446
Res. 2331, MV Miner: Gov't. (N.S.) - Remove, Mr. A. MacLeod.....	4446
Vote - Affirmative.....	4447
Res. 2332, Connolly, Pat: Death of - Tribute, Hon. G. Steele.....	4447
Vote - Affirmative.....	4448
Res. 2333, Educ.: Priority - Identify, Hon. K. Casey.....	4448
Res. 2334, Gunn, Heather: Accomplishments/ Commun. Contributions - Applaud, Hon. M. Smith.....	4449
Vote - Affirmative.....	4449
Res. 2335, Sackville Blazers Hockey Team - Anniv. (30 <sup>th</sup> ), Hon. D. Wilson.....	4449
Vote - Affirmative.....	4450
Res. 2336, Johnson, Margaret: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. J. MacDonell.....	4450
Vote - Affirmative.....	4451
Res. 2337, Meagher, Cyril: Intl. Literacy Day Award - Congrats., Hon. S. Belliveau.....	4451
Vote - Affirmative.....	4452

Res. 2338, Cooper, Robert: Northumberland Veterans Unit	
- Dedication/Serv., Hon. C. Parker .....	4452
Vote - Affirmative.....	4452
Res. 2339, Truro Debate Team/Mentors: Accomplishments	
- Congrats., Ms. L. Zann .....	4453
Vote - Affirmative.....	4453
Res. 2340, Lambie, Jim & Sandra: HRM Hospitals -	
Dedication/Vol. Efforts, Ms. B. Kent .....	4453
Vote - Affirmative.....	4454
Res. 2341, Lauren Tutty Promotions: iPhone App -	
Launch Congrats., Ms. V. Conrad .....	4454
Vote - Affirmative.....	4455
Res. 2342, Thompson, Daniel C.: Work - Recognize,	
Mr. C. MacKinnon.....	4455
Vote - Affirmative.....	4456
Res. 2343, Burke, Patrice: WorldSkills America - Gold Medal,	
Hon. W. Estabrooks .....	4456
Vote - Affirmative.....	4456
Res. 2344, Better Care Sooner - Commitment: Clayton Park MLA	
- Thank, Mr. S. Prest.....	4457
Res. 2345, Christmas on the LaHave: Organizers - Congrats.,	
Mr. G. Ramey .....	4457
Vote - Affirmative.....	4458
Res. 2346, Langille, John: Commun. Contribution	
- Thank, Mr. B. Skabar .....	4458
Vote - Affirmative.....	4459
Res. 2347, Nielsen, Jeff: Social Networking - Congrats.,	
Mr. M. Whynott .....	4459
Vote - Affirmative.....	4460
Res. 2348, Collaborative Emergency Centres - Success:	
Kings West MLA - Acknowledge, Mr. J. Morton.....	4460
Res. 2349, Mahone Nursing Home - Mini Art Gallery:	
Vols. - Recognize, Ms. P. Birdsall.....	4461
Vote - Affirmative.....	4461
Res. 2350, MacEachern, Cpl. Kate: "Soldier On" Fundraising	
- Congrats., Hon. M. Smith.....	4461
Vote - Affirmative.....	4462
Res. 2351, Potter, Don & Terry - Burrito Jax: Opening	
- Congrats., Hon. D. Wilson .....	4462
Vote - Affirmative.....	4463
Res. 2352, Isles, Kenneth: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal	
- Congrats., Hon. J. MacDonell .....	4463
Vote - Affirmative.....	4463

Res. 2353, Cox, Bill: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal	
- Congrats., Hon. S. Belliveau .....	4464
Vote - Affirmative.....	4464
Res. 2354, Tatamagouche CEC - Hfx. Clayton Park/Col. North MLAs:	
NDP Gov't. - Thank, Hon. C. Parker.....	4464
Res. 2355, Hayes, Kelsey - Best Buddies Prog.: Dedication	
- Congrats., Ms. B. Kent .....	4465
Vote - Affirmative.....	4466
Res. 2356, Cobequid Cougars Boys Soccer Team - Bronze Medal:	
Players/Coaches - Congrats., Ms. L. Zann.....	4466
Vote - Affirmative.....	4467
Res. 2357, Burse, Andrew/Dixie Lee Fam. Rest.:	
Entrepreneurial Spirit - Congrats., Ms. V. Conrad .....	4467
Vote - Affirmative.....	4467
Res. 2358, Springhill/Parrsboro CECs - Cumb. So. MLA:	
NDP Gov't. - Thank, Mr. C. MacKinnon .....	4468
Res. 2359, Benson, Jenny: Aninga Proj. - Work - Recognize,	
Hon. G. Steele.....	4468
Vote - Affirmative.....	4469
Res. 2360, Thorburne, Wayne - Bridgewater Town Coun.:	
Election - Congrats., Mr. G. Ramey .....	4469
Vote - Affirmative.....	4470
Res. 2361, Pugwash CEC - Argyle MLA: NDP - Thank,	
Mr. B. Skabar .....	4470
Res. 2362, Valley Bantam Bulldogs - Football Championship:	
Successful Season - Congrats., Mr. J. Morton.....	4471
Vote - Affirmative.....	4471
Res. 2363, Baird, Gail: Natl. Teaching Award - Congrats.,	
Mr. M. Whynott .....	4471
Vote - Affirmative.....	4472
Res. 2364, Tanner, Charlie: Lun. Santa Claus Parade	
Grand Marshall - Congrats., Ms. P. Birdsall.....	4472
Vote - Affirmative.....	4473
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:	
No. 487, Educ.: Cuts (3 <sup>rd</sup> Yr.) - Stop,	
Hon. S. McNeil .....	4474
No. 488, Educ.: Class Sizes - Legislate,	
Hon. J. Baillie .....	4475
No. 489, ERDT - Rural N.S.: Jobs - Exodus,	
Hon. S. McNeil .....	4476
No. 490, ERDT - Southern N.S.: Jobs - Exodus,	
Mr. G. MacLellan .....	4477
No. 491, Energy: Electricity Plan - Rewrite,	
Hon. J. Baillie .....	4478
No. 492, ERDT: C.B. Jobs - Exodus,	
Mr. G. MacLellan .....	4480

No. 493, ERDT - Nova Scotians: Econ. Status (2009/2012) - Comparison, Mr. A. MacLeod.....	4481
No. 494, CCH - My-Play: Analysis/Patent Search - Details, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4483
No. 495, TIR: Aboriginal Reserves - Paving, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	4484
No. 496, ERDT - Rural Economy: Task Force - Necessity Explain, Mr. G. MacLellan .....	4486
No. 497, ERDT - Trade Centre: Funding - Details, Mr. A. Younger.....	4488
No. 498, Lbr. & Advanced Educ.: Pictou Co. Injured Workers Assoc. - Funding, Hon. K. Colwell .....	4489
No. 499, Health & Wellness - ER Physicians: Central Database - Interest, Hon. S. McNeil.....	4490
No. 500, Fish. & Aquaculture - Southwestern N.S. Fishers: Prices - Min. Efforts, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	4492
No. 501, TIR - Crosswalk Safety: Awareness - Efforts, Hon. W. Gaudet .....	4494
No. 502, Health & Wellness: Newborn Screening - CF Testing, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4495
No. 503, Health & Wellness - 811 Serv.: Reg. Nurse - Availability, Mr. L. Glavine.....	4497
No. 504, TIR - Serv. Areas: Changes - Explain, Mr. C. Porter .....	4499
OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 103, Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act Hon. M. Samson .....	4501
Mr. M. Whynott .....	4501
Mr. K. Bain .....	4502
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
Res. 2275, Yar. Ferry: NDP Gov't. - Mishandling Mr. Z. Churchill .....	4503
Mr. G. Ramey .....	4507
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	4512
Mr. G. MacLellan .....	4516
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
NDP Gov't.: Better Care Sooner - Collaborative Emergency Centres Mr. G. Burrill .....	4521
Ms. D. Whalen .....	4523
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	4526
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., Nov. 29 <sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon .....	4529

## NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 2365, Giles, Steve: N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Hon. S. McNeil .....	4530
Res. 2366, King of Donair Men's Soccer Club (2001): N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Hon. S. McNeil.....	4530
Res. 2367, Murray, Glen: N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Hon. S. McNeil .....	4531
Res. 2368, Barton, Julie: N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Hon. S. McNeil .....	4531
Res. 2369, Horsman, Vince: N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Hon. S. McNeil .....	4532
Res. 2370, LeBlanc, Dave: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4532
Res. 2371, Comeau, Wilson: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4533
Res. 2372, Melanson, Jean: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4533
Res. 2373, Comeau, Pierre: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4534
Res. 2374, Maillet, Robert: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4534
Res. 2375, Robicheau, Claredon: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4535
Res. 2376, Melanson, Lucy: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4535
Res. 2377, Basque, Elsie: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4536
Res. 2378, Comeau, Aline: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4536
Res. 2379, Boudreau, Harold: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal - Congrats., Hon. W. Gaudet.....	4537



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2012**

**Sixty-first General Assembly**

**Fourth Session**

**2:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Gordon Gosse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine, the subject for late debate has been chosen, which I will now read:

Therefore be it resolved that despite Opposition claims that emergency rooms could not be kept open, the NDP Government has proven that they are keeping their election commitment and increasing access to Better Care Sooner through the creation of Collaborative Emergency Centres.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, a Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Petition for Inquiry, requesting an inquiry into the alleged abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings West.

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

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

#### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

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

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

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

#### **Bill No. 140 - Transgendered Persons Protection Act.**



**Bill No. 143 - Importation of Wine for Personal Use Act.**

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

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

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report, the Annual Accountability Report on Emergency Departments.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present the third annual Accountability Report on Emergency Departments for Nova Scotia. The purpose of this report is to make the management of emergency health care more transparent and provide a tool for holding governments accountable to Nova Scotians. This report also gives government and the district health authorities accurate, reliable data so we can better understand the challenges facing our emergency care system.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, emergency department closures have been a long-standing problem in this province. For too many years now, Nova Scotians, especially those living in rural communities, have sometimes had to deal with finding their emergency departments closed. The reasons behind emergency department closures are complex, and it is not a problem that will be fixed overnight. However, this government is taking the necessary steps to improve emergency care and to make life better for Nova Scotians and their families.

To that end, in December 2010, government launched the Better Care Sooner plan. Better Care Sooner is a plan to improve emergency care in Nova Scotia by keeping emergency departments open, reducing patient wait times, and providing better care for Nova Scotians and their families.

Over the past year, through Better Care Sooner, the Department of Health and Wellness has taken strong actions to reduce the number of emergency room closures in our province. For example, we have opened six Collaborative Emergency Centres - in

Parrsboro, Springhill, Pugwash, Tatamagouche, Annapolis Royal, and Musquodoboit Harbour. More CECs will open this coming year. We invested \$22 million in home care initiatives, which will allow seniors to get more of the help and support they need in their homes, thus reducing their trips to the emergency department.

Mr. Speaker, we launched an emergency department coverage program, which is helping to match doctors with emergency departments that would otherwise be closed. We diverted thousands of patients headed for the emergency room to the new rapid assessment unit at our busiest emergency room in Halifax, getting them better care sooner. We've also hired paramedics to work at nursing homes so Nova Scotia's highly trained paramedics will be able to treat seniors in the place they live rather than making the frail and elderly wait in ambulances at the emergency departments. I know last year this program alone diverted over 2,000 transports to the local emergency department.

Mr. Speaker, trained advance care paramedics immediately give life-saving drugs to Nova Scotians having a heart attack rather than waiting until they arrive at the hospital. This was a new program that was piloted in Cape Breton, in the Sydney region, a number of years ago - about three years ago - where paramedics trialed the use of clot-busting medication for those Nova Scotians who were having a heart attack. I can say today that it has worked extremely well and I have no question that this new procedure and service that's offered by our paramedics in Nova Scotia has saved lives.

We launched the Supportive Care Program, which gives low-income seniors and their caregivers greater control and flexibility to organize home care. We continued the Healthlink 811 public awareness campaign, so people across Nova Scotia know that they can call a nurse 24 hours a day and receive professional advice over the phone.

These bold steps are beginning to bear fruit, Mr. Speaker. This accountability report marks the third year in a row of decline in emergency room closures here in Nova Scotia. In communities where CECs are open, that decline has been dramatic and other provinces are wanting to emulate the great things we are doing here in health care in Nova Scotia. This past summer the Premiers of Canada's provinces and territories gathered in Halifax and in Lunenburg, and health care was at the top of their agenda.

Just as for Canadians, Nova Scotians know Collaborative Emergency Centres are generating excitement and promise, Mr. Speaker. Both Saskatchewan and P.E.I. are now looking to Nova Scotia as they establish similar centres and services in their provinces, and we should be very proud of that - not only be very proud of it but ensure that we thank the men and women who are providing health care here in our province because it's those individuals who are making a real difference in the lives of Nova Scotians when it comes to health care services.

The recognition Nova Scotia is receiving and the data contained in this accountability report show that our province is on the right track but what's most important

is the difference that Better Care Sooner is making to Nova Scotians and in their lives, Mr. Speaker: the senior who can get a same-day or next-day appointment with a doctor or a nurse practitioner or a physiotherapist, so that an everyday health care concern can be treated before it becomes an emergency.

I've heard this first-hand from residents in Parrsboro, for example, who used to wait five to six weeks to see a primary care clinician. Now with that CEC open in Parrsboro, they're seeing service the same day or next day and that makes a world of a difference, especially to a senior who needs to gain access to primary care in their community, the family who can count on their local emergency room being open - lights on, doors open, skilled people or a team ready - when their children need urgent care at night.

People like Wanitta Gregory from the Young's Cove area are seeing a change for the better. A few weeks after the CEC opened in that area, Ms. Gregory said: "What a difference . . . I got into my appointment on time and the doctor I saw really took the time to go over everything with me and answer my questions. I wasn't rushed and everyone was really supportive and friendly at the centre."

To that end I am pleased to present this third annual Accountability Report on Emergency Departments for Nova Scotia and am more committed than ever to reducing closures and keeping emergency rooms open.

On the whole there was a decrease in 1,203 hours of emergency department closures in 2011 and 2012, as compared with the previous year. Emergency departments across the province were open 94.7 per cent overall and, no question, I don't want to settle on that number, we want to continue to work to see the number increase and the number of closures decrease across the province.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the communities where CECs exist have experienced even more dramatic decreases in the number of emergency department closures. For example, in the communities like Springhill and Parrsboro the emergency department closures are down 96 and 93 per cent, respectively, as compared to last year. (Applause)

These changes, Mr. Speaker, are tremendously positive but government is not doing it alone and we're not done either. Communities and health care workers have embraced new ways of working that are better for the patient and make it easier to recruit and retain skilled professionals to communities across this province. Their work and openness to change has made it possible for us to move forward and truly address emergency department closures and change is never easy. To that end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the health care workers in Nova Scotia who over the past two years have embraced the Better Care Sooner plan. I'd like to thank the CEOs, the board chairs, the workers within the district health authorities who are all working hard to make

real the ideas of government. (Interruption) And paramedics. I believe they do embrace it, Mr. Speaker, and I better not go down those tracks.

Progress is being made, Mr. Speaker, however there is still work to be done. Every emergency department closure still has an impact on patients and on the provincial emergency care system. More initiatives under the Better Care Sooner plan are expected and positive results of all these actions will be reflected in the years to come. Again, I'd like to thank those health care providers who have worked extremely hard to bring these services and the change of model care that we see especially in our Collaborative Emergency Centres.

I also want to thank the communities because this wasn't an easy road. We went into those communities recognizing there had been chronic issues of closures of emergency departments for decades. We asked those communities to allow us to try to change that, to try to address what's at the root of the closures and I truly thank those communities that have embraced the Collaborative Emergency Centres. You don't have to take my word for it you just need to go into these communities and ask them about the Collaborative Emergency Centres and what they think about them. With those few words, I welcome the comments from the Opposition Parties and I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place and respond to the minister's statement regarding the Accountability Report on Emergency Departments, one that we had been asking for some time for, so I do appreciate the minister bringing it forward. I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

There is no question that the issue of emergency room closures is complex and that is why a simple statement made by the NDP Government in the 2009 election, a commitment to keep ERs open around this province 24/7, is one that this government has yet to accomplish. Despite comments from the Premier stating this government has accomplished all the platform commitments, this statement today is proof this government has yet to honour this promise they made to Nova Scotians three years ago.

In my area of the province the number of emergency room closures at Soldiers' Memorial is escalating despite all of the great things the minister has stated he has done here today. In many instances the closures at Soldiers' Memorial coincide with ER closures at the Digby Hospital, oftentimes leaving the Valley Regional and the Yarmouth Regional the only two emergency departments open, covering all of the Valley and the southwestern region of Nova Scotia. This, in many ways, to my constituents and to those of Annapolis County indeed, is very, very alarming.

I don't say this in any joking or flippant manner, Mr. Speaker, but in my community now, when Soldiers' Memorial is closed and they have to go to Valley

Regional, the word is “take a lunch with you.” You know you are going to be waiting five, six, seven, or even eight hours before you will be seen, and that is truly alarming. Soldiers’ Memorial is serving an area, demographically, making up 25,000 to 30,000 people.

I’m sure the residents of the Valley will be very interested in hearing of the minister’s progress today. The minister has indicated there have been six Collaborative Emergency Centres opened in the province and we know this is a good thing, but it now calls for really a definition of what is a true emergency room.

It bears mentioning, Mr. Speaker, that some of these centres experienced closures as well since opening. He also inserted a word in today’s statement that is worth noting - he stated the CECs are offering “urgent” care. There is a distinction between urgent care and emergency care and the people of Nova Scotia know this.

As the minister pointed out, and I do need to reflect on, we are truly blessed in the Province of Nova Scotia with one of the finest paramedic services in North America and on many days they are holding some fragility of the emergency room system together for sure.

The minister today informs us that on the whole there was a decrease of 1,203 hours of emergency room closures in 2011 and 2012 over the previous year. To put real numbers on this statement, emergency rooms were closed for 17,717 hours in 2011 and 2012. The minister made the statement that emergency rooms were open 94.7 per cent overall, an improvement of 0.4 per cent since the last report. Mr. Speaker, we are a long way from the government’s commitment to keep emergency rooms open 24/7. Today’s report, highlighting 17,717 hours of closures is proof of this point.

With these few comments, Mr. Speaker, I take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to thank the minister for a copy of his remarks, and I also want to say that the members of our caucus have been waiting for this report for some time. The first report from this government was tabled in March 2010, and last year the report was available or issued in May.

We all waited in the Spring of 2012 for the report, but we were all disappointed. All the department would continue to tell us was that it is coming. Of course we said many times, Mr. Speaker, well yes, so is Christmas. So here we are, on the afternoon when we expect the first real snowfall of the year and Christmas songs are playing in the stores, here is the report, finally. So by my count the report being tabled today is about 18 months since the last one was brought forward, and about six months late. It makes you wonder whether or not this government is trying to put off having to face the music about the real impact of ER closures on Nova Scotians.

Now I agree with the minister when he says that emergency room closures are a long-standing issue that can't be fixed overnight. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 this government promised Nova Scotians to keep their emergency rooms open 24/7. That was an easy and quick fix. The document tabled today is concrete proof that the NDP broke their emergency room promise to the people who voted for them, and to all Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from the Valley just said, from April 2011 to March 31, 2012, the total of emergency room closures was 17,717 hours and nowhere in this report does it talk about how long Nova Scotians have to wait when they do find an emergency room open in Nova Scotia.

Today we hear a lot from the minister about Collaborative Emergency Centres. CECs are not emergency rooms. The minister told us that families expect the lights to be on and the doors to be open when their child needs care, or their family member needs care, or their elderly parent needs care. But he forgot one thing: Nova Scotians expect a physician to be on site when they get there and that is not always the case with a CEC. In Nova Scotia we're lucky to have so many dedicated and skilled health professionals. Each profession has a role to play to ensure that Nova Scotians get appropriate care and that includes physicians.

