



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordon Gosse

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2012

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fourth Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordon Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a petition with the operative clause, to help children like Joseph Campbell live in their hometown for support of local group homes to start up.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 1,200 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own.

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:

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

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature to the 151 names.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Preston.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition with the operative clause:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there are 24 signatures, and I have also affixed my name to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, 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. 151 - Workers' Compensation Act.

Bill No. 153 - Community Interest Companies Act.

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

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

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. 150 - Residential Tenancies 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 member for Halifax Atlantic.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Private and Local Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 117 - Anne Murray Centre Tax Exemption Act.

Bill No. 129 - Liverpool United Baptist Church Cemetery Act.

Bill No. 130 - Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches Act.

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

Bill No. 146 - East Hants Curling Arena Act.

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

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2516

HON. DARRELL DEXTER (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the member for Halifax Atlantic, a fighter for social rights, voice of reason and compassion, and a leader in protecting and honouring the heritage of her community, was first elected to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly as the MLA for Halifax Atlantic in 2003, and was re-elected in 2006 and 2009; and

Whereas the honourable member is an editor and researcher who co-authored a book on the Northwest Arm, has spent countless hours fulfilling the commitment to make life better for Nova Scotians, while giving a strong voice to her constituents' issues and concerns; and

Whereas this dear friend and colleague recently announced that she will not run in the next provincial election, taking a much-deserved break from public life to enjoy more time with her husband and family;

Therefore be it resolved that all the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the member for Halifax Atlantic for her full and accomplished public service, thank her for the great things she is doing for the individuals and families she represents, and wish her all the best for years to come as she continues to work to make her community a better place with a rich sense of its unique heritage and lifestyle.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

I started in a bit of haste earlier today and I forgot the subject matter for late debate, which I will now read:

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly condemn the NDP Government for its support of a 3 per cent increase in power rates for the next two years and subsequent increases beyond 2014.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Richmond.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 2517

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

Whereas Legacy of Life is Nova Scotia's provincial organ and tissue donation program, and its mandate is to ensure that all Nova Scotians know about organ and tissue donation and choose to donate; and

Whereas organ and tissue donation saves and improves lives - an organ donation from one person can save the lives of up to eight people, while a single tissue donor can improve the lives of up to 40 people; and

Whereas Nova Scotia leads the country in the number of registered organ and tissue donors, with over 50 per cent of residents signed up to donate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in commending the work of the Legacy of Life program, and encourage all Nova Scotians to register as organ and tissue donors.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2518

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: M. le Président, par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que M. Jean Melanson a été premièrement élu au Conseil municipal de Clare en 1979 et a été choisi préfet depuis 1988 jusqu'à sa retraite cette année; et

Attendu que Jean Melanson a été réélu à dix reprises au cours de sa carrière politique; et

Attendu que Jean Melanson a siégé à plusieurs comités et conseils d'administration tant au niveau national que provincial avec la Fédération canadienne des municipalités et l'Union des municipalités de la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent M. Jean Melanson à l'occasion de sa retraite du Conseil municipal de Clare et le remercient pour ses nombreuses années de dévouement et de services rendus à sa communauté, sa province et à son pays, et lui souhaite longue vie et bonne santé.

M. le Président, je propose l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débats.

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

Whereas Jean Melanson was first elected to the Clare Municipal Council in 1979 and has been warden since 1988; and

Whereas Jean Melanson has won 10 municipal elections in his political career; and

Whereas Jean Melanson has served on committees and boards at the national level with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and provincially with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities throughout his political career;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the important contribution of Warden Jean Melanson throughout his municipal political career and wish him all the best on his retirement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 2519

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

Whereas after serving residents of Springhill for more than three decades, Lamp Cabin Beverage Room owner Ron Reynolds has sold his popular watering hole to businessperson Damian Byrne and local partner Derek Forsyth; and

Whereas the Lamp Cabin is an integral part of the Springhill community, holding many fundraisers and supporting several worthwhile charities; and

Whereas the new owners are wisely going to incorporate the Lamp Cabin name, with all of its historic significance, into that of the new business, calling it the Split Crow at the Lamp Cabin;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Ron Reynolds and thank him for the commitment he has shown to the Springhill community, and wish new owners Damian Byrne and Derek Forsyth success as they carry on the Lamp Cabin tradition.

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.

HON. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that I introduce a guest - who is not really a guest, but is a regular member of our staff who is here in your gallery. I'd ask Sergeant Don McElhone to stand for a moment. I'd ask him to remain standing, for a change, because now he has to listen to what we're going to say about him.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 2520

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

Whereas one of the security staff of this House of Assembly, Sergeant Donald Roy McElhone of Commissionaires Nova Scotia, has been a player, coach, and legend in the sport of lacrosse, having played games in seven different decades, starting in the 1950s, and is still coaching today; and

Whereas Don, or "Twig" as he was known in the sport - I see the resemblance - had a stellar start in Ontario with the Cornwall Wildcats as starting goalie, including the season in which his team went undefeated, including 18 games in which he played goal and two games - wait for it, Mr. Speaker - in which he played forward, scoring two goals and four assists, and won the Ontario championship; and

Whereas after going on to spend 25 years playing senior lacrosse in Nova Scotia, as well as coaching at various levels in this province, at a ceremony held on August 11, 2012, Don was inducted into the Cornwall Sports Hall of Fame in recognition of all of his accomplishments in the sport of lacrosse;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize the lifetime achievements of Donald McElhone in the sport of lacrosse, congratulate him on his well-deserved induction into the Cornwall Sports Hall of Fame, and thank him for his decades of dedication to the sport, which he loves and for which he has done so much, as a coach and a mentor for others.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 2521

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

Whereas after three years of the NDP Government's economic mismanagement, Nova Scotia has had the worst economic growth and the second lowest wages in Canada; and

Whereas three years of massive record-breaking deals that saw big cheques going to big business, we see that Dexter economics has done nothing to move up the wages in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this NDP Government agreed to hand over \$590 million to six corporations only to watch them lay off 1,310 Nova Scotians, \$245 million of which went to Bowater and Port Hawkesbury Paper, companies that slashed wages, rolled back benefits and left pensioners in the cold;

Therefore be it resolved that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island question the Premier, his NDP Cabinet, and find out why his government is choosing to hand over millions to companies to bust unions, drive down wages, and slash benefit packages.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It is improper to refer to another member by their name in any way during any proceedings in the House, that includes notices of motion and while reading from documents such as newspaper stories. I would ask the honourable member if he would please change the name on that resolution.

MR. COLWELL: Yes, I will and I would change that to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2522

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

Whereas on Sunday, November 4th, the Bay St. Lawrence Credit Union celebrated its 75th Anniversary of its founding; and

Whereas the Credit Union began with local farmers, fishermen, housekeepers, teachers, students and labourers, 25 in all, from Bay St. Lawrence, Capstick, Black Point and Meat Cove; and

Whereas from its humble beginnings in 1937, the Credit Union moved into its own building around 1950 on lands once belonging to Daniel Driscoll, the first recorded settler of Bay St. Lawrence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the board of directors and manager Mary Collins of the Bay St. Lawrence Credit Union, on its 75th Anniversary and wish them every 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 Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2523

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

Whereas Gladys Vivian Haack was born on October 6, 1912 to Nellie and Edward Herget and she and her brother grew up in Upper Dyke, Hants County; and

Whereas during her life she accomplished many things such as graduating with a nursing degree from the Farmington School of Nursing in Massachusetts, the University of

Toronto with a diploma in Public Health Nursing, working in this profession for many years in Lunenburg County, and with her husband she owned and operated the Windjammer Motel and she always vowed that if she reached the age of 100 she was going to throw a big party and invite the entire community; and

Whereas Friday, October 5, 2012, friends of many years and from across the province along with municipal, provincial and federal political Parties, gathered to wish this delightful lady a happy birthday and take part in many exchanges of stories and good times throughout her long life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in recognizing Gladys Haack on reaching the wonderful milestone of 100 years young and wish her continued good health and happiness.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: May I do an introduction that is related to this resolution that we're going to do on Tamara Musgrave?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the west gallery where we have with us today Leona Mollis, who is Tamara's mother, as well as Scott Musgrave who was Tamara's husband, and Scott's parents, Glenn and Pat Musgrave. I'd ask them to stand and receive a warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 2524

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 November 4th Nova Scotia lost one of our young, Tamara Adrian Musgrave, to cancer, a disease that continues to account for more than one-quarter of all deaths nationally; and

Whereas on hearing Tamara's story you would soon discover her desire to study philosophy, her love of singing, her zest for life and her will to live, inspiring all of us, even those who never had the privilege of meeting her; and

Whereas now we take up the torch for the new generations of Tamaras, in hopes that her fate through tragedies of childhood and cancer will not be the same for others;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in not only expressing our condolences to Tamara's many friends and family, especially her husband Scott, but also in seeing the world through Tamara's eyes in how to express our true compassion, respect for each other and in living each day to the fullest while remembering her philosophy, "The past is gone, the future is unknown, there is only now."

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 Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2525

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

Whereas Mike Jamieson is a master technician and sound equipment extraordinaire for public events in Windsor, West Hants, and throughout Nova Scotia; and

Whereas whether it is at the Windsor Hockey Heritage Gala, the Mermaid Theatre or working for a big name such as Matt Minglewood, Mike is often the man behind the scenes making sure everything is running smoothly; and

Whereas the 36th Annual Christmas Angels Fundraiser was held in Windsor on December 2nd, where Mike has volunteered his expertise in technical and sound for more than 30 years working throughout the entire weekend to assist with this very worthy cause;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our sincere thanks to Mike Jamieson of Windsor for his continued support of Christmas Angels and other worthwhile events and wish him all the best.

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. 2526

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

Whereas Special Olympics Nova Scotia serves over 1,500 athletes in 15 regions across Nova Scotia striving to provide these athletes with year-round sports training and athletic competition of the highest quality; and

Whereas each year nominations in several categories from across the province are submitted for consideration by the Provincial Program Council and presented at a dinner; and

Whereas Matthew Hunter has trained with the Cobequid Special Olympics swim team for over 10 years, represented Nova Scotia at the 2009 Canada Summer Games in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, was named to Team Nova Scotia's training squad to compete at the 2010 National Special Olympics Games, competed at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Greece, and also at the 2012 National Winter Games;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Matthew Hunter for being named 2012 Male Athlete of the Year at the dinner hosted by Special Olympics Nova Scotia, another honour to add to his many, many achievements.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2527

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

Whereas residents of the Alderwood Rest Home in Baddeck, were thrilled recently with a special visit from renowned musician Dave Gunning; and

Whereas about 12 years ago while playing at the Keltic Lodge in Ingonish, Gunning met Margie and Eddie Yates, who were celebrating their 50th Anniversary at the time; and

Whereas as a result of his conversation and enjoying the company of the Yates, Dave that evening wrote the song *Saltwater Hearts* with the Yates in mind, a song that he often sings in his many performances;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Dave Gunning for his visit to Margie Yates and the other residents at Alderwood, and for sharing *Saltwater Hearts* with his many fans.

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. 2528

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

Whereas Harlow Construction Limited was named Business of the Year at Eastern Shelburne County Business Excellency Awards on October 18, 2012; and

Whereas Harlow Construction is a second-generation, family-owned business that has continually invested in their community over the years to expand their operations and services, becoming a true economic backbone of Shelburne County; and

Whereas Harlow Construction is very much a community-minded business that supports various organizations and events on a regular basis including annual bursaries that are awarded to graduates of the Shelburne and Lockport High Schools;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Harlow Construction Limited for being named Business of the Year at the Eastern Shelburne County Business Excellence Awards on October 18, 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 Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2529

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

Whereas Yarmouth resident Jessica Amirault, who was born with cerebral palsy and does not have the use of her hands, started painting when she was around 9 years old by clasping a paintbrush inserted into a mouthpiece between her teeth; and

Whereas Jessica's art and her infectious smile have been a great source of joy and inspiration to many in our community; and

Whereas a book of Jessica's favourite paintings has been published and her artwork will be on exhibit at Th'YARC Playhouse and Arts Centre from December 4th to December 14th;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica Amirault on the publication of her book of art and on her art exhibition and thank her for so generously sharing her incredible talent with the rest of us.

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. 2530

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

Whereas 4-H is the largest and longest-running rural youth organization in Canada; and

Whereas the 2012 annual Pictou County 4-H celebration and awards event was held in November and its members were honoured for their work and accomplishments in 4-H; and

Whereas at this year's 4-H awards event, Andrew Greene of Durham, a member of the Saltsprings 4-H club, was named the top senior member and the top senior livestock member in recognition of his many achievements at 4-H at local, regional and national events;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly congratulate Andrew Greene on his 4-H awards and thank him for his dedication and commitment to 4-H and his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 2531

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

Whereas Cordell Levy is a retired, proud member of the Canadian Armed Forces, who holds a special place in his career for his time in peacekeeping service; and

Whereas Mr. Levy was awarded the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Medal and more recently Her Majesty's Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Cord continues to be an active member of his community, the Canadian Association of UN Peacekeepers, the Royal Canadian Legion and provides relentless support to our veterans, especially to have them treated with the greatest dignity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Cord Levy on his recent awards and commend him for his work on behalf of our veterans.

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. 2532

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

Whereas Big Brothers Big Sisters of Truro has offered an in-school mentorship program to their clients since 1997; and

Whereas Michelle Misener, executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters in Truro, works diligently doing training and background checks to ensure that the right volunteers are matched with Truro-area students who have been identified by teachers and school administrators as being candidates who would benefit from the mentoring program; and

Whereas in 2011, 256 students in Colchester County took part in the mentorship program that has as its goal to match each student with a mentor as soon as possible;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Big Brothers Big Sisters and all of their in-school volunteer mentors for their great work helping students to thrive and succeed during their school years.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2533

MS. DIANA WHALEN: 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 Canadians who have made a difference or a significant contribution to our country have been presented with this medal throughout the year; and

Whereas Len Whiffen from Clayton Park was honoured with the presentation of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal at a special ceremony at Park West School for his dedication and commitment to helping his church and community and for his generosity in sharing his experiences as a young man in World War II;

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

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 2534

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

Whereas Halifax Regional Municipality was formed in 1996 and is the largest population centre in Atlantic Canada, including communities from the Eastern Shore through Eastern Passage to the shores of Peggy's Cove and as far as Fall River and Waverley; and

Whereas in October of this year the municipality saw 66 people put their names forward in the 2012 municipal election; and

Whereas Bill Karsten was elected to represent the residents of the new District 3, now Dartmouth South-Eastern Passage, generally situated on the southeast side of the Circumferential Highway to the shores of Cow Bay, encompassing Eastern Passage, 12 Wing Shearwater, Imperoyal, and South Woodside;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Councillor Bill Karsten on his recent election to the new District 3, Dartmouth South-Eastern Passage, of Halifax Regional Municipality and wish him many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

RESOLUTION NO. 2535

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

Whereas students and parents in Springhill are looking to this government to invest in their community and build a new elementary school in the town; and

Whereas a request has been made to the Department of Education from the local school board to build one new school instead of renovating West End Memorial and Junction Road School; and

Whereas the students, parents, school advisory councils, and community of Springhill have been waiting for this new school announcement since September;

Therefore be it resolved that this government commit to the students of Springhill and announce a new elementary school for that community.

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 Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 2536

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

Whereas Silver Donald Cameron came from his native British Columbia to Nova Scotia after studies at the University of British Columbia, Berkeley, and the University of London; and

Whereas Silver Donald Cameron, while teaching at the University of New Brunswick, founded the periodical *The Mysterious East*, was later the first writer in residence at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, and then at Cape Breton University, and has played central roles in the creation of Cape Breton University's Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies Program and in Isle Madame's Telile community television station, and has recently established an institution with The Green Interview series of webcasts on pressing environmental issues; and

Whereas Silver Donald Cameron has won awards for his novels, short stories, screenplays, and works of non-fiction, and was inducted into the Order of Nova Scotia on November 29, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the House recognize and congratulate Dr. Silver Donald Cameron on his induction into the Order of Nova Scotia, and thank him for his tireless advocacy for Nova Scotia culture and the protection of the province's fragile coastal environments.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2537

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

Whereas Nova Scotia author Bruce Nunn has produced a beautiful new book titled *A Bluenose Twelve Days of Christmas*, illustrated with wonderful paintings by Nova Scotia artist Doretta Groenendyk; and

Whereas the book is the traditional *Twelve Days of Christmas* song, rewritten Nova Scotia-style, and promotes many aspects of Nova Scotia's culture, landscape, and humour; and

Whereas instead of "a partridge in a pear tree," Mr. Nunn's book celebrates "*a Bluenose in at Pier Three!*";

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the author and the artist for reflecting the best of Nova Scotia in their book *A Bluenose Twelve Days of Christmas*.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 2538

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

Whereas Eddie Hartley has been involved in basketball officiating for the last eight years, was selected to officiate at the NSSAF High School Provincial Championships for the last five years, has been chosen by his evaluator as the official to referee the championship game three times, and has been identified by the provincial organization (NSBO) as an official worthy of progression to the next level of certification; and

Whereas the 36th Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards banquet was held on Friday, November 16th; and

Whereas Eddie Hartley was named 2012 Yarmouth County Official of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Eddie Hartley on being awarded the 2012 Yarmouth County Official of the Year at the 36th Annual Yarmouth County Athletic Awards Banquet, and recognize him for his many impressive accomplishments in basketball officiating.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 2539

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 2012 celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the Diamond Jubilee Medal is a tangible way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service to this country, while honouring the significant contributions and achievements by Canadians; and

Whereas Halifax West Member of Parliament Geoff Regan presented Halifax resident Cathy Fares with the Jubilee Medal in a ceremony on November 12th in recognition of her volunteer efforts, particularly her leadership within Nova Scotia's Lebanese community, as well as her work in the wider community;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Cathy Fares on being awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and wish her well with all her future volunteer efforts.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 2540

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

Whereas the St. Mary's Bay Academy senior girls volleyball hosted the 2012-2013 Western Region Division 4 Girls Volleyball Championship on November 17, 2012; and

Whereas this tournament involved teams from North Queens, École Rose-de-Vents, Centre scolaire de la Rive Sud, and St. Mary's Bay Academy; and

Whereas the hosting team successfully defended their title for the third year in a row after winning the regional championship banner;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the St. Mary's Bay Academy Stingrays senior girls volleyball team and their coach, Danny LeBlanc, for winning the 2012-13 Western Regional Division 4 Girls Volleyball Championship and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2541

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

Whereas Anna Stuart, partner and vice-president of Knightsbridge Robertson Surette has been named a Fellow of the Society of Management Accountants of Canada, FCMA; and

Whereas this national honorary designation is awarded to certified management accountants who embody the qualities of leadership, professional accomplishments, civic mindedness and dedication to advancing the profession of management accounting; and

Whereas Anna has enjoyed a varied and challenging career as a CMA for more than 20 years, holding senior positions in the public and private sector while also volunteering extensively for community organizations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anna Stewart on receiving this honour and wish her continued 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 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice as per Rule 43(2) that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance. As per the Rule, I sent you a copy of my request earlier today. In accordance with Rule 43(1), I request that the emergency debate take place at the moment of interruption.

