



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordie Gosse

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

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

Fifth Session

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
Health & Wellness - Inverness Cons. Mem. Hosp.:	
Emergency Surgery - Restore, Mr. A. MacMaster	1782
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:	
Status of Women: Sexual Assault Awareness Mo. (05/13)	
- Recognize, Hon. M. More	1782
Nat. Res.: Large Intact Forests - Conservation,	
Hon. C. Parker.....	1786
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1090, Mills Team: Excellence in Pub. Serv. Award (2013)	
- Congrats., Hon. M. More.....	1790
Vote - Affirmative.....	1790
Res. 1091, Gaelic Awareness Mo. (05/13) - Gaels: Contribution	
- Recognize, Hon. M. Smith	1790
Vote - Affirmative.....	1791

Res. 1092, Whitman, Dr. Shelly/Staff/Dallaire Child Soldiers Init.:	
Leadership - Acknowledge, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse	1792
Vote - Affirmative.....	1792
Res. 1093, Speech & Hearing Mo. (05/13) - Acknowledge,	
Hon. D. Wilson	1793
Vote - Affirmative.....	1793
Res. 1094, Neptune Theatre - Anniv. (50 th),	
Hon. L. Preyra.....	1794
Vote - Affirmative.....	1794
Res. 1095, Motorcycle Safety Awareness Mo. (05/13)	
- Acknowledge, Hon. M. Smith.....	1794
Vote - Affirmative.....	1795
Res. 1096, Caregivers Mo. (05/13) - Celebrate,	
Hon. D. Wilson	1795
Vote - Affirmative.....	1796
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 70, Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals Act,	
Hon. D. Wilson	1796
No. 71, House of Assembly Act,	
The Premier.....	1796
No. 72, House of Assembly Act,	
Hon. F. Corbett	1797
No. 73, House of Assembly Act,	
Mr. J. Boudreau.....	1797
No. 74, House of Assembly Act,	
Ms. L. Zann.....	1797
No. 75, House of Assembly Act,	
Mr. M. Whynott	1797
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1097, Gaelic Awareness Mo. (05/13) - Acknowledge,	
Hon. S. McNeil	1797
Vote - Affirmative.....	1798
Res. 1098, Gaelic Awareness Mo. - Gaels : Spirit - Recognize,	
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1798
Vote - Affirmative.....	1798
Res. 1099, Forbes, Devin : Natl. Wheelchair Curling Championships	
- Congrats., Hon. C. Parker.....	1799
Vote - Affirmative.....	1800
Res. 1100, MS Awareness Mo. (05/13) - Acknowledge,	
Mr. A. MacLeod	1800
Vote - Affirmative.....	1800
Res. 1101, Hochman, Philip: Retirement - Congrats.,	
Mr. J. Boudreau.....	1800
Vote - Affirmative.....	1801