The minister points out the good experience one Nova Scotian had at a local CEC. Unfortunately, for every positive story, this report will no doubt prove that there are many other Nova Scotians who arrive at their local emergency room to find the lights out and the doors locked or wait for hours and hours on end. It is wrong for the minister to compare the 2010 and 2011 Emergency Room Accountability Report to what he tabled today. It's like comparing apples to oranges. On one hand, many ER closures listed in today's document will be due to physician shortage, yet CECs, which don't have doctors on site, will not be recorded as a closure. This is a little disingenuous for the minister to quote this statistic. A closure in one community might very well be business as usual for another.

With that, I'm very much looking forward very much to taking a close look at today's report, the report that shows that emergency rooms were closed in this province for 17,717 hours. That is unacceptable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North on an introduction.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make an introduction. I would like to draw the attention of the members to the west gallery in the far seat we have two of my constituents: Joy Laking, well known artist, many of us have her works in our offices or in our homes; and her husband Jim Wyatt. I would like to welcome them to the House. As you know, Joy is well known and Joy has just been the recipient of a Queens Diamond Jubilee Award, so I'd like to congratulate Joy on that. Her husband, Jim, is a very active member of the district health authority in District 4, Colchester-East Hants, and I'd like to thank him for his contribution to our community and to ensure that you are

able to hear the comments today from the minister and the Opposition, which we know directly impacts on the work you do. On behalf of all of us, welcome Joy and Jim to the House and I hope you enjoy the proceedings. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle on an introduction.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you. As we are doing introductions, I want to introduce some other people that are in the west gallery today, a couple of constituents of mine. From Middle West Pubnico, I have Karmen and Sheree - Karmen is a Grade 8 student from Drumlin Heights Consolidated School in Argyle. Of course, Sheree, driving him around to Halifax today, Karmen has a keen interest in politics and is here to see the proceedings on the floor of this Legislature, maybe some questions during Question Period so I want them to be welcomed to this great Legislature. (Applause)

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: May I make an introduction? Joining us in the east gallery today is a remarkable family or two families. Joining us today is the family who discovered the unique 300,000,000 year old fossils of a sail-back amphibian on the Northumberland Shore, which was unveiled at the Museum of Natural History in August. I find it really cool that 300,000,000 years ago we had amphibians growing sails, perhaps ships started there. It is great that the first amphibians were growing sails, that we were doing sails 350 million years ago. (Interruptions)

I would like to introduce - and if they could rise as I introduce them - Patrick and Susie Keating, and Peter and Peggy Keating with their children - Thomas, Benjamin, Grace, and Lilly. They also have a dog named Kitty, but Kitty is not in the audience, but Kitty was also one of the people who discovered the amphibian. Also with them is the Nova Scotia Museum's Curator of Geology Deborah Skilliter, who has been working with the Keating family and other researchers to bring to light what this animal was and how it lives.

I want to thank Deborah and the Keating family for being here today. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2326**

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

Whereas Patrick and Susie Keating and their son, Zachery, while walking along the Northumberland Shore with their dog, Kitty, discovered the rib cage, backbone, partial sail, and skull of a sailback amphibian, the first of its kind ever to be found in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Peter and Peggy Keating and their children - Thomas, Benjamin, Grace and Lilly - took the pieces to the Nova Scotia Museum where the fossil was named Superstar because of how well-preserved and unique the find was to the province; and

Whereas the Special Places Protection Act protects important archeological, historical, and palaeontological sites and remains, so that fossils of extinct lands and animals can connect us to our past by helping to tell the story of Nova Scotia's and the earth's history;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Keating family for making one of the most significant fossil discoveries in Nova Scotia, and thank them for bringing Superstar to the Nova Scotia Museum so that it can be properly researched, displayed, and enjoyed by thousands of people for years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2327**

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



Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour the province can bestow on its citizens; and

Whereas Silver Donald Cameron, the late Graham W. Dennis, Alexa Ann McDonough, the late Robert James Morgan, and Bridglal Pachai have made immeasurable contributions to their communities and this province as a whole; and

Whereas these outstanding Nova Scotians were formally invested into the Order of Nova Scotia today, at a ceremony hosted by His Honour, Brigadier-General The Honourable J.J. Grant, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia and Chancellor of the Order of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the recipients of the 2012 Order of Nova Scotia and encourage all Nova Scotians to continue to nominate those who have made, and continue to make, our province a better place to live.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2328**

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

Whereas on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 30 teams of Grade 4 and Grade 5 students from throughout the province, including a group of visiting students from Colombia, took part in the Nova Scotia Science Olympics at Saint Mary's University; and

Whereas these students used their creativity and enthusiasm to explore several scientific challenges that encouraged them to "question, investigate, and discover"; and

Whereas many school staff, chaperones, parents, and volunteers invested their time and energy to help make this day a great success;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Legislature congratulate all of the schools, students, and volunteers who took part in this year's Science Olympics and encourage them to continue exploring the world of science in new and creative ways.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2329**

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

Whereas today the Nature Conservancy of Canada is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as Canada's leading national land conservation organization; and

Whereas the Nature Conservancy of Canada has helped protect over 2.6 million acres of ecologically-sensitive lands across this country, including more than 25,000 acres of wetlands, forests, and coastal natural areas here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Government of Nova Scotia is pleased to partner with the Nature Conservancy of Canada through a conservation agreement that helps protect key habitats and the plants and animals they sustain;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Nature Conservancy of Canada on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and commend them for identifying, securing, and caring for some of the province's significant landscapes and creating a lasting natural legacy for us, our children, and our grandchildren to enjoy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Before I introduce this bill, could I do an introduction, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. MACDONELL: I'd like to draw the attention of members to the gallery opposite, in connection with this piece of legislation I'm about to introduce. There was a Nova Scotia social enterprise working group, which was a partnership between government and community partners.

In the gallery opposite we have - and I'm going to ask them to stand as I call their names - Joanne MacRae, who is not a stranger to this House - people may remember Joanne as a Page in the House of Assembly - co-founder of The Hub Halifax; David Upton, a co-founder of Common Good Solutions Inc. and president of the Atlantic Council for Community and Social Enterprise; and Mr. Richard Bridge, a lawyer who works regularly with the social enterprise sector in Nova Scotia. I'd like the House to give these three individuals a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 153 - Entitled an Act Respecting Community Interest Companies.**  
(Hon. John MacDonell)

**Bill No. 154 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act.** (Mr. Eddie Orrell)

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. 2330**

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

Whereas on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, the world of sports lost both a friend and a fan with the passing of a true gentleman, Pat Connolly; and

Whereas Pat's work with local radio and television, as well as serving as the official announcer for the Nova Scotia Voyageurs, the Halifax Citadels, and the Halifax Mooseheads, has left all of us with fond memories of not only an extraordinary voice but with the fountain of information on sports in general and local sports in particular; and

Whereas while his commitment and passion for local sports and its athletes are legendary, his passion for supporting his community and helping those who needed help will never be forgotten;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly extend our condolences to Pat's wife Betty, his son David, daughter-in-law Allison, and grandchildren Brigid and Alec, and honour his memory by strengthening our appreciation for immense talent our local athletes possess and be ever mindful of the importance strong, active communities play in the lives of so many.

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. 2331**

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

Whereas it has been more than a year since the MV Miner ran aground off Scatarie Island; and

Whereas as time passes, local communities have growing concerns that the deteriorating ship will pose a significant risk to the local fishery; and

Whereas the government needs to stop wasting time, take responsibility and live up to their statement about taking on the job of removing the vessel;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remind the government that these communities have legitimate concerns, and that they must take the lead and remove the ship and assign the costs to whomever, once it is removed.

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 Fairview.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2332**

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia sport community lost a legend yesterday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, with the passing of Pat Connolly; and

Whereas Pat was Atlantic Canada's first television sport host and only recently retired from the limelight after over 60 years as an active contributor to Nova Scotia sports; and

Whereas generations of athletes, fans, and enthusiasts will surely miss his personality, his knowledge, and his booming voice;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House pay tribute to Pat Connolly for his years of dedication to sport in Nova Scotia, and extend our thoughts to all who knew and loved him on his recent passing.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2333**

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

Whereas during this session of the Legislature the Liberal caucus has introduced seven bills focusing on public education, including Bill No. 10, a Blueprint for the Future of Public Education in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas a second bill, Bill No. 110, an Act to Ensure Appropriate Supports in the Classroom for Children with Special Needs, is designed to address the complexities and diversities in every classroom and help all students in those classrooms be successful; and

Whereas a third bill, Bill No. 120, an Act to Ensure Appropriate Class Sizes, beginning with capping class sizes in Primary to Grade 3, addresses the concern shared with us from both parents and teachers;

Therefore be it resolved that the NDP Government listen to the messages from parents and teachers, start to identify education as a priority, and reinvest the \$65 million they cut from public education.

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 Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2334**

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

Whereas on June 8, 2012, 60 young Nova Scotians received Diamond Jubilee Scholarships in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee; and

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Scholarships were awarded to Grade 12 students who are leaders in and have made significant contributions to their communities and the province; and

Whereas Heather Gunn, a student at Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School, received a Diamond Jubilee Scholarship in recognition of her role in establishing the Gender and Sexuality Alliance at her high school, as well as her work as a board member of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House applaud Heather Gunn for her accomplishments and contributions to her community and wish her all the best 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.

There is a lot of chatter in the Assembly this afternoon. I would remind the honourable members to please take that outside the Chamber so I can listen to the Notices of Motion.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2335**

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 Sackville Blazers play in Nova Scotia's Junior Hockey League; and

Whereas the team began in the 1982-83 season and is the only team to win three consecutive Don Johnson Cups as Maritime Junior B Champions and were inducted into the Sackville Sports Hall of Fame in 2011; and

Whereas the Sackville Blazers marked their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with celebration and an alumni game taking place between October 13-15, 2012, involving alumni from the past three decades;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Nova Scotia Junior Hockey League team, the Sackville Blazers who are unbeaten three-time Junior B Champions and members of the Sackville Sports Hall of Fame on marking their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in October 2012, and wish them future 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 Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2336**

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

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

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

Whereas Margaret Johnson of Shubenacadie was honoured with a presentation of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her dedication and commitment to helping her community;



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

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2337**

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

Whereas Lockeport businessman Cyril Meagher was presented with the Workplace Education Champion Ambassador Award during the International Literacy Day Awards and Recognition Ceremony on September 7, 2012; and

Whereas Cyril Meagher has been involved with the Workplace Education initiative since 1998, helping to bring education and training opportunities to his staff at Allendale's Electronics; and

Whereas Cyril Meagher has also served as a member of the Nova Scotia Partners for Workplace Education Advisory Committee for the past 12 years, helping to promote workplace education and its benefits to business and employees throughout Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Lockeport businessman Cyril Meagher for receiving the Workplace Education Championship Ambassador Award during the International Literacy Day Awards and Recognition Ceremony on September 7, 2012.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2338**

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

Whereas Dr. Robert Cooper of Pictou is the in-house physician at the Northumberland Veterans Unit in Pictou; and

Whereas Dr. Cooper's commitment to patient care is evident in the many hours he spends working with the veterans at the Northumberland Veterans Unit staff, to ensure that the veterans receive the best of care during their stay in the Veterans Unit in Pictou; and

Whereas Dr. Cooper not only provides medical care at the Veterans Unit but also has developed a new record-keeping system model that will be used to provide up-to-date and accurate information for both patients and staff;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly thank Dr. Robert Cooper for his dedication and service to the veterans of the Northumberland Veterans Unit in Pictou.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2339**

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

Whereas the Truro Debate Team of Cobequid Educational Centre - the high school - develops confidence, public speaking skills, and knowledge of global and current issues that its members find very useful in many of their high school courses, as well as a preparation for careers such as law and politics; and

Whereas the Truro Debate Team, mentored by Lesley Fisher and Paul Millman, has won the provincial title at the Nova Scotia Senior High Impromptu Debating Championships 2012; and

Whereas the Truro Debate Team of Sarah Millman, Brie Dukeshire, Rumana Rafiq, and Leanna Langille will make history by representing both their school and province at the national championship in Calgary next April, as well as at the Oxford Cup for the North American championship in November;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Truro Debate Team and its mentors on their accomplishments and wish them well in their upcoming competitions and their future careers.

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. 2340**

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

Whereas Jim and Sandra Lambie of Cole Harbour have spent several years as volunteers at the IWK and the Dartmouth General Hospital; and

Whereas Sandra is in her second term as president of the Dartmouth General Hospital Auxiliary and also served as one of the volunteer buyers of the Dartmouth General Hospital Gift Shop; and

Whereas Jim served as past president of the Auxiliary of the IWK Health Centre for several years, is presently the volunteer coordinator for Pediatric Palliative Care Services at the IWK, is a palliative care volunteer visiting patients at the hospital and in a home setting, and is also a member of the Dartmouth General Hospital Auxiliary, as a palliative care volunteer working with adults;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Jim and Sandra Lambie for their dedication and volunteer efforts for the hospitals and patients of HRM.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2341**

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

Whereas in the competitive world of the music industry, promoters must rise above the competition to benefit their clients; and

Whereas Lauren Tutty Promotions of Liverpool has taken the initiative to launch her own iPhone app to efficiently and effectively connect her clients with radio station music directors; and

Whereas this promotional app by Lauren Tutty Promotions provides music directors with access to her clients' music, lyrics, latest CDs, performance schedule, and other relevant information at their convenience through mobile Apple devices;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Lauren Tutty Promotions on the launch of her iPhone app.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2342**

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

Whereas Daniel C. Thompson, born at Skinner's Dam, Pictou County, in 1930, raised in the Town of Westville, later as a young man would experience North America, including California, before returning to his home town to start a vinyl record store and become a concert promoter who brought many major acts to Pictou County, including Johnny Cash; and

Whereas in 1970 Dan Thompson, a graduate of the Maritime Business College, set up a bookkeeping and income tax service in Westville and to this day he continues to oversee his business and remains committed to contributing to community life; and

Whereas Dan Thompson, while overseeing his business, became a leader in lobbying government to drop the provincial income tax on the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement and has been recognized by a former Finance Minister for his contribution;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize and honour Daniel C. Thompson of Westville for his work and wish him continued good health.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2343**

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

Whereas from November 12<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, a group of talented young people formed the first Team Canada at the WorldSkills Americas in Brazil; and

Whereas while up against 50 other chefs from 19 countries and regions in the Americas, 21-year-old Patrice Burke of Shad Bay competed in the baking category; and

Whereas Ms. Burke's talents and determination vaulted her to a gold medal win making her the pride of her family and friends and her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Patrice Burke of Shad Bay on her gold medal win at the WorldSkills Americas competition in Brazil and wish her "sweet" success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2344**

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

Whereas the people of Musquodoboit Harbour and area will soon receive better care sooner thanks to the announcement of a new Collaborative Emergency Centre; and

Whereas CECs are part of the NDP Government's commitment to keep emergency rooms open, a commitment that has clearly been kept; and

Whereas despite the member for Halifax Clayton Park's assertion on April 8, 2010, that the commitment to keep emergency rooms open "doesn't hold water", the NDP Government has done just that;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, including the member for Halifax Clayton Park, thank the NDP Government for keeping their commitment to provide better care sooner with the establishment of a Collaborative Emergency Centre in Musquodoboit Harbour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2345**

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

Whereas on Sunday evening the Town of Bridgewater, in conjunction with the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, held their very successful annual parade and festival known as Christmas on the LaHave; and

Whereas this event was attended by thousands of people, the direct result of great planning by folks like Bill McGinnis, Wayne Thorburne, Mike Graves, Cheryl Fougere, Joanne Falkenham, Frank Fawson, Cathy Moore, Janice Rand, Carol Pickings-Anthony,

Dave Hadley, John Swain, Kerry Oickle, Greg Ritcey, Phillip Oakes and a host of others, as well as support from Mayor Don Downe, the mayor of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and David Walker, the newly elected mayor of Bridgewater; and

Whereas this event was made even more successful because of the terrific support of the local area businesses, which supported the event by entering 65 beautifully decorated floats which wowed the crowd along the parade route, pleasing young and old, myself included;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate - are you ready for this? - Bill McGinnis, Wayne Thorburne, Mike Graves, Cheryl Fougere, Joanne Falkenham, Frank Fawson, Cathy Moore, Janice Rand, Carol Pickings-Anthony, Dave Hadley, John Swain, Kerry Oickle, Greg Ritcey, and Phillip Oakes for organizing this great event, Mayors Downe and Walker for their support, and the local businesses and the public for embracing it, and wish them all success and prosperity in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2346**

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

Whereas in Nova Scotia many people generously give of their time and ask for nothing in return; and

Whereas John Langille is one of these people who quietly works behind the scenes by helping the local food bank, by writing letters for veterans' families and seniors to help them address their concerns with their pension and health care, by driving seniors to their doctor appointments, and by cleaning up after local community events; and



Whereas John does these acts, and many others, to help the people of his community without any concern for repayment or recognition;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly acknowledge and thank John Langille for giving freely of his time and expertise to help the people in his community without ever asking anything in return.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2347**

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

Whereas social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook are not only household names, but they are also useful tools to spread information which is used by millions around the world; and

Whereas Lower Sackville native Jeff Nielsen uses his Twitter handle - get this - @sack\_vegas as an outreach tool for residents in Lower Sackville to use for traffic updates, news alerts pertaining to the Sackvilles, and other newsworthy items; and

Whereas Jeff Nielsen uses the social media tool to quickly and easily bring attention to everything from community activist projects such as the Acadia Inclusive Playground to school closures;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend Jeff Nielsen for the work he is doing to keep the hard-working families of Lower, Middle, and Upper Sackville informed and aware of what is going on in our communities.

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. 2348**

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

Whereas on November 19, 2009, the member for Kings West wrongly told Nova Scotians that three or four emergency rooms were going to close; and

Whereas the newly announced Collaborative Emergency Centre in Annapolis Royal will help deliver better care sooner to families and individuals in the Valley area; and

Whereas this NDP Government is delivering on its commitment to keep emergency rooms open and ensuring Nova Scotians receive the care they need when and where they need it;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, including the member for Kings West, acknowledge the success of the Collaborative Emergency Centres in delivering better care sooner to Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2349**

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

Whereas a 1990 renovation of the Mahone Nursing Home created a blank wall space, which inspired Lunenburg artist Ruby Stewart to create a mini art gallery within the nursing home; and

Whereas many artists have showcased their work at the gallery, located just past the reception desk, showing their work for a month with a small commission from sales going towards the Mahone Nursing Home Residential Council Society; and

Whereas volunteer curator Melanie Cooke encourages visitors to visit the mini gallery within the nursing home and see recent works by Frans Ayelts, including a piece entitled *Bluenose II Launch*;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the volunteer efforts of the Mahone Nursing Home to create a mini art gallery within its walls, and to provide exhibition space for artists while providing enjoyment for residents and visitors.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2350**

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

Whereas Corporal Kate MacEachern, an Antigonish native, spent much of June 2012 undertaking a unique fundraiser for Soldier On, a program for injured Canadian Forces members; and

Whereas Corporal MacEachern set out on June 4<sup>th</sup> from her base at CFB Gagetown, wearing a full rucksack weighing 60 pounds and walking the route to Antigonish; and

Whereas Corporal MacEachern arrived in Antigonish on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to a welcome home reception, having walked 572 kilometres and breaking the world record for longest distance travelled in full military garb and rucksack;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Corporal MacEachern on a successful fundraiser and thank her for her dedication in raising awareness for such an important issue.

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. 2351**

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

Whereas Don Potter was the owner/operator of Lower Sackville's Downsview Esso station for 17 years; and

Whereas Don partnered with his son Terry to open a Burrito Jax franchise at 720 Sackville Drive in Lower Sackville; and

Whereas Burrito Jax opened in October 2012 and has created 15 full- and part-time jobs;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Don Potter and his son Terry Potter on the October opening of their Burrito Jax franchise at 720 Sackville Drive and wish them future 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 Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2352**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2353**

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

Whereas Shelburne resident, renowned wooden boatbuilder, and World War II veteran Bill Cox is one of the many Nova Scotians who have been honoured in 2012 by being awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Bill Cox was nominated for the award for his leadership, commitment, and significant contribution to the Town of Shelburne during his lifetime, including 13 years he served as mayor; and

Whereas Bill Cox at the age of 95 continues to be a valuable asset to the Town of Shelburne, unselfishly sharing his wealth of knowledge as a boatbuilder with younger generations, helping to preserve the town's boatbuilding heritage and legacy;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Bill Cox, who was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on October 3, 2012, by Shelburne Mayor Alan Delaney.