The matter is as follows: MLAs and all Nova Scotians learned late last week that the cost of the Maritime Link will increase by \$100 million to \$300 million more by the time an application is made to the Utility and Review Board for the project. That means that the new estimated cost of the Maritime Link will rise to between \$1.3 billion and \$1.5 billion - far above the \$1.2 billion originally estimated. Nova Scotians also learned that power rates will increase by 2 to 3 per cent per year, every year, for the rest of this decade as a result.

For these reasons, the motion is as follows:

Therefore be it resolved that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance, that the cost of the Maritime Link portion of the Muskrat Falls project will increase by \$100 million to \$300 million by the time an application is made to the URB for the project and that power rates will increase by 2 to 3 per cent a year for the rest of this decade and after that will continue to increase at a slightly lower rate every year for the life of the project. As a result, now is the time to ensure Nova Scotians do not get locked into an expensive project that they cannot afford.

MR. SPEAKER: While I have received more than two hours' notice of the matter required under Rule 43(2), under Rule 43(4) I'm required to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed. I have considered the factors set out in Rule 43(4A), this is a matter of grave concern to Nova Scotians and which concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government and could come within the scope of ministerial action. It is not on the order paper for discussion and I have no indication that it is likely to be debated within a reasonable time by other means, so I will read the motion and ask whether the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party caucus has the leave of the House for the debate to take place.

The motion is that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance and that the subject of the issue be described by

the Leader of the Progressive Conservative caucus as: that the cost of the Maritime Link portion of the Muskrat Falls will increase by \$100 million to \$300 million by the time an application is made to the Utility and Review Board for the project and that the power rates will increase by 2 to 3 per cent for the rest of this decade and after that will continue to increase at a slightly lower rate for the life of the project.

Does the House agree to give leave for the motion to be debated?

Leave has been given. The debate will take place today at the moment of interruption as provided under Rule 43(11). It also takes the place of the late debate for this evening.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 12:56 p.m. and end at 1:56 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM.: BOWATER LANDS - EXPROPRIATE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier make certain that the Bowater lands are not taken from Nova Scotians and will he expropriate the lands for the public good of the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little bit amused by the question mainly because the Leader of the Opposition was so critical of the purchase of the last piece of Bowater's lands. I believe members of his caucus referred to it as dirt and various other admonishments with respect to the purchase of that part, despite the fact that much of what was purchased in the last round with Bowater was actually in the Leader of the Opposition's riding. What he should know is that these matters are under full consideration and when a decision is made, we'll make sure he is one of the first people to know.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, our caucus was never opposed to buying the land. What we were opposed to was what the Premier was prepared to pay but Nova Scotians are becoming used, quite frankly, to the Premier opening the chequebook and writing a large cheque and allowing someone else to fill it in.

The NDP Government loves to come to the aid of big corporations in this province but they forget about small business. In Moose River, the NDP Government has already set in motion the expropriation of land from a small, family-owned business only to begin to hand it over to a large international gold mining company. This is expropriating private land from one family business in order to give it to a large corporation.

My question to the Premier is, why does the Premier think it's okay to take land from a Nova Scotia family business to give to a large multinational corporation yet won't consider taking land back from Resolute?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll await your ruling on this but I believe that is a matter before the courts and any response to that question would be inappropriate.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, what is not in question is that the motion that was set in place by this government was to expropriate land from a small, privately-owned Nova Scotia business to give to a multinational corporation. What not is in question is that this Premier is unwilling to stand up to Resolute to protect that land for the use of Nova Scotians. He needs to treat the multinationals the same way that he is treating Nova Scotia small businesses, with the same disrespect.

My question to the Premier, will the Premier do the right thing and expropriate this land now from Bowater so that Nova Scotians will have access to it.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the matter, which the Leader of the Opposition refers to, is actually a process that isn't initiated by the government. It is, of course, initiated by someone who decides they want to do exploration in the province. (Interruption) And I might point out to the Leader of the Opposition, if he will be quiet long enough for me to answer his question, I might point out to him that this is, in fact, the same process that was underway for decades, including the last time. . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable the Premier.

THE PREMIER: This is the same process that has been underway for decades including the many, many years ago when they were last in government.

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

PREM.: GRANTS/LOANS - VALUE-FOR-MONEY AUDIT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, as it turns out, the Premier's very first bill that he introduced into this House when he was in Opposition was entitled, An Act to Impose a Moratorium on Grants and Loans to Large Corporations until the Auditor General Completes a Value-for-Money Audit of Government Assistance to Business.

I will table the bill, by the way, for the purposes of the House. Mr. Speaker, in introducing the Premier says, and I quote from Hansard, “. . . incentives offered have favoured large corporations. . .” That was his complaint. He further complains, in Hansard, “. . . that there is not always good follow-up to ensure jobs are created. This is a problem. . .” said the Premier, as an Opposition member. I will table that for the benefit of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier is setting a record for corporate handouts, including the single largest forgivable loan in the history of Nova Scotia. His total to date is almost \$600 million.

My question for the Premier is this. Now that he is Premier, will he submit his own corporate loans and handouts to the Auditor General for a value-for-money audit?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I very well remember this bill. I remember at the time that the Liberal Government was staggering from one fiasco to another. There was Dynatek, Orenda Recip - there were a number of them, right? So there was a good reason for the bill at that time.

Now, under what we think is a far superior system, in fact the auditing of jobs is done in arrears, to ensure that the number of jobs that were promised are actually created and other than that, all of the loans are on a commercial basis, which it actually specifies right in the bill.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I defy the Premier (Interruptions) Well, in fact, I did read the bill and I defy the Premier to find a real bank or a real company that would lend money to any of the companies that he lent to and then write that loan off and not actually require the principal to be paid back. That is not a commercial basis.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier described the bill in greater detail when he brought it to this House. He says, and I quote from Hansard directly, “. . . governments involved with loans and grant systems tend to be secretive about the details of the cases. This is a problem . . .”, the Premier says. He further complained that when a government decides, “. . . that \$40 million is better spent on corporate welfare than for the welfare of the sick and injured, what is the offsetting value received that justifies the expenditure?”

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is so confident in his own corporate welfare, I'll ask him, in light of today's report that Feed Nova Scotia is running a record deficit because of the increased demand for their services, will he now submit his own corporate welfare deals to the Auditor General for a value-for-money review so that all Nova Scotians can see the answer for themselves?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, this government has lived up to exactly the letter of this bill because what it was intended to do was to bring transparency, which you have, you have full transparency on this side of the government. Just to give you an example, the largest of these is a \$300 million commercial loan to the Irving Shipbuilding yard, which can only be forgiven if they reach job targets that would provide more than \$2 billion in tax revenue to the province, which can go to provide services to exactly the people who the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is referring to.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if that is a commercial loan, then why didn't the Irving Group go to the Bank of Nova Scotia to get the loan, instead of to the Government of Nova Scotia led by that Premier? That's what a value-for-money audit would tell all the people of Nova Scotia.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, during a debate on the Premier's bill, who was then in Opposition, the Premier described the Liberal Government of the day as ". . . this health-care wrecking, truth-twisting, service-smashing, tax-raising, privatizing government." Although that should sound very familiar to the current NDP Government, although the government may want to look in the mirror before they clap at that description, it may explain why, perhaps, speaking for the Liberals, the member for Cape Breton South both then and today called the idea of a value-for-money audit of corporate giveaways, a ridiculous bill. I will table that for the benefit of the House.

My question is, why won't the Premier call on the Auditor General to do a value-for-money audit of his \$590 million worth of corporate giveaways?

THE PREMIER: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but because of the noise in the Chamber, I actually couldn't hear the quote that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party read. I wonder if I could get him to read it again?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM. - RESOLUTE LANDS: PURCHASE DETAILS - RELEASE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, since the Premier just mentioned that his government is all about full transparency, will the Premier release the details of the proposed purchase of the Resolute lands for the House of Assembly to examine and debate?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as you would know, and perhaps just due to the member's inexperience he wouldn't know - in any kind of an agreement, a commercial agreement or otherwise, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Since everything is not agreed, there is no agreement.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants to talk about inexperience, he might want to talk to members of his own Cabinet and caucus, given the fact that we've had some of them say that there is a deal and use the "is a deal" tense. Some of them say there's a deal coming, some of them say there's a deal agreed to. Last year it was good enough for the Premier to bring the proposed Resolute deal to the House when he thought he was going to save all of those jobs, but now this new deal to buy the lands from Resolute or maybe buy the lands or maybe there is a deal, maybe there isn't, seems to be shrouded in secrecy.

My question to the Premier is, why was last year's deal so important to bring to the House, but this one appears not to be?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, when we brought forward the legislation in the last House there was, in fact, a fully completed and understood agreement and all of the elements were signed off on. As I said to the Leader of the Opposition - I'll repeat it for the member for Dartmouth East - which is simply this, once the matter is resolved to our satisfaction, then we'll be happy to provide them with the information they require.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, based on the Premier's comments, I'm sure that he can understand why Nova Scotians might be troubled that the member for Queens would have brought forward a motion asking the Legislature to endorse and talk about how wonderful the deal is when the Premier now says, well, there really isn't a deal finished.

Is the Premier simply unwilling to have this purchase or potential purchase or possible purchase brought forward for debate in the House because he knows that he will be paying millions more to Resolute than is necessary to purchase this land?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things about this. One is that the last time we purchased land from Resolute, the Liberal caucus was very critical of it even though we paid below market value for some of the highest-value land in the province. That's the first thing. The second thing is that because of their inexperience, or because of their misunderstanding of how these things work, they would prefer that we go to an expropriation process, which is what was apparently proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, but doesn't seem to understand that the Bowater assets are far more than just the lands that are there, and that there are other pieces associated with this and other considerations.

I realize that's complex and it's difficult to understand, but it is the things that we have to manage when we're in government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM. - MUSKRAT FALLS: TERM SHEET - MOU CONFIRM

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Is the Muskrat Falls term sheet signed on Friday, simply another memorandum of understanding and not actually a loan guarantee?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the term sheet sets out the terms for the commercial guarantee and is binding on the components and the parties.

MR. MCNEIL: The term sheet and its details should be revealed, so full scrutiny of this agreement can take place. This agreement, Mr. Speaker, only outlines how the

provinces may now seek funding. So my question to the Premier: Will the Premier release the details of the term sheet that he signed last Friday?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition would know, this matter is before the House of Assembly in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have agreed that we will release the term sheet concurrent with the release in Newfoundland and Labrador, so that everybody has the option to see the details at the same time.

MR. MCNEIL: So now, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is telling this Premier what to do. It's not the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are going to have to pay his expensive tab - it's the people of Nova Scotia. He should show leadership and release the details today.

Mr. Speaker, Emera has until July 2014 to decide whether or not they're going to actually build the Maritime Link, and that gives us plenty of time to make certain all of the checks and balances are in place so Nova Scotians know they aren't getting a raw deal like Newfoundland and Labrador did with Quebec so many years ago. It also gives us time to seek alternative options such as importing power from Quebec, or anything else that may be available.

So my question to the Premier is, will the Premier tell this House what other alternative energy sources and projects he examined besides this very costly Maritime Link project?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what will come to the Utility and Review Board is a full examination of all of the alternatives and the board will have the ability to be able to compare this project to the others. He has heard the officials from Emera say that this represents some \$300 million to \$500 million in value to ratepayers. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing - and I understand that it's difficult when you don't have experience in this area, but the reality is that the purpose of the loan guarantee is to provide the best possible rate of financing for the project and, therefore, to reduce the costs to the ratepayer. So that is what it does, it reduces by almost \$100 million the cost to ratepayers which, therefore, is a benefit to all families in this province and, frankly, we thank the federal government for their participation in this very important project.

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

PREM. - MAR. LINK: RATEPAYER COSTS - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Emera told Nova Scotians on Friday that the cost of the Maritime Link will increase from \$100 million to \$300 million by the time an application for that link is made to the Utility and Review Board here in Nova Scotia - that's a 25 per cent increase in the cost of this project. Nova Scotians are

being asked to foot the bill for the Maritime Link, but they still don't know how much their electricity rate will be when electricity from Newfoundland and Labrador comes to their homes.

Will the Premier tell Nova Scotians exactly how much that electricity will cost when it gets to their homes, before this project goes to the URB?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there will be a full rate filing and a full examination of the project by the Utility and Review Board. What was revealed on Friday was that this project would save the ratepayers of Nova Scotia between \$300 million and \$500 million. Would the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party agree that if this is the case, this is the best project for Nova Scotia?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the salesperson who sells me a Honda Civic tells me I'll save lots of money if I buy that car instead of a Mercedes-Benz. That's exactly the argument that the Premier is now making today.

The fact of the matter is that the Premier has directed the URB that they must approve this project if it fits within his own electricity plans. That is not a full review; that is exactly the problem. It is exactly that kind of thinking that is why Nova Scotians are now paying the highest electricity prices in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

The CEO of Emera says that the Muskrat Falls electricity project will cause power rates in Nova Scotia to go up every year for the rest of this decade by 2 per cent to 3 per cent and then continue to go up for the life of the project. So Nova Scotians deserve to know exactly how much they're going to pay for that electricity when it comes to their doors before it is approved. Will the Premier demand that Nova Scotians get that information, how much that electricity will cost, from Muskrat Falls before it goes to the URB?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I'm not sure exactly what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party would expect. The simple fact of the matter is that the cost of the project and the financing of the project will determine the cost to ratepayers. So in order to be able to determine that, we first had to have in place the loan guarantee from the federal government, which happened on Friday.

The proponent is proposing to bring the matter before the Utility and Review Board, which they will do. They will do that, they will propose what the rate will be and they have already said that it will be \$300 million to \$500 million of savings to the ratepayers, over any of the other alternatives.

When he talks about increases in the rate that ratepayers would pay, he would need to know that the rate they would pay would be as much as \$500 million more if other alternatives were used. That is the calculation.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what I expect is that Nova Scotians will have a Premier who will stand up for them and won't sign on the dotted line for a project when he, himself, does not know how much that electricity will cost. That's what we expect over on this side of the House. Nova Scotia now has the highest power rates in all of Canada, we have the highest taxes in all of Canada and 7,400 full-time jobs have been lost as a result.

Now the Premier is already committed to a mega-project that's going to drive our rates higher each and every year for the rest of this decade. That is the NDP record, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask a simple question: if the Premier is so confident, why won't he allow for a full and complete and independent and public review of the Muskrat Falls project, compared to all of the other alternatives, so Nova Scotians can see for themselves before the project is approved?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I honestly don't know what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party thinks is going to happen before the Utility and Review Board. That is exactly what is going to happen. They are going to have an opportunity to look at this project, as opposed to other alternatives.

What they have said in advance of that hearing is that the evidence they will produce will demonstrate that this project is from - I think they said \$200 million to \$500 million of value to the ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear about this - not a single penny of that project will go into the rate base unless it is approved by the Utility and Review Board.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

PREM.: NSP RATE SETTLEMENT - DETAILS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Will the Premier explain why his government decided to endorse the portion of the rate settlement with Nova Scotia Power that increases rates for the next two years and piles on additional costs in future years for further increases?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we are interested in only one thing and that is the lowest and fairest rates, unlike the Liberal Party who is pursuing or would pursue deregulation that would drive up the cost of electricity to ordinary families, people who are trying to make ends meet, by 30 to 50 per cent.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Premier already succeeded in raising rates over 30 per cent in just three and a half years in government. He knows full well that the Liberal Party doesn't support deregulation and maybe he should do his research. Maybe it shows the inexperience of that Premier that he doesn't know that.

The submission from the government, from his government, clearly favours the settlement agreement. The November 22nd filing by the Department of Energy talks about the position of the minister and the government and says:

“12. . . . the Settlement Agreement has been executed by representatives of almost all of NSPI’s classes of customers and therefore we would respectfully suggest warrants serious consideration.

13. From the Department of Energy’s perspective, there are many positive aspects to the proposed Settlement Agreement . . .”

The filing goes on to discuss the merits of acceptance and adoption of the 2013-14 Rate Stabilization Plan. My question to the Premier is, does the Premier agree with the Department of Energy’s submission that the plan for rate increases over the next two years should be accepted by the Utility and Review Board?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, actually, what the government does do is it agrees with the submissions that were put forward by the consumer advocate, the small business advocate and the other folks who were involved in that process.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Premier is incorrect on that. The positions of the small business advocate and consumer advocate are, when they submitted their final submissions, was that Nova Scotia Power should be disallowed costs on fuel derating at Lingan. The consumer advocate talked about not passing onto ratepayers costs associated with the all-out war by Nova Scotia Power and its auditors. Yet the government in their submission doesn’t mention these at all. In fact, it says that the settlement agreement warrants consideration and seems reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, why does the government not agree with the advocates for small business and consumers that costs such as those in the rate proposal should not be passed on to ratepayers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we do agree with them and we have said so. The simple fact of the matter is that when they reach agreements they do so broadly and they are designed to make sure that the fairest, lowest rates are available to ratepayers, which is why we brought in the legislation that we brought in to disallow many of the expenses that were formally allowed to be considered. It is why we don’t consider the kinds of things that the Liberal Party would do and the Opposition would do. For example, deregulation of our system which would lead to increases - severe, unexpected increases like we see in Alberta and in Ontario where taxpayers have to underwrite the cost of the utility just to keep the prices reasonable. What they would do is cause the rapid increase to consumers of electricity rates by 30 - 50 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: EAST COAST FORENSIC HOSP. - ELECTRONIC MONITORING

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker my question is to the Minister of Justice. This government and this minister announced a new initiative to give peace of mind to families who have loved ones with cognitive conditions like autism or with Alzheimer's disease. Last month the Arenburgs from South Alton were honoured for their efforts in providing the technology for this project, the purpose of which is to protect people who have cognitive disabilities with an electronic monitoring bracelet and support services of Search and Rescue teams across the province. My question is, why does the minister agree with protecting people with cognitive conditions but not vulnerable people at the East Coast Forensic Hospital?

HON. ROSS LAUNDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad this question is posed because it outlines that as the minister I'm very conscious and committed to the safety of all Nova Scotians, that I'm also aware that there is a separation between the courts and the health care system and that when it comes to the bracelets for somebody with autism or Alzheimer's it has been clearly demonstrated by the health profession that it's a safe process in that area. We also know from the law enforcement community to be able to respond and address that issue that is there.

To separate to someone who has a mental health issue and is under the care of medical personnel - and I repeat my point, unlike the Progressive Conservatives that believe that mental health is a crime, I see it as an illness and that the difference is you need health professionals, and there's also significant information out there that shows that someone who is being treated under the mental health area that the bracelets of that nature can cause further harm or restrict their development.

I leave my trust in the health professionals and in the people who manage our correctional facilities, and believe in their good work and expertise.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we certainly don't believe people suffering from mental illness, we don't believe that it is a crime. We have seen - and not too long in the distant past - that somebody who was on leave from that facility did commit a crime, a very tragic crime.

Let me move on. A Truro woman was violently assaulted and kidnapped this Spring and says she can't believe that the man accused of attacking her is now free on bail. She said her offender doesn't have to wear an ankle monitoring bracelet and only has to check with police, by phone, once a week. Upon his release on bail she talked about how she was unsure whether or not he would abide by the conditions of his bail. She also said: "My heart just sank. All those feelings of relief and peace of mind that I had were just wiped away and replaced with the same feelings, again, of fear, frustration and all of those things that I was feeling before he was caught." I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

So my question is - the minister refuses to protect public safety when it comes to vulnerable people at the East Coast Forensic Hospital, but does the minister agree that protecting this woman's safety should be a priority?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to pass out to anyone in this province who is experiencing fear or frustration at any time, that our job and responsibility within Justice is to ensure that each Nova Scotian is safe. The staff and the people who work within Corrections - in fact, yesterday I had the pleasure of giving out awards to people who have worked within Correctional Service for 40 years, 35 years, 25 years, and I made expression about the commitment and the professionalism of all these individuals to work diligently to ensure that the public is safe.

For the area that you mentioned, the Truro area, I have the utmost confidence in the chief of police and the police officers in Truro, also within the RCMP for the Bible Hill area. They work very hard to make sure that everyone is safe, so I have confidence in them. I also respect - and I should point out to the Progressive Conservatives - that this Legislature does not police the province or tell the courts what to do, unlike messages that I get from the Opposition there that we should be dictating to the courts of the decisions that they make.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we have confidence in our province's law enforcement as well, but we also believe in giving them the tools to do their job. We, like many people in our province, believe these technologies are tremendously important for protecting vulnerable people. The same standards should apply to protect safety, whether it is patients on unescorted leave from the East Coast Forensic Hospital or for offenders who are out on bail with a high risk to reoffend.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister stop creating a double standard when it comes to public safety and provide electronic monitoring for people on unescorted leaves from the East Coast Forensic Hospital and reinstate the program he cancelled to put electronic monitoring bracelets on high-risk people out on bail?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I should really point out to the member - and I thank him for the question - we haven't cut out any program. The bracelets are still there, but once again it goes down to the difference between this government and his government. His government believes that anyone who is accused or anywhere involved in the court process that we slap a bracelet on them, drive up the costs and assume people are guilty before the courts have determined. If someone has been determined by the court that they're a risk to society, they will make the decision and put it over to Probation Services to allow them to weigh and measure that; that's what the process is there.

I do understand the Progressive Conservative ideology - build jails, fill them with good people.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

TIR - SNOW REMOVAL STAFF: CUTS - DETAILS

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. With winter here, the maintenance of our highways is the chief concern for many travellers. Recently our office has been notified that certain areas in our province are getting cutbacks to staff and infrastructure for winter snow removal, so my first question to the minister is, has the minister given any directives to reduce winter snow removal staff and maintenance in certain areas of our province?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend opposite for the question. I can assure him and all members of this House, and indeed the population of Nova Scotia, that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal will maintain the roads in Nova Scotia throughout this winter, to the best of their ability. There will not be any areas that are going to get less service than others. We will maintain the roads in an effective way and a safe way.

The people who do our plowing, do our sanding, do our salting are also members of the public and they take the greatest care that they can because their families, too, are on these roads. So to my friend opposite I'll say, I don't think he should worry at all about the safety of Nova Scotia this winter, it's in good hands. Thank you.

MR. GAUDET: Well, Mr. Speaker, one area of the province where we've heard staff is being reduced and not being called back and winter snow removal will be more difficult is in Guysborough County so my question to the minister is, has the minister reduced snow removal staff in Guysborough County?

MR. SMITH: Again, for the question I give thanks. I'm going to reiterate to the member opposite and to assure Nova Scotians that Guysborough is as much a part of Nova Scotia as any other part of the province. We are going to look after Guysborough. Guysborough will be in good hands.

No, there is not going to be any reduction in service in that particular area or any other area. What we have done is we have looked at service across the province, made some adjustments in terms of realignment of pieces of equipment and that kind of thing but that will not, in any way, reduce the ability for us to maintain the roads in a safe manner. Thank you.

MR. GAUDET: Mr. Speaker, the maintenance and safety of our highways during the winter months is of the utmost importance. If the minister has a planned reduction of winter road maintenance and snow removal, he has a duty to tell the people.

My final question to the minister is, does the minister commit to this House that his department will not be reducing staff in winter road maintenance and budgets will remain the same, to make certain our highways are safe and motorists can travel them without concerns?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, again to my friend opposite, I want to assure him, because he seems to be somehow unduly concerned about this issue, the changes that we have made have, in fact, been made to enhance safety. We have made some adjustments in routes, for instance, just to give an example: if one plow was travelling 30 kilometres to do its road and another was travelling 15, we made adjustments so that each of those plows would be doing an equal area of service across the province.

Effectively we've rejigged some of the routes on the roads, but in doing that, nothing has been done to decrease safety. Indeed, I would argue that those adjustments we made would improve safety. Thank you.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - CB DHA:
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION SERV. STAFF - REMOVAL EXPLAIN**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, recent news that six long-serving members of the mental health and addiction services team in the Cape Breton District Health Authority have been relieved of their duties has many concerned. The counsellor attendants with a combined 95 years of valuable experience treated and supported patients with substance abuse issues, they were replaced by others.

Mr. Speaker, we just heard the Minister of Justice talk about him relying on the good advice of the health care people with their experience. Many are concerned that these replacements will not have the time or the same experience to provide the necessary level of care and attention to their patients.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, does the Health and Wellness Minister agree with removing these individuals and tossing 95 years of experience of dealing with substance abuse issues out the window?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no question, the issue of mental health and addiction services here in Nova Scotia is an important one. That's why as a government, when we took over in 2009, we did consultation throughout the province to try to figure out some of the services and improvements that we needed to make within the health care system here in Nova Scotia, especially for mental health and addiction.

That's why we brought forward this province's first mental health and addiction strategy, Mr. Speaker. It was an important step to ensure that we could move forward,

ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to the appropriate care in mental health and addiction services here in Nova Scotia.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the editor in the Cape Breton Post, Regina Gillis writes: "The disease of addiction does not respond to bandages or pills. The whole person must be healed." I'll table that. The concerns being raised by Regina Gillis and others are valid. Counsellor attendants use their years of experience to fight the deadly disease of addiction. That is a tool we cannot afford to simply toss away.

Does the minister really believe that getting rid of this level of hands-on practical experience is really providing better care sooner to substance-abuse patients in Cape Breton?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's extremely important that Nova Scotians gain access to the services they need, and that includes those individuals who are seeking support for addictions in Nova Scotia. I recognize the importance and the commitment and the work that many health care providers have provided, especially in addiction services. I have mentioned it before in a question earlier in this session: it's extremely hard when you do change the model of care; unfortunately, there are some people whose job descriptions may have to change. Those individuals who we rely on to provide those services may change, or the scope of practice for an individual may change.

We appreciate the hard work that the men and women who are providing the extra services have done throughout Nova Scotia, especially in Cape Breton, and we understand there are some difficult decisions ahead, but I truly feel that the change of model of care within mental health, within addiction services, will better serve Nova Scotians. We have to move forward with new models of care to ensure that we meet the needs of Nova Scotians, especially in addiction services.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest in a long line of NDP failures when it comes to substance-abuse patients in Cape Breton. We all know the Talbot House file was mishandled by the NDP's incompetent Minister of Community Services. People suffering from addictions in Cape Breton cannot afford to see this kind of injustice repeated. Will the minister commit today to reverse the NDP's misguided approach to addiction services in Cape Breton and actually deal with the crisis at hand?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is completely wrong. I'm very proud of the decisions that my government, our government, has made over the last three years when it comes to health care, and especially addiction services. We rely on district health authorities like the Cape Breton District Health Authority to recognize the services and the changes needed to meet the needs of the patients that they serve. We work with the district health authority in Cape Breton to ensure that addiction services could be improved upon, and I'm glad to work with district health authorities across this province - unlike what the former government would like to do, and that's create one super board that would

have all those decisions being made out of Halifax. I want to work with the district health authority in Cape Breton to ensure that Cape Bretoners have access to the health care they need, and I'm proud of the decisions we've made here.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NUTRITIONAL THERAPY REPLACEMENT - FUND

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, recent media reports have many people shaking their heads. While government will pay for the drugs necessary to keep palliative care patients at home, they do not pay for the nutritional therapy replacement - in other words, their food. While the nutritional therapy is available in hospital, it's not covered for those who have chosen to take their loved ones home to die. Could the minister please explain how this makes any sense?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, what makes sense is that Nova Scotians have a government that recognizes the importance of end-of-life or palliative care. For far too often and for many, many years, government has not put a priority on end-of-life or palliative care. As the member opposite just mentioned, Nova Scotians now receive support from this government because of changes in end-of-life and palliative care.

We want to ensure that Nova Scotians have choices when it comes to palliative care or end-of-life care, that is why we moved in the direction and I can assure the member of the Opposition that this government, this minister will continue to work with those individuals, within the health care system, who provide this essential service and we'll continue to move forward.

MR. GLAVINE: As the minister well knows, many families are handcuffed. They have no choice, their loved one has to go to hospital because they can't afford to keep them at home and afford the nutrition.

Mr. Speaker, Seana and Balfour Collins are in the biggest battle they will ever face yet they took their story to the media to show all Nova Scotians there are still gaps in this government's palliative care plan. This is a government that fundamentally believes that people should be allowed to receive care in their homes because that is where they want to be yet palliative care patients, who make their choice, are denied the ability to eat. How does not paying for food for a palliative care patient, who chooses to stay at home instead of occupying a hospital bed, make any financial sense?

MR. WILSON: We recognize the financial burden that was placed on patients, their families and their loved ones, Mr. Speaker, by previous governments' decisions and that was not to fund drugs for end-of-life care or palliative care unless they were in a hospital in a few district health authorities. We recognized that that wasn't right. That's why we took the steps to lessen the financial burdens on families in Nova Scotia, to pay for

those medications if they choose to stay at home for the end of their life. This year alone with the announcement that we will cover end-of-life, palliative care drug costs for any Nova Scotian, no matter where they live, was an investment of \$240,000. Next year we predict, or forecast, that that could be up to about \$800,000, an investment that former governments didn't make, an investment that this government did make.

MR. GLAVINE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to help the minister to save more money because here are the financial facts: \$1,000 a day, roughly, for a hospital bed, which includes food for a palliative care patient, versus \$33 per day to feed a palliative care patient at home. When you contrast \$1,000 per day with \$33 per day, it's abundantly clear. The health care system wins, the taxpayer wins, and most importantly the patient wins when a nutritional-therapy replacement is funded.

I understand the minister has received the request in writing from Mr. Murray Salsman outlining this gap and the minister has indicated it will be considered. Given that palliative care patients need to eat, could the minister please indicate when he plans to respond to Mr. Salsman's request?

MR. WILSON: As I said earlier in my previous answer, this is a government that recognizes the importance of trying to improve services within health care and that includes end-of-life and palliative care. Often, it's a subject that not a lot of us want to talk about or deal with but we all recognize that eventually we have to deal with palliative care or end-of-life care. That's why we are going to continue to work within the health care system. That's why we are going to continue to work within reality and the financial reality of the province.

I wish I could stand here today and say we would cover everything for every patient in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, but in reality, we just can't do that. But I can reassure the member opposite and those Nova Scotians who find themselves in that financial burden that we are taking and have taken steps to lessen that burden and I am going to work within my government, within my department, to see what we can do in the future to improve the services to those who are receiving palliative care or end-of-life care, but more importantly reduce the financial burden that any family is stricken with when they have to deal with this type of situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT - RURAL ECON. DEV. STRATEGY: FORMATION - DELAY EXPLAIN

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we welcomed a task force on rural economic development. It is disappointing, however, that it took this government three and a half years to figure out that one was necessary. The government has denied the troubles facing rural Nova Scotia. We've seen a population drop by 8,200 people and we've seen

the number of full-time jobs drop by 4,400. Since taking office, the job market and the economy of rural Nova Scotia have worsened.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why did it take three and one-half years of deteriorating economic prospects before the government decided to start forming a rural economic development strategy?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, one of the good things that we did when we came into government is we recognized the hardships right across the Province of Nova Scotia, from one end of the province to the other. We developed a strategy to deal with that. Since we became government, there's a difference on the positive side of 7,600 jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia that weren't here before. We are doing things the right way.

What we know is that it takes a little getting used to after 20 years of being in last place. Finally Nova Scotia has a government that's turning the corner.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister have continually touted jobsHere as the plan to save rural Nova Scotia. Three years ago the unemployment rate in rural Nova Scotia was 10.2 per cent - certainly a crisis level. Today the unemployment rate is even worse at 11.8 per cent. In fact, the unemployment rate in rural Nova Scotia has never been below 10 per cent since this government took office. My question to the minister is, why did he fail to recognize and realize the struggles of rural Nova Scotia when the economic struggles of these regions have been clear since this government was elected?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, when we took over as government, we were coming off a recession - 20 years we were in a recession, 20 years of no growth in the Province of Nova Scotia. The member for Glace Bay quotes numbers, I remember when there was a Liberal Government and I can remember that we experienced the highest unemployment rates in the past 20 years under a Liberal Government.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government has been great at setting up economic task forces but has struggled in translating their own strategies into real job growth. We've had, as the Premier hinted last week, the worst three years of economic growth of any province in Canada since this government took office. We have the Jobs Fund Advisory Committee, the jobsHere advisory group, the Premier's Advisory Council on the Economy and now three and one-half years into the government's mandate, we have a rural economic development task force that won't report until after the next election.

This government has gone through an entire mandate without a real economic strategy for rural Nova Scotia and that is inexcusable. This minister has failed, this government has failed, their plan for rural Nova Scotia has not helped anyone and now three years later we have no plan, and are asking the outside private sector to help us with a plan. My question to the minister is, if this task force is required, why didn't he establish it

back in 2009 instead of wasting hundreds of millions of dollars of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, since we've come into power - you talk about the future, we are building for the future. Ships Start Here, at the peak, 11,500 jobs; PROJEX Engineering relocating from Calgary to Halifax, 440 jobs; IBM, building a global centre here in Halifax, 500 jobs.

I know this may, for the member for Cape Breton North, I know that the Cape Breton Post just very recently put out a publication and it talked about the federal job cuts in Cape Breton. I'm going to read this, I'm going to table this. "The 270 federal civil service job cuts announced this year for Cape Breton could be just the beginning", says the report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. It goes on to name individually where the jobs are located. I'd like to know what that member for Glace Bay is doing about that?

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

COM. SERV. - CABINET: EXPENSIVE POLICIES - REVERSAL URGE

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today is to the Minister of Community Services. Today it was reported that Feed Nova Scotia is struggling with a \$270,000 deficit. The deficit has tripled in size in only one year. Executive Director Dianne Swinamer explained that higher costs were the primary reason for the ballooning deficit. She said ". . . costs are up for everything from fuel for transporting food to electricity." I will table that quote, Mr. Speaker.

The HungerCount survey showed cost of living as the greatest influence on the people who needed food banks in the past year, so my question to the minister is this, government policies are to blame, will the minister urge her Cabinet colleagues to reverse their expensive policies?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, well in fact we do know that times are tough because of the world economy, but it has been this government that has invested over \$300 million in helping breaking that cycle of poverty. It's also this government and in that food report suggests that those who receive the GIS, the seniors, no longer pay provincial tax. It's this government that did that, to be able to support people with a multi-program approach with regard to the economy.

It's this government that has increased the Child Tax Benefit by 22 per cent; it's this government that has created the Affordable Living Tax Credit; it is this government that has created the Poverty Reduction Credit; it's this government that has taken the HST off home heating; and it is this government that has also, if you take a young couple who are considered working poor, with two children, because of all that gamut of programs,

they now are receiving \$4,000 more in their pockets annually since 2009, because of this government - certainly no action from that Party has helped them out over the years.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it is that government that has seen the deficit triple for food banks in this province. On November 25, 1998, while in Opposition, the Premier said “. . . the services of food banks are expanding, it is, unfortunately, one of our fastest growing franchises.”

Mr. Speaker, never, never has that been more true than right now. More than 3,000 new people have had to rely on food banks since this NDP formed government. The cost of living is beyond what people can afford. The expensive policies of this government have created a booming business for food banks. This government is even driving food banks out of business - they are driving food banks out of business.

My question to the Premier, what does the Premier say to Feed Nova Scotia about his remarks and his broken promise to make life more affordable?

THE PREMIER: I don't really remember the quote that I used with respect to the Liberal Party, but I think I said “truth-twisting” at the time and that very much applies to what the member for Cape Breton West just said.

The simple fact of the matter is we have invested more money in supporting vulnerable people in this province than I believe any government before us - not only taking the HST off home energy, not only putting in their hands more money through the Affordability Tax Credit, the Disability Tax Credit, increasing the amount of money they can retain through IA, Mr. Speaker, for vulnerable seniors we ensured that instead of having to pay tax on the GIS that they receive, something that was ruthlessly enforced by that government, we promised them that we would make sure they never paid tax on that income again, and they don't. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Ms. Swinemar has said, don't give Feed Nova Scotia money. Instead we should ask ourselves, “What is needed to make an impactful difference on the lives of the people we're serving?” She said put the money there, and I'll table that.

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

The honourable member for Argyle on an introduction.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a couple of people in the east gallery - the west gallery, I always frig that one up. Two people have joined us from my constituency, representatives of the Conseil acadien provincial de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the Acadian group in Argyle. They're Mr. Norbert LeBlanc and Mr. Clyde deViller. I'm glad that they are here to see the proceedings of the House and I want to give them the warm welcome. (Applause)

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 159.

Bill No. 159 - Missing Persons Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 159 now be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm here today to speak about the Missing Persons Bill. There is no greater fear for all of us than to have a loved one gone missing. When it happens, people are frantic. They want answers and they want to know the police have the power to get those answers quickly and efficiently. As a former police officer I know the first 48 hours of any missing person investigation is a critical period. Police investigators work hard to find out as much information about the missing person as they can during the first two days, but right now, police investigators can't apply for access to critical information like bank records, phone records, text messages, or GPS tracking, unless they believe a crime has been committed.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would remove that roadblock for police. It would enable police investigators to apply to a judge or a Justice of the Peace to access that crucial information. It would also allow them to apply to a judge and Justice of the Peace in order to get access to a building where they think a vulnerable person or missing child might be.