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 Energy.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2354**

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

Whereas Collaborative Emergency Centres are giving Nova Scotians access to better care sooner; and

Whereas a CEC in Tatamagouche at the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital in Colchester North is providing emergency care 24 hours a day to people who need it; and

Whereas despite claims from the member for Halifax Clayton Park that the commitment to keep emergency rooms open was a very foolhardy commitment to make;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly, including the members for Halifax Clayton Park and Colchester North, thank the NDP Government for creating a Collaborative Emergency Centre in Tatamagouche to help deliver better care sooner.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2355**

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

Whereas Kelsey Hayes of Eastern Passage has shown exemplary volunteerism in both her community and at Cole Harbour District High School, above and beyond a typical young lady of her age; and

Whereas Kelsey has been a volunteer with the Ocean View Continuing Care Centre for two years, the health representative on Cole Harbour District High Student Council last year, is the president for the 2012-13 school year, a member of the Peer Leaders Network Diversity Club, a member of the Environmental Club, as well as this Spring she was nominated for the Lieutenant Governor's Award; and

Whereas Kelsey is presently the president of the Best Buddies Cole Harbour High Chapter after last year bringing it to the school for the first time, a program that has over 12,000 volunteers across Canada and Kelsey was chosen to be one of 18 across Canada to attend its international leadership conference;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Kelsey Hayes of Eastern Passage for her dedication to the Best Buddies Program, being the president of the Cole Harbour District High Chapter, as well as for her long list of volunteer activities, and wish her great success in all of 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 Truro-Bible Hill.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2356**

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

Whereas the Cobequid Cougars boys soccer team claimed victory over the Riverview Reds in Bridgewater in the recent Nova Scotia Athletic Federation Division 1 boys soccer provincials; and

Whereas the Cobequid Cougars, under the coaching direction of Hans Budgey and Jay Foster, the 2-1 victory over the Reds earned them a bronze medal, making this their first-ever provincial medal; and

Whereas the Cobequid Cougars goals were scored by Ben Gorringer and Dan Vanderpoel, with Tim Trites in goal;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the players and coaches of the Cobequid Cougars boys soccer team on their bronze medal win.

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

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

Is it agreed?



It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2357**

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

Whereas entrepreneurs and family-run businesses are valuable components of our communities, contributing to dynamic and unique streetscapes; and

Whereas Dixie Lee Family Restaurant was operated by the Bursey family in Liverpool from 1972 until 1993; and

Whereas Andrew Bursey recently returned Dixie Lee Family Restaurant to Liverpool, relocating it to Main Street, 20 years after his family's original Dixie Lee closed its doors;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Andrew Bursey of Dixie Lee Family Restaurant in Liverpool, for his entrepreneurial spirit and contributions to the business community of Queens County.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2358**

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

Whereas our NDP Government did not let years of neglect by previous governments deter us from fulfilling our commitment to keep emergency rooms open; and

Whereas years under the not-so-watchful eye of the Leader of the Progressive Conservatives, as chief of staff, resulted in Nova Scotians needing medical care being greeted by closed doors at their local emergency room; and

Whereas Collaborative Emergency Centres in Springhill and Parrsboro, in Cumberland South, the constituency of the Leader of the Progressive Conservatives, will prove to Nova Scotians that this NDP Government is committed to providing better care sooner to all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, including the member for Cumberland South, thank the NDP Government for opening Collaborative Emergency Centres in Springhill and Parrsboro to help provide better care sooner to Nova Scotians.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Fairview.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2359**

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

Whereas the Aninga Project is a non-profit educational initiative that funds education for girls in Uganda; and

Whereas in her spare time Jenny Benson, the executive assistant to the Minister of Education, heads the project which focuses on contributing to the empowerment of African

women by providing them with the means to acquire an education that otherwise would be out of reach; and

Whereas the Aninga Project reminds us that one person can make a big difference with the right mix of determination and help from a friend;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize Jenny Benson for her work with the Aninga Project and thank her for showing us the importance of education around the world.

Madam Speaker, if I may be permitted to draw the attention of the House to Jenny who is in the Speaker's Gallery, and she told me earlier today that the Aninga Project is named for the first girl whose education was funded under the project.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2360**

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

Whereas Mr. Wayne Thorburne has been a volunteer firefighter for the past 40 years; and

Whereas for the last seven years, Mr. Thorburne has been the Chief of the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department, performing his duties with diligence, efficiency and skill, a position from which he will be retiring on December 10, 2012; and

Whereas Mr. Thorburne will be continuing to serve his community as a newly elected member of the Bridgewater Town Council;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank Mr. Wayne Thorburne for his many years of volunteer service as a fireman, congratulate him on his recent election to the Bridgewater Town Council and wish him success, health and happiness in the future.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2361**

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

Whereas individuals and families living in Pugwash have access to better care sooner thanks to a Collaborative Emergency Centre; and

Whereas years of neglect by Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments resulted in closed emergency rooms putting the health care of Nova Scotians at risk; and

Whereas this NDP Government is delivering on our commitment to provide better health care sooner by keeping emergency rooms open, like the one in Pugwash, despite the assumption of the member for Argyle who told Nova Scotians ERs were going to close;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, including the member for Argyle, acknowledge that the NDP Government kept their commitment to provide better care sooner with the establishment of Collaborative Emergency Centres like the one in the community of Pugwash.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2362**

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

Whereas the Valley Bantam Bulldogs football team, which includes 28 players from all over Kings County, had an impressive 10-0 season in 2012; and

Whereas the Bulldogs capped off their perfect season with the 31-21 win over the Bedford Saints to win the Nova Scotia Minor Football Tier 1 Bantam Championship in playoffs at the Sportsplex in East Hants; and

Whereas the entire team, led by Coaches Reg Ogilvie, Andrew Hartnett, Greg Rise, Pat Kelly, Devon Adams and David Ross showed skill, determination and exceptional teamwork to achieve their success;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the members of the Valley Bantam Bulldogs and their coaches on their successful season and on capturing the Nova Scotia Minor Football Tier 1 Bantam Championship for 2012.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2363**

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

Whereas elementary school teachers put kids and learning first every day in our schools to ensure that their children receive the very best education possible; and

Whereas Sackville Heights Elementary School teacher Gail Baird has been educating elementary school children throughout the region for more than 13 years; and

Whereas in October, Gail Baird's hard work was recognized with a national teaching award, *A Day Made Better*, for such things like involving her class in the Sackville River Association River Rangers program and requesting that instead of purchasing her a teacher's gift at Christmas time that they instead pool their money to donate to a local charity;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Sackville Heights Elementary School teacher Gail Baird on receiving the national teaching award, *A Day Made Better*, and thank her for the unwavering dedication to the education of our community's kids.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2364**

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

Whereas Charlie Tanner of Lunenburg has a long history with the working waterfront of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, starting with his fishing career at the age of 10; and

Whereas Mr. Tanner, who is one of a handful of living former fishermen who sailed with Captain Angus Walters aboard the original Bluenose, had a long career fishing in the North Atlantic including during World War II, before quitting fishing at the age of 42 to work for the Lunenburg Industrial Foundry & Engineering until his retirement; and

Whereas Mr. Tanner, who handcrafts wooden models of schooners with meticulous attention to detail, is taking on a new challenge at the age of 93 by acting as the Grand Marshal for the Lunenburg Santa Claus Parade on November 24, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognizes the long career of Mr. Charlie Tanner on the Lunenburg waterfront and congratulate him on his role as Grand Marshal for the 2012 Lunenburg Santa Claus Parade.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

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

Whereas Jeremiah Jones of Truro, Nova Scotia, born in 1880 and died in 1950 at the age of 70, enlisted in the 106<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles) in June, 1916; and

Whereas Private Jones transferred to the Royal Canadian Regiment where he participated in front line combat at the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: That is your third resolution and that resolution is out of order. You're only permitted two per day. Thank you very much.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 3:24 p.m. and end at 4:54 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**EDUC.: CUTS (3<sup>RD</sup> YR.) - STOP**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, as a result of this government's \$65 million in cuts to education, class sizes are growing, educational assistant support is being eroded and these cuts are having a negative impact on every student in every classroom in our public education system. The Minister of Education has stated that Nova Scotia will face three years of cuts with the first two years that have been devastating to our system. My question to the Minister of Education is, will the minister stand up for kids, protect their education, and commit to stopping the third year of cuts?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I am going to repeat again that there were not \$65 million of cuts within our education system. We have made investments in our children and I just want to be very clear, we will continue to invest in our children.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, there were \$65 million in cuts to public education and as a result, there were 1,100 support positions being cut from our schools, 700 of those were teachers. Instead of investing in our students' education, the NDP Government is handing out millions of dollars to large corporations. Parents, students, teachers and in fact all Nova Scotians, are left shaking their heads at this government's priorities.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education tell parents, students and teachers when they can expect this government to make education a priority and to reinvest the \$65 million back into Nova Scotia's education system?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the work that we've done as a government to make sure that we are investing not only in our communities to make sure we have jobs for families, we are investing in our schools. We have made many improvements with our education system, one being our math program. We've added more SchoolsPlus sites. We are making sure that we are doing things that are very strategic, because times have changed.

Unfortunately, because of declining enrolment, we have been left with some challenges but I will reiterate, we are investing in our students and we're making sure the programs that we are providing for our students are what they need in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Thank you.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, cutting funding by \$65 million, adding more programs, the only thing this minister has been able to do is ask teachers to do more with less.

In the Spring of this year over 20,000 Nova Scotians, including all members of the Liberal caucus, signed a petition calling on the NDP Government to reverse their cuts to public education. In difficult times every economist will tell you that the last place you



should cut is in public education. My question to the minister, when will the NDP Government stop its corporate welfare and start investing in our kids?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I just want to repeat that we have not taken \$65 million out of our public education system. We are making sure that we are making very strategic investments. We have the lowest class sizes we've had in a generation. Also, I just want to make it very clear that we are actually investing more per student than ever before in the history of this province.

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

### **EDUC.: CLASS SIZES - LEGISLATE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education, the NDP had to scramble this Fall to fix their short-sighted decision to actually remove the cap on class sizes, particularly in the early years. That last-minute decision caused great hardship for our youngest students and for parents who had to go through a disruptive change in classes well into the school year.

My question to the minister is quite simple, will she commit today to show that she's serious about class sizes by committing to make smaller class sizes the law?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, because of our changing demographics, our declining enrolment, many of our class sizes all across the province are extremely low. As I said, we have the lowest class sizes we've ever had. I don't have the numbers for this year but we did recognize that in certain areas of the province there was growth and when we recognized the growth in those areas, we went in and made sure that we fixed that. We listened to the teachers and the school boards and to parents.

I want to say that around the province, because of declining enrolment, we do have challenges. I taught for 30 years and every September we had to make sure that in some cases teachers had to be moved because the class sizes were too small and we had to combine, or were too large. It's a phenomenon that takes place every year. This year we had pressures in certain areas and, Mr. Speaker, we listened and we solved the problem.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge in public education today is a government that turns a blind eye to class sizes that are well above the previously-accepted maximum. The minister doesn't believe there's a problem. Well, tell that to the students of Spring Street Elementary in Amherst, who started the school year with 33 kids in their Grade 1 class, or tell that to the students at Sir Charles Tupper School here in Halifax, who had several classes far in excess of the previous maximum. That's the problem, and to say that it's fixed because on a one-time basis some teachers were added well into the school year, causing a complete scramble of those classes, does an injustice to those students and to the parents who want to know that they're going to get a good quality education.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, how can the minister assure Nova Scotians that the students are going to be in appropriate class sizes when we get to next Fall, when she has not made any commitment to that effect?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little bit confused. We have areas in the province that had significant growth, and we listened and we put teachers in those areas that had significant growth. Is the honourable member saying that I should not have done that?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I agree that the minister is confused, so let me clear up that confusion right now. If smaller class sizes are a worthy objective in our public education system and if it's as easy as the minister says it is to fix it, will she commit to make it the law of the Province of Nova Scotia that class sizes will be below the cap and institute that now so that no Nova Scotia family or student needs to go through the turmoil next September that she put them through this September?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting with all of the school boards over the next couple of weeks and into the new year. I'm going to be listening to all of our superintendents, our chairs, and our elected school boards to see where their pressures are. We are a government that does listen, and we are making sure that we are making the appropriate investments in education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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

### **ERDT - RURAL N.S.: JOBS - EXODUS**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, this government's corporate welfare-driven economic development strategy is failing rural Nova Scotia. In 2009 the NDP promised to keep Nova Scotians here with jobs that will pay well. In the last three years, 8,200 Nova Scotians have left rural Nova Scotia. I guess that's what happens when you give \$590 million to six large corporations that turn around and lay off 1,300 Nova Scotians.

So my question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why has the government failed to stop the exodus from rural Nova Scotia?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I just heard the member over there opposite say, you've got to plan. Well, do you know what? He's right. We do have a plan. We have a plan that is working. We are creating jobs in Nova Scotia. There are 7,600 more people working today than there were when we took over as government. That is progress.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, when we look at the numbers, it's clear why people are leaving rural Nova Scotia. In the last three years rural Nova Scotia has lost 4,400 full-time jobs. That's what happens when you invest in corporate welfare and not in Nova Scotians.

My question to the minister is, when is the government going to stop investing in corporate welfare and start investing in Nova Scotians?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what this government has done very successfully is that, yes, we have invested. We've invested in Nova Scotians. We don't subsidize companies. (Interruptions) These are incentives, which are based on reaching certain milestones with respect to employment. What they do is they get a rebate. At the end of the day we do not lose money. We make money.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, not only do they subsidize companies, they subsidize companies to come into this province to compete directly against hard-working Nova Scotians.

I'll tell you one thing that has happened, Mr. Speaker, under this government. There are 31,000 unemployed Nova Scotians in rural Nova Scotia, and that's an increase of 3,600 in the last three years under the NDP watch. The \$590 million in corporate welfare has not helped rural Nova Scotia.

My question to the minister, with 4,400 fewer full-time jobs, why is he satisfied in supporting a part-time job economy?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will give you some facts. Want to hear some facts? In 1993-94, who had the highest unemployment rates in Nova Scotia? You want to know who was in power then? It was the Liberal Government - unemployment at higher than 14 per cent. Right now this province is leading Atlantic Canada when it comes to employment, a trend that we set, and a trend that we are going to continue.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

### **ERDT - SOUTHERN N.S.: JOBS - EXODUS**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Well the overall picture of rural Nova Scotia's economy is bad; there are certain parts of the province where this government's failings are overwhelmingly clear. Southern Nova Scotia is suffering because of this government's failed economic development strategy. In the last three years 2,800 people have left southern Nova Scotia. I guess that is what happens when you give \$590 million to six large corporations who lay off 1,300 Nova Scotians.

My question for the Economic and Rural and Tourism Development Minister is this, why has this government failed to stop the exodus from southern Nova Scotia.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is attracting business to the Province of Nova Scotia. If we did things the way previous governments

did them the results would be the same - nothing. After 20 years of nothing we've come in, we are doing things differently, and the results are there to prove it.

MR. MACLELLAN: Despite the government's big cheques to big business this government was not able to spur economic growth or improve the job market in southern Nova Scotia. In the last three years the area lost 6,100 full-time jobs. This is what happens when you give \$590 million to six corporations, so my question for the minister, why has this government failed to create the 2,200 jobs per year they promised the people of southern Nova Scotia in 2009?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'll give you a good example, it's called Bluedrop. Here is a company that was based in Newfoundland and Labrador, a company that approached us. They are in the aerospace and defence sectors, one of the largest sectors in Atlantic Canada. They came to us, we helped them, and they have now set up the most modern facility in aerospace technology in Canada, maybe in North America, with over 30 jobs - and where is it? It's right here in Nova Scotia. They wouldn't be there if it wasn't for this government and the way that we think about the future of this province. If we had done things their way, we would have killed that deal.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, unemployment in southern Nova Scotia is simply alarming. There are 7,800 unemployed people in southern Nova Scotia - that is an increase of 2,700 in the last three years, so we're so happy that this minister is here making life better for rural Nova Scotia.

The unemployment rate in rural Nova Scotia sits at 13.5 per cent, that's an increase of more than 58 per cent unemployment in three years, and that's what happens when you invest in big corporations to the tune of \$590 million, so my question for the minister, with 2,800 fewer people, 5,100 fewer jobs, and 2,700 more unemployed in three years, will this minister finally admit his economic development strategy has failed southern Nova Scotia?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this government and the vision that we've had. Shelburne Shipyard is a perfect example of that, Bluedrop is a perfect example of that, LED Roadway Lighting is a perfect example of that. We are creating jobs, unlike the Liberals over there who like to terminate jobs.

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

### **ENERGY: ELECTRICITY PLAN - REWRITE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. We now have 940,000 experts who know what's wrong with our economy. They are officially now paying the highest power rates in all of Canada. Hydro-Québec's report, released yesterday, shows that of 21 major North American cities, that the highest power rates are now paid right here in Halifax. I will table that for the benefit of the minister. As a result,

7,400 full-time jobs have been lost across our province, many in rural Nova Scotia which is officially now in a recession.

My question to the Minister of Energy is, now that he has succeeded in jacking up our power rates to the highest in North America, will he finally agree to rewrite his electricity plan and produce one that Nova Scotians can actually afford?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, of course, that study that the honourable member is referring to was done last Spring and it was one day in time and we know that certainly there are other cities and provinces in Canada that now do have higher rates, including the Province of Alberta under a Progressive Conservative Government. In reality, past governments have relied too long on coal and every time you open your power bill you see that and that's why we're in the position we are because past governments have been on their duffs too long and really have done nothing about getting us off of that one source of dirty, imported coal.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised to hear the minister say that because that's exactly the line of Nova Scotia Power, the line about it being one day in a year because that's exactly what they say. What's interesting is that Nova Scotia Power has changed their story and the minister might want to check his e-mail inbox to see what their latest line is because last May, when the report's previous year version was released, an executive of Nova Scotia Power said, no, don't look at the National Energy Board report which said we had the highest, that's wrong. The best report to look at on power prices is the one produced by Hydro-Québec, the one that we have today. I'll just table that for the benefit of the House.

Now Nova Scotia Power is trying to discredit the Hydro-Québec report, the very one that they said was the right one a year ago. Under this minister our power rates have gone up by 25 per cent, they're now confirmed to be the highest in all of North America, rural Nova Scotia families are struggling to get by and this is before, by the way, the most recent rate increase application that we're all waiting to hear from the URB about. Will the minister freeze rates right now, set aside that URB application and put together an electricity plan that Nova Scotians can actually afford?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we've had past governments who relied far too long on coal, relied on fossil fuels - a government without a vision, without a plan. This government has a plan. The first thing we did when we came to power is we took the HST off home energy, I understand the member's Party wants to put it back on. We had a renewable electricity plan in 2010 that looks at all the blessings that we have here in Nova Scotia like wind, tidal, sustainable biomass and hydroelectricity even of our own. We have a COMFIT program for community energy projects, we have large wind projects - if you drive over the Trans-Canada in Pictou County, you'll see a number of those. We have the Lower Churchill Project that will bring us stable energy prices for 35 years. We put on the HARP program for low-income Nova Scotians. We have done a lot, we have a plan and we

need to get off one source of energy, we need a portfolio of energy sources, we're blessed in Nova Scotia with those.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we know that this government has a plan because the chief financial officer of Emera bragged about it to a group of financial analysts in Toronto last week. He said that their plan is that they're going to get a healthy 6 per cent increase on the backs of Nova Scotians in 2013 and 2014 and furthermore, that they've done this in order to get past the inconvenience of an election expected next year. That is the NDP/Nova Scotia Power plan, as described by the chief financial officer of Emera.