I can assure you that the bill contains strict controls over what the police can do with personal information once they have it. It is not shared with family members or the public unless a public release would help locate the missing person. Investigators sometimes do that now.

Recently the Peel police asked people in the Halifax area to be on the lookout for a 22-year-old man with liver cancer whom they believed had come to Nova Scotia. When the police discover that a person has gone missing of their own free will, for example, to escape an abusive partner, they will not use the information to bring the person back home. Police must apply to the court or to a Justice of the Peace to access this information, in the same way they do now for search warrants when they are investigating a crime.

Mr. Speaker, we would be the first in the Atlantic Provinces and the fourth province in the country to pass legislation like this, but I am not concerned about how we rank among other provinces, I'm concerned about Nova Scotia families who are worried about a sick and wandering person, waiting for answers. Families who have a missing loved one don't have to hear that from authorities that they can't help them right away. They want to know, if their loved one is missing, we are committed whether a crime has been committed or not. They want to know that the police have all the tools they need to help. They want to hear that the investigators will be there for their loved ones as fast as possible, hopefully safe and sound, and bring them home. I believe this bill will help do that. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, since the government announced - I think it was yesterday - that they were bringing this bill forward, I've been quite surprised by some of the response and where it's coming from. When the government brought forward a bill of this nature, I assumed that they would have consulted with transition houses, that they would have consulted with Stepping Stone, which is a support group for sex workers. I was quite surprised to discover that this government has brought forth a bill of this nature - which I believe is well-intentioned, and certainly similar things have passed elsewhere in the country - but I was surprised that the government didn't take the time to consult with community, with the very people who deal with this kind of issue all the time.

When I talked to transition houses, with the organization and with Stepping Stone, what I heard was, men report women missing all the time. Some men do this so that they can find out where their spouse is, and sometimes the spouse does not want to be found. My concern is what happens with this information.

In the government's press release, they said, "The legislation defines missing person as someone whose safety is in question. This is to ensure that when someone has chosen to go missing - for example, a person who chooses to leave an abusive partner - their privacy will be protected."

I would like to know how their privacy will be protected. What guarantees do people have that if they go missing on purpose, for very legitimate reasons, that information will not be shared with someone they are trying to get away from?

Again, we believe that this is a very well-intentioned bill, and that it may, in fact, help the police early on in cases, although I would like to have some specific examples from the Justice Minister where this early information would have made a difference. What I've been reading in articles across the country is that any time where they said this would have helped, it would not in fact have helped.

We are prepared to be convinced. We just want to know in what specific cases that would have made a difference, because we're not hearing the exact example of how that would have made a difference.

Again, in 2011, the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police received a total of 1,400 missing persons reports. That number should give you pause: 1,400 missing persons. That tells you that there are people who are being reported missing who are not missing. They haven't returned home when people thought they would or whatever. You have to ask yourself, in all those cases, is this the tool that we need?

We believe that this is a well-intentioned bill. It certainly has the approval of the police and it has the approval of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, but we would have liked to have seen the government consult with organizations that typically would deal with this kind of matter, like the transition houses, like Stepping Stone. It's the same thing with - Madam Speaker, that was probably the funniest sneeze I've ever heard in here.

We want to make sure, Madam Speaker, that the government actually consults with affected groups before bringing in legislation. For example, if they had done this on the Residential Tenancies Act amendments that just came through this House, they probably would have found some compromises. In fact, that's exactly what happened in the Law Amendments Committee, but groups had to come in and change the bill. If they had done the consultation process at the beginning, before they brought the bill in, it probably would have been a little bit smoother. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, it's funny that we're talking about this bill because just during Question Period we were talking about law enforcement and I stated I have confidence in law enforcement in this province. But I also said we need to make sure we give them the tools to do their job. It's interesting that the minister is bringing forward a bill for second reading this afternoon that is a tool for law enforcement to protect public safety.

I just make note of that because we are also concerned with protecting people in this province and we believe that ankle bracelets are technology the minister should be looking at to do that. With respect to this bill, time is critical for the missing person; the sooner we can find clues to track them down, the sooner we can find them. The kind of information that the minister is aiming to be able to provide to police by way of passing this legislation could very well help to track those people more quickly.

There may be great benefit to this legislation. We will be giving this bill a critical eye and we look forward to hearing from the Committee on Law Amendments, to people who may present there. We should not rush this bill through the Legislature because it contains significant change for privacy protection. I won't feel comfortable supporting it until we have a chance to look at it further, but I certainly do like the intent of trying to support our law enforcement with the tools they need to protect public safety and to ensure that we all know people - I can think of a young man who wasn't much older than myself, his name was Kenley Matheson. He disappeared from Acadia University; he was from the Strait area, I believe he was from West Bay area or West Bay and I also knew his sister Kayrene.

I remember when he went missing, just totally disappeared. I wasn't much younger than him at the time and I remember thinking about how strange it was for him to just disappear off the face of the earth. Knowing his sister and what that family has gone through over the years, if I could ever do anything in this Legislature to support law enforcement or any other officials in helping find somebody who is missing like that, I would love to be able to do that.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to having a closer look at this piece of legislation. Thank you.

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

The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 159.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 159. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 143.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. I had expected some other speaker, perhaps the minister or someone in advance of just moving third reading that there might be a few comments made. But it is important that . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we proceed, a member of government must move third reading, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 143.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you again, I appreciate that. I know few comments were accompanied by that moving of third reading but there are a couple of things that should be said on this bill. Number one, this bill is allowing the importation of wine between provinces. A few provinces in Canada have moved that and made it law, not too many. The federal government made a change in their legislation, which has paved the way for this to occur and now the provinces need to respond if they think it's a good move to relax our importation rules of wine and our province has seen fit to do so, which I think is a good idea.

I feel strongly that the opportunity to amend the Liquor Control Act to allow people to order their wine in from other provinces, as they travel, should signal a loosening, shall we say, or a relaxation of some of the stringent rules that we have been held under in Nova Scotia, when it comes to wine and beer.

Madam Speaker, while we debate this very positive change that people are welcoming, the wine industry is welcoming, and consumers are welcoming, I would like to urge the government to reconsider their stance on the small stores in this province that offer to sell packages of wine, kits that you can mix up in your own home and that can be used to

make wine. It's very similar to the bill in front of us. It is a business that provides wine and allows people the hobby of making their own wine but there are people who do not have the physical strength to do that in their own home, or do not have the space in their home to mix up these batches of wine and be able to participate in that hobby.

Madam Speaker, it is a way for people to try wine at a more affordable price per bottle. It does not encourage - I would say very strongly - it does encourage underage drinking, or inappropriate drinking, or binge drinking, or any of those things. The stores that are engaged in selling these kits currently are very careful about whom they sell them to and they believe there should be a relaxing of the rules to allow for those stores to allow people to mix up their beef and wine on the site.

Madam Speaker, I have spoken, sometimes angrily here in the House, about this and I'm hoping that the sign that we have today with this bill before us on third reading is that the government is looking again at changes to the Liquor Control Act, that they are recognizing that the people who drink wine are looking for some other avenues to get wine, to acquire wine, to make it part of their travels, in this case, to be able to explore other provinces and for our own wineries the opportunity to encourage people in other provinces to order our wine.

At the same time while we relax those rules we should look at moving into the 21st Century and relax the rule that says that it is illegal to, or somehow inappropriate, to mix up wine and leave it to ferment in a store even when that is done with all the other Health Canada and required documentation and is, in fact, generating tax revenue for the Province of Nova Scotia. It would be another avenue to help small business. It will be helping in the red tape reduction because it would be removing one, I think, unnecessary restriction on small business and would actually be an improvement to the services that are offered in our province.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that is pushing the need for us to review other amendments to the Liquor Control Act - like the ability to go to a store and brew your wine and beer in the store - is that people travel widely across Canada and people come to Nova Scotia and we want more of them to come. We want to urge them to come back to work on the ships contract, or in engineering or in whatever other fields are expanding in Nova Scotia and when they come back from other provinces and they go into a store and they are told that this is a service they can't offer for some unknown reason that nobody can explain, then people are angry and the public is saying why can't we do this? We did this in other provinces, we did this from where we just came from.

This ties into the expansion of our own economy here in Nova Scotia and us being in sync with other provinces. Even our closest neighbours, P.E.I. and New Brunswick, allow their citizens to go into a store and have the service of brewing on the site, or u-vints as they're called. Madam Speaker, this bill is very much in line with that because it is relaxing the rules, which people were breaking anyway, quite frankly. People were

importing wine across the borders and now they can do that legally. I think it's important that we recognize that we don't want to make law-abiding citizens, put them in a position where they may be breaking the law, because it is a common practice to pick up some wine when you're travelling and driving back from one province to another.

Therefore, I think we need to be cognizant of what public opinion is and public sentiment. If there is no public harm, I'm often reminded of the words of Joseph Howe downstairs, we have them on the walls in the special room downstairs for Joseph Howe, and it says, if it's for the public good that we should be here for the public good.

If there is no harm and we can't see why it would be in anybody's detriment, then I think we are obliged to look at changes and to move them forward, and moving forward this importation of wine between provinces is an excellent example, that it was anachronistic, it was out of date, it didn't make sense, it didn't jibe with the public opinion, and the government has chosen to be one of the first provinces to move ahead with this change - and congratulations for that. I'm glad we're here on third reading, and I'm glad we're going to see this change.

I have to question why there is this irony that it's okay to improve this portion of the Liquor Control Act and not to make it clear for retailers about the other portion of the Act - about the retailers who sell these wine kits in their stores and would like to offer services to have the public be able to brew their wine there.

Madam Speaker, there is a lot of uncertainty and I know that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism would be interested to know that before even buying or expanding in these businesses, people have been contacting me and saying, I'm considering buying one of these wine kit businesses and I don't know if I should or not because I don't know whether I have access to one avenue or one line of the business that creates benefit.

Madam Speaker, I think it is very pertinent to the bill in front of us because the government has shown a willingness to move forward and be modern and accept the changes to the Liquor Control Act that are before us today. With that, I certainly support this change. I'm here to speak in favour on third reading and to ask the government, again, to question the rationale for not being clear in where we should go, and to question the NDP Government as to why they are maintaining the same old-fashioned stance on this issue that the previous Progressive Conservative Government did.

We kind of understood where the Progressive Conservative Government was coming from because they are supposed to be more right-wing and more reluctant to change; they're supposed to be, but in today's world everything is topsy-turvy. Today we have an NDP Government that in many, many ways, Madam Speaker, is more conservative than the government they replaced. That seems to be what we're stuck with

today. I expected some moves forward, some reforming. I expected reforming. We've got a government that makes huge donations to large businesses . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd remind the member to speak to the bill.

MS. WHALEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So in terms of the political stance of various Parties, the move forward to allow importation of wine from one province to another and freer trade between provinces, I think is very positive and that would be in line with what we'd expect from the NDP.

I'm simply saying there's an extension to this which also relates to the Liquor Control Act. The current minister has not changed her stance on this, neither did the previous minister, and no one in the government will even speak to the matter.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The time has come that that second change to the Act be brought forward and I look forward to seeing it, perhaps in the Spring session. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, I'm just going to take a moment once again here on third reading, as I did on second, to show support for this bill. As a matter of fact, as I said, I think in second reading, this mirrors a bill that I put before this House just a couple of weeks prior to this introduction of Bill No. 143. Having said that, it is certainly something that is good for our province, good for the industry, and we certainly want to continue to see this wine industry grow and become even more than it is today. This is all good for us in the province.

I am by no means critical or want to talk about topsy-turvy or the like, I want to talk about the bill and point out that many Nova Scotians, people in my area have a couple of wineries. As I mentioned previously, Sainte Famille Wines - this is an important bill for them and certainly for our new winery over in Avondale, the Avondale Sky Winery. For those who haven't had a chance to visit, perhaps they might like to stop by there and pick up some nice wine that is available to them in both those wineries.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, just taking a moment to show support once again for what I believe to be a good bill before this House. With that, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 143. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I'm going to ask the permission of the House if we could give consent - because I'm going to ask shortly also for consent to go into Committee of the Whole House on Bills - but that we could consider bills that were introduced today by the committees.

Those would be Private and Local Bills, Bill Nos. 117 and 129 - for the sake of clarity, Bill No. 117, An Act to Exempt Property of the Anne Murray Centre in the Town of Springhill from Municipal Taxes; Bill No. 129, the Liverpool United Baptist Church Cemetery Act; Bill No. 130, the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches Act; Bill No. 139, the Sisters of Saint Martha Consolidation Act; and Bill No. 146, which would be the East Hants Curling Arena Act.

Could I have the concurrence of the House to do that?

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Also, which were tabled from the Law Amendments Committee today, the following three bills: Bill No. 150, the Residential Tenancies Act; Bill No. 151, the Workers' Compensation Act; and Bill No. 153, the Community Interest Companies Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: With that, Madam Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

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

The motion is carried.

[2:22 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

[2:35 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Becky Kent in the Chair.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 94 - House of Assembly Act.

Bill No. 117 - Anne Murray Centre Tax Exemption Act.

Bill No. 129 - Liverpool United Baptist Church Cemetery Act.

Bill No. 130 - Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches Act.

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

Bill No. 144 - Insured Health Services Act.

Bill No. 146 - East Hants Curling Arena Act.

Bill No. 151 - Workers' Compensation Act.

Bill No. 153 - Community Interest Companies Act.

all without amendments, and

Bill No. 147 - Regulated Health Professions Network Act.

Bill No. 150 - Residential Tenancies Act.

which were reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, without further amendments and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, with the consent of the House, I would ask for third readings of the bills that were just returned, with the exception of Bill No. 94, not to be heard until at least Thursday.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: So the government is going to move by way of doing Private and Local Bills first.

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 117. So moved.

Bill No. 117 - Anne Murray Centre Tax Exemption Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I so move.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, just very briefly, I want to thank the Government House Leader and thank all members of the House for their consideration of this important bill. As I said on second reading, the Anne Murray Centre is an important anchor of downtown Springhill. This bill goes a long way to put it on a long-term, sustainable financial path. It is the result of some great collaborative work between the Town of Springhill, the Anne Murray Centre itself and now the House of Assembly here with this Private and Local Bill.

I am very pleased that we are dealing with this in third reading today. I want to thank all the members for their time and interest in the Anne Murray Centre and in Springhill. I won't conclude by singing an Anne Murray song because I would be afraid, Madam Speaker, that it might change the votes of some of the members. With those few words I thank the House and I conclude my remarks.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 117. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 129, Liverpool United Baptist Church Cemetery Act.

Bill No. 129 - Liverpool United Baptist Church Cemetery Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I move that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 129. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 130.

Bill No. 130 - Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I so move.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 130. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 139, an Act Respecting the Sisters of Saint Martha Consolidation Act.

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

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

Bill No. 146 - East Hants Curling Arena Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 146.

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

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 144.

Bill No. 144 - Insured Health Services Act.

Bill No. 147 - Regulated Health Professions Network Act.

Bill No. 150 - Residential Tenancies Act.

Bill No. 151 - Workers' Compensation Act.

Bill No. 153 - Community Interest Companies Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motions are carried.

Ordered that these bills do pass. Ordered that the titles be as read by the Clerk.
Ordered that the bills be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: That concludes the government's business for today. I am just going to rag the puck here for a minute and tell you thanks for keeping me in my place a few times today, Madam Speaker, but I just want to take a brief recess and then we'll be right back - it shouldn't be more than five minutes at maximum.

MADAM SPEAKER: The House will now take a five-minute recess.

[2:45 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:48 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise, to meet tomorrow from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and now I'll hand it over to the Progressive Conservative House Leader to inform us what the business will be for Opposition Day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, we will be calling a number of things - we'll decide tomorrow exactly what we want actually to discuss. We're going to call Bill No. 148, which is an Act to Protect Users of Accessible Transit Services;

Bill No. 72, Capital Projects Review Act; and maybe Bill No. 108, Bluenose Trust Accountability Act. And if there's time, we'll have Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne called as well.

With that, I move that the House do now do rise, to meet tomorrow between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise, to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We have reached the moment of interruption. We will now be replacing the late debate with an emergency debate as per Rule 43, and submitted by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, which reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance, that the cost of the Maritime Link portion of the Muskrat Falls will increase by \$100 to \$300 million by the time an application is made to the Utility and Review Board for the project and that power rates will increase by 2 to 3 per cent for the rest of this decade and after that will continue to increase at a slightly lower rate for the life of the project.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 43

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

ENERGY - MAR. LINK: COST INCREASE - EFFECT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, thank you for the ruling earlier that allowed this emergency debate to proceed. This is, in fact, one of the great examples of what an emergency debate can be used for. After all, Nova Scotians face a 50-year decision about a \$7.5 billion project, of which their share is 20 per cent - a project that the CEO of Emera says will increase our power bills by 2 per cent to 3 per cent per year, every year, for the first 10 years and then continue to increase our power rates for every year of the life of the project.

Nova Scotians are already paying the highest power rates in all of Canada. They have been very clear to this government and to all MLAs that they cannot afford to pay more and more and more year after year after year.

That increase, whatever it may be, is already on top of the 1 per cent to 2 per cent per year more, every year, for the rest of this decade that the Minister of Energy for the government himself admits is the cost of the NDP renewable electricity targets. Now Nova Scotians are faced with the prospect of as much as 5 per cent or 6 per cent compounded every year rate increases for the next 10 years. That is clearly the breaking point for Nova Scotians when it comes to paying their power bills. That's why, before the government signs on the dotted line and commits a whole new generation of Nova Scotians to unaffordable power rates, this emergency debate is so necessary.

Madam Speaker, it is not only necessary but urgent, because Emera - or Nova Scotia Power, whoever they choose - will soon be making an application to the URB for approval for this project. If that's not an urgent enough reason, it is the opinion of Emera that they don't need to wait for URB approval to even sanction the project, the sanctioning of which triggers loan guarantees, triggers construction, triggers engineering, and triggers work that cannot be easily rolled back if that approval ever were to be a no. That's why this is such an urgent time for Nova Scotians, for the government, and for the Premier to pause and stop and examine and be sure before going any further.

Nova Scotians are being told that the URB will be the ones to decide whether to approve the project or not. That would be fine if the URB were given a free hand to examine all of the options ahead for Nova Scotia, but the NDP's own Act of this Legislature instructs the URB that it must approve the project if it is consistent with the NDP electricity plan, the policy of the current government that has been printed and sent out and that Nova Scotians have become all too familiar with, because at the heart of that electricity plan is the reason that their power rates have already been going up by 25 per cent over the last three years. The Minister of Energy, in quoting the electricity plan, says that the renewable targets of the NDP are causing our power rates to go up by 1 per cent or 2 per cent a year. Using the 2 per cent number, that is two-thirds of the most recent increases that are today before the URB.