Given all that, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister, since we now have independent confirmation that we're paying the highest power rates on the continent, will the minister deny this rate increase, which is so clearly unaffordable, and bring to this House an electricity plan that Nova Scotians can actually afford?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, you know the reason we are where we are today is because past governments relied far too long on coal, expensive coal, dirty coal, now imported coal. We have to get off fossil fuels; we have to stop being like that Party over there, being Luddites in this time and age.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

### **ERDT: C.B. JOBS - EXODUS**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, while the overall picture in Nova Scotia's rural economy is bad, Cape Breton is also suffering because of the lack of economic vision displayed by this government. In the last three years 3,400 people have left our island. I guess that's what happens when you give \$590 million to six corporations who, in turn, lay off 1,300 Nova Scotians. I guarantee that the people of Cape Breton and all rural Nova Scotia and the South Shore are listening to the minister's answers, hoping that he's somewhat accountable for his economic development plans.

My question to the minister is, why has this government failed to stop the exodus of people from Cape Breton Island?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I just remember a very short while ago this government came in to Port Hawkesbury and saved 1,400 jobs in Port Hawkesbury. While this government stood up for Cape Bretoners, I never heard a single positive thing coming from that side of the House.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, despite this government's big cheques to big businesses, this government was not able to spur economic growth or improve the job market in Cape Breton whatsoever. In the last three years the island has lost 1,800 jobs and

500 full-time jobs. This is what happens when you give \$590 million to six corporations and then watch them lay off 1,300 Nova Scotians.

My question to the minister is, why has this government failed to create the 2,200 jobs it promised Nova Scotians in its campaign brochure in 2009?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, one thing for sure, if it had been a Liberal Government, there would be 1,400 less jobs in Cape Breton today.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, unemployment in Cape Breton is frightening. There are 10,500 unemployed people in Cape Breton, that's an increase of 1,800 since June 2009. The unemployment rate in Cape Breton sits at 16.4 per cent, an increase of 20 per cent since this government took over in 2009, and that's what \$590 million gets you to six corporations that lay off Nova Scotians. We have fewer people, fewer jobs and more unemployment.

My question to the minister is - since he is smiling and seems to have answers as to why the economy is stumbling all across rural Nova Scotia, maybe he'll have an answer for us - with 3,400 people, 1,800 fewer jobs, and 1,800 more unemployed in three years, will this minister finally admit that his plan has failed Nova Scotians?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I may smile every now and then but it has nothing to do with the good people of Cape Breton. Maybe it has something to do with some of the verbiage that is coming from across the way.

Mr. Speaker, you know we've got a proven track record in Cape Breton. Ask Billdidit about the investment that we made in their company. What about Techlink, another company that we invested in in Cape Breton. It is quite an extensive and exhaustive list. We are proud of our record in Cape Breton and we are still going to do more, despite the lack of effort from the member from across the way.

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

#### **ERDT - NOVA SCOTIANS: ECON. STATUS (2009/2012) - COMPARISON**

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, families in the NDP Nova Scotia are struggling. Not only has this government taxed away an extra \$1 billion, reaching into each and every pocket in Nova Scotia and taking \$1,000 out of it, but since the NDP got elected, the prices of necessities have skyrocketed. Gasoline prices have increased by 36 per cent, energy prices have increased by 31 per cent, egg prices have increased by 25 per cent, and meat prices have increased by 19 per cent.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, would he say that Nova Scotians deserve a break from high taxes and high prices? Will the minister admit that Nova Scotians are worse off today than they were in 2009?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to pass this question off to the Minister of Finance.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the efforts it has made to protect the most vulnerable citizens in our province. We have, through the Affordable Living Tax Credit, put money back into the pockets of 240,000 households in the Province of Nova Scotia through the HST rebate. We have increased the Child Tax Benefit by 20 per cent in this province. We have introduced a new tax credit for people who live on social assistance, which will cost \$6 million this year. In addition to that, we took the HST off children's clothing and footwear and we took the HST off home heating fuel. We have energy efficiency programs for people living on low incomes, and the poorest senior citizens in our province no longer pay provincial income tax. Those are the things this government has done. (Applause)

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious this Minister of Finance is an expert at the shell game, because what they give with one hand they take away with the other hand. (Applause)

Inflation has increased drastically in Nova Scotia since 2009. There has been a blanket increase of 8.4 per cent. Meanwhile, nationally it's 6.7 per cent. This means that Nova Scotians pay 1.7 per cent more than the rest of Canada, and rural Nova Scotia has shouldered more of the burden than Nova Scotia as a whole.

My question to whichever minister wants to answer is, will the minister admit that adding \$2,000 of debt to every Nova Scotian, taxing away \$1,000 from each of us, and paying 1.7 per cent more than the rest of Canada is proof that the NDP broke their election promise to Nova Scotian families?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I have to laugh. You really do have to laugh when a member of the PC caucus has the audacity to stand up on the floor of this Legislature and talk with righteous indignation about debt. That Party left debt to subsequent governments of any political stripe that cost close to \$1 billion annually to service in the Province of Nova Scotia. The reason why we see programs under pressure - our health care, our education, and other programs - is because of the spectacular mismanagement of previous governments, particularly the former Rodney MacDonald Government.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, there is no one in this House of Assembly who could hold a candle to mismanagement next to that lot over there. If she wants to talk about debt, she should talk to the former Minister of Finance, who signed off on the fact that we



didn't leave a big debt in this province. Her own predecessor said that and the Auditor General of Nova Scotia said that, but of course, she knows better.

Shelter is a basic right for Nova Scotians. Shelter prices have increased 10 per cent within the last three years under the NDP. National shelter prices have only increased 5 per cent. Shelter prices are growing at twice the speed of the rest of Canada under the NDP. This is not acceptable to the people I represent or to the people that they represent. The NDP have failed Nova Scotians.

So my question is, what does the NDP have to say to people looking for shelter or lowering their standard of life to accommodate the failing policies of that lot over there?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, what I would say to people in this province is that this government is bringing financial sense back to the management of the province. At the same time, we are investing in health care, we are investing in education, we are investing in roads, and we are investing in good training and job development opportunities for people in our province.

In the three years that we've been in government we've brought our department spending in every year on or under budget. There has not been the \$1.3 billion of unplanned and unbudgeted spending that we saw in the previous MacDonald Government, of which that member was a member.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **CCH - MY-PLAY: ANALYSIS/PATENT SEARCH - DETAILS**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to a civil debate with the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Safe Gaming System, a company from Las Vegas, has taken Techlink International Entertainment to court. The Atlantic Lottery Corporation and the Nova Scotia Provincial Lotteries & Casino Corporation - what used to be the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation - are also defendants along with Techlink. Safe Gaming System claims patent infringement on their product, which is similar to the My-Play system that the province implemented.

My question for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage is, why did the department fail to conduct a thorough analysis and patent search before implementing My-Play province-wide?

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, as you know, Nova Scotians care deeply about our gaming industries and our gaming strategy. Most of all, they have told us they want us to have responsible gaming, that they want it to be socially responsible, that they want it to be fiscally responsible, and they want it to be managed effectively. Certainly that's what this government is doing.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the findings of this court case have the potential to put jobs at risk. If this government had done its due diligence, the workers in Cape Breton would not be in this precarious situation today. Instead of putting in the work to ensure that this would be a sound investment for Nova Scotia, this government was too eager to put out a gambling system - a system that wasn't even made fully mandatory.

My question to the minister is, what protections are in place for the workers in Cape Breton who this government has placed at risk with their lack of due diligence?

MR. PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, when that lot was in office, Nova Scotians were at risk. There was a great spread of VLTs all over the province. There were VLTs in corner stores and in bars, and we rolled that back. We said we would do that and we did it. That's responsible. That's the risk that we avoided when we threw those guys out.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, taxpayers have invested millions into this company and there are now jobs at risk. The province even holds an equity stake in Techlink, all for lack of due diligence on the part of the NDP. My question to the minister is, what steps has the minister taken to mitigate the risk as a result of their previous lack of due diligence?

MR. PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, the policies we enacted to deal with the risk was to reduce the number of VLTs in play. We introduced the My-Play system, which reduced the numbers of people, advised people of what they were exposing themselves to, and we provided better training for people who were involved in the gaming industries. Those are the concrete steps we took to reduce the risk that member speaks about.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

### **TIR: ABORIGINAL RESERVES - PAVING**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Contrary to popular belief, Nova Scotia Aboriginals pay taxes. They pay sales tax on virtually everything they buy. They pay fuel, alcohol and tobacco excise taxes, air traveller's tax, income tax on most income earned off the reserve. These people are counted when we receive equalization payments, giving Nova Scotia more federal tax revenue. These are taxpaying Nova Scotians, why won't this government pave roads on reserves?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I can say that it has only been a short time since I've been Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, but this is not an issue that has been presented to me by anyone. I've met with several chiefs, Chief Julian at Paq'nkek, and that has not been raised. I've met with the chief at Eskasoni, that issue has not been raised. It's simply an issue that has never been brought forward to me as an issue. If my friend has a particular case that he wants me to look at or to address, I'd be pleased to do that. If he wants to develop that issue

with me, I'll look at that as well, but at this stage it is not something that has been brought forward to me. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that the issue has been brought forward to his department. I've tried just about everything I can do and that's why I've chosen to bring it forward here as a last resort. I guess what we're wondering here is, and what I'm thinking about this, are we saying these people are not Nova Scotians? Are we saying these people do not deserve pavement in their communities? If the members agree that's not the case, then I think we need to start looking at this. If these people are paying their taxes, why not get past the policy roadblocks, which I have encountered as I brought the matter forward to the department, and do the right thing and share the paving budget with our Aboriginal communities?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am, of course, somewhat offended by the suggestion that because there is an issue that perhaps - let me set the record straight. I have been the minister since May 29<sup>th</sup>. I read every piece of correspondence that comes to my office. If the member opposite is saying he's been diligent in getting in touch with me, nothing has come in since that date, to deal with this issue.

I do want to address the point about the status of our Aboriginal people in this province. They are the First Nations people. They're more Nova Scotian than any of us are and my position is that on this point, if it's an issue that he's brought forward, somehow it hasn't got to my desk. He has never spoken to me about it, he's never called me about it, he's never written me about it. If he wants to have that opportunity to meet with me and to deal with this issue, I'm prepared to do that. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the minister, I haven't contacted him directly and it's important that we put that on the record. If he does a little bit of investigation, he will see that it has been brought forward before to the government and I'll leave it at that, for the record.

It seems our Aboriginal people always have to go to court to get everything and that's something they've told me; that's how they feel. They always feel that to get anything from the government in this province, they have to go to the court. And I'm not just talking about this government. (Interruptions) Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the government members are sensitive to this and they should be. I hope that after today they take a serious look at this issue.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister take advantage of the position he now holds - he spent a career working in Legal Aid and I think there's an opportunity for government to show some good will towards these people. Will he take advantage of the position he now holds and acknowledge that our Aboriginal people deserve the same benefits entitled to all other Nova Scotians, and that includes paving roads in their communities?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I will point out to the member opposite - recently within the last month, I attended a Cabinet and Chiefs conference that was held in the Truro area. Every Chief in Nova Scotia attended and all of the Cabinet was there. This was not an issue that was brought forward at that meeting, it was not an issue that was on the agenda.

We meet regularly with the Chiefs. I can tell the member opposite that in my local community I represent Paq'nkek Native community, we are working with them on projects, in infrastructure, transportation and infrastructure initiatives and they are very pleased with the progress we are making on that front. That's the proof that I have to indicate that this is an issue that seems to be - to me it's a fresh one but I have been given an opportunity to speak about these issues and it has not come up.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

#### **ERDT - RURAL ECONOMY: TASK FORCE - NECESSITY EXPLAIN**

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, November 15, 2012, a Halifax ChronicleHerald story noted that the province was planning on turning to the President of Acadia to head a task force on how to revive the rural economy. All of a sudden this government and this minister have caught on to what we've been telling them for three years.

On December 7, 2010, the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister said, "What we have done with jobsHere is, we've created a future for the Province of Nova Scotia based on innovation and certainly on education, giving people the skills for good jobs in the future; jobsHere now will go a long way to advancing the causes here in the Province of Nova Scotia."

My question for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, if the minister is so proud of his accomplishments and his record with jobsHere and in rural Nova Scotia, why does he need a task force?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we've always maintained and I've always said - as good as we are, we always look for ways to be better. You know what? I think the Liberal Party has a huge problem with that. We continue to try to improve on what we've got.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this minister is forming a task force on economic development in rural Nova Scotia because he has failed the economy and he has nowhere to turn. I've got to be thinking he's getting pretty close to being out of taxpayers' money so of course he needs some advice from the pros on how to do it.

When facing questions about rural Nova Scotia, on November 23, 2011, the Premier said, "We are responding to those requests, we are growing the economy, we are

creating good jobs.” Except now we know that in the last three years 8,200 Nova Scotians have left rural town and communities. We know that rural Nova Scotia has shed 3,200 jobs and we know that unemployment in rural Nova Scotia is well above 10 per cent.

This government’s corporate welfare-driven economic strategy brought rural Nova Scotia double-digit unemployment, increasing out-migration and fewer job opportunities. Now, three and a half years after taking office, this government launches a task force to tell them how to fix the problems in rural Nova Scotia that they created.

My question to the minister, now that the NDP needs a task force to fix Nova Scotia’s rural economy, will the minister explain why he has told us for three years that things are getting better when clearly, they are not?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, this government announced three weeks ago nearly 1,000 jobs coming to Nova Scotia - good jobs. One of those companies being IBM that is going to have a global centre here in Halifax. They could have set up anywhere in the world; they chose the Province of Nova Scotia to set up. This is enormous. They are not the only ones we are attracting. I don’t know why the Liberal Party continues to knock good jobs coming to the Province of Nova Scotia and trying so hard to tarnish Nova Scotia’s image, globally. I don’t understand this except job terminators, Mr. Speaker, job terminators.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, what send signals about the economy and economic decisions for a province is when a minister and a Premier and a government give \$11 million to a Calgary-based firm to compete in a sector, engineering consulting, that is growing right now with Nova Scotia products. On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister said, “What I will acknowledge is that this government. . . has a plan and we are sticking by that plan. The plan is working and, for the first time, we’ve built on that plan.” It now it appears that the government is getting ready to throw that plan out. My question to the minister is, if the minister is so confident in his jobsHere strategy, why does he need a task force to bail out the mess he created?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the task force aligns with the jobsHere strategy. I can appreciate that the member for Glace Bay doesn’t understand that because he’s never read the plan. We’ve made offers for him to come over to the office and sit down with staff to explain the plan to him. He knows the plan is different because we are doing things in the best interests of Nova Scotians. We are building a Nova Scotia for the future, something that government in the past failed to do, but we are doing it, we are doing it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**ERDT - TRADE CENTRE: FUNDING - DETAILS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. In the Fall 2012 Auditor General's Report, the Auditor General noted, "Trade Centre Limited does not have an adequate internal control framework or sufficiently rigorous financial management practices." I'll table that.

The Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister is responsible for oversight at the Trade Centre. Why does the minister hand this organization \$4.8 million, without ensuring it has the appropriate and rigorous financial controls required?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that particular question. We have great respect for the Auditor General and we've acted on the Auditor General's recommendations. In fact, I can stand in my place and say that we started implementing things for the Trade Centre around controls before we even received the Auditor General's Report.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I think a lot of people would be surprised to hear that, including the people at Trade Centre Limited, who said, in response to the Auditor General's Report, there was no need for changes and that they didn't need to implement any. So they are saying they're not and the minister says there is.

In the document I just tabled the Auditor General said:

"Trade Centre Limited does not have adequate processes for the approval of travel and business expenses. The CEO's expenses were not reviewed and approved, and a number of paid claims were not supported by appropriate documentation. Trade Centre Limited's business travel and expense policy is not consistent with the government travel policy."

This minister has given them \$4.8 million after already hearing about these issues previously. Will the minister require that any overpayments or unapproved expenses are reimbursed to taxpayers?

MR. PARIS: The Trade Centre Limited, through Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, has already implemented 12 of the 19 recommendations coming from the Auditor General. I can stand in my place and tell you that they are in the process of completing the other seven.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister would like to name those.

The minister has been aware of this for some time; in fact, on June 15, 2011, the minister was questioned about this in the media and he said: "I've got great confidence in

Scott Ferguson, I think he is doing a wonderful job for the province and the World Trade Centre . . . Scott Ferguson thought he was acting appropriately. He thought he was being prudent.” The Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister then went on to say Ferguson was doing “a wonderful job.” The Auditor General clearly disagrees.

Does the minister still defend the financial management of Mr. Ferguson and the Trade Centre management?

MR. PARIS: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**LBR. & ADVANCED EDUC.:  
PICTOU CO. INJURED WORKERS ASSOC. - FUNDING**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Pictou County Injured Workers Association recently sent a letter to all members of this House. This letter raised concern that the association will not be able to meet the needs of their clients because of underfunding by this NDP Government.

My question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, how does the minister expect the association to meet the needs of the injured workers with little or no support from her department?

HON. MARILYN MORE: It's not uncommon for non-profit organizations and community groups to want more funding from provincial governments. Certainly a few years ago the injured workers associations in Nova Scotia were getting about \$20,000 a year in funding provincially, and it is now up to \$100,000 with the ability to also access extra funding for specific initiatives or projects that would improve their effectiveness in terms of serving injured workers. We have ongoing discussions with them about their mandate, their operation, we've started to meet as a forum to talk about some of those issues, but certainly we feel at the time this is what the taxpayers can afford.

MR. COLWELL: The association serves over 400 clients, but only has a budget for 120. This NDP minister refused to increase funding, instead she told the association they will have to divert their clients to other bodies. The minister is telling injured workers that they are on their own and have to go elsewhere for support. Why doesn't this government increase funding for the Pictou County Workers Association so they can continue to serve their injured workers?

MS. MORE: As I mentioned in my earlier answer we have significantly increased the funding available to injured workers associations in this province. We continue to work alongside them. There are other bodies that also provide advice and support to injured workers in terms of working through the Workers' Compensation processes, and all I did

was suggest in that meeting that we need to better coordinate everyone's efforts so that we get the best bang for our buck in terms of supporting injured workers in this province.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, in a letter of November 6<sup>th</sup>, the Pictou County Injured Workers Association writes: "... the workers' compensation system is broken and requires your action to fix it." I'll table that letter.

A review is not enough; after three years of inaction by this minster it is time that she stops stalling and actually gets to work. When can the injured workers expect this NDP minister to finally take action and fix the Workers' Compensation system?

MS. MORE: That's a much broader issue. I have to say that I do meet on a very regular basis with the chairman and the CEO of the Workers' Compensation Board, and I meet regularly with injured workers associations and all the affiliated interest groups. We have a strong working relationship and certainly we're listening carefully. The Workers' Compensation Board has accepted, with their huge unfunded liability, that they are in a very difficult position. Of course they want to improve benefits to injured workers in this province but, at the same time, they have responsibility for the unfunded liability. You can't increase benefits on income that is not there.

So this is a huge challenge, mostly the result of the recession and the poor market conditions, but we're certainly working closely with WCB. They make quarterly reports. They're accountable to and certainly provide that information to all members of this House, and we will continue that strong working relationship.

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

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS - ER PHYSICIANS: CENTRAL DATABASE - INTEREST**

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, over the past four months, the emergency room at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital has been closed 16 times. For the people of Annapolis County and western Kings, closures become more problematic when the emergency room is closed in Middleton and the emergency room is closed in Digby as well, leaving the Valley Regional and the Yarmouth Regional, with some 225 kilometres between them, the only emergency room departments open in the Valley. These closures have been frustrating and puzzling to residents, given government's flurry of pre-Legislature sitting announcements around the centralized database that would ensure supply of physicians to cover emergency room closures.

So my question to the minister is, could the Minister of Health and Wellness indicate how many doctors have expressed an interest in covering ER shifts by adding their names to the central database?



HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for this question. As I indicated, I had the pleasure earlier to introduce and table the emergency department accountability report and in my speech that I talked about earlier, we recognize that there are areas of the province that we were finding difficulty in continuing to reduce the closure rates of emergency departments. We have a suite of options that we are working with our partners across district health authorities, including physicians who are willing to put their name into a pool of physicians who are willing to work around the province, and we are working extremely hard to cover shifts, especially in the Leader's riding. We know there's an issue there and we're going to continue to work to minimize the number of closures of the emergency department in that region in Nova Scotia.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, comments are spreading throughout the community as to why the emergency room at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital has been closing more and more frequently, despite the centralized database and the additional physicians coming to our communities. Media reports have noted that with only seven emergency room physicians working at Valley Regional, the differential in wages between the two hospitals could draw more doctors to fill shifts at Valley Regional than at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. While we all know that the Valley Regional needs to function, so do the hospitals that keep people from going to the regional centres in the first place. So could the minister indicate who sets the hourly rate for physicians at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital; is it the department or is it the district?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no question, salaries and rates for physicians to cover shifts across the province is extremely important and extremely complicated but, no question, we work with and negotiate with Doctors Nova Scotia, who negotiate a fee, depending on what facility you work in across the province and will continue, I think, in that manner because I think it best serves the physicians that Doctors Nova Scotia represent, but also recognizing there is a difference of level of care from hospital to hospital and a difference in the amount of skills and education background that you need to work in certain hospitals around the province. So that's negotiated between the province and Doctors Nova Scotia.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the minister that's a district as a result of the changes to the physician master agreement made by the previous Progressive Conservative Government four years ago. When the DHAs are faced with these budget cuts, the easy solution is to keep emergency rooms like Soldiers' Memorial Hospital closed. This government is a long way away from keeping its promise to keep emergency rooms open. In fact, things have worsened at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital since the NDP have come to power. So my question to the minister is, could the minister outline what he is going to do next to keep the ER open at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no question, I recognize the challenge and the anguish that not only the people who are providing services and trying to fill those difficult

shifts to fill in that area of the province, but the anguish placed on the residents. Nobody wants to hear that their local emergency department is closing for a long weekend or even for one night. That's why we asked Dr. John Ross to go around the province, to figure out what we could do as a government, to address the emergency room closures. That's why he brought forward a plan and the plan is Better Care Sooner, where we have a multitude of items that we are working towards, to ensure that we minimize the closure rates across the province. One is the Collaborative Emergency Centres. We see that they're working extremely well, like in Parrsboro and Springhill, where we've seen a 93 to 97 per cent decrease in the closure rates in those communities.

I know that it doesn't answer and address the issues in that particular hospital but we're going to continue to work with partners to provide physicians to hard-to-fill areas and we're going to continue to work with the district health authority to minimize the number of shifts and closures that we see here in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE - SOUTHWESTERN N.S. FISHERS:  
PRICES - MIN. EFFORTS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the economy in southwest Nova Scotia is falling into a recession since this lot of NDP became government over three years ago. Since that fateful day back in 2009, we've seen the loss of 6,600 jobs due to the mishandling of the economy, with the loss of the Yarmouth ferry - that's just to name a few and I'll table the Statistics Canada numbers that show that 6,600 jobs have now left the southwest Nova Scotia area.

Mr. Speaker, the fishery is the only industry that we have left and close to 1,000 vessels are out on the ocean catching lobster this very minute but we heard that the landed price is looking like a little more than \$3 a pound.

My question to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, what is his department doing to make sure that fishers in southwest Nova Scotia will have a decent price this lobster season?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, again I want to thank the member opposite for the timely question. In fact, we're doing a considerable amount as a government; unfortunately the other government, when the member opposite was a minister, they did not do this.

We actually have financed the Lobster Council of Canada, along with our neighbouring provinces, and we are taking a proactive approach. Just recently, in the last three weeks, Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday that we had a special meeting with our counterparts across the Maritime Provinces, dealing with this particular issue. I can recite

you a number of examples: putting more protection around Georges Bank, which this government did; we're standing up for owner/operators, we were the first elected government to take that official stance; we stand up for the inshore fisheries; and when it comes to the lobster industry, I can assure the member opposite that we'll be standing up for the lobster fishers. Thank you for the question.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in the South Shore area is 13.5 per cent. That's the highest rate since Statistics Canada started tracking them back in 1987. Today, hundreds of people are heading west as they have absolutely no confidence in the fishery in our area - I'll table that document as well.

The minister's words will give cold comfort to the thousands of families that depend on the fishery for putting food on their table. We have a deeply divided industry that is looking at poor pricing once again this year. Will the minister maybe just stray off his speaking notes and commit to rolling up his sleeves and working with the industry? That includes, Mr. Speaker, the LFAs - even 1688s, the buyers and other organizations - in order to find real opportunities to improve the price.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I just want to reflect and give the member opposite a little bit of a history lesson here. First of all, I was the chairperson of the LFA 34 advisory committee for three terms. I know this industry inside and out, and I can tell you that we have been forcefully bringing this issue, in a very proactive approach, to the industry regarding this situation.

The Lobster Council of Canada is addressing the issues about grading and getting more of an international support for this particular market and we are there for the lobster industry, unlike the member opposite. When this issue surfaced a number of years ago, when the Harper Government had an opportunity to deal with this issue, the federal government has never taken this issue seriously and they have never put in money in the right direction. We have stood up for the inshore fishery and we'll continue to stand up for the inshore fishery. Thank you for the question.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the things he's speaking of are wrong and ineffective. He knows full well that our government put in a number of dollars in making sure that our product was being marketed around the world - something they have not done. While he stood silent - while that minister stood silent while his government was gutting the economy of southwest Nova Scotia. I guess he'll just remain ineffective once again when it comes to helping his colleagues in the fishery.

Will the minister commit today to actually helping those who have been knocking on his door, calling him every day? They've been calling on him for the last three years - is he actually going to help them?

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my memory is very clear, and I want to jog the member opposite's memory, because I believe it was the former Third Party that wanted to charge the fishermen a \$40 permit to sell lobsters roadside. We took that permit fee away. I also want to point out that we worked very hard on this issue. We're very proactive. We've met with the ministers across the Maritimes in the last three weeks, and the Lobster Council is doing international and national marketing on this issue.

It reminds me that we've done a lot. I talked about the protection of Georges Bank and owner/operator and EI. It reminds me that this issue came about 20 years ago, but it reminds me of a song. I hope everybody gets the lyrics to this. Otis Redding wrote a song that reminds me of the Opposition on this issue 20 years ago. They were sitting on the dock of the bay, wasting time, watching the tide roll away. They had the opportunity. They wasted time. Thank you for the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

### **TIR - CROSSWALK SAFETY: AWARENESS - EFFORTS**

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, that's a hard act to follow. My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. With two collisions early last week and a very unfortunate death last week, crosswalk safety and awareness are again at the forefront of people's minds. It's unfortunate that accidents have to happen in order for this important issue to be raised.

My first question to the minister is, what efforts is government taking to increase awareness for crosswalk safety in Nova Scotia?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend opposite for that question. Indeed, I acknowledge and want to express sympathy for those people who recently had accidents in our crosswalks. It's a tragedy when this kind of thing happens, and unfortunately it has been happening much too often of late.

In terms of crosswalks, every intersection in Nova Scotia is a crosswalk. Some of them are marked with white lines. When we look at where these white lines go, an assessment is made to determine the pedestrian crossing at that particular point and the flow of traffic in that particular area. That's one of the things we do: we mark crosswalks that have more need to be noticed. There are gradations of how that's done. In addition to the markings, some of them have signage up. Some of them have lights up. Recently on some of them we've pooled with municipalities to increase lighting on some of these more-used crosswalks.

Crosswalk safety is everybody's responsibility. We all have to be careful, particularly drivers. Drivers have to know that crosswalks, the ones that are marked in particular, are the ones we flag as being ones they have to be more cautious in. Similarly, of

course, we have to make sure that pedestrians are fully aware of the crosswalks, and we're doing the best we can on that front. Thank you.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, there have been four deaths in HRM this year as the result of accidents in crosswalks. That's two more than last year. So, awareness and safe practices are something that obviously requires more government assistance in order to avoid these unfortunate and avoidable instances. So my question, again, to the minister, is government prepared to make further commitments in order to create more awareness about crosswalk safety in Nova Scotia?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, in 2010, there was a program in place to do that very thing, to advertise about crosswalks and the safety there. That's one of the things that we are looking at, increasing that kind of awareness, another program of that nature. As my friend also will know, we've recently introduced lowering speed zones in school areas, where children are present, so that there's a safety factor added to that as well. So, yes, these are things that we need to be constantly vigilant about and we are, when we can, making these changes.

MR. GAUDET: This issue affects all of us. It is a public safety issue and one that is important to both pedestrians and motorists. While often pedestrians are not in the wrong, they have the most to lose. It's government's responsibility to ensure that those walking and those driving are aware of crossings and how to avoid accidents. So, again, to the minister, my final question is, what new initiatives are this government examining to make certain the best possible awareness campaign around crosswalk safety is available to everyone.

MR. SMITH: I agree with my friend opposite that this is a very important public safety issue. Education is important. We have, as my friend will know, around the decrease in the speed zones in the school areas in June and September, we had an extensive advertising on radio, television, newspaper to bring that kind of issue forward. This is a matter that we look at on a regular basis. We are in touch with municipalities. When they ask us to look at an area in terms of putting in a crosswalk, we do that on a regular basis. On a go forward basis, as I said, this is a constant matter that's being looked at and reviewed and we will continue to do that. As we see opportunities to improve, we'll make those opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: NEWBORN SCREENING - CF TESTING**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have all added a simple blood test for cystic fibrosis as part of their newborn screening program. Without newborn screening, babies are not diagnosed until symptoms begin to appear, at which point irreversible damage to the lungs and digestive

system have already occurred. This damage adds costs to our health care system, but, more importantly, leads to poorer health outcomes for individuals living with CF.

I understand that the reproductive care program, in partnership with the IWK, is working on a proposal to be delivered to the Department of Health and Wellness in the new year. In the meantime, could the minister please indicate whether he views the addition of CF testing as part of a newborn screening program as very important?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Cystic fibrosis, no question, is something that is extremely important to try to diagnose at an early age. We recognize there has been a push across the country to bring forward early testing for cystic fibrosis. We are compiling that information, as we speak. We have a committee of professionals who will oversee any future additions to the screening program that we have currently here in Nova Scotia. I look forward to receiving that information and moving forward on a possible recommendation, if that's what comes out of the gathering of the information.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I notice with interest that Cystic Fibrosis Canada wrote all of the Atlantic Ministers of Health on June 1, 2012. I also note that CF Canada has posted on-line responses from three ministers, with the missing response being from the Minister of Health and Wellness of Nova Scotia. I understand that New Brunswick and P.E.I. used the testing services of the IWK, so a response from them is relatively straightforward. I note that the New Brunswick Health Minister stated that a proposal is expected to be provided by the department in the summer.

Given that the IWK has indicated that a proposal will be forthcoming in the new year, I'm wondering if the minister could explain why there appears to be a delay in the delivery of the proposal?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, in my first response, I recognize that this is a new service, that individuals at Cystic Fibrosis Canada want jurisdictions across Canada to implement their screening programs. That is why we are doing the proper steps to ensure that we recognize that these tests could possibly be implemented here in Nova Scotia. I will wait until I get those reports from the experts within our health care field here in Nova Scotia, and I look forward to speaking on this issue in the early new year.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know I don't have to tell the Minister of Health and Wellness just how important newborn screening is for not only the health and well-being of children, but also for the health care system in general. This is not a new test. The minister needs only to speak to his counterparts in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, or B.C. to learn more about the benefits.

I was wondering if the minister could give us an indication as to how long Cystic Fibrosis Canada can expect to wait for a response once the report being produced by the IWK and the reproductive care program is received?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are looking at opportunities within our system here in Nova Scotia and the screening program that we have. If we need to increase the number of screening tests that are provided for newborns here in Nova Scotia, we're going to do that. I realize that cystic fibrosis is something that we need to ensure that we diagnose early so that we can treat people earlier - no question, they have a longer life expectancy if they recognize or are diagnosed at an early age. It is a serious disease, so we will work early on in the new year to ensure that I have all the information in front of me and that we'll move forward as soon as we can and make any decision as quickly as we can.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS - 811 SERV.: REG. NURSE - AVAILABILITY**

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, according to the Better Care Sooner plan released almost two years ago, there was a recommendation to increase the public's use of 811. Page 22 of the plan states that by increasing the usage of 811, "This will relieve pressure on emergency rooms, get people quickly to the hospital best equipped to meet their needs, and help people stay at home with their families when they really don't need emergency care." I will table this.

Given we have spent at a minimum \$0.25 million last year encouraging people to use 811, with more being spent this year, so they could have access to a registered nurse 24/7, could the minister please confirm that when someone calls 811 they promptly speak to a registered nurse?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we're very proud as a government to continue supporting the 811 service. I believe that Nova Scotians are well served by having access to the highly-trained professionals, the nurses who are overseeing that service. As Nova Scotians utilize the 811 service they do usually have contact almost immediately with someone on the other end. No question, because of call volumes, there are times when they have to leave their name and number, and that registered nurse returns the phone call to an individual. We've noticed a trend: as we advocate or as we promote the 811 system, we see an increase in the use of that service.

I believe 811 is a complement to the Better Care Sooner plan. It allows Nova Scotians to ask some of those questions that in the past they would just arrive at an emergency department and I think that the use of this by Nova Scotians is an important component to the health care system.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Gary Burley recently called 811 and when he did a gentleman indicated the nurse was busy. After being left on hold for two or three minutes he hung up and tended to his ailing wife then called again. This time a lady answered and he got the same response, the nurse is busy. He never did get a chance to speak to the nurse

that evening. The next day he spoke to the manager of clinical support services at McKesson, and was told that there were two or three nurses on duty so they were probably busy but she would double-check the numbers and get back to him. When the manager at McKesson did not get back to Mr. Burley he called the manager again and was told that he would have to talk to the Department of Health and Wellness to find out how many nurses were working at 811 that evening. Given the initial information provided to Mr. Burley, does the minister believe that two or three nurses manning the 811 system for the province is sufficient?

MR. WILSON: It's unfortunate to hear this type of case. That's not the service we expect to be provided to Nova Scotians. I'm unaware of this circumstance but I can guarantee Nova Scotians that the 811 system is well run with the nurses that we have working that service for Nova Scotians. As I said, you may not, every time, speak to a nurse immediately. They do have people who will receive those calls when the nurses are busy to try to - similar to if you were in an emergency department - assess the acuity level of the question and they will get people to return those calls.

I hope that Nova Scotians recognize that it is a service that at times is very busy and I know that they are working extremely hard to return every single call that is made to 811 but I do encourage Nova Scotians that if it's a serious issue, they need to call 911. Don't wait for anybody to call you back. Get the ambulance on the way; get the highly-trained paramedics on the way to provide service to you.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, according to a press release issued in March 2009, 15 full-time and 12 part-time nurses were to be hired with a contact centre located in Dartmouth and some nurses working throughout the province out of their own home. This is a far cry from the two or three nurses Mr. Burley was told were working; 811 has been established to keep people from going to emergency rooms or from calling 911 when there is no medical emergency. Given that Mr. Burley has never received a clear answer from anyone, could the minister please tell us, or could he table before the end of the business day, how many nurses work at 811 on any given 24-hour period for say the last month?

MR. WILSON: As I said earlier, it's unfortunate that someone had a bad experience when they tried to access services, especially health care services, Mr. Speaker. As I am unaware of this particular case, I welcome the member opposite to give me any information that he has and rest assured that I will look into that and have my staff look into why someone was given certain information. I want Nova Scotians to know that we have highly trained nurses who are working the 811 service but I encourage them, if there is any doubt, if they think there is a serious issue going on medically, that they should call 911. That, I think, can ensure that they get access to the emergency care when and where they need it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.



**TIR - SERV. AREAS: CHANGES - EXPLAIN**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. As of May 22<sup>nd</sup> of this year, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal changed the way services are being delivered to Nova Scotia taxpayers. In Hants West, for example, I now have my local Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal out of their Brooklyn base, something that has always been in place and works well, but now I also have the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal out of Chester covering another section of Hants West. Unfortunately as a result, there is a noticeable difference in how services are being provided. My question to the minister is, why has this policy changed when it worked so well for many, many years?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: My understanding is that when these arrangements were changed, or the areas of service were changed, it was to accommodate a more evening of the workload for people in areas, so that it was a fairer distribution of the workload and it also had to do with a better distribution of equipment that we had available in different areas. At one point we might have had a piece of equipment covering - and I'm just going to as an example give a distance, but perhaps 10 kilometres whereas in a neighbouring area, the same kind of work, that the person was assigned 30 kilometres. So these realignments, as I understand it, were to balance out that workload so that they both would have approximately 20 kilometres of roadway to cover. That's my understanding of the situation.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the department stipulates the changes are happening as a result of a new collective bargaining agreement between CUPE and the province. Part of the new agreement allegedly includes reducing the geographic size of work areas in some parts of the province. However, the hard-working individuals looking after the delivery of service consider the province's definition of a change as a smokescreen because all of this is done, it makes their specific coverage areas larger and, therefore, making it more difficult to get the necessary work done.

The area in the constituency of Hants West, which has been taken over by Chester, has literally been forgotten. No work is getting done at all and I can guarantee you one thing, it's not for lack of trying because I've spoken with the minister's people out there, the area manager and the operational supervisors on multiple occasions, Mr. Speaker.

My question is, will the minister commit to reviewing this decision so he can see for himself it is just not working?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. I'm sorry if the member was having some difficulty with a portion of my department, with people in his local area, he didn't bring that to my attention. I certainly would have looked at it to determine what the problem was and to come up with a reasonable solution for him. I don't

know in particular what kind of work he's saying has gone wanting as a result of these changes. Again, my understanding is that, in effect, these changes have actually improved service because it's a more evening out of the workload for the people, for the workers, so that they can actually have a fairer share of the workload and, similarly, equipment has been placed in areas that, again, makes its usage more effective.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the real reason for this change is due to the government cutting funds that are sorely needed to take care of RIM work around rural Nova Scotia - and we all know that; any rural member would know that. I know that I don't have to explain to rural members in this House how important RIM funding is for getting work done, like getting potholes fixed, ditching done, guardrails put in place that are desperately needed. Since this change in May, the area of Vaughan and Leminster in Hants West are being neglected; in fact, so neglected the supervisor at the school bus garage has changed bus routes due to concerns expressed by area residents for the coming winter season.

My question to the minister is, does the minister understand how this has impacted those living in areas like Vaughan and Leminster, where roadwork is being ignored?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I want to answer that question. I note the time, but I want to get that question answered. I'm also from a rural area, so I appreciate very much how important RIM work is to our areas . . .

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

### **OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

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

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise on this bill, but I'm going to be quite brief - and the reason I'm going to be quite brief is there are only six minutes available to us for debate on this bill here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Opposition only gets to control one day of the week in this Legislature, which is on Wednesdays - it's either the Official Opposition or the Progressive Conservative caucus. And today, where the hours are from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., you will have noted - and it's an old trick, I'm not going to say this government is the first to do it, but when we see the last few weeks where a government has called hours and has never actually been able to have enough business to fill those hours and yet turns around and on the one day that's available to the Opposition to bring forward business on behalf of Nova Scotians, they fill up as much of the time as they can with Ministerial Statements, Government Notices of Motion, and Notices of Motion. Opposition Day is the one day we hear from backbenchers who we didn't even know existed, because not a word is heard from them all week. Wednesday is the one day we are guaranteed we are going to hear from them.

It's extremely unfortunate. I've risen a number of times as the House Leader for the Official Opposition to point out that on the order paper there are dozens and dozens of Opposition bills that have not been called for debate, and yet the government wraps up its day after two or three hours of work, when there are two and a half or three hours left in the day. No business is called. On the one day that we have control over business, the government decides to fill that up and take away the time for the Opposition to be able to raise those issues.

Mr. Speaker, I find that extremely unfortunate. This is an important bill, one that one would expect the government would want to debate and would want to see passed in this House. But in light of the government's efforts today to eat up time to prevent the Opposition from having further opportunity to speak, I would believe that my time to speak today, which was limited to two minutes, has expired.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the honourable member for Richmond that this backbencher is standing on his feet as much as I possibly can. In this session I know that I have been talking about the issues that really matter to Nova Scotians. I can tell everyone who is watching at home - and I want to tell the people at home as well - that the Opposition also have the ability to have the debate on bills that they have brought forward, which they have. So they are the ones who limited the two-minute debate on this bill. That's what I want the people at home to know.

The other thing is that - and we're talking about economic development here, Madam Speaker - I know that Nova Scotians want high-quality, good-paying jobs for themselves and their families. The Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party sat

in their seats the other day and laughed. They laughed at the fact that there were 1,000 jobs for Nova Scotians being created in this province. They do not get it. They do not understand the fact that this government - we're building a future to allow young Nova Scotians to stay in our province. That Party never did it, and I'm proud to be standing on this side of the House. Thank you very much.

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

MR. KEITH BAIN: Madam Speaker, it's great to be able to stand to actually talk about the bill for a minute, if we could. The fact that a government has to bribe companies to come to our province is a sign that our economy is sick. This bill doesn't cure that sickness, either. It simply slaps a decorative bandage on it, maybe a Spider-Man or Cinderella.

This bill guarantees the creation of one single job, Madam Speaker: the guy who builds the Web site. It does nothing to lower taxes, stop wasteful spending, or create long-term, meaningful jobs. It does nothing to fix the fundamentals of our economy.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The terminology "bribe" in this House is just not acceptable. It's not parliamentary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

MR. BAIN: I will withdraw that word, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Now where was I? This bill, Madam Speaker, won't create a climate that brings companies and job creators to Nova Scotia. A Party is needed that is serious about fixing Nova Scotia's economy and that introduces a bill that would make balanced budgets the law. Nova Scotia needs a Party that will lower taxes, stop wasteful spending, and create jobs. That's the Progressive Conservative Party. It's time to rip off the Cinderella bandage and get on with it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, I defer to . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for that bill has elapsed.

#### **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, we were certainly looking forward to a vote there. Unfortunately maybe another time we will have the opportunity. Would you please call Resolution No. 2275.

Res. No. 2275, re Yar. Ferry: NDP Gov't. - Mishandling - notice given Nov. 26/12 - (Mr. L. Glavine)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

Order, please, forgive me, I saw the member for Cape Breton North rise so I recognized him.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Madam Speaker, it is always important for me to get up and speak about this resolution, this issue, which has been absolutely critical to my area of the province, over the course of the last three years, and which I think will continue to have an impact on the economy of Yarmouth and on southwestern Nova Scotia, and that, of course, is the Yarmouth ferry.

The rash decision to cut subsidy to the Yarmouth ferry in 2009 was reckless and we've been dealing with the negative repercussions of that ever since, which are pretty significant. This was a decision that was solely made by this New Democratic Government, by the Premier, and perhaps his Cabinet colleagues, but it was a decision that was supported by that entire caucus. The reason there is not a ferry in Yarmouth today is because of our Premier and the NDP Government in this province. There is nobody else to blame. That solely rests on the shoulders of the folks that I'm looking at opposite.

I do want to address some of the comments that were made the other night by the member for Lunenburg West. Losing the ferry didn't just impact Yarmouth - it impacted a lot of regions of the province and the tourism sector. It did impact Shelburne, Queens County, Lunenburg as well. It impacted some traffic in the Valley and we had meetings in Cape Breton with tourism operators, all the way to Baddeck, and they said it had a major impact there as well. This was a decision that didn't just impact one town or one region, it really impacted the whole province.

I did take exception to the member for Lunenburg West's comments about his belief that the government was in this all alone, it didn't have any potential options or partners. That isn't true. The municipality - I will table this - in a submission the municipality made to the province in 2009, the municipality actually outlined four funding options other than the one that was being requested at the time and actually the municipality, in working with the federal government, came up with half the money that was required to keep The Cat going for an extra year, which would have allowed the community to transition and which would give the province and the community time to

find a new service that would require potentially less subsidy or whatever the Premier was looking for.

So to suggest that there were no partners in 2009 to keep this ferry going is completely inaccurate. In fact, because of the partnership of the municipalities in the Yarmouth area, which would include Argyle, the Town of Yarmouth, the Municipality of Yarmouth, it would have only required this government \$3 million to keep that ferry service going for another year. (Interruption) It is true and I'll go over the numbers if the Minister of Education would like to hear them.

It would have cost \$12 million to subsidize that ferry service. It's going to cost the provincial government \$6 million either way to keep it going or to cancel it. By cancelling the ferry contract with Bay Ferries, this province actually had to give Bay Ferries \$6 million to pay out the contract. That leaves us with \$6 million left, so out of a \$12 million subsidy that was needed for one year, \$6 million was spent to cancel the service. The municipalities came up with half of the remaining subsidy, which was \$3 million. This would have left \$3 million, undeniably, that is the fact, that's how much it would have cost to keep that ferry service going for one more year.

What happened was this government, this Premier said no. We said no to all the options that were presented by the municipality, we said no to the option for the municipality to cover half of that subsidy. Instead of investing an additional \$3 million to keep that ferry service going for a year, to allow the community to transition, help us find a new service while we're keeping that market in New England intact, this Premier and this government said no. And everybody, everybody in the province has been wondering to this day, why that was the case.

I know we have felt the negative economic impact most distinctly in Yarmouth. It's estimated that between 325 to 625 jobs were immediately lost; we've had several accommodation facilities close, including the Colony Harbour Inn which was our second largest hotel in the area right on the waterfront; and we've lost about 50 per cent of our room accommodations, they've all closed. We've had a lot of restaurants close including some historic facilities like Captain Kelley's, Bruno's, the Austrian Inn, and we're now losing the Colony Restaurant as well. I mean, the negative impact of this decision has not stopped in Yarmouth ever since this Premier chose to make it.

If you look at what's happening in other parts of the province you've had similar impacts as well. In fact, if you look at travel to the U.S. - and this is interesting because I know the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism spoke at a TIANS conference this week and he talked about how great the tourism industry is doing except, he said, regrettably that U.S. visitation to this province was down. We all know why that's happened - you eliminated the one major link we had left via sea to the largest tourism market in the world. (Interruptions)

The Minister of Community Services, or any other minister over there, can keep defending this decision, but the fact that the Premier has actually reversed his opinion on this would be a clear indication to that Cabinet that there was a mistake made. And instead of now paying \$3 million, a one-time \$3 million, to keep that ferry service going for a year, what has this Premier promised and committed to - \$3 million a year over seven years, and there is a reason for that. It's because three years later and going into an election year, this government and this Premier are tired of hearing about the negative impacts that this decision has made.

It's not a coincidence that heading into an election year this decision was made; in fact, that tourism industry, the people in Yarmouth, and businesses across the province have been demanding this sort of action for the last three years, and this government said no and ignored those pleas up until this past summer.

In Yarmouth we saw probably around 500 jobs directly lost, and U.S. visitation is down and that ranges from across the province and I'll table these, Madam Speaker. In 2009, U.S. visitations drop, that's the first year that we lost the service; the same thing happened in 2010, U.S. visitation dropped again . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: What about the year before that?

MR. CHURCHILL: These are all - sorry, these are all based on the year before.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's go back to 2004 because we really have time here.

MR. CHURCHILL: The decision was made in 2009, it wasn't made in 2004.

In 2011, that was another season where U.S. visitation was down. (Interruption) Now we look at 2012 - and the Minister of Community Services, if she is interested in the facts, she can read the data that I'm tabling. These are facts, these are the facts of your own Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

AN HON. MEMBER: Go back to 2004.

MR. CHURCHILL: In 2012 visitation from the U.S. to this province, down again.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the member not to use the document as a prop, holding it up, it's for tabling. Thank you.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is four years in a row that we have had U.S. visitation in this province down, something that the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism just acknowledged this week at a TIANS conference.

That has also impacted other tourism indicators in the province as well, and I'll table these especially for the Minister of Community Services to take a look at if she is interested. These are statistics from the Tourism Department, 2009. This isn't just U.S. visitation, this is all visitation. South Shore down 8 per cent; Fundy and Annapolis down; Yarmouth and Acadian Shores down; and province-wide tourism numbers are down. I'll table that. In 2010 South Shore down; Yarmouth and Acadian Shores down. In 2011 South Shore down; Yarmouth and Acadian Shores down an additional 10 per cent; the province down - these are tourism indicators and anyone can take a look at these over there. In 2012, that's this year, the South Shore visitation is down; province-wide tourism is down again.

One cannot say that tourism isn't down because you eliminated the major connector that we had going to the largest tourism market in the world. In the bad years, during the recession, Madam Speaker, there were still 80,000 to 100,000 people coming over here and spending money. Despite all this stuff, despite the fact that this government probably knew that these numbers were going to be impacted by losing the ferry, they made that decision anyway.

Let's look at what happened over the course of those three years. We had a number of reports done, independent reports done by government agencies and by consulting firms - ACOA - this would have been released in 2010, a transportation study. By the way, the province wasn't willing to wait until the study came out before they made the decision to cut the ferry. If they had, they would have gotten this report that said the present value of benefits from continued operations of the Yarmouth-Maine ferry service are estimated to be \$70.4 million, consisting primarily of travel time impacts, \$22.2 million in benefits to Nova Scotian tourism in the amount of \$35.1 million - transportation study done by ACOA.

We have another impact study done by the chambers of commerce from Shelburne and Yarmouth; they consulted a private consulting firm to do that. This was released in June 2010. Conclusion, "An annual investment of \$6 million generates \$22,220,903 of revenue to residents of Nova Scotia." The results of this paper have shown that the Yarmouth-Maine ferry service performs with strong financial indicators. That's June 2010, two reports that highlighted what we all know.

We have a third report, done by the Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership, again given to an independent consulting firm that found - in terms of economic impact, Gardner Pinfold reported that the termination of the service had a dramatic impact on the hospitality sector not only in southwestern Nova Scotia but throughout the whole province. They conclude that restoration of the service would reverse the negative economic impact the region has suffered over the course of the last three years. A positive impact would be felt throughout the region as soon as the service begins, that the revived Yarmouth-U.S. ferry service will generate \$16.3 million in tourism spending, that the impact of the ferry service extends beyond Yarmouth to the whole province, that the service contributes to the provincial and municipal tax revenues, that the 2010 drop in U.S. tourism can be directly



linked to the loss of the ferry service. That is a third report done by an independent consultant.

What was this government's response to those three reports, including one that they were part of? They ignored them, and they still get up in this House and say that cutting the Yarmouth ferry was the right thing to do. It's absurdity to say that, Madam Speaker, it doesn't make any sense.

So fast-forward to this past year, an election year, we have another report done. This time it is commissioned by the Premier. Its findings mirror the findings of the past three reports and tell everybody the same thing that the tourism sector has been telling this province for the last three years - a ferry service is viable and it is needed to reverse the negative impact to our economy. I'll table this as well.

So now, after this report is released, what does the Premier say? Oh, well now that we have this report, it changes everything and now we're going to invest \$21 million into a ferry service. That report has no new information in it and it tells the Premier everything that we knew before.

What we have had here is three years of negative impacts to this provincial economy because of this decision and finally, in an election year, the Premier is trying to make things right with it. And he couldn't even do that right. All that was needed this whole time was for the Premier to say, we made a mistake, we want to fix it. That still hasn't happened. Instead, he still tries to spin this and say that everything is different now, now we'll put \$21 million into a ferry service and we only needed \$3 million three years ago.

This is a black spot on this government's record and was one of the first major mistakes that it has made but, as we've seen, Madam Speaker, it definitely wasn't the last. What we're hoping now in Yarmouth and I know the tourism sector is - I was privileged enough to speak to some tourism operators from across the province and even beyond, this week. We hope that the Premier does hold his commitment to restore that ferry service before the next election is called. We need him to work with the federal government and right this wrong that was done to the entire province. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to rise to speak on Resolution No. 2275, even though I must say I can't agree with its premise, nor the kind of thinking that may have generated it in the first place. I guess the person who submitted it, or the member who submitted it, was the member for Kings West. He's a teacher, so I guess he probably understands the value of repetition when you're trying to teach somebody something, and so I'm going to repeat some things I said the other day.

I spoke in the House yesterday at some length, as you may recall, regarding the misconceptions that were perpetuated by the Opposition Parties regarding the suspension of the Yarmouth ferry. Instead of going into a lengthy regurgitation of those comments, I'll try to encapsulate in point form what I said in this regard just yesterday.

There is no question in my mind - and I said this yesterday, and I'll say it again today - that people and businesses in southwestern Nova Scotia want to see, as the member for Yarmouth just said, a viable, successful, and stable ferry between Yarmouth and the United States. I indicated that this area of the province is my favourite summer destination, and many of my colleagues, like the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley over there, have family who live in Yarmouth. So it goes without saying that we get it; we definitely get it.

Madam Speaker, in 2009, when we were elected as the government of our province, the ridership on The Cat was down by - are you ready for this? - 73 per cent from its peak in 2002. That old model had already failed. Nova Scotians were paying more and more to run an increasingly-empty ferry. I noted yesterday that neither the federal government, which cancelled the subsidy during the Honourable Paul Martin's stint as Prime Minister, nor the Government of Maine were willing to contribute to the cost of running the ferry.

I mentioned this the other day, and I assume everybody agrees with this: all the other major ferries in Atlantic Canada - the Newfoundland and Labrador ferries, the P.E.I. ferries, the Digby-Saint John ferry - have three funding partners. To complicate matters - and this is where I really wonder sometimes about how much the Opposition Parties understand global pressures - after 9/11 there was a requirement for U.S. citizens to buy passports, which Homeland Security demanded that they have in order to get back into their own country. Given the kind of orientation people have in the United States toward tax, many Americans refused to buy them, which means they couldn't come to our country because they needed a passport to get back into their own.

At the same time, gas prices skyrocketed. At the same time, the currencies of Canada and the United States reached parity, and everybody knows - ask anybody in my region, and they'll tell you that when our American visitors do not have a currency that's higher than ours and they don't get a rebate back when they buy something here, they tend to stay at home, and they did.

Now, Madam Speaker, we couldn't run an increasingly-empty ferry on our own hook. So we consulted with the community and we established a thorough, transparent consultative process by way of a draft request for proposals. This process resulted in a number of potential bidders, and on November 20<sup>th</sup> we held a session in Halifax for these potential bidders to provide feedback on the draft RFP. The three potential bidders were in attendance at that meeting, and this session was only one way we engaged and consulted

with potential bidders. Interested groups could e-mail, they could call, or they could participate in conference calls.

As opposed to the knee-jerk reactions of governments in the past - where there's a problem, you get a bunch of money, you throw it at it and hope it goes away - what we tried to do was make sure that when we did it, we did it correctly, we did it right, we did it the right way. Minister Corbett has written the federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities - sorry, the Deputy Premier . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to remind the member not to use the proper name of a member. Thank you.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MR. RAMEY: Madam Speaker, I stand corrected. The Deputy Premier has written to the federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and Denis Lebel and officials have started the necessary discussions. This is part of our effort to gain federal support and, we hope, investment in the new model for a Yarmouth ferry service. Currently our government has put - and I think the member for Yarmouth mentioned it - \$21 million on the table for the next seven years, as our contribution to help make this happen.

Madam Speaker, it's the member for Kings West who brought forth this resolution, in an attempt through some sort of, I don't know, eclectic and flawed reasoning, I guess, to try to tie the suspension of service of the Yarmouth ferry to a lack of caring by our government for rural Nova Scotians. At least I think when I read it, that's what was attempted here.

Where this comes from, Madam Speaker, I do not know because you see, here's where his Leader, the Leader of the Party of the member for Kings West, is on rural economic issues, the Leader of the Liberal Party spoke out against 400 good jobs on the South Shore, Digby and at the feed mill in Truro when he criticized Cooke Aquaculture's expansion. He spoke out against the province's investment that ensured we would win the national shipbuilding contract. That investment over 30 years means 11,000 good jobs, some of them, true, in HRM, but many in other areas of the province as well. He has criticized DSTN, going so far as to say they shouldn't be allowed to compete for business in the province.

Madam Speaker, due to what I can only think of as a lack of experience, the Leader of the Liberal Party did not seem to understand how saving the former NewPage mill meant saving hundreds of small businesses throughout the Strait region and 1,400 jobs. Nor did he seem to understand that the province will gain the entire loan back and make \$150 million in new tax revenue over 12 years.

Now, Madam Speaker, the Liberal Leader initially supported Lower Churchill, or I believe so, but now he wants the province to turn its back on that project, a project that will create thousands of good jobs and stable power rates. The Leader of that Party, to which the member who put forth this resolution belongs, has fallen into the trap of advocating Nova Scotia should deregulate energy in the province, which would, as we know from failed attempts in Alberta and Ontario, drive rates up 30 per cent to 50 per cent and kill thousands of jobs.

So to summarize, the member for Kings West, who proposed this resolution, has a Leader who in the past few months - just the past few months - has threatened to kill more than 10,000 jobs in places like Digby, Truro, Cape Breton, Pictou, Halifax-Dartmouth, Port Hawkesbury and Shelburne, to name a few. Now he has the audacity to bring a resolution like that forth and imply that we don't care about rural Nova Scotia.

Now I just would ask Nova Scotians, is this the kind of Leader and the kind of Party that they want at the helm of our province over the next couple of years? I think I know the answer to that.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that that's not what Nova Scotians want. On the other hand, our government has clearly shown its support for small- and medium-sized business, in all parts of this province, investing millions of dollars to help hundreds of Nova Scotia businesses become more productive, become more innovative, train their employees, and bolster their competitiveness in a world market. I emphasize world market because we live in the world and global forces have an impact on what happens here.

Our government has made critical investments in more than 200 small businesses, companies like Allendale Electronics down in Lockeport, Billdidit in Sydney, and Eden Valley Poultry in the Annapolis Valley. It seems to me that the kind of support the Opposition claims is missing here in Nova Scotia is exactly what we're doing. So I'm not sure what they're on about, I really have to say.

I would consider the resolution that I'm actually speaking on, because it appeared and somebody should speak on it, I consider it, if anything, misleading and kind of an insulting resolution to put forth with regard to how we're looking at the rural economy of Nova Scotia.

I would urge the member for Kings West, who proposed it, to look at the hundreds of examples of the government's position on supporting small business in Nova Scotia. Those small businesses, of course, know who they are and if they're listening I'm sure they'll have something to say about this at some point. I would further encourage that member to recognize that the government has decentralized a number of departments, relocating them in critical rural areas of our province. That is worthy of his attention, in my opinion.

The government has similarly done a number of other things - for instance, the small business corporate income tax rate. The Opposition could have reduced this rate when they were in power; they did not do that. We have done that. These cuts to the small business corporate income tax rate are the first of their kind in more than 20 years. Of course, 20 years is the magic number because that's how long our economy has been in the doldrums, thanks to the leadership of those two other Parties.

By reducing the tax from 5 per cent to 3.5 per cent, this government is saving small business millions of dollars every year. Growing the Nova Scotia economy means looking at the big picture, it means, first of all, looking at things globally - I keep saying that in here because I'm not sure folks get it - it means looking for opportunities of all sizes and it means making choices that will bring long-term prosperity for Nova Scotian families across the province.

That's exactly what the government is doing through our jobsHere plan. We're turning the corner, people are learning the right skills for good jobs, businesses are becoming more innovative and productive and Nova Scotia is competing and winning on a global scale like never before. Working together and investing in people sets the stage for a brighter future in Nova Scotia. I would argue, in Nova Scotia, the future starts now.

What we're hoping, what I'm hoping, sincerely hoping, is that over the next number of days, however many days in here, we'll finally be able to convince those on the other side that no man is an island and no country is an island. We do not live outside of the world context, we live in a world where we are part of that world and what happens in other places in the world - whether it's the United States, the European Economic Community - has something to say about how well we do here. It has something to say about that.

The member for Yarmouth, he studied at university, maybe he didn't take any economics courses, maybe he did, I don't know, but I would argue that it would be a good idea perhaps to take a little primer, a little refresher, maybe go back and take another wind at it and realize that all countries in the world do not operate in isolation. Industries in the world that have people who buy their products in various parts of the world, for instance, the United States buys a lot of our lumber, that's a given fact. Everybody knows that. If they have a downturn in their economy, if they have the Freddie Mac and Fanny Mae and the fiscal cliff, that's going to have some kind of bearing on how well we do in terms of selling our products there.

Housing starts are related to people buying wood and when houses are not being built, people do not buy wood. That would be one rudimentary example for the folks over there to try to figure out in terms of understanding how the global economy works.

Madam Speaker, it is my sincere hope that over the next while, as a result of having spoken on these issues, not just me but the Premier and a number of other ministers in our

government, those on the other side will realize that we're part of a much bigger picture than the tiny little Province of Nova Scotia or I'd even argue, the small population in a country like Canada. We're part of a much bigger picture and it would be wise for every member in this House, including the ones who chirp at me occasionally over there when I'm speaking, to realize that's a very important factor as to how well we'll do now and in the future.