It is now time to look specifically at the Maritime Link project. When it was first proposed a year ago, Emera provided the construction costs, making it clear that they expected all of those costs and any cost overruns to be added to the rate base that Nova Scotia ratepayers pay. They told us then that it was \$1.2 billion.

Well, it hasn't started yet, but the cost overruns are already rolling in. As of Friday, we know that it's not going to be \$1.2 billion - it will be at least \$1.3 billion, and maybe as much as \$1.5 billion, all of which will be added to the rate base of Nova Scotia over the life of the Maritime Link project. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of money over a period of time that will include a whole new generation of Nova Scotia electricity bill payers. The government and the Premier say they have a high degree of confidence in Emera's cost projections. Well good for them but, Madam Speaker, excuse the rest of us if rather than accept Emera's cost estimates with the high degree of confidence that the Premier expresses, they would actually like to see a full and independent review of this project

compared to every other possible project that could bring cheaper, cleaner power to Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, there are many options. In New England, for example, power utilities that are regulated are applying to their own regulators to drop their power bills at the same time as ours go up. The State of Massachusetts, for example, in the same week that Nova Scotia Power asked Nova Scotians to pay 6 per cent more - their state utility went to their regulator and applied for a 21 per cent decrease in their power rates. The reason they gave is that they are using natural gas to generate electricity. Nova Scotians have natural gas resources offshore. They have a pipeline already built to New England, and paid for, that could import natural gas here. We're using some natural gas now, perhaps we could use a lot more. It is low emission and it is very cheap right now.

Rather than me promote it, let me just say that it would be awfully nice and, in fact, very important, for the URB to examine natural gas as an alternative, in full, to Muskrat Falls. When the NDP tells the URB that they must approve a project if it meets their renewable energy targets, which excludes natural gas because although it is cheaper and it's much lower in emissions than the coal we burn now, it is not renewable. When they exclude that comparison, they have done an expensive disservice to the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, Madam Speaker.

As this now-\$1.5 billion gets thrown into our power rates, Madam Speaker, Nova Scotians are rightly demanding to know, well wait a minute now, how much will that electricity cost when it gets to my home? Someone should tell them, before the government signs on the dotted line; before Emera says we can sanction this project, get on with construction before it is even approved by the URB; before the URB goes through a review where their own government, in law, tells them they must approve it. That is what's wrong with the current process.

Even after asking in this House, time after time, how much will that electricity cost when it gets to our homes, as recently as today the government has no answer, Emera has no answer and the URB has no answer. They say that will come later. We'll tell you later how much that electricity is going to cost, even though Emera can go ahead and sanction the project without approval, even though the approval is guided by a bill that says they must approve it, even though the NDP itself has signed on without knowing how much it will cost.

Nova Scotians are demanding to know, so who do they turn to, Madam Speaker? Who do Nova Scotians turned to, these tapped-out power bill paying Nova Scotians, paying the highest rates in the country? Who do they turn to, to find out this information about how much this project is ultimately going to cost them, the ones who pay the bills? Well, they can turn to Emera, who clearly loves this project, and Nova Scotia Power. No wonder, when you have a \$1.5 billion share of a project and you're going to finance it in the normal way and then you're going to add 9 per cent profit to your costs and pass all of that

on to Nova Scotians, no wonder Emera and Nova Scotia Power love this project so much, because when they actually build the project, they get to add on their guaranteed 9 per cent and charge all of us.

Nova Scotians rightly say, well wait a minute, Emera is conflicted about whether this is the best project for the province because they're going to make a guaranteed profit on that project. So we get it why Emera is jumping up and down, saying let's build it, let's build it, we don't even need to wait for the URB approval, we're so anxious to get going, so we can start adding it to our rate base, so we can add on our 9 per cent guaranteed profit. That's Emera, and so although the NDP say we have a high degree of confidence in Emera's costing, Nova Scotians are rightly saying, halt, slow down, wait a minute, stop, we need an independent review of whether it's really in our best interests or not - those of us who pay the bills. That's why they don't turn to Emera with the high degree of confidence that the Premier has in their costing, because they know that that's not Emera's interest. They want someone to stand up for their interests.

So another option, Madam Speaker, is the URB and that is where the government is sending this for approval or, more specifically, where Emera or Nova Scotia Power, or whatever subsidiary they come up with will go, to the URB for approval. But rather than leave the URB to its own devices, rather than leave the URB with a free hand to do whatever work they need to do, to talk to whatever experts they need, to look at all of the options that are in the world today that Nova Scotia could draw on, the government brought a bill to this House that says the URB must approve the project if it's consistent with their own electricity plan. Tying their hands and eliminating options that deserve to be considered, like much more natural gas, a cheaper and cleaner alternative, or even importing power from another province, even hydro power, like from Quebec.

Madam Speaker, we understand why Nova Scotia Power or Emera wouldn't like that option because they don't get to build a big expensive project and add their 9 per cent to it if we're simply importing it from another province, but they ought to be able to look at that option, the URB ought to be able to look at that option, every option, and say this is better or not better than Muskrat Falls, the \$1.5 billion share that Nova Scotia ratepayers are going to be asked to pay shortly.

Madam Speaker, the URB is there for them when they can be, they're there sometimes, but when the government instructs them that they must approve a project then Nova Scotians know they can't be totally reliant on the URB in this case either. That only leaves one other place, the final place where Nova Scotians can go to see if they are being looked after, and that one other place - that very important place that they should be able to go to, to know their own interests are protected, their own pocketbook is protected - is the government itself and their Premier.

When they look to the NDP to see if the ratepayers of the province are going to have their pocketbooks protected, their interests protected, what they see is a Premier and a

government that a year ago signed on the dotted line, described this as the greatest thing since sliced bread, have worked hand in glove with Emera to work it through to where we are today, and yet still doesn't know how much that power is going to cost when it gets to our own homes, Madam Speaker.

No wonder they're so frustrated as we get to this point and I know when the government has its turn, Madam Speaker, one of them will get up and they'll say, but the federal government in Ottawa thinks it's a good project because they have provided a loan guarantee. Well, the federal government in Ottawa is doing what they can to bring the costs down - although the cost increases of last week already swamp the amount that that brings the costs down. What I want Nova Scotians to know is that having the federal government provide a loan guarantee for this one project is just like a Nova Scotian buying a car, let's say a Honda Civic, and they go to their banker and they say, will you lend me the money for this Honda Civic, and the banker says yes. The banker has done his job, or her job, but what the banker doesn't do is say, well, did you consider all the other cars out there, did you look at a Hyundai or a Ford? That's not their job, and that's not the job of the Government of Canada.

The person who has to do their own homework to make sure this is the best option is the person buying the car and in this analogy, Madam Speaker, that person is the Premier of Nova Scotia. He is the one bringing an expensive car into his loan guarantor to get that guarantee but that does not absolve him of the responsibility of ensuring that a full review is done of all the alternatives and the cheapest, cleanest one is chosen. That's why this emergency debate is so important.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Madam Speaker, this is an important topic for consideration of the House and I think we first have to start at the beginning. We have to try to reflect on the position we were in when the Progressive Conservatives were last in power and how this project came about.

Just to give you a feeling for what that was like, in 2005, 2006, 2007 the increases in electricity costs were 7.1 per cent one year, 9.9 per cent the next, 5.3 per cent the next. In fact, the year that we came into power in 2009, the increase was some 10.6 per cent. All of that tied to the decisions made by the previous Progressive Conservative Government because what they had done was they had tied us to a coal-fired generating system, which became increasingly more expensive as the cost of fuel increased. In fact, far from what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party says, the costs throughout these years are still reflective of the generation system we have, which is primarily coal.

The reality is the increases are actually still rolling through from the decisions that were made by the Progressive Conservative Government and the Liberals before them. At the same time, the federal government, through the federal Department of Environment - at

that time Minister Prentice - announced that they were going to deal with coal-fired generating stations and they said they were going to bring in a regulation that would require the closure of coal-fired generating stations at the end of 45 years. End of story. They would all close, no reprieve, no alternative, no nothing.

We felt this was not a good way to achieve the result. We had already announced a hard cap for Nova Scotia on greenhouse gas emissions, one that had won international praise - in fact we received an award at the Copenhagen summit for having the first hard cap. We were able to put together a renewable electricity plan, which demonstrated to the federal government that we were going to be able to achieve or exceed the results that were being dictated by the coal regulations, through a means that would be both cheaper and more effective than simply predetermining the closure of all of the coal-fired plants.

With Minister Prentice, we eventually managed to sign an equivalency agreement that said so long as we meet the targets associated with the coal-fired regulations, we would not have to go through the same kind of closure exercise. In fact, we would be able to cycle down these plants when they were both most convenient to the Nova Scotia consumer and least expensive. In other words, instead of stranding the asset and having more costs put into the rate base for ratepayers, we would be able to close those in a more equitable manner, meaning better savings for everyone.

At the same time, this project, the Lower Churchill project and therefore the Maritime Link became a matter of discussion between myself and the then-Premier of Newfoundland, Mr. Williams. At the time I indicated to Mr. Williams that I believed that the Lower Churchill project was a good project for the Atlantic region for a number of reasons. I believed, as evidently he did as well, that economically it would make sense because it would provide the stable, long-term rates for energy to the Atlantic region.

Even more than that, it was strategically important for the Province of Nova Scotia to have, in their hands, the ability to be able to negotiate prices with respect to electricity in a competitive market. Let us remember that over and above the 35 years of stable priced energy and access to additional energy at a cheaper price, we also become part of a competitive framework that we would then be able to negotiate the lowest cost energy of four consumers in this province.

We convinced the federal government that this was the case, we demonstrated that this would mean the lowest costs for consumers, because it is not just about this particular plan which is 8 per cent to 10 per cent of the energy required so there are going to have to be a lot of other things that go into the portfolio mix as well; there will be more wind, there will be some natural gas, there will undoubtedly continue to be some coal, there will be some biomass - you will have a fully hedged energy profile which will allow you, as costs go up and down, to be able to cycle down the most expensive energy and bring up the cheaper costs as the markets continue to fluctuate.

This is a good plan for Nova Scotia, one that never entered into the calculations of the other Parties. They were so fixated on whether it was going to be coal or oil that they tied themselves to the fossil fuel markets, and, frankly, families in this province are paying the price today for this short-sighted policy of former governments - and they want to go back to that. This is something that they want to repeat, they haven't made the mistakes enough times, they want to make the same mistake one more time and we say no.

Madam Speaker, much to the contrary of what is said by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, not only is this a lower cost option, it does not reflect the kinds of increases that he says will take place, and I don't know where he got those nonsensical numbers that he is using because what the proponents actually say - and what they will have to take to the regulator and have endorsed - is that this project will actually produce value for the ratepayers. That means that it will have to be a cheaper option than the other options that are there.

I just want to give you an example of how profoundly wrong the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party can be. This is just a brief example, I'm sure there are many more, but this is just a brief example. He talks about natural gas, he talks about the cost of natural gas and if you were to go to the newspaper today you would look and you would see what is known as the hub price for natural gas and it would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$3.50 per MMBTU, so that's the measurement unit they use when they are pricing natural gas. That cost is dramatically different than it has been for many years, as you would know, and this is something that people often don't know; when they were selling at \$11 we were getting all kinds of revenue which we could use to support programming.

Here's a little something - you know the Progressive Conservative Party likes to talk about balanced budgets. but here is what they did, on \$11 gas they received \$454 million in royalties on which they built health and education. Do you know what we received last year on natural gas royalties? We received \$28 million - \$426 million deficit built by the former government that we inherited and had to solve.

But this is because - and my point on making that point, is because the cost of natural gas is volatile and it means that completely without warning ratepayers in our province could be subject to large spikes in the cost of electricity. I'll give you an example, do you know what the cost of natural gas was last week in Nova Scotia? It was \$14, not \$3.50. It has spiked to \$14 and why is that? Because the supply has become constricted, we no longer receive off of our offshore or have access to the natural gas we would need in order to be able to supply the electricity at a competitive price. This is just an example of how extraordinarily flawed the thinking is that says that we should go back to the way we used to do things, that we should tie ourselves somehow to one supply, tie ourselves to volatile fossil fuel markets and place every family in this province at the mercy of those markets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that might have been good enough for the Progressive Conservative Party and that might have been good enough for the Liberal Party, but it is not good enough for the government. It is not good enough for families in this province, and we are not going to allow that to happen. (Applause)

Contrary to what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has said, this project will go forward to the Utility and Review Board. It will be compared with all of the alternatives. There will be evidence before the Utility and Review Board that looks at all of the cost matrix so that they can determine that this project is fully in the best interests of the Province of Nova Scotia. Not one penny of that project can go into the rate base without being approved by the Utility and Review Board. So we are, of course, interested in only this aspect of it, that the lowest and fairest electricity rates are actually here in Nova Scotia.

Now I want to give you another example where the flawed thinking of the Opposition Parties is at play. The alternative that the Liberal Party would take is to embark on full-scale deregulation. The legislation in New Brunswick, which they say they are modelled on, was such a failure in New Brunswick that the New Brunswick model has been completely withdrawn - they want nothing to do with it.

What they would do is that would start down the road to full deregulation and would result in at least 30 per cent to 50 per cent increases in the cost of electricity for the ordinary families in Nova Scotia. That is the plan that has been directly set out by the Liberal Party for - well, the member for Dartmouth East actually tabled the exact legislation, which he said was modelled on this. He tabled the New Brunswick legislation and said, this is what we ought to be emulating. That is just further evidence that they have no idea what they're talking about when it comes to energy.

I'll give you another example - the Leader of the Opposition tabled a bill where he would punish the electricity provider if there were unwarranted electricity stoppages. Now, you know what would happen if that was actually allowed to take effect? It would mean that they would go to the ratepayers and they would increase the level of the maintenance budget. They would have to do that. They would have to go beyond what is already allowed by the Utility and Review Board, and that would go right into the rate base for ratepayers. So this would increase the costs.

There's no other way they can do it. They can argue that that's not going to happen, but there would be no other way to do it. The maintenance costs would have to be absorbed, because they are part of the ordinary operating expenses of any system. That just shows, Madam Speaker, how inexperienced and naive they are when it comes to the question of electricity in our province and what the consequences of their plans are.

We are going to stand up and protect consumers in this province against the wrong-headed plans of the Opposition and of the Progressive Conservative Party, so that we can ensure they get the fairest and lowest rates.

I would just say, Madam Speaker, that thefairestandlowestrates.ca is a great Web site. You should go to it and see all of the flip-flops that come from the Liberals.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Madam Speaker, it's always interesting to listen to the Premier. You know, Nova Scotians are going to get an opportunity for the Premier and myself and the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to debate our plans, but that election call - who knows when it will happen? What they are hoping for is that the Premier will finally wake up and stand up to Nova Scotia Power instead of being their cheerleader. That's what he does. (Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, as always, the Premier has shown his class once again and the good news for members of this side of the House is that Nova Scotians stopped listening to the Premier a long time ago, but what's interesting is what we're debating today is the Muskrat Falls project in Newfoundland and Labrador. I want the Premier - and we've asked the Premier many times, and he has been unable or unwilling to give us the information that we required, not only today, he didn't do it in this debate today, he hasn't done it at any other time, the simple questions of how much will the project cost, what will it mean at the end to Nova Scotia ratepayers? How much will their power bills go up?

You know, we stated here that it was \$1.2 billion. The project hasn't even started, Mr. Speaker, and it's now \$1.5 billion. He can't tell us how much that power is going to be and yet he is out cheerleading it. He's out thinking it's a great project. I asked him today in the House during Question Period to stand up and give some facts of why he believes that. What is he comparing it to? Did he look at what it would cost to bring energy in from Quebec? (Interruptions) Well, show us, show us. With no disrespect, Premier, but you've said lots of things that didn't actually come true.

Madam Speaker, unlike everyone else, we would like it in writing, Mr. Premier. What it comes down to is to find out what it will mean. In the absence of this debate, I think we need to ask ourselves, is this the only option for Nova Scotians? The Premier says it's the best deal - compared to what - compared to the status quo without the costs? The URB will look at it, they will look at it. In the absence (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, there's no question, we understand that the federal government has said regulated coal-fired plants have to shut down. We also understand that almost eight months ago Quebec was sending 600 megawatts of hydro energy into the Province of New Brunswick to offset Point Lepreau. They could get it to Point Lepreau in the Province of New Brunswick, but this government won't go and talk to them. This government won't go enter into a conversation to find out whether or not we can have cheaper power. The Premier had an opportunity to stand in this House and lay out options. The Premier had an

opportunity to lay out options and in the absence of that, all he did was go on about how great he is. Well, Nova Scotians will determine that.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, Nova Scotians deserve the right to have an alternative. What's interesting about this particular project, and what we still don't know, and it's why it's surprising to me that this government has grabbed on to this project, there are so many unanswered questions. How much is the project going to cost? How much of the power bill is going up based on what this renewable energy is going to cost?

Mr. Speaker, what the Premier can't tell us as well is how much of this project - will it be the entire project, will it be a portion of this project - that ends up on the balance sheet of Nova Scotia Power as equity and that we pay 9 per cent on top of? How is that a good deal for Nova Scotians? The question is, why does that even need to end up on the balance sheet of Nova Scotia Power?

If you remember, and I'm sure you will, there's a thing called an independent power purchase agreement that was being signed and being legislated in this House that was going to allow renewable energy producers the ability to generate renewable energy in this province, put it through the grid and be bought by Nova Scotia Power, but one caveat on that whole arrangement was that Nova Scotia Power was not allowed to participate in those IPPs. They were not allowed to. Do you want to know why? Because what would happen, not only would we have to buy the energy associated with those IPPs, we'd have to pay a 9 per cent rate of return if they were owned by Emera on top of that project.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is sitting here saying that. He should speak to his friend, Chris Huskison, who's going around bragging about the fact they're now putting 49 per cent of the most two recent ones on their equity sheet and they're going to pay a 9 per cent rate of return. Let me get that straight, sorry, sorry, Mr. Speaker. We're going to pay the 9 per cent rate of return, and they're going to receive it with the blessing of that Premier and this government.

What we have said all along is, let's look at the options. What would happen if we engaged in Quebec? What would happen if we had reached out and said that 600 megawatts that was going in to deal with Point Lepreau - why couldn't we use it and put it in the Province of Nova Scotia? Why couldn't we? We can't because one of the reasons (Interruption) you know what? I hope the Premier has the courage - I hope the Premier goes down to the rate hearing and stands up and tells the URB to ignore the legislation he's sending over there to pass the Muskrat Falls and to sign onto cheaper power from Quebec instead of sitting in this House adding rhetoric. He should stand up when he has an opportunity and say he's going to provide an alternative to Nova Scotians buying that energy. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I did go to Newfoundland and Labrador; I suggest he might want to go too. I suggest you might want to go too and I suggest instead of allowing Nova Scotia

Power to set the energy policy in the Province of Nova Scotia, you might want to try governing and showing leadership.

The fact of the matter is, not only are we going to be forced to buy that energy under this deal - instead of actually saying we want to buy cheaper energy out of Quebec, we're going to be forced to buy this energy out of Newfoundland and Labrador, potentially at a higher cost, with the blessing of the NDP Government and the Premier of this province. But that's only half of it - we're then going to turn around and spend 9 per cent on whatever portion Nova Scotia Power can deem to get through the regulator down here for us to have to pay on top of it.

Do you know what's interesting? Under this government, under the NDP Government, if you look at the equity sheet of Nova Scotia Power, their equity has increased substantially. But consumption is going down. You know what else is going up? What Nova Scotia Power takes out of the pockets of Nova Scotia ratepayers and sends out of our province.

The Premier is showing his inexperience. (Interruptions) The Premier is showing his inexperience. Not only is he forcing Nova Scotians to potentially pay a higher rate for power coming from Newfoundland and Labrador, but he's out cheerleading for the fact that Emera and Nova Scotia Power are going to lump the cost of this project directly on their equity sheet and we're going to be forced to turn around and pay a 9 per cent rate of return on that. It's simply showing his inexperience and his inability to stand up to Emera and Nova Scotia Power to provide Nova Scotians with an alternative.

At no time did we ever say that we were going to deregulate the energy market. What we've said is we're going to allow competition in the energy market. If you actually go back, if the Premier gets a chance tomorrow to read what he said on the record here - his hope was with the Muskrat Falls to create competition in the energy market. So when we do it, he suggests it's deregulation, when he does it it's good public policy. Figure that out. He should read what he said tomorrow on the record in this House. The fact of the matter is, we agree, we should allow competition in the energy market. I hope Emera builds whatever they want, but what I don't want to have happen is that Nova Scotia Power - more importantly, Nova Scotia ratepayers - are forced to foot the bill.

If Emera wants to build the link with Newfoundland and Labrador, go ahead. If the business case fits for them, go ahead - we'll call them and we'll offer to buy their energy from them if it's a good price. But don't tie us into potentially an escalating cost of energy out of Newfoundland and Labrador when there may be cheaper options for the people of Nova Scotia. That's showing the Premier's inexperience here. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, what it's really showing is that he is preaching the line from Nova Scotia Power and Emera. That's what it's showing.

Mr. Speaker, we believe there should be competition in a highly-regulated energy market. We also believe in the IPP that was set - independent power purchasing agreements that should be set - but we also believe that Nova Scotia Power should not be participating in those arrangements. You know why? Because we pay twice. When you go down before the Utility and Review Board - we'll take that option and go down and present whenever the Muskrat Falls project comes before the Utility and Review Board, and we'll talk to them, as we have at every time and every opportunity. It would be nice to see the Minister of Finance down there. The question needs to be asked to them, why does Nova Scotia need to pay 9 per cent on renewable energy projects that Nova Scotia Power doesn't need to own? Why? There is only one reason, Mr. Speaker. Because the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power want that money.

This may come as a surprise to the Premier and the Minister of Finance, but their job is not to worry about shareholders of Nova Scotia Power. Their job is actually to protect Nova Scotia ratepayers. While they may not understand it, the members on this side of the House understand the business model that Nova Scotia Power is using. We know the business model of Nova Scotia Power is to get us coming and going - pay 9 per cent on the equity of the projects, plus buy the power back. That's a great deal, and if you look at the last four years under the NDP Government, Nova Scotia Power has really figured it out. Their equity sheet is growing while demand is going down, the rate of return, but the other thing which is really growing is the amount of money that they are taking out of the pockets of Nova Scotian ratepayers.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: You set them up to do that.

MR. MCNEIL: I would suggest to you, Minister of Finance, that you did. I would say that you did. It was under your watch. It's under your watch that the equity of that company has gone through the roof. It is under your watch that power rates have gone up 30 per cent. It is under your watch that shareholders are doing well. (Interruption) Mr. Speaker, I never thought I'd hear the day when I'd wish for the former Finance Minister to reappear. While we may not have always agreed, you can't say he didn't understand what was going on.

What we have here is a utility that is running wild on the ratepayers in this province under the watchful eye and with the blessing of the NDP Government of Nova Scotia. We've got Chris Huskison flying over to Newfoundland and Labrador and signing memoranda of understanding with the sole understanding that the equity of that project is going to go on the equity sheet of Nova Scotia Power. You know what he says to his shareholders? Don't worry, that's another 9 per cent increase on that project, and we'll put that - but even better, he says, not only will we get the 9 per cent, but we've got a built-in customer and they have no option. That built-in customer is the ratepayers of Nova Scotia Power, and that's those of us here in Nova Scotia.

We have no option, Mr. Speaker, because the NDP Government has become the official cheerleader for Nova Scotia Power and Emera. The NDP Government has been more focused on shareholders than they have been on ratepayers. We have no option because they are showing their inexperience when it comes to standing up to these large companies. Whether it's in the Strait area, whether it's Resolute out of Quebec, or whether it's Nova Scotia Power and the Province of Nova Scotia, what do they do? They become the chief apologists for them. They stand up, they open up their chequebook, they sign the cheque, and they say, how much do you want? Fill it in yourself.

Well, Nova Scotians have had enough. I hope that the members across who have been sitting here heckling show up at the Utility and Review Board and put their remarks on the record to decide whether they are going to be with Nova Scotia ratepayers or Emera shareholders.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand for a few minutes today and speak to this very important topic. We've heard a lot of discussion in this House this session. It's been a bit of a hot item, I guess you could say, electrifying at times, through numerous discussions in this House.

The reason why, Mr. Speaker, I think most people in this House would agree, it is an important topic for all Nova Scotians. We stand in our place and we talk about this. We sit in our place and we listen to others, the Premier, and we've heard others talk this afternoon on this particular issue. It seems everybody has the right plan.

I've talked to a lot of Nova Scotians about this, travelling around certainly as Energy Critic, and just every day in my constituency. They will tell you they want the right plan. They want a plan that is going to work. They're seeing all three Parties stand in their place, in the media; everybody has a little bit of a different plan. They're saying, how do we know what is right, Mr. Speaker? But they do care about one thing and that is that we do get it right, as 52 members in this House that we get it right, that all the Parties get together in this.

What that should mean, Mr. Speaker, in all honesty, is a good review - is this in fact the right project? What we do know is this is a big, massive project. We've seen the feds come in and they've offered their loan guarantee. They are backing this at this point. Do we know if this project will ever actually go? Hard to say, we don't know just yet. We don't know what's going to happen in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador but this is a big project. This project in Newfoundland and Labrador could set them back billions and billions more in debt.

Will that go in Newfoundland and Labrador? We don't know yet. What is worrisome about the fact that we don't know is (1) the cost, which I'll get to, but (2) what

are we doing for alternatives? The Premier did stand and he talked about some other things but that's not part of the entire package as we know it, going to the URB for approval.

Let's back up a little bit. What we have seen is we've seen in the last three, almost four years now, a province that has had growth in this area, our rates have gone up 25 per cent and now we are only weeks away from a decision by the URB in the Province of Nova Scotia that will determine whether we are going to go up another 3 per cent. We don't know what that figure will be. What we do know is that application also is requesting 3 per cent the following year.

We hear from Nova Scotians all the time - residents, big business, small businesses that say we can't afford any more. The rates that they are paying, on top of everything else that they are trying to do to survive in this province, are making life very difficult to survive.

I hear the member for Hants East over there, Mr. Speaker, going on about this. The Premier spoke a few minutes ago about how far they've come. Well, they've come a long way, all right. We've gone on an increase, as I've just said, we've got the highest taxes; we've got the highest power rates in this province. We've got nothing to incent people to come here unless we're giving them \$100 million, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker.

How long will that last? Well we know that can't last very long. We know that some of those decisions are not good decisions. We await the results of that, Mr. Speaker. On this particular issue we do know that Nova Scotians want and deserve a government in place that is doing the right thing on their behalf. We are not getting that, we are not seeing that. People are saying, Mr. Speaker, we don't feel that we're getting that. We've seen rates continue to climb. How is that good for Nova Scotians? What's worrisome about this even more so to the everyday people who are trying to survive in this province, trying to stay here with their families, is that we have no idea what the cost of this mega project will be.

Even if you tried to do some sort of equation - and we've heard a number of things - what is the equation? How do you actually get to best guess? We don't even have that. Emera has made it clear, a couple of months or so back, when they made a big announcement and signed contractual agreements, they made it very clear that the ratepayer in the Province of Nova Scotia will bear the cost of every nickel that is over and above the cost of this project.

We know where it's going. Everything that they do comes back to the ratepayer. We already know that. This project is no different, except this is a huge project - \$1.2 billion, going to \$1.5 billion maybe and we haven't even started. There's not even one bit of construction underway yet with this project. What will the cost be? We don't know.

I've said this before and the Premier said he agreed with me, that we don't know what the costs are; he agreed. Construction projects do start out at one price but often there

are increases along the way, for a variety of reasons. Mr. Speaker, we know that. It is reasonable to believe that we would have cost increases due to a whole variety of reasons. We know labour costs go up over the course of the years and this project will take years to complete.

The other big piece of this project is that to Nova Scotia this is worth about 8 per cent or 10 per cent of our energy, our total energy market and our usage. What about the other 90 per cent? Right now we are paying very high power rates, as most people would say. Businesses are going out of business because they can't pay the power bill. We've seen - it would be a huge piece and when we see big industry closing, they will admit power costs affect our bottom line, which in turn affect the decision as to whether we are going to stay or we are able to stay in business or not.

We know that small business - we know there is a whole array of how the pricing is set, and there's a band and how they're in the band, or they're out of the band, Mr. Speaker, and to most people it's very complex. You would have to really study it to get a good understanding of how this works, and it is very complex, but what people do know, and they know very clearly, is every month or every second month they get their bill and what the figure is. They know what they are paying and they feel that pain when they're trying to pay it.

I'm sure as members - I know I do and I'm sure others do - we all meet with constituents in the province who struggle to try to figure out how they are going to do that. They get behind a little bit and winter comes on. If they are heating their homes with electricity, what happens then? We know that there's a spike. We know it's cold. We know that the thermostats are going to get turned up. We know that the bills will go up and I see it through the winter and into the Spring, they can't afford to pay the bill and they set it aside. They go and they buy their groceries and they support their families and their children. They do what everyday people do. They go to work. They set it aside saying, okay, we will try to find it somehow, we'll put a little bit on it if we can, and we'll try to make the payment. The next thing you know, the second bill is there and interest is on that and now it's getting pretty high.

I've seen people walk into my office with three power bills, Mr. Speaker, well over \$2,000. Along with their power bill and the last notice they got is the disconnection notice because they haven't been able to pay and they say, what are we going to do? How are we going to get around this? Well, you know, I think that's human nature. People get a little anxious and they set it aside but there comes a point when they get that notice. Can you imagine getting the notice saying we're going to cut your power off if you can't pay? So we call - I've talked about this - we call and we try to make an arrangement. These are the people that we need to think about. We stand in here and hear all the rhetoric go back and forth, the bickering and fighting and hollering, and I don't think, sometimes, that we have those folks very foremost in our minds when we are making decisions.

Now, the Premier believes that we on this side of the House perhaps don't understand how wonderful the deal with Newfoundland and Labrador is, and do you know what? Maybe when all is said and done and our costs associated with all of this, maybe in the long term this turns out to be a good deal, maybe, but again what is worrisome is - and it's good for the government to sit there and say, you know, well, this is a good deal, it's a good deal - nobody is saying that we shouldn't be thinking about clean energy in the future, green energy, about getting off fossil fuels. We know, we've heard others talk about the federal regulations that are at one point going to take us off things like coal, probably oil at some point as we move forward in the years ahead, if we're able to develop, but you can't do that without other sources.

We have seen wind in the Province of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the wind. We've seen it continue to grow. We see interest in it. We see investment in it, but it makes up a small portion of what it is, generally speaking, that we are using. It's still a small portion but it's an expensive portion. When you think about those projects and how many millions of dollars - a windmill goes for about \$1 million apiece, they get set up, but the problem with windmills, if you want to call it a problem, or one of the concerns of windmills, of course, is 30 per cent of the time they claim they have to be backed up with some other kind of generation and what's that - a generator probably running on gas, which is not totally making this clean - but it's good. (Interruption)

AN HON. MEMBER: Dirty coal.

MR. PORTER: Wind or dirty coal, of course, maybe you've got dirty coal but, you know, we speak about coal in the Province of Nova Scotia. We know that a lot of work has been done in the coal area with regard to trying to make coal cleaner. (Interruptions) Yes, Point Aconi, there are the baghouse plants at the plants. (Interruption) What do you call them, Keith?

MR. KEITH BAIN: Fluid ice bags.

MR. PORTER: Fluid ice bags that are now in place and they have been, I guess, for some years too. I know in Trenton, my father-in-law used to work at the Trenton plant and he was on the coal run, you know, we saw improvements. We know that coal is a very big part of our energy source in Nova Scotia and it's going to be. We stand in this House and we talk and we make it sound like coal is going to end tomorrow, bang, it's gone. We know that's not right and we know that the members will stand in this House and agree that that is not right.

We need a good plan for the long term and a place for coal. We need to be able to either use our own, we've been purchasing, that's one option. We talked a bit about natural gas. The Premier talked about natural gas being at \$3.50 and then he talked about it being at \$4. Yes, do you know what? On anything market-based, like today in the market we know that things are very volatile, as a matter of fact for the last few years, as we all know, the

markets have been very volatile. We have seen gas go up and go down, but generally speaking, it fluctuates. There's probably a happy medium there at some point.

If you were Nova Scotia Power and you were going to be the energy generator, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure if you are going to spend a lot of money in a long-term investment in securing energy sources that there's some agreement to be worked out with the energy market when it comes to natural gas. You can probably set yourself up to buy at a very, very good rate.

We know that natural gas is a good source of energy. It's clean, Mr. Speaker. What other options do we have? The problem is, that's not going to be on the table when they get to the URB. It's not going to be something for them to consider. But as I said a few minutes ago, we have to think about that other 90 per cent. If Muskrat Falls and the wonderful deal does go, it's only 10 per cent at best.

What about the other 90 per cent? Well, that other 90-plus per cent now is what we're paying, so just think about today's rates, what you're paying right now, just even for residential - nearly 13 cents a kilowatt hour, I think; that will still be there, plus the add-on from this mega project over in Newfoundland and Labrador.

What's the figure? We don't know. How can you add that on to the 13? Is it 7 or 8 more cents? We have good options. We've heard a little bit about the other options to buy. Now, we've put forward bills in this House. We believe in a couple of different better ideas, I think. You could say a regional energy market that we've talked about before. We don't care where the energy is coming from. We care about the best buy, whether it's coming from Quebec or whether it's coming out of New Brunswick. New Brunswick is now generating with Point Lepreau back up. There's an excess there that we know is available if we really wanted it to be. Are we seeking it out?

I know there might be some issues between provinces. Well, then, let's go to the table and talk about the issues if there's some regulations or laws that say you can't transfer energy at the border. If it has to stop there, then let's go there and say, open it up. Let's talk about that. Let's talk about wherever we can buy it from at the best rate. But we don't seem to be interested in that. We have our focus solely set on Newfoundland and Labrador.

People need to think about that, and when they are thinking about that they need to think it's still only 10 per cent. If they think they're going to get some great big discount because we've got Newfoundland and Labrador coming on, even in the long term, that's not true, not true at all. They still have the other 90 per cent that they have to deal with.

If there's a price tag that we're not sure of yet, if it's 5, 10, 15, or 20 cents, whatever it might be to purchase a kilowatt hour, for the 168 or what equals the 20 per cent that we would be entitled to of the generated power in Newfoundland and Labrador and we have

options to buy more, is that another - how much? Well, we don't know, because we don't know the cost even to start out.

How can we look at this seriously and not have concerns? It's great for the Premier to stand up, and it's great for the ministers to stand up and have a position. That's okay, but we've asked and will continue to ask until the deal is done or not, because we believe it's important to Nova Scotians, everyday Nova Scotians who are struggling already to pay what they are trying to pay now. We believe it is our job to stand in our place in this House, on their behalf, who put us here, to ask important questions. They want to know what they are going to pay. We have to ask those questions.

The Premier can't just sit there and say it's a good deal. Just show us it's a good deal. If it is, maybe we can then buy into it as all members in this House should or could, or at least we could consider it.

Will that price come out when he gets to the URB? Is it some big secret that is being withheld? All of a sudden the application is filed, and bang, here's the final price tag. Is that where we're going, so that by Spring we are going to have a price tag or before January or February, when the application is filed, maybe the true cost? Well, I shouldn't call it the true cost - a beginning cost, an estimated cost of what the rate base will be. It should be there.

Again, the problem is when we see the project ongoing, if it starts - if we see this project, what will happen? We've already seen it grow, \$300 million, it might be \$1.5 billion now. What will it be when it's done? How will that affect the rates? That's the key question we have to ask ourselves.

We have to stand here in our place and represent the people who matter, the people of Nova Scotia who we represent. They want us here. They want us asking the important questions. More importantly, though, Mr. Speaker, they want us working together as a unit to try to do good things for this province.

We're willing to do that. I don't think I've heard one Opposition member ever say we don't agree that we should have a good price in energy markets in the long term for Nova Scotians, but a key factor has got to be that it's got to be the right price. It's got to be an affordable price. We've got to stop putting hardships on businesses, small businesses, large businesses, industries, and residents and everyday people in this province.

I know my time is running out and I thank you for the opportunity to have a few words this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to stand in the House this afternoon and be so proud of a Premier who has shown tremendous leadership, who has the experience to lead a province, a Premier who has the vision to lead us into the future.

I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by talking about Hillside in my constituency and the legacy that has been left by Liberals and Progressive Conservatives to the people of Hillside. Now Hillside is in the lee of the coal-fired generating station in Trenton. I have been there on picket lines when I was in Opposition, I was there on picket lines when I was a part of this government because the people of Hillside have had fly ash coming out on them for years and years and years, and we are moving away from that. I've seen the window ledges, I've seen the cars, I've seen the swimming pools with fly ash. I've seen, worst of all, the slides and the toys of children covered with fly ash. Some people may snicker on the other side of the House but I've seen that. I've seen children playing in flowered fields and the flowers are covered with fly ash.