I've gone on longer than I really wanted to here. I realize my time is becoming short, so with those few words, I shall take my place. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It's my pleasure to stand and speak to this resolution. I quite enjoy the partisanship sometimes in this House in listening to the member making sure that he stuck to his speaking notes. I know there was some member for Lunenburg West in that, I know there was. There were also some lines that, of course, were presented to him from the caucus office as from central government. But what he didn't really speak about all throughout that was really the truly Yarmouth issue, which is the cancellation of the ferry by that government.

I know he tried to lecture us on a whole bunch of other issues about no country being an island, well I thought Britain was an island and Ireland is an island, Jamaica is an island, Australia, New Zealand, you know, I get the metaphor but there are so many great countries that do it. I'm not trying to attack the member, I thanked him. I know he doesn't like to take the thanks too well but the criticism I have is that he really didn't talk about the Yarmouth ferry and what it has done to the economy of southwestern Nova Scotia.

It's not different than the question I did ask the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture earlier when I talked about the 6,600 jobs that have gone missing in southwestern Nova Scotia, and what is southwestern Nova Scotia? Southwestern Nova Scotia is basically anywhere - if you draw a line between his home community of Bridgewater and cut it across to Kentville and you count everything going west of that, that is southern Nova Scotia. That is the statistical area that Stats Canada looks at, it looks at the jobs and, Madam Speaker, since 2009, and basically since they started to record these in 1987, we have the highest unemployment rate that we've ever had, the highest unemployment rate.

Why is that? It is because we feel, and what we're hearing from the people that we're talking to on a daily basis - and maybe they are clearly different people, maybe they are out talking to different people than I'm speaking to, maybe we're going to different coffee shops, maybe we're going to different places - but the people that I talk to are not very optimistic about the economy in southern Nova Scotia.

I talked about - and I'll deviate a little bit before I go back to the ferry - but I talked about the fishery and the problem that we're having today is that we have a price that is very low and, yes, a lot of that is impacted by the U.S. market, about the strength of our dollar, about a whole bunch of other issues that are beyond our control. To credit the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, I know there are number of things that are within his department that are going on to try to make that price better but there is so much more, I think, that we as government can do to make that better.

But the optimism is at an all-time low. People are very pessimistic about how things are going to roll out. We have what you would call hired hands leaving this province in droves. I know a number of fishermen today who did not have the extra person on their boat to do the banding because all of those people have moved out West to take on jobs that are well paying, that are more stable in the oil patch. I can't blame them too much for it because of what we're seeing in those job losses of 6,600 people. (Interruption) Yeah, exactly, the member for Hants West says it well, people do have to eat so they have to make these decisions but the pessimism, the psyche of southwestern Nova Scotia right now is as low as I have ever seen it in my 43 years.

People don't believe we're ever going to get a boat back. I think they are hopeful. They would like to see it happen but people don't believe that at this last minute before an election, when the government puts out an RFP, that we're actually going to be getting a boat. I hope they are wrong because I think we deserve to have a boat in southwestern Nova Scotia, as we had for over 100 years.

Let's go to the decision, the decision to cancel the ferry. I mean okay, maybe it wasn't a decision directly to cancel the ferry. I'm sure that the Cabinet didn't say, how are we going to cancel that ferry? I'm sure there was a discussion amongst them in saying we're very concerned about this payment that is going out towards Bay Ferries in order to support the ferry. What are we going to do about it? I think that maybe in their inexperience that they felt that they could go and have a discussion with Bay Ferries and say, listen, we can't afford to pay that \$6 million or that \$9 million or that \$3 million, whatever that number was, we're not going to pay that to you anymore - thinking that maybe Bay Ferries - you know, they're going to keep the boat there, we're just supplementing it. That's the kind of negotiation I'm going to think went on behind the scenes. I'm thinking the inexperience of the Premier and his fellows was that they thought they could negotiate this one, get them out of that payment, and that the boat would still continue to go forward.

We know that what happened is that Bay Ferries was a little smarter than them, and they said, no, listen, if we don't have that kind of payment, we can't provide that situation. What would have been better is that that government would have presented a couple of options and said, listen, as all of us would admit, everybody that you've talked to would say the ferry was the wrong kind of boat. The Cat ferry was not the ferry that we needed.

So why didn't the government at the time say, listen, we're going to say for the next year we're going to supplement this, but we need you to make a decision on getting a different service? We're going to want you to go out and get that done.

I don't think that actually happened. I really don't think that happened, because knowing Bay Ferries, knowing the service that we had, that would have been reasonable to the area and the area would have found an opportunity or an option to make that happen. But that didn't happen for us.

So the decision was made. Bay Ferries called the bluff, and the ferry service was cancelled in 2009. They didn't consult with anyone in southwestern Nova Scotia. They didn't call the mayor. They didn't talk to an MLA. They might have talked to someone; I don't know who. People were caught extremely off guard by the decision of Bay Ferries to leave the area. The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture could have picked up the phone and called around and said, hey, what do you think of this? I don't know if he did. Maybe he can show.

We know that from the work that the chambers of commerce have done, the work that ACOA has done, and now finally what the government has done, that an opportunity was lost in tax revenue. Whether it is ACOA's guess of \$35 million, whether it is the chambers of commerce's study of \$22 million of revenue in Nova Scotia - and again, this is not a southwestern Nova Scotia - as much as we say it's a Yarmouth issue and a southwestern issue, there were businesses all across the province that have been impacted by the lack of ridership and the cancellation of the ferry.

Whether it's the job losses - I mean, we know the job losses have started to add up over the time, directly related to the ferry cancellation and also to the changes to the tourist industry in Nova Scotia. That can be easily counted in 300, 400, 500, 600 jobs directly because of that.

A lot of people would say this is a punishment. I don't believe it was a punishment to southwestern Nova Scotia for not voting for the government, but I think it was, again, a bit misguided, maybe a little bit of inexperience that led to this decision.

So where are we today? Where are we with this situation today that I'm hoping this government will continue to support and move forward?

They put out this RFP to bring together a lot of information that was already known. The Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership had been working already for a good year and some, trying to find interested parties to set up a ferry service in Yarmouth to Maine. I want to thank the members of that board, its co-chairs, for working really hard - Keith Condon, Neil LeBlanc, and all the other members of that board. I think they've done a phenomenal job of trying to pull all those ideas together.



So that wealth of information is sitting in their heads, sitting in their files, ready to share with government. I'm thankful that the government itself has found it appropriate to work with them to find the right operator. The member for Lunenburg West said just a few days ago or a week or so ago, they had a meeting here in Halifax, there were a number of interested businesses, ferry operators who would get together to offer that service, or be able to at least show interest in working towards something. You know, now that the government has put together \$21 million in order to make that happen, don't forget it's \$21 million over I think it's seven years, I think is what they looked at. An admission, I mean really it's an admission that maybe the first decision was done in haste, done too quickly, that maybe some things should have been researched a little better before we got here.

What I found interesting, with the information that was brought forward to us, the member for Yarmouth just tabled it there, the findings of the report, that when the discussion of ridership, and I know the member for Lunenburg West fell into this trap a little bit when he was talking about ridership, you know, the ridership of The Cat itself, yes, it shows a decline in what was happening there but in the original decision and the original way to try to defend that decision, people kind of forgot about the Scotia Prince and that Scotia Prince was bringing somewhere near 190,000 passengers a year. In the year that they were cancelled, in 2009, if I remember correctly, it was probably still in the 150,000 range that that boat was bringing before there was a disagreement between it and Bay Ferries on docking fees and a whole bunch of other issues that saw to the elimination or cancelling of that service.

So to go and blame 9/11, okay, yes, we did lose some, but we kept forgetting to put the numbers of the Scotia Prince in there, and I think the experience of the Scotia Prince shows us that having an independent model, or having a model that is not requiring of a subsidy, is one that can work in Yarmouth for that ferry, and I'm going to call it the Nova Scotia ferry to Maine. That's not just the Yarmouth ferry. As much as we want to take ownership for it, you know, it is Nova Scotia's ferry, it is its connection to the United States. So it can work.

So what does it mean that we need to find the right model? There will be added support by both levels of government, maybe even three levels of government at this point. We know the \$21 million is up front by the government and, you know, okay, this doesn't happen very often but I thank the government for putting that money on the table, for coming up to its obligation in looking at it from a different lens because I think that's what it took for them to actually take some orange glasses off and maybe put some pink ones on, I don't know, but looking at it from a different angle, they were able to see that there was an avenue for this.

The federal government has said on a number of occasions, in my conversations with the MP, that they're ready to support the infrastructure requirements at that terminal. (Interruption) He's doing well. I've talked to him a couple of times lately. That will depend on what kind of ferry we're able to attract to the area. So it's always running into a little bit

of a chicken before the egg kind of problem but I think once we get through the RFP process that has been well underway, I think it has got a good start going here, that we'll have an idea of who the operator is going to be, what kind of a boat is there, and then the federal government can step in and say, all right, here's the ferry terminal that we need, here's the docking infrastructure that we're going to need, and here's how we're going to pay for it. At that time the counties, the Town of Yarmouth, the municipalities, they can jump on board and make sure that it's the right decision of how things are going to happen.

Madam Speaker, you know, I wish this file had been dealt with correctly from the start and I just wish at some point along the way, whether it's the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, whether it's the Premier, to just say to my community, to the community in Yarmouth County, just sort of say, you know, maybe we were wrong. I'm sorry, we're going to try to make this right and we're going to work hard to do it. I know that my office is always available to anybody who calls it to help on this file and with that, I offer my help on this. I know I probably won't get a phone call but I'm always there to offer my thoughts on it and I know that the Minister of Health and Wellness has my number. So thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank my colleagues for speaking on this very important issue, and I certainly look forward to standing here and talking a little bit about Resolution No. 2275 and how I see it impacting our province and our economic development landscape.

First of all, I want to say that we're talking about two common things. I think that the government has handled these two things in a very similar way, with cutting the Yarmouth ferry specifically and the rural economy in general, because both have been, in my opinion, poorly managed and mishandled, and now we're backtracking to try to figure out where we go with this. I'll get into that a little bit later.

I do want to mention how proud I am to stand here in support of and next to my good friend, the MLA for Yarmouth. He came to the Legislature in a by-election and he has represented his people extremely well. The Yarmouth ferry is a massively important issue, and despite the politics of it all, I think we realize the effect it has had on the ground. I am proud of his work on this file. Since I've been here, I've listened to it, and in casual conversations we talk about it. This is his driving force, and I just want to acknowledge his work on the ferry and on the boundaries for Yarmouth. He's a good man, and he's doing great work for the people of Yarmouth, so I want to give him a heads up.

Again, my perspective is that this is another example of how the government has changed the channel. They've made a commitment in a particular way and then changed the direction and waved the wand, and now would suggest that some of these things

weren't said or weren't committed to. I think that when we create these expectations and then you don't meet them and you abandon them, these are the types of things that happen.

Now the government is left to backfill on some of the decisions they made in 2010 and certainly up until today. Again, there are two examples, and they tie into this resolution. The first one is the state of the rural economy in Nova Scotia, and secondly, it is specifically with the Yarmouth ferry.

Rural Nova Scotia is struggling. We heard the numbers today, and I will reiterate those for the House and for the debate tonight. It's so frustrating, truly, to listen to the minister. He gets up in the Legislature and I wouldn't say that he's answered 10 per cent of the questions I have asked him in my two years as Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Critic. He says things are great. Nova Scotians are happy. Young people are returning home for work. Things are fantastic. The economy is growing. We're so delighted. People tell us all the time how well we're doing.

That is not supported by any fact that I have access to. It's not supported by numbers - it's not supported by specific numbers, regardless of what your data source is. It's certainly not supported by the people I represent who I see every two weeks because the other two they're in Fort McMurray. That's a very real example. That used to be a bit of a rarity 20 years ago, that someone would go and come back, and now it's the way people work. They live in Glace Bay and their families are here and their kids are here and everything that they own is here, except that they have to go out West for their paycheques.

The reality is - and these statistics are pretty alarming - that we have 31,000 unemployed people in rural Nova Scotia; 4,400 full-time jobs lost since 2009; 8,200 people left rural Nova Scotia. That is a pretty significant outmigration. Collectively, unemployment in rural areas is north of 10 per cent, easily. The South Shore, we heard these numbers today: 6,100 full-time jobs lost in the last three years; 7,800 unemployed - up 2,700 since 2009; and a 13.5 per cent unemployment rate. And, of course, Cape Breton. The southern region of Nova Scotia is certainly catching up in these dire stats. We have 3,400 who have left the Island since 2009; 10,500 people unemployed; 16.4 per cent unemployment; and we've lost 500 full-time jobs since 2009.

These are alarming statistics, and where are we from this minister and from the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Department? What do we have? We have Bowater and we have DSME and we have Scanwood. We have these investments that have been made on behalf of Nova Scotians, and the minister, again, will get up and say, the plan is working.

If the plan is working, then why, three years later, in the relatively near future, facing an election, do we need experts to come from outside to tell us what we're going to do with rural economic development now? Why do we need Ray Ivany? Ray Ivany is a brilliant man. He has succeeded in everything he has ever done. He is an incredible person,

and certainly, as a province, we're lucky to have access to Ray Ivany. But why was this not done in 2009 and if the government didn't have a handle on these issues, then why is it that you've been telling us for three years that you have and that things are growing and things are getting better? We're not seeing it.

The minister said today that Ray Ivany is going to - the purpose for this task force is to support jobs here. I can pretty much say, unequivocally, that will be absolutely false. Ray Ivany will take a very objective approach to this and the people who are appointed to that task force and they will make decisions based on what is best for the province and where the rural economy is going. It certainly won't be to support the government's mandate. I don't think they'll be that kind of people; they want to have an objective impact on the rural economy.

To say that these things are double-speak and the rural economy is going so well but we need a task force to tell us how to do it, it's indicative and so is the Yarmouth ferry. In 2009 - and I have some articles to table - the Premier said he “. . . disputed the town's information when The Vanguard presented it to him during a conference call this morning. ‘I've never heard anything of that nature,’ he said. ‘What I know is there were about 23,000 people who came off The Cat into Yarmouth between May and October of last year . . . This is just not a service that is doing what needs to be done for southwestern Nova Scotia.’”

It's pretty clear. I don't think anyone has to read quotes or have things tabled to know where the Premier and where the government were back in 2009. The Premier was very confident that this wasn't sustainable and it wasn't viable and it shouldn't be there so it was removed. But of course, 2009, fast-forward to now. We've witnessed before our eyes very devastating economic impacts to southwestern Nova Scotia, southern Nova Scotia, certainly the County of Yarmouth. With direct and indirect jobs, as the MLA for Yarmouth mentioned, with hotels, retailers, food services, those types of things, the economy is still hurting; it's still reeling from that decision.

I'm sure the Premier, as the member for Yarmouth mentioned, is feeling that impact and now all of a sudden he is seen to have changed his tune. It's interesting that it wasn't on the table and it wasn't something that we were going to be interested in, now all of a sudden the Premier has committed \$21 million over seven years to getting a boat back in Yarmouth. Now it's a good idea.

My question would be, why did the Premier change his mind? What happened? If the expert panel have indicated this is viable under certain conditions and there are ways to do this, then why didn't we have this expert panel assembled in 2009? Why is it now? Why is it the summer of 2012?

What we have done in terms of economics, in terms of the community; we have allowed this decay to take place. If there's a viable ferry option and we know that there is,

then now we've lost these food services; we've lost these retailers; we've lost this economic foundation that we had in the county and in the region of Nova Scotia. It's certainly concerning. It's something that, as the member said, has impacted the entire province.

We heard about it in tourism round tables with our caucus and we also heard it in the tourism strategy session that was put together by the provincial government. It wasn't as if it was just us asking people, it was a very objective study that was put together. I think that's something that is concerning that when vendors in Cape Breton and vendors in Antigonish and vendors all the way across this province are worried about it, then that's significant.

What we're looking at is an impact that has really hit us hard. I listened to the member for Lunenburg West yesterday and as well today, and he talked a lot about the world markets and the recovery and he talked a little about fiscal policy and a little bit about exports and all these things and he uses the recession. Again, the idea of using a recession in this Legislature has become a crutch for the government. When things are bad and they're going to get better, then it's the recession, but when you cut the Yarmouth ferry it's because of the recession. By that logic, I would assume that when the U.S. economy recovers - which it will - and when the people of the U.S. spend their disposable income on things like tourism - which they do - then we will have increased traffic back here to Nova Scotia.

If that's the case, then I think the member for Lunenburg West would agree then that I would suspect that the Yarmouth ferry would become viable. I think that's a very interesting idea.

The member for Lunenburg West and I go back and forth in here, but we certainly have respect outside and inside the Legislature. One of the topics - and I just wanted to go down this road, I know I'm running out of time, Madam Speaker - I listened to the member and he talked about the Yarmouth ferry and he made some points yesterday and I want to sort of tie them into another topic.

One of the most difficult times and difficult questions, certainly, I asked as the Economic Development Critic was with respect to Bowater. My questions, if you can recall from Hansard, were very specific. They were about job guarantees; they were about how much money Resolute - and these were questions I made up on my own because I was concerned about the very specific aspects of this deal. If the president of Resolute was given this support by the province and didn't travel down to even meet with the Premier and with the government, then that was a concern for me and maybe I'm reading too much into that, but that was the first indication. Then when we started to look at the deals, there was really no way to ensure that these jobs would be protected, which naturally they weren't. No one celebrated the fact that Bowater and Resolute pulled out of Queens County, but the reality is they did.

I think it is only fair that someone who is on the Opposition side, who is asking very specific, very economic-based questions about a deal, was sort of painted as though I wasn't concerned about the community and that's a difficult thing. We've faced that so many times in Cape Breton where there are massive job layoffs and losses and it's a tough thing to go through and nobody wants that for any community, anywhere.

I wouldn't suspect the government would say that about Opposition ridings, and obviously vice versa, but the day after I asked some of those questions the member for Lunenburg West was talking about Bowater and he said, the same idea, I get along with the member for Glace Bay, he's a good guy, but I'm very disappointed in what he said and he was wrong to ask those questions. I don't think that's the case. What I think the case was, was that I was applying due diligence to the Bowater situation and trying to understand where are the job guarantees? Where are the assurances that this money is going to be well invested on behalf of the people in that region, in Queens County and, of course, the taxpayers of Nova Scotia?

The member for Lunenburg West, yesterday, basically made the exact same points about the Yarmouth ferry. We just have to have due diligence; we just have to make sure that the partner is in place; we have to make sure that this thing is long term and viable and sustainable. If it was valid when it was about Bowater, why wouldn't the very same questions be valid about the Yarmouth ferry? I think that if that's the due diligence we applied, then that's what we have to look at.

Finally, Madam Speaker - I know I've got a couple of minutes - I want to talk about the general direction here with the rural economy. We need a change in gears here. What we've done with the corporate welfare injections - and again briefly, I'll say it, I'm on the record as saying this, I will never hide behind this - the \$11 million investment to PROJEX is a subsidy. That's exactly what it is; it's nothing more, nothing less. I know that I've taken heat over this from the Premier because I don't like the people in the gallery and I hate jobs, or I'm killing jobs, or what have you, but this is money to compete directly with Nova Scotia firms who are already vibrant and are already successful. When you're provided with - they can bid low and they can buy high. They can give increased wages to pluck engineers from existing firms, which they have and they can bid lower on contracts, and that million dollars here and there will make a difference.

That's the kind of direction that we've taken and I'm concerned about that. Let's focus on the business environment of entrepreneurs and let's get back to small business and helping diversify the Nova Scotia economy. With that, I'll take my seat.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The honourable Opposition House Leader.

**HON. MICHEL SAMSON:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, that concludes the Opposition business. I'm certainly hopeful that next Wednesday we'll have much, much more time to deal with the business of the Opposition in Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, I call on the Deputy Government House Leader to provide us with hours and business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at 12:00 noon, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, the government will be calling Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 151 and 153. We will also be dealing with Bill Nos. 136, 140, and 143. That will be done in the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, clause by clause, and if time permits, we will call Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that we do now rise to sit tomorrow, Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. 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 MLA for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley:

“Therefore be it resolved that despite Opposition claims that emergency rooms could not be kept open, the NDP Government has proven that they are keeping their election commitment and increasing access to Better Care Sooner through the creation of Collaborative Emergency Centres.”