What we are dealing with is a vision, a vision of the future and the member for Hants West talked about you can't base the electricity of the future solely on Muskrat Falls; well, we've been saying all along that it's 8 per cent to 10 per cent. What we are projecting is a multiplicity of sources of power generation, unlike the Pony Express people of the Liberal Party who are back so far in time - and the member for Pictou West, the Energy Minister the other day referred to the Progressive Conservatives - and that member doesn't get wound up too often like I do - but he referred to the Progressive Conservative Leader as a Luddite and I am willing to not only say that but I will repeat that and say that the Leader is a Luddite and what I'm hearing on the other side is that the little group of six followers are Luddites as well. Luddite is okay to say in the House, I think, because it was never rejected before.

We talk about the situation with experience. I couldn't believe the Leader of the Liberals talking about experience. The only experience he has is in the art of flip-flop: I agree with this project, I don't agree with it; it's good, it's bad; oh it's good, it's bad. We could table in this House - and I think it has already been done - a list of the flip-flops that have taken place on the other side of the House. You know, there is a total lack of experience here because on this side of the House we have a vision, we have a plan, and we have leadership.

Actually, outside of this province there are some Conservatives that do in fact show leadership. Premier Williams showed leadership in relation to Muskrat Falls; Premier Dunderdale showed leadership; and - I never thought that I would ever say it anywhere in this province or beyond - Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister of Canada, has actually shown leadership here because he is guaranteeing a loan. So there are some very smart Conservatives on some issues outside of this province.

We're looking at 35 years of stability, 35 years of stability. We are looking at an increase of 2 to 3 per cent between 2012 and 2020 - 2 to 3 per cent. Who was in power back in 2005 when it was 7.1 per cent of an increase over the previous year? Who was in power in 2006 when it was 9.9 per cent? Who was in power then? Tell us this now, who was in power in 2007 when it was 5.3 per cent and who was in power in 2009, before we came to power, and it was 10.6 per cent? Compare that with 2 per cent to 3 per cent, compare that. (Interruption) I know there's a lot of chirping on the other side, but that's all they're capable of, is some chirping.

We are looking at a mixed source of electrical production. We are looking at hydroelectricity, of course, but we're also looking at wind, and wind in my constituency has the (Interruption) my constituency, if you would listen for a moment, if you would bear with me for a moment. My constituency has the largest wind turbine operation in the Province of Nova Scotia at Glen Dhu and I'm very proud of that. We have 29 turbines generating clean electricity, clean electricity being supplied there.

We also have tidal taking place in this province. This summer, my wife Mary K. and I went up to the Parrsboro shore to see facilities being built in advance of the coming ashore someday of tidal energy. We see a growth taking place already in advance of that on the Parrsboro shore. We also have solar, natural gas, biofuels. We have to look at vision. There have been governments in this country that have shown vision on lots of issues.

We look at our railway system from coast to coast that united us. We look at the CBC that served us from coast to coast and up into the north. We look at the Trans-Canada Highway that has brought us together. We have example after example. The people of the Northwest Territories have just had a major project open and that's going to unite them over the McKenzie River with a bridge, for the first time. We have people that have vision - vision.

The upgrades that will take place (Interruption) If they would only listen for a moment. If the upgrades of transmissions that will be taking place in this province - we will see a capability of the sending of power back and forth. We can actually get that power from Hydro-Québec, we can get power from New Brunswick. With this in the future (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, to achieve the provincial 20-20 and the federal 20-30 environmental targets, Nova Scotia must move to more reliable sources of energy. We all know that. The lowest cost option to meet these targets is accessing hydroelectricity from the Lower Churchill project through the Maritime Link. I am proud of the leadership that has been shown by the Premier in relation to this and the experience he has on dealing with issues, unlike the other Leaders across the way who are so inexperienced.

We have the option that will create thousands of jobs and more stable power rates, as I said before, for 35 years of clean, local energy. The Maritime Link subsea power cable

project will connect Nova Scotia to Newfoundland and Labrador, crossing the Cabot Strait. We all know that. It will transmit hydroelectricity from the Muskrat Falls generating facility and interconnect with the link in Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the greater Lower Churchill project.

Well, let's look for a moment at the wisdom of Stephen Harper - as I said before, I never thought I would say this. The federal loan guarantee will enable the financing of the project by providing lower borrowing costs to Emera and Nalcor, which will ensure lower-cost electricity to Nova Scotia families. Over \$100 million in borrowing cost savings to Nova Scotia ratepayers is projected over the lifespan of the project.

Now, let's go back to coal for a minute. Coal has been the key driver beyond rising electricity costs because of the Pony Express people and the Luddites over there. We recognize that Nova Scotians need to understand more about the project's regulatory oversight and impact on power rates. Nova Scotia is transforming its energy mix to include more renewable energy, driven by the federal government's focus on reducing CO₂ emissions and pending federal regulations that will require utilities, including Nova Scotia Power, to gradually reduce CO₂ by 65 per cent by 2050.

Well, the Maritime Link will be one of our best legacies in this province of many legacies in the years to come. There's talk about the URB and its role. The URB has the full authority to look at the alternatives to the Maritime Link and determine if the project is the lowest-cost long-term alternative for Nova Scotia to meet the federal coal regulations and provincial environmental requirements.

We know what is taking place in this province, and we know that we have a vision. We contrast that to no vision. We contrast our plan to no plan. We contrast leadership to no leadership and to no leadership. We are on our way to see energy coming from multiple sources - our wind energy coming from Pubnico to Belle Cote. We have a vision that will transform the Province of Nova Scotia. I'm looking at all of those years of 2 per cent to 3 per cent, as opposed to a jump, perhaps, in the years to come - if they ever come to power - of 30 per cent to 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, the only experience the Leader of the Opposition has on power electricity is the power it takes to run a washer or a dryer. That's not my quote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see the member for Pictou East to end his comments with a personal attack on all the hard-working men and women in this province who are self-employed, the member for Pictou East taking an attack on all those people in this province in trades, all those people in this province, and I hope that that member will stand and apologize to every one of those whom he has insulted with that comment. (Interruption) Go ahead, go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly didn't intend to say that and it wasn't included in my remarks, and I do apologize. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I respect the member for standing and offering that.

You know a lot has been said about this Muskrat Falls project and, you know, there have been members on the opposite benches who have accused the Leader of the Opposition of flip-flopping on Muskrat Falls but, in fact if you go back, he has actually said the same thing as have I. He went to Newfoundland and Labrador to meet with the former Premier Danny Williams and talk about this and all along, both that member and myself have said similar things. We've said that this is a project which could have great potential for Nova Scotia but we should have the option of purchasing electricity. This should be a project that Emera and Nalcor - Newfoundland and Labrador can determine on their own how they do it, but if Emera wants to go and build that, that's great and then we can choose to buy power from that project if it's the best available.

You know, it's interesting, when I listened to the Premier's remarks, the Premier talked about being able to buy in a competitive market and that this would allow that, but that's not true because, of course, we will be required to purchase this energy and as much as the Premier and the previous member has stood up and suggested that there will be an independent review at the board, and in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, that is what we hope for, but let me quote the Premier's own words just last night.

Just last night - and they're talking about this in Newfoundland and Labrador today apparently. We just received a phone call that this is a subject of debate in the Legislature there where they're pointing out that Emera and the Premier here have said not to worry about the review because they'll make sure it happens. That's backed up by the Premier's comments to allnovascotia.com yesterday. In an article entitled "Maritime Link Sanction Might Precede URB Ruling. Premier . . .", and they mention his name, ". . . said the province will not necessarily wait for regulatory approval before it officially sanctions Nova Scotia's portion of the Muskrat Falls hydro development. 'Those things are not necessarily tied together' the premier said Monday evening." I will table that.

So the Premier is actually saying that, well, we're going to do the review but really it doesn't necessarily matter because in fact we're going to probably approve this anyway, even if necessary. You know, a number of members have said that we've become at the mercy of fossil fuels and, you know, they're right, but that's not unique to Nova Scotia. In fact, there are many places that are stuck with that. There are many places in North America but also elsewhere in the world that are faced, whether it's increasing oil prices, whether it's increasing coal prices, and that's a reality. Nobody denies that.

The federal government has said with or without the equivalency agreement, the coal plants in Nova Scotia have to close at a certain point - so they have to close. So that whole debate is almost a non-issue and the Premier wants to stand and say, well, those Parties over there brought us coal. The Premier before he gets too far down that road should probably go and check the Hansard record and read the comments of previous NDP members in this House fighting for the use of coal, fighting for the use of Nova Scotia coal in this province because, do you know what, there were members of all three Parties that fought for the coal industry in this province and let's be very clear that there are members of that Cabinet who were in the NDP in this Legislature fighting for the use of Nova Scotia coal in energy generation in this province. (Interruptions)

So the fact is, you know, Mr. Speaker, because we now realize the federal government will require, with or without that equivalency agreement, the coal plants to be closed, so this is about options.

The fact of the matter is the Premier stood - and you know it's funny, he says one thing now and he says something else in Question Period and here is a good example. Many times over the past few years I and others have asked the Premier about contracts with Hydro-Québec, for energy, and he stands and he says well we already bring Hydro-Québec power in. That's not true. It's true that we bring it in on the spot market. The very highest price that you can pay for energy from Hydro-Québec is on the spot market, so that is true. Nova Scotia does not have a long-term power purchase agreement like many states have signed or anywhere else. With or without Muskrat Falls, the signing of such an agreement would allow cost averaging on the prices.

The Premier has also stood and his latest talking point - when you talk to people out in the public they actually laugh that a Premier would even claim it - is that this is a Party that stands for deregulation. In fact, just last week the Energy Minister stood in this House and he said the Liberal's Ratepayer Protection Act shows that they stand for deregulation. He should read the bill. It was a bill that required audits of Nova Scotia Power, that required removing bonuses and so forth, and that's deregulation? No.

Mr. Speaker, we have never once advocated for the models of energy markets in Ontario and Alberta, in fact we have spoken against them many times. In fact, the Premier, who stood up and said that our comment of competition in a regulated market - I think he used the word gobbledygook - is exactly the same phrase that the international energy association, and I'm getting their name not exactly right, but associated with the United Nations, just realized a study in the past couple of weeks and used that very phrase and showed, where that has been introduced, power rates have decreased in pretty well every single jurisdiction where that has been done.

Unlike the claims of the government, it simply isn't backed up by the facts of what we've introduced or the facts of the research that is independently out there. Moreover, the previous member stood and noted the cost increases in energy under the previous Tory

Government, and he is right about those. What he forgot to mention though, is if you actually graph the increases on a year-to-year basis, the NDP Government, this government, bears the mantle and gets the prize for the highest power increases of any government in Nova Scotia history.

The member can talk all he wants about - he would be happy to accept 2 to 3 per cent a year, is what he said, and let's remember that's not the entire rate increase, that isn't the increases associated with all the other things that get piled on top. What I would like that member to do is to go knock on doors in the next election and go and say hello, I want to continue to be your MLA and I'm happy with 2 to 3 per cent increases every year in power. Even though we know that it will be more than that when you add the other things, I don't think there are going to be too many people that agree with him.

So we come back to the Muskrat Falls project. Two weeks ago Nova Scotia Power filed their capital plan, which includes some of the buried costs for Muskrat Falls. Makes you wonder why Nova Scotia Power is filing some of the capital costs when we're told it's going to be an Emera project. We don't know what will happen with cost overruns.

We know actually, interesting, the terms sheet that was realized just a couple of hours ago on the loan guarantee actually indicates some concern on the federal government's part. They cap the total project costs of the Link at \$1.3 billion, despite the fact that we now know the estimate is up to \$1.5 billion, so anything over \$1.3 billion they won't guarantee. They will also only guarantee 70 per cent of that \$1.3 billion, and the cost increases for the total project that have happened already have already pretty much wiped out the savings that ratepayers would have seen from the loan guarantee and that is knowing that also in the terms sheet that we have not yet even reached the design phase for the Maritime Link. I think that most people in this Legislature, most members, are experienced enough - and let me use that word - to realize that most large projects, most government projects, start to increase most once they hit the design phase. We've seen that so many times. So what happens?

We also know that the Innu and the Metis in Newfoundland and Labrador have not had their issues addressed yet. The Premier doesn't seem to think that's an issue. He says that's a problem for Newfoundland and Labrador to deal with. Well, I'm sorry, but I don't think that's a problem for just them to deal with. That's the problem with how we've treated First Nations people in this country for decades, and it's time for that to change.

There is no reason that this project cannot be built as a private project by Emera. You only need to read their shareholder PowerPoint presentation from the other week - that I was recently given a copy of - that just exudes about the profits they're going to get from participating in this project. They'll pick up money at Muskrat Falls; they'll pick up a bit of profit on Muskrat Falls; they'll pick up some profit in the Nova Scotia Power part; they'll pick up some more profit as it goes through their line in New Brunswick. Boy, they're making money hand over fist on every end on this.

The current Finance Minister stood up and wanted to blame the Tories for privatizing Nova Scotia Power. She wanted to blame the Liberals for then allowing Emera to create it, but she forgot to mention that the NDP was the first government to actually change regulations in such a way to allow Nova Scotia Power to earn more profit from ratepayers, which is why today they earn more profit despite delivering less energy. That, too, is something that Emera now trumpets as part of their shareholder presentation.

I think this is quite simple. From the very beginning we have said that there is the potential for this project to have merit, and it has potential to have merit in that Emera can build it, and if the price is there, then we buy from it; if it isn't, we buy from another source. There are other opportunities for us.

It creates what the Premier stood up and said - he said he wanted to create a competitive market, but instead, he doesn't. We also don't know what happens at the end of 35 years. Already in Newfoundland and Labrador they're talking about the fact that all of the energy from Muskrat Falls will likely be needed to power the nickel mines that are starting there, and that's one of the most important parts. Go read the debates in the Legislature if you want to find out more about that.

So what happens to Nova Scotia? We have no guarantee after that point. As the Premier answered in Oral Question Period the other day, we also have no backup plan and no plan to get power from additional sources at that point.

This is a project that could be one of the whole slate - they like to use the word "portfolio" over there a lot of times, so this could be one of those projects in a portfolio that if we choose to buy power from, we do. But instead, we've been told we must buy it - that we must buy at whatever price the Maritime Link comes in at.

Keep in mind that because that will be charged against ratepayers of Nova Scotia Power, as we reduce our energy consumption, the amount that each person will pay per kilowatt will actually go up, because once the Maritime Link is built, it's a fixed cost that then has to be paid for over that period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up by saying there are some very basic questions that this government is unwilling to answer and that they need to answer for Nova Scotians. They need to tell us what the cost is going to be. The Premier should be telling Nova Scotians what the cost will be before he stands up and says that this is a great project for Nova Scotia, because he doesn't know if it's a great project if he doesn't know what the price is. He has no way of knowing that.

The Premier needs to stand up and explain why it is - and he said this in Question Period, in previous sessions - why he hasn't picked up the phone and called Hydro-Québec, even if he still wants to go with that.

Mr. Speaker, there are many questions left. I'm sure my colleagues will have much more to say on this. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we heard the Premier today, in response to our call for this emergency debate, in his remarks he mentioned that they were trying to put together a diversified portfolio of energy inputs. This would be a great idea if they are affordable. It would be a great idea if they reduce carbon emissions, but this government's energy policy does neither.

Let's take a look. Where does the cost of Muskrat Falls fit into the cost mix of energy inputs? We know that it's going up in cost by another \$100 million to \$300 million by the time an application is made to the Utility and Review Board. This is the second time we've heard about a cost increase. This project is upwards now from \$6.2 billion to \$7.7 billion. Emera's CEO said on Friday that Muskrat Falls' electricity will contribute to power rate hikes of 2 to 3 per cent for the balance of the decade.

Mr. Speaker, 2 to 3 per cent sounds small, but it does have a cumulative effect. Also, let's think about how much Muskrat Falls is relative to all the other energy inputs that are responsible for the cost of the overall rates we pay. When we consider, as I recall, the Muskrat Falls project, our share of it is about 160 megawatts, on an annual-load basis. The overall load for the province now is about 2,100 megawatts. We're looking at something that comprises about 7.5 per cent of our energy inputs yet it's going to drive costs 2 to 3 per cent. Imagine if it were 100 per cent of our input. If it were, we'd be looking at energy rate increases per year of 26 to 36 per cent. That's significant.

Do Nova Scotians want to pay for sources of power that increase their costs each year by that amount? It's true that it's going to be a small portion at 7.5 per cent of our overall energy inputs, but why would we want that? Why would we want that if it's going to cost us that much, and if it's going to increase our costs every year that much, to pay for all the infrastructure to start that project and to transmit the energy across the water into our province?

Another thing the Premier mentioned was that natural gas was at - I believe he said it was around \$14 last week, roughly. I won't quote him because I can't remember the exact number he said. I guess what I would say to that is, what about long-term purchase contracts for natural gas? What about hedging strategies to hedge against fluctuations in natural gas prices? Those are all things that utilities use to make sure their consumers get a fair rate for the energy inputs they're purchasing to generate the power that we're paying for when we pay our power bills.

This was identified as an issue by Liberty Consulting when they audited Nova Scotia Power. They said Nova Scotia Power should be doing a better job to ensure that

they're getting the best natural gas prices for their consumers. This totally eliminates the point the Premier has made today because he's suggesting something that in his own words, as he would say to us, is simply not true. I wanted to stand here and refute that point that he made because, as he says, it's simply not true.

Let's look at the cost of Muskrat Falls. I've heard, historically - it's very difficult to get a number and we actually don't know and the government refuses to supply us with a figure or to even go out and get the Utility and Review Board to determine what it's going to cost, on a per kilowatt hour basis, but I have heard the figure of 16 cents per kilowatt hour. With these recent increases, we're probably looking at least at 18 to 20 cents per kilowatt hour.

Let's compare those numbers with natural gas. At its current price levels - I will table this - this was something I had in a previous emergency debate we had here. Natural gas price on October 30, 2012 was \$3.72 U.S. per MMBTU and that's down from the 2008 price where it was almost \$13. I will table that. It's important that we table numbers behind our statements. At the rate natural gas is trading at right now, we'd probably be looking at more like around 6 cents per kilowatt hour versus 18 to 20 cents for Muskrat Falls.

So, sure, let's diversify our energy mix. Let's look at other sources so that we're not held hostage to certain sources of energy but, Mr. Speaker, why would we want to look at a source of energy that is going to cost over three times the price of one of our current sources of energy? It doesn't make any sense, it makes no economic sense.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear from the members across that we are shackled to fossil fuel prices. If it is such a terrible thing, why doesn't the government come off coal immediately? We know that 58 per cent of our energy is generated by coal and if we came off it tomorrow, what would happen? The price of our energy would skyrocket. Why? Because coal is one of the cheapest - next to Wreck Cove Generating Station, coal is the cheapest source of energy in this province. If people out there don't believe what I'm saying, they need only look back to the Public Accounts Committee, when we had, I believe it was the Department of Energy, here a number of months back, and they said that.