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

### **NDP GOV'T.: BETTER CARE SOONER - COLLABORATIVE EMERGENCY CENTRES**

MR. GARY BURRILL: Madam Speaker, I would like to focus my comments in support of this resolution on the particular situation of the ER at the Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital in Middle Musquodoboit. I would like to do that by stepping back almost exactly two years to the day in early December 2010, when the announcement inaugurating the Better Care Sooner plan in response to the recommendations of Dr. John Ross was made in the space of the family practice clinic which adjoins to that ER.

There was a reason why that announcement was made in that particular location, and the reason for that was that the model for rural ERs envisioned by Dr. Ross was one that had already been initiated in an approximate form over the previous 18 months in the hospital in the Musquodoboit Valley.

The background to this is as follows: for many years the Musquodoboit Valley had been fortunate to have been served by a physician group of three physicians, all of whom over the years were in good health, were young and strong, and who therefore were able over that period to provide 24/7 emergency care in the Musquodoboit Valley by means of upholding a brutal three-in-one rotation on-call system.

I'm reminded of my great uncle, Dr. Don Sutherland, who served as the only doctor in the Musquodoboit Valley in the Depression until 1939, when he went away to the war, and who after the war, when the time came to settle back in Nova Scotia, said to his wife, my grandmother's sister: We cannot go back now to Musquodoboit because in order to be the doctor there, one must be young and one must be strong, and now I am neither.

They did not return to Musquodoboit, and so it happened with time, as was inevitable, that the day came when one of the three physicians came into circumstances where they were unable to continue in practice, and this then accelerated the on-call schedule for the physicians who were there to an impossible one-in-two. Predictably, this led to a situation where doctors, having worked in emergency overnight, were needing to sleep during the day, were not available during the day, and then this in turn led to the situation that waits for appointments in the family clinic lengthened and lengthened. This in turn led to the situation where people, in order to access a doctor, went instead to the ER to meet the very doctor that they had been unable to get an appointment with during the day. As a result of this vicious cycle, patients became frustrated, doctors became exhausted, and also the emergency room, due to physician unavailability, sometimes had to close.

Now in the face of this situation, the physician group in the Musquodoboit Valley took matters into their own hands and dealt with this situation by introducing an entirely new and innovative rural model of care. The model of care, which is based on same-day appointments and the ER being open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and around the clock on weekends, is, in fact, the model of care which prevails in that hospital unto the present.

Now it is a very big thing for the people of Musquodoboit Valley, and I am particularly pleased to be able to say that a Collaborative Emergency Centre is about now to be established in Middle Musquodoboit. This is a very welcome development, and I want to point out a couple of things about this development which have come to light in the course of the public consultation which has taken place leading up to this decision.



One thing that has come to light in that consultation is the extent to which having this ER open 24/7 with these physicians is not, in fact, necessarily the sine qua non of quality emergency care in Musquodoboit; that is, there is a very real sense in which if you are extremely sick, in a real emergency, perhaps our eight-bed hospital and our general practitioner physicians are not the place for you to be cared for. In this respect, what emerged as an especially important thing for quality emergency care in an area like Musquodoboit is EHS and 911 service to get you to where the care that you need is available. Hence, the government's decision in September to eradicate ambulance fees for everyone whose income is below the Statistics Canada low income cut-off is a decision that emerges, from a health care point of view, as particularly important.

Secondly, it has come to light in the consultation process in Musquodoboit that a CEC-type model of care is necessary in order for our hospital to continue to be able to be a reasonably sustainable place for a physician to want to come and to want to continue in practice. The great public priority for health care in our area, in fact, is that we should keep our hospital and maintain our doctors, and the CEC model has been embraced publicly because people understand it's the means by which our community can lay hold of this important goal.

So as we move towards implementing the new CEC in Middle Musquodoboit, it's worth stating and noting that in this very demanding contemporary situation in rural areas, nothing we have in rural Nova Scotia can we take for granted. If we are going to have in our communities things that we want to have, we're going to have to fight for them, we're going to have to take ownership of them, and we're going to have to think in new ways towards accomplishing and maintaining them. This is true of schools, it is true of churches, and it is certainly true of hospitals.

In my view, Collaborative Emergency Centres are the application of just this kind of necessary, innovative intelligence to the rural ER situation. I very much look forward to the implementation of the CEC in the Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital and I think it prudent that our communities chose in 2009 to side with the Party which is the author and developer of the CEC solution. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and speak on this government's resolution that is before us, I guess, the talk tonight about emergency rooms.

We were just treated to not a general talk on the emergency rooms or what the NDP are pretending to be a promise kept, but we've been given a snapshot on a community in Nova Scotia in the Musquodoboit Valley, and we certainly appreciated that from the member from the Musquodoboit Valley - I'm not sure if that's exactly the full title of your

riding, however, it's nice to know the pride that you feel in that area and what is going on in your emergency room in the hospital there.

What we have though before us is a resolution that says that the NDP have kept their promise in keeping open emergency rooms, and I think it's really important that we remember first of all - in the 2009 election, at the time the NDP Party running in that election had some very short bullet-points that were promises that they put forth to the public in Nova Scotia. One of them was emergency rooms will be kept open 24/7, full stop. There were no other descriptions that we might redefine emergency rooms, we might change them; we might move them, we might do whatever. In every community it was don't worry, don't be fearful, you've experienced closures and now it's going to be open all the time. Well, of course, people like the thought of that.

There is also a suggestion in this resolution operative clause that said that the Opposition said that it couldn't be done. That's not true. During the 2009 election, we had our own suggestion on what could be done to stop the constant closures in emergency rooms and we knew it was a question of physicians and nurses and the availability of staff and we had a suggestion to counter that. So there is a false premise in the statement that is before us to begin with but as the member speaking did not make reference to that, I think we can go on and look at the record of the NDP Government, in this particular issue of emergency rooms and keeping them open.

The government has created a new category of facility and they are called Collaborative Emergency Centres. Madam Speaker, essentially, these are urgent care centres. A lot of other cities have them. I know where my mother lives in Calgary, they have urgent care centres where you can go and get a certain level of emergency care but you're not at the hospital getting all the full range of care and services that would be available there. If you are experiencing a full-blown emergency - a heart attack, a stroke, and so on - they will have you at a hospital very quickly.

As was said, you're not to be at a Collaborative Emergency Centre if you are having a full-blown emergency need. I think it's important that we understand that there has been a misconstruing of language, a redefinition of what an emergency room is and then an attempt to claim that that means that the promise has been kept. Well it hasn't, Madam Speaker, and we know that we are a long way from it across the province.

I wanted to mention today the article that had appeared in The ChronicleHerald on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, just last week, coming from the Valley Bureau and talking about closures at the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. The mayor of Middleton said that it was the first item on their agenda as a new council when they came together after the municipal election. The first item on their agenda was to look into the closures at Soldiers' Memorial and the rotating nature of these closures. It was closed 13 times between July 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> for overnight shifts, and there were three closures as well on 12-hour shifts in November, just recently, the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.

This area covers a large catchment area: 40,000 people live in the area of Soldiers' Memorial; 18,500 patients visit that hospital each year. These closures cause a lot of distress especially when they are combined with closures that may be taking place at the Digby hospital as well and you'll find that there is no hospital open between Kentville and Yarmouth, which is a long distance to travel in the event of an emergency.

The people in the Valley certainly are not feeling a sense of ease or calm that this is all being taken care of and that a promise has been made. There is a lot of distress to make it the number-one issue for the municipal council to lobby to try to find out what's needed, to see if they need to intervene. They point out the fact that their hospital pays less per hour to the emergency room doctors than the regional hospital in Kentville, and only today here in Question Period we had a question from our Leader asking exactly that question. For him it was a local question, a question that people in his area are asking and are very concerned about. He raised that issue because the promise has not been kept. The people are not getting what they bargained for when an NDP Government was elected in this province.

Madam Speaker, the figures still speak very loudly. Last year there was 17,717 hours of closures on emergency rooms in this province and that is a tremendous number. They have gone down slightly, I will give you that. They are down 1,000 hours from the year before, but that is still 17,717 hours of closure and I would expect we'll see an election in this province within the next eight to 12 months; something like that. If we don't, I'll be surprised and again, I don't see how the NDP Government are going to reduce that 17,700 hours in this year. I mean at the rate that they are declining, it is miniscule and there are many many communities captured in these 17,000 hours of closures.

I know my time will go fast, so I'm anxious to get into some of the snapshots of what we're seeing in emergency health care today. One of the things I wanted to mention was some of the standards that emergency rooms are having. I remember the minister saying, and it was in the John Ross report, that we would be the first place in Canada to set emergency room standards and stick to them.

One of the things that are now being reported on is something called the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile length of stay for admitted patients. That means - I want to read what it means, because these are statistics, so I want to make sure we're clear. For information purposes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile length of stay is the time that 90 per cent of patients ended up waiting in the emergency room before being admitted.

So they're sick enough that they're not going to be sent home. They're going to be admitted to hospital. That means they're seriously ill at the emergency room, definitely. The standard for that, the benchmark that is set, is eight hours. Eight hours should be the maximum that you would have, so within 90 per cent of the time you'd get people into a hospital bed within eight hours. Even that is a long time to be spending in an emergency room, having some preliminary tests, et cetera.

But how are we doing against that benchmark? That's the question. In the same report it was noted that the wait was 28 hours in the QE II. For the thousands of people who live here on the Halifax side of the harbour who are going to the QE II, the wait for somebody sick enough to be admitted, 90 per cent of the time, was 28 hours - again, measuring that against the benchmark of eight hours, which is already a long time.

That has a tremendous impact on people's health, clearly. It shows the stress and the pressures in the emergency room, and the NDP Government have done nothing to address this. They've set a standard, a benchmark, but we're so far away from achieving it, and I see no evidence of how we're going to get there here in metro. As I say, such a busy hospital with so many thousands of people. My community alone is larger than most towns and cities in the province. We're all relying on that - 400,000 people in HRM going to either the Dartmouth General or the QE II.

The Dartmouth General was also very high on that list in terms of the length of time. The November report said the wait time at the Dartmouth General, for those sick enough to be admitted, was 35 hours. That's 35 hours in the emergency. It's just untenable, and it's a window on the kind of suffering that people will be experiencing when they go there. We know there are a lot of elderly people who go to the emergency room. We know they need help.

Another one of the statistics is called the CTAS Level 3 patients. It says that they should be seen in 30 minutes. They're people with a condition that's going to get worse, and they should be seen in 30 minutes. At the QE II and Dartmouth General, in the month of September, they were waiting 140 minutes. These are statistics now being gathered and reported on on a regular basis, and our results are very poor.

I have to say again that during the 2009 election, which saw the NDP Government elected with a majority, there was a promise made of keeping all emergency rooms open 24/7. That is a promise that has not been met by a long shot. Urgent care centres are a good thing to have, but they do not qualify as an emergency room being kept open 24/7. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand this evening and speak for a few moments on this resolution.

I'm going to try something new here. After 10 years, it's always good to try something new. I'm going to start by saying something nice before I get going.

The thing is, I've never heard truer words said on the floor of this Assembly than words that I heard come from the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. He said, we in rural Nova Scotia have to fight for our communities - I know I'm paraphrasing just a

little bit - we have to fight for our churches, we have to fight for our schools, and we have to fight for our hospitals. I want to thank him for that, because I think that levels us all out in understanding why we, as Opposition Parties, maybe call out the government at times on certain decisions and why they're not always exactly what they look like or what they actually are. I want to thank him for that, because that was a really good statement.

This annual accountability report of emergency departments is six months late. It took 18 months for it to get produced from the last time and it doesn't show much more than we already know, which is that emergency rooms across Nova Scotia are in a crisis situation. No wonder the community that the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley talked about is so anxious to get a CEC, because that hospital was closed, I think, 3,600 hours during this reporting period, which pretty much means it was almost never open. I feel bad for the community he represents that it really had to go through that. It's a long time.

We need to start where this issue really begins, and you know the government members will defend, and the minister will defend the closures or moving towards a different model, but let's not forget, back in 2009, what the actual promise was, that the Leader of the NDP at that time said they would keep emergency rooms open 24 hours a day, seven days a week - all emergency rooms.

Now they didn't say in the different communities that, by the way, we're going to close your emergency room and we're going to reinstate or create a different model for you, we're going to put in these Collaborative Emergency Centres, which I think in my mind is a misnaming because it is not an emergency centre, it's an urgent care centre. It's a glorified - "glorified" is the wrong word, I guess, I shouldn't use that, but it's a model which uses other professionals, very good, well-trained professionals, to provide a service that is not an emergency room. They will help you book with your primary care physician; they will see a nurse or a paramedic, or whatever that model tends to be.

Madam Speaker, what's happening across the province is there are different models. There is no one model that we're seeing in these different communities that are the same. If you actually talk to, let's say the Nurses' Union, the Nurses' Union would say that one model is actually safer than another model, that the actual competencies of those individuals who are at those centres are different and/or better than others.

So they are all different; I think they all are tailored in a way and we really won't know what the outcome is going to be, what the true effect to those communities will be until they are thoroughly reviewed, after a good year or two of service.

You know the NDP did break the promise of all emergency rooms open 24/7. Why don't we admit that we're not going to make that, and why doesn't the government admit that they're not going to make that and say, listen, this is a second-best method and we're going to try to do that. I mean, there are a number of hospitals or urgent care centres that are

on this list that need addressing, just like the one in the member's constituency - the Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital was closed, like I said, 3,915 hours.

We talked about CECs in different places and where the next ones are coming from, but we really haven't talked about the Northside General Hospital - that was closed 1,500 hours, and the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital, 2,000 hours. Why haven't we talked to them and said, hey, we're going to be setting up CECs in your area to satisfy our promise of keeping emergency rooms open 24/7.

This is a difficult issue - I'm not going to diminish the fact that it's a difficult issue. Madam Speaker, I've lost skin in this game over the last number of years, spending my time as Minister of Health, and I can tell you why emergency rooms are closed. They are closed because physicians are not available to be there.

Well, why don't we work or have a program - and we're still waiting for this, I think, from government - of truly finding a method in which to have more physicians in our province? It is not just that we are going to steal them from somewhere else in the world because we know through the CAPP program and other things that we can bring international doctors in here, get them trained and get them working here. But why not give the opportunity to our families, our communities that have young people who are interested in going into medicine, provide them with the seats at Dalhousie or buy seats somewhere else that will get more of these doctors into our areas like Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. I'm sure there are a number of bright young people who would be tremendous in providing that kind of medical service in a rural area.

The best example I have of how this doesn't work is a cousin of mine, a very smart individual from Bedford. She got straight A's all through school. I have never seen marks like that and I never had marks like that. I don't know if many of you did, I wasn't one of those. But she did phenomenally well through her schooling. She applied to Dalhousie University, wrote the test on two different occasions and was not accepted. So what did she do? She went to an international school, first off to Hungary, then off to the Island of Saba. Phenomenal marks, I mean the GPA that this girl kept was phenomenal. She was able to get her clerkships in the States. She did a couple clerkships here but when it came time to actually do her internship, Dalhousie didn't have any room for her so she went to the States to do her internship. She is now at the Mayo Clinic in Michigan. She is a surgeon at the Mayo Clinic in Michigan. She is probably one of the top doctors there right now.

They tried to entice her back and tried to get her to do some surgeries at the IWK, I know that she was doing some work there, to try to get some pediatric surgery going, but there is still no incentive for her to come back to Nova Scotia. They are offering her a tremendous amount of money in Michigan and they want her all around the county. Had we been able, and had we had the service and the handle and the partnership with Dalhousie University, we could have had her working in Bedford or in Kentville; we could have had her working in Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, anywhere in the province.

That's what we need to do, Madam Speaker, is to try to find the brightest, youngest, smartest in order to offer a service to keep our emergency rooms opens right across the province. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time allotted for the late debate has elapsed. I thank all members for participating in this evening's debate.

The House does now stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:29 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 2365**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 3, 2012, athletes, teams, and valuable builders in the development of sport were ceremoniously inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Lake Echo native Steve Giles was inducted into the Nova Scotia Hall of Fame for his outstanding career in the sport of paddling; and

Whereas Steve Giles' talents and athleticism have not only set an example for countless new athletes in the sport of paddling but have also yielded world championships, a gold medal win at the 1999 Pan American Games, and participation in four Olympic Games in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004, with the 2000 Olympics in Sydney resulting in a bronze medal;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Steve Giles on his most-deserved induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame, acknowledge his successful career as a paddler, and extend our appreciation for his extraordinary efforts serving as a role model for future generations of paddlers, both in our province and country.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2366**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 3, 2012, athletes, teams, and valuable builders in the development of sport were ceremoniously inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; and

Whereas players of the 2001 King of Donair Men's Soccer Club were inducted into the Hall of Fame for being the first Nova Scotia club team to win a national championship at any level; and



Whereas this induction is well deserved, given their National Club Championship title was secured without sustaining a loss; the Canadian Soccer Association listed Halifax King of Donair as the third most successful team in the history of the championships; and five of the team members were named Nova Scotia Soccer League all-stars;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the members of the 2001 King of Donair Men's Soccer Club for their most-deserved induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame and acknowledge their role in putting Nova Scotia on the national map in the sport of soccer.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2367**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 3, 2012, athletes, teams, and valuable builders in the development of sport were ceremoniously inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Bridgewater native Glen Murray was inducted into the Nova Scotia Hall of Fame for his exemplary career in the NHL; and

Whereas Glen's 16-year stellar career in the NHL saw him play for the Boston Bruins, the Pittsburgh Penguins, and the Los Angeles Kings, and accumulate 651 regular season points, putting Glen in third place for points scored by a Nova Scotian in the history of the NHL;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Glen Murray on his most-deserved induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame, acknowledge his successful career in the NHL, and recognize his accomplishments as one of Nova Scotia's all-time great hockey players.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2368**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 3, 2012, athletes, teams, and valuable builders in the development of sport were ceremoniously inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Julie Barton's induction was in recognition of her career full of firsts in the sport of table tennis; and

Whereas Julie's accomplishments include being the first Nova Scotian and youngest player to make the national team at the age of 14, and at the age of 15, she became the Canadian Women's Singles Champion, making her the youngest competitor in history to hold both the junior and senior Canadian singles titles;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Julie Barton on her most-deserved induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame and acknowledge her successful national and international career in the sport of table tennis.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2369**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Saturday, November 3, 2012, athletes, teams, and valuable builders in the development of sport were ceremoniously inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Dartmouth native Vince Horsman was inducted into the Nova Scotia Hall of Fame as only one of three Nova Scotians to have made it to the major leagues since the turn of the century; and

Whereas from 1991-1995, Vince had a stellar career playing 141 games as a pitcher for Toronto, Oakland, and Minnesota, and while playing in Oakland had a 2.49 earned run average in 58 games, helping the A's win their division and go to the playoffs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Vince Horsman on his most-deserved induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame, acknowledge his successful career in Major League Baseball, and extend our appreciation on his ongoing efforts to coach a new generation of baseball players in the State of Michigan.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2370**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Dave LeBlanc of Meteghan Station was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dave LeBlanc on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2371**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Wilson Comeau of Concession was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Wilson Comeau on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2372**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Jean Melanson of Salmon River was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jean Melanson on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2373**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Pierre Comeau of Meteghan River was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Pierre Comeau on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2374**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Robert Maillet of Meteghan River was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Robert Maillet on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2375**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Claredon Robicheau of Concession was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Claredon Robicheau on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2376**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Lucy Melanson of Hectanooga was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to her community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

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

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2377**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Elsie Basque of Saulnierville was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to her community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

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

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2378**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Aline Comeau of Saulnierville was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to her community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

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

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2379**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

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

Whereas a new commemorative 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; and

Whereas medals are being awarded to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and our country; and

Whereas Harold Boudreau of Meteghan was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community at a ceremony held in Cornwallis on October 11, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Harold Boudreau on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to his community.