The other thing I would like to bring up is - and you know what? Why don't I table some numbers on coal? We often hear the government saying the price of coal has gone up 70 per cent. I think they need to readjust their figures, Mr. Speaker, because we know that it's actually lower today than it was two years ago. I'm going to table that, Mr. Speaker.

What about \$200 oil? We used to hear people talking about \$200 oil. Oil is trading around \$85 to \$90 per barrel. No question, the price of fossil fuels has increased a lot in the last number of years, but there are reasons why it continues to fluctuate, and by that I mean it also goes back down. The data that I just tabled proves that and that has to do with market forces of supply and demand.

The other thing that we hear - and I'll quote the Premier on this - he always talks about long-term, stable, energy prices, but do you notice he never says more affordable energy prices? That's because he knows he can't say that. He would be wrong to say that, so he has become selective in what he says. That is a disturbance to Nova Scotians. I would say, we were talking about Muskrat Falls, why don't we look at Hydro-Quebec? Why don't we do a cost comparison, Mr. Speaker? I think we would find out that power purchased from Hydro-Quebec is cheaper than Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

MR. SPEAKER: You have approximately two minutes and 18 seconds.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, I don't have a lot of time but one of the statements that I had made was that the energy policy of this government actually does nothing to reduce carbon emissions. We've actually seen carbon emissions increase since this government has come to power. One of the reasons they are increasing is because if we've moved toward things like wind energy and because wind energy is intermittent, it needs to be supplanted with inefficient burning of fossil fuels to make up for a lack of energy when the wind is not blowing. I really don't care if the members opposite don't believe this, I happen to know it's a fact. I've done my research and this information is going to come forward more and more as time goes on but the point is, this government, if they are trying to reduce carbon emissions, they are failing, and anybody who is concerned about the environment should be aware of that.

I want to make one small point and that is if we look at who is really causing pollution in the world, we can look towards a country like China. I'm not bringing that up to be critical of them, but I'm stating the fact, if you look at their rate of increase, just the rate of increase, not the power they use but the rate of increase each year grows by 13.3 per cent. Just that rate of increase would swallow our entire carbon emissions in four days. Four days of activity in China, just their increase, swallows what we would produce in a whole year in this province.

If we really want to do something to help the environment, why don't we include some economics so that when we come up with ideas to reduce carbon emissions it also makes economic sense? Then we can take those ideas around the world to places like China, where it will make a real difference for our planet, and when that happens, Mr. Speaker, we will be showing leadership, we will be protecting our environment and we will also be respecting the fact that many Nova Scotians cannot afford the energy prices that this government is putting them under.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution. I have to say that I'm less comfortable bandying about in speculative figures

than some of the members opposite, but what I am able to say is that I am very, very pleased to hear that we are able to have such firm predictions as 2 per cent to 3 per cent increases - not because a 2 per cent or 3 per cent increase every year in residential rates is a good thing, but because it is a predictable thing. If there's nothing else that we have learned, risk costs.

In the world markets, whether it is in energy or in stocks, whether it is in seeking insurance - all kinds of activities - we spend a great deal of time and energy compensating for the unpredictable, trying to hedge against the unpredictable. The one thing that can be said for this project is that it is predictable.

Something else that can be said for it is that it is not intended to take up the entire capacity for supply of power to the Province of Nova Scotia. It can take up, or it will take up some 10 per cent of the potential use of Nova Scotia, and we can subscribe to power rates for up to an additional 20 per cent during the 35-year term. In case you haven't looked at the estimated 35-year term, that actually takes us up to the year 2052, assuming that production does begin in 2017, as is estimated. That's a long time out, and it's a long time ahead to be able to say that power rates are going to be increasing 2 per cent to 3 per cent and subsequently half of whatever the current inflation rate is at that time.

When you look back at the years between 1999 and 2009, which is the year after the world's peak oil production was estimated for many years to be reached, and in the 10 years preceding peak oil production, the average price increase of residential electricity in Nova Scotia was 3.6 per cent. That's well above what we are looking at now.

The other thing that interests me in this discussion is what enthusiasm there seems to be for remaining attached to particular sources of electricity that have existed in the past. We're talking about the possibility of buying from Quebec Hydro; we're talking about the possibility of continuing to subscribe almost exclusively to the fossil fuels which have supplied us - some from Cape Breton, others more recently from the central continent and from across the ocean, and others potentially from offshore drilling. These are geographical facts. If we are going to look at the attachment that people have for the continued supply of electricity, you need to be looking at what economic interests are also served by the routes from which this electricity is coming.

One of the things which we're also taking advantage of at this point is historically low borrowing rates. Something that hasn't been calculated into this, as far as I know, is the real unpredictability of the coming interest rates. I've always been interested in the fact that we looked at what we saw was one of the more spectacular economic crises in living memory arising at just about the same time as peak oil production. It's hard to believe that that is a complete coincidence.

Something which also I think that the Third Party - and I must commend the Third Party for its interest in the past, and it suggests a shared interest - is the energy which they

have poured into the extension of broadband connectivity to this entire province. This is a small province. It is not to a huge degree an export and manufacturing province, but it is one which is a lively user - one of the first adopters of the Internet - of extensive Internet connection, one of the early adopters in Canada, which in itself was one of the early adopters. It should be noted that that is almost inextricably tied with the consumption of electricity.

I will say that, just from a personal note, when I deal with people coming into my constituency - and I think we are all well aware that housing costs and shelter costs are significantly impacted in our climate by the need of climate control in the house, under the roof that one needs to keep over one's head, but another huge cost and a component in many people's lives is the cost of Internet service, of communication.

We have recently seen the - I won't say privatization - removal of what we used to call poverty TV, I won't call it that, anyway, the free channels that were available, that's not available anymore. The community access points - that access has been largely defunded by the federal government and these are things which also add costs to any household which hopes to remain in touch with the world of today.

We talk about educating ourselves, we cannot educate ourselves, we cannot educate our young people and we cannot, in fact, export the education of which I think we should be so very proud without really an abundant and reliable supply of electricity. There are ways in which we can ameliorate some uses of electricity. There are others over which we just do not have control, and I think that the responsible thing to do is to look at assigning risk as far as possible. We're talking about 10 per cent of this portfolio, we're also talking about very significant investments in the development of tidal energy, something which was actually pioneered in Nova Scotia in the 1950s. I'm proud to say another aspect of that, I often tell people that the world's first functioning tidal energy plant was in fact at Herring Cove, and that plant was discontinued when its California investors were told that in fact nuclear energy was the way of the future and they might as well give it up and not worry any further about capitalization.

So it's interesting to look at the tides of history and the tides of electricity and power. We have been looking at huge disturbances over the course of the 20th Century and the 21st Century surrounding some of the great oil producing regions of the world, and I'm afraid that there's no particular reason to expect that that uncertainty is going to quiet down any time soon. We know that the OACD, excuse me, not OACD, the oil producing nations are (Interruption) OPEC, yes, are using a global formula for balancing the fossil fuels pricing and that particular pricing, given global patterns, and you can expect that whoever needs a lot of electricity is going to be asked to pay for a lot of electricity.

So if we're being offered an opportunity to invest in stable prices, I really believe the responsible thing is for us to do that. There's also the fact that environmentally, with fossil fuels, we're not always just looking at the burning of fossil fuels, there's the

transportation of fossil fuels, there's the production of fossil fuels. We are approaching a brick wall, it may be a regulatory brick wall, but even at that, it is coming fast and it's coming at the federal level and entirely likely at other levels as well which say that greenhouse gas emissions do need to be capped and reduced.

I'm very proud that this province has taken a lead in putting hard caps and working aggressively towards meeting those so that there aren't those panicky last minute attempts to buy technology that costs an absolute fortune. This is not panicky, this is not last minute. This is long vision and this is something of which I am extremely proud. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased this evening to join the debate around Muskrat Falls and the kind of, I guess, impact that it will have for our province, for our region. I guess perhaps more than anything, we need to point out here is the hope that the URB and those who will present, I think, some very, very strong and striking arguments of reconsideration, that, in fact, their voice will be heard loud and clear.

Being a former Newfoundlander, you know, you would like to say, well, it will be good for Newfoundland and Labrador and perhaps it may very well be but the unknowns about this project still I think are very loud and looming as we look at Muskrat Falls and there's a lot because of the time and the era in which this project is coming about.

I, for one, as Newfoundland and Labrador gains new prosperity, would let them develop Muskrat Falls and put the link across to Nova Scotia, and then we can be a purchaser of power directly from Newfoundland and Labrador if it is at a competitive price. There are other competitive prices that are available to us, I believe, and I know New Brunswick and Quebec have been talked about.

I'd like to spend a little bit of time today talking about the alternatives to Muskrat Falls. Just last week, we had in the House the panel that will make up the rural economic development commission, and I do applaud that initiative. I think the people who are on that committee - their past shows that they listen to people and they want the very best for all of Nova Scotia, but they've invested heavily in good rural development.

I think of Ray Ivany and his days with the Nova Scotia Community College. He didn't just want a strong college or two or three campuses in Halifax. He wanted it throughout Nova Scotia. John Bragg is much the same. His business relates to many of the counties of Nova Scotia, and also, of course, the speaker opposite was speaking about his investment with broadband and high-speed Internet.

I would like for us to take a look at how we, as Nova Scotians, could solve our own problems of moving toward renewable energy and having control over it. One of the real worrisome points about this is that Emera won't even own the Maritime Link after 35

years. Will the electricity be available to us? These are certainly worrisome points about this deal.

You know, one of the countries that people said could never attain very much in renewable energy was Germany. Everybody said an industrial giant needs to have centralized power production in order to be able to keep Germany on that leader in Europe. In the year 2000 they passed a law - really, it was more about policy - but they allowed any German to produce electricity. Any German could put power into the grid in any way. All over Nova Scotia there are those kinds of opportunities.

Who would ever believe that Germany would increase - in 1999 they had 32 megawatts of solar electricity. In 2012 they have 30,000 megawatts of solar electricity. That's a 1,000-fold increase. What's even more remarkable is that they have a geography and a sun regime similar to Alaska. That's right. They've gone dramatically toward solar, and they gave the incentives to people as they produced solar for themselves and into the grid.

As I look at Nova Scotia - and we look at and we've established a fair amount of wind - I like small-scale biomass compared to the 60 megawatts that we have in Port Hawkesbury, the possibility of solar in our province, geothermal, small hydropower tidal. There's our solution. We still have a fair ways to go. We're still producing about 56 per cent of our power from the burning of coal and another percentage with gas. All those renewables that I have mentioned are available to us in Nova Scotia. If we were to start down the road now of letting Nova Scotians produce power and put into the grid, we would find, I think, very quickly, with the innovative nature of Nova Scotians, the enterprising and entrepreneurial spirit that we have in this province, I think we would find our own solution.

You know in Germany they said the four major producers that had the nuclear power plants and the thermal plants said no, it won't work. The best we could ever hope for would be 4 per cent of our electricity produced by renewables and by small producers. Every German having the possibility of producing electricity, that's ludicrous, we can get 4 per cent. Our place in the industrialized world will fall.

Well you know, on January 1, 2012, Germans were producing 20 per cent of their power through small, renewable efforts. Just six months later, this summer, they were at 25 per cent; by 2050 they will be at 80 per cent.

I think they have shown us an immense way forward. I think this is the kind of Nova Scotia solution that we need to be taking a look at, even though it is green energy, for the most part - not entirely green but for the most part - Muskrat Falls, I think there is an alternative to this. As I look at it, as I've heard from lawyer friends in Newfoundland and Labrador who have studied this project now, one in particular for 30 years, he has looked at this for a 30-year period. He has a number of misgivings about the project, whether it is the

amount of water that will come from the Upper Churchill because it is controlled by Quebec, the costs, some of the unknowns on the technological side, he has raised a lot of concerns around this project for many years.

I think there is reason to say, let's find an alternative, let's find other ways of generating our power here in Nova Scotia. What really happened in Germany, and this is why I really like this for Nova Scotia as we struggle in our rural areas, what the decentralized power allowed for many, many people to become the power producers and, in fact, they gained that income and that wealth from this kind of very wide production of power, as opposed to a centralized approach. So when we take a look at the needs in rural Nova Scotia, farmers in particular answered the call in Germany, and I think our farmers in Nova Scotia and many others would become the producers and that would be real power to the people, not as Muskrat Falls is sometimes advertised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to thank all the honourable members this evening for a very informative debate. The motion for adjournment was made earlier.

We now stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 4:49 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2542**

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the New Germany Saints girls soccer team started their season with a goal of winning the provincial title and saw success throughout the season, finishing first in the District, hosting and winning the regional title, and hosting the qualifying round before qualifying for the Division 3 Provincials; and

Whereas the New Germany Saints defeated École du Carrefour 3-1 on November 3 at Dalbrae Academy in Cape Breton to win the Division 3 Provincial Championship, even being treated to a rainbow during the medal ceremony; and

Whereas coach Darren Penney, co-coach Christine DeLong, and players Rachel Penney, Justine Russell, Charmaine Moore-Turner, Amber Wentzell, Courtney Kelly, Jillian Logan, Kaitlyn Rhodenizer, Emma Sue Wagner, Megan Zinck, Robin Penney, Abby Cook, Taylor Bruhm, Maria Jose, BreAnne Snyder, Emma Bruhm, Hailey Langille and Courtney Lohnes made up the winning team;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulates the New Germany Saints girls soccer team for setting and meeting their goal of winning the Division 3 Provincial Championship title.

RESOLUTION NO. 2543

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas Events Liverpool was created with the goal of growing the economy and attracting visitors to Queens County, advocating positive change in the area; and

Whereas over the past years, Events Liverpool has taken on the goal of becoming the events capital of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Events Liverpool has successfully brought to Queens County a World Junior A exhibition hockey game, assisted in hosting Nova Scotia Music Week and has

secured the Nova Scotia Under 15 Curling Provincials in March and the Nova Scotia Music Festival in June;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognizes and congratulates Events Liverpool for being an advocate of positive change, attracting visitors to Queens County, and contributing to growing and developing the economy of the area.

RESOLUTION NO. 2544

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas the Pictou County Wellness Centre has recently opened its doors to the public, offering a world-class facility capable of hosting a suite of activities to the people of northern Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this Centre offers two NHL-sized ice surfaces, an aquatic centre, a gymnasium, the Pictou County YMCA's fitness centre, child minding and licensed child care services and public meeting areas servicing up to 300 people, as well as all season events for up to 3,000 people; and

Whereas the Centre was built through the support of federal, provincial and municipal government and many dedicated and generous volunteers and donors who proudly completed it on schedule and on budget;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize this milestone achievement by honouring the first goal in the first hockey game played in the Centre, scored by Cassie Clarke of the Pictou County Female Atom Subway Selects on Monday November 19th, 2012.

RESOLUTION NO. 2545

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas the St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church, Mulgrave, celebrated their 50th Anniversary on August 10, 2012; and

Whereas St. Lawrence Parish has maintained itself in the Town of Mulgrave as an important spiritual, educational, and social community gathering place for the past 50 years; and

Whereas the congregation and community highlighted this historic milestone with a community celebration on November 17, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church, the ministers, and entire congregation on their 50th Anniversary, with the very best wishes for every future success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2546

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the medal is not only a way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service, but also to honour contributions and achievements made by Canadians; and

Whereas a medal recipient must be a Canadian citizen and have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region, or community within Canada, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate William Cameron from Tatamagouche, Colchester North, a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, for his many contributions to the Royal Canadian Legion.

RESOLUTION NO. 2547

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the medal is not only a way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service, but also to honour contributions and achievements made by Canadians; and

Whereas a medal recipient must be a Canadian citizen and have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region, or community within Canada, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hugh Matheson, a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, for his municipal leadership.

RESOLUTION NO. 2548

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the medal is not only a way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service, but also to honour contributions and achievements made by Canadians; and

Whereas a medal recipient must be a Canadian citizen and have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region, or community within Canada, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Pippa Moss from Tatamagouche, Colchester North, a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, for her many contributions to provincial, national, and international work in her field.

RESOLUTION NO. 2549

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the medal is not only a way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service, but also to honour contributions and achievements made by Canadians; and

Whereas a medal recipient must be a Canadian citizen and have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region, or community within Canada, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Noah Tremblay from Bass River, Colchester North, a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, for his Forgotten Heroes project at the Veterans Memorial Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2550

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada; and

Whereas the medal is not only a way for Canada to honour Her Majesty for her service, but also to honour contributions and achievements made by Canadians; and

Whereas a medal recipient must be a Canadian citizen and have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region, or community within Canada, or an achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Patrick Ryan from Debert, Colchester North, a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

RESOLUTION NO. 2551

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas William Joseph Brophy has 25 years of service with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Ladder Captain, Hose Captain, Medical First Responder, and Chair of Ways and Means; and

Whereas William Joseph Brophy will be recognized with both the Fire Exemplary Service Medal and Fire Services Long Service Medal from the Province of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate William Joseph Brophy for his continued dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2552

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Walter Crant has been serving for 35 years with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Pumper Captain and Fire Chief; and

Whereas Walter Crant will be recognized with a service pin for 35 years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Walter Crant for his dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2553

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Michael Breen has 30 years of dedicated service with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the position of Fire Chief for the past 10 years; and

Whereas Michael Breen will be recognized with a service pin for 30 years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael Breen for his dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2554

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long-service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Seward Benoit has 20 years of service with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the position of Fire Chief for seven years and presently holds the position of Deputy Fire Chief; and

Whereas Seward Benoit will be recognized with the Fire Exemplary Service Medal for his years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Seward Benoit for his dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2555

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Lorne MacDonald has 35 years of service with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Secretary/Treasurer and Deputy Fire Chief; and

Whereas Lorne MacDonald will be recognized with a service pin for 35 years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lorne MacDonald for his continuous dedication and volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2556

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas James Spencer has been serving for 20 years of service with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Fire Police Chief and Medical First Responder; and

Whereas James Spencer will be recognized with the Fire Exemplary Service Medal for his years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate James Spencer for his dedicated years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2557

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012 the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Basil Benoit has been serving for 20 years with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Chairman of Ways and Means, Training Officer, and Medical First Responder; and

Whereas Basil Benoit will be recognized with the Fire Exemplary Service Medal for his years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Basil Benoit for his dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.

RESOLUTION NO. 2558

By: Mr. Jim Boudreau (Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)

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

Whereas on December 8th, 2012, the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department will present long service medals and pins to members of the department; and

Whereas Kelly MacDonald has been serving for 15 years with the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and held the positions of Ladder Captain, Chairman of Ways and Means, and Medical First Responder; and

Whereas Kelly MacDonald will be recognized with a service pin for his 15 years of service;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kelly MacDonald for his dedication and years of volunteer service to the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Mulgrave.