Res. 1102, Sexual Violence - Long-Term Action: NDP Gov't.	
- Take, Ms. K. Regan	1801
Vote - Affirmative.....	1804
Res. 1103, Inverness Oran: "Jeopardy!" Prog. - Clue,	
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1802
Vote - Affirmative.....	1803
Res. 1104, Zann, Lenore - Truro Fire Chief Blois Currie/Truro Fire	
Serv.: Work - Thank, Ms. L. Zann.....	1803
Vote - Affirmative.....	1803
Res. 1105, Doctors Day (05/01/13) - Acknowledge,	
Hon. S. McNeil	1804
Vote - Affirmative.....	1805
Res. 1106, Cousineau, Capt. Medric (Ret.): Serv./Bravery - Thank,	
Ms. B. Kent	1805
Vote - Affirmative.....	1806
Res. 1107, Mulcair, Thomas/NDP - Access to Info. Act.:	
Politicization - Condemn, Ms. K. Regan	1806
Res. 1108, Shannon, Joe - Cdn. Bus. Hall of Fame: Induction	
- Congrats., Mr. G. MacLellan.....	1807
Vote - Affirmative.....	1807
Res. 1109, Pickart, Ralf/Nova Scotia Webcams: Innovation	
- Congrats., Ms. M. Raymond.....	1807
Vote - Affirmative.....	1808
Res. 1110, Intl. Workers' Day (05/01/13) - Workers: Contributions	
- Recognize, Mr. G. MacLellan	1808
Vote - Affirmative.....	1809
Res. 1111, Elgie, Dr. Robert: Death of - Tribute,	
Mr. H. Epstein.....	1809
Vote - Affirmative.....	1809
Res. 1112, Amherst Reg. HS - Senior Concert Band:	
Boston Festivals of Music - Congrats., Mr. B. Skabar	1810
Vote - Affirmative.....	1810
Res. 1113, Killen, Heather/ <i>The Annapolis County Spectator</i> :	
Series - Congrats., Mr. E. Orrell	1810
Vote - Affirmative.....	1811
Res. 1114, Hfx.-Lun. Trail Network: Importance - Recognize,	
Ms. P. Birdsall.....	1811
Vote - Affirmative.....	1812
Res. 1115, Upper Musquodoboit Cons. Sch. - Anniv. (50 th),	
Mr. G. Burrill	1812
Vote - Affirmative.....	1813
Res. 1116, McManaman, Doug "The Balance King": N.S.	
Ambassador - Thank, Mr. B. Skabar	1813
Vote - Affirmative.....	1813

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:

No. 216, Prem. - Educ. Ads: Spending - Justification, Hon. S. McNeil	1814
No. 217, Prem.: Job Losses - Explain, Hon. J. Baillie	1815
No. 218, Prem. - Health Care Administration: Execs. - Details, Hon. S. McNeil	1817
No. 219, Prem.: Health Care System - Administrative Structure, Mr. L. Glavine.....	1819
No. 220, Prem. - Muskrat Falls: URB - Timeline, Hon. J. Baillie	1821
No. 221, Health & Wellness - Trenton Power Sta.: Fly Ash - Upgrade, Mr. A. Younger.....	1823
No. 222, Energy - Renewable Energy: Small Companies - Opportunities Allow, Mr. C. Porter.....	1825
No. 223, ERDT - Corporate Handouts: Economic Growth - Results, Mr. G. MacLellan	1826
No. 224, Lbr. & Advanced Educ. - Apprenticeship Review Rept.: Release - Time Frame, Mr. K. Bain.....	1828
No. 225, EECD: Early Intervention Progs. - Funding, Hon. K. Casey.....	1830
No. 226, EECD - Early Learning Init.: McCain Fdn. Funding - Confirm, Hon. K. Casey	1831
No. 227, WCB - Dorsey Rept.: Recommendations - Implementation, Hon. K. Colwell	1832
No. 228, SNSMR - HARP: Usage Threshold - Reasons, Ms. D. Whalen	1833
No. 229, Justice - MacIntosh Case: Inquiry - Jurisdiction, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1835
No. 230, Energy - URB: Evidence - Min. Misrepresentation, Mr. A. Younger.....	1836
No. 231, ERDT - Personal Income Tax: Surge - Expectations, Mr. G. MacLellan	1838
No. 232, TIR - Subdivision Paving: Mun. Leaders - Meet, Hon. Karen Casey	1840
No. 233, ERDT: Trades Positions - Over-Qualification, Mr. K. Bain	1841
No. 234, Dep. Prem. - CBRM Capital Plan: Support - Confirm, Mr. G. MacLellan	1842

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 64, Maritime Link Act

Hon. J. Baillie	1843
Mr. M. Whynott	1845
Mr. A. Younger.....	1847
Mr. A. MacLeod	1850

No. 4, Balanced Budget Act

Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1852
Hon. Maureen MacDonald.....	1855
Ms. D. Whalen	1856
Hon. J. Baillie	1859

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

Law Amendments Committee,

Hon. R. Landry	1862
----------------------	------

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):

Health & Wellness - Health Care: NDP Gov't. - Priority,

Mr. G. Ramey	1863
Mr. L. Glavine.....	1866
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1868

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., May 2nd at 12:00 noon1871

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 1117, Bilodeau, Danielle - felicitations et souhaite succès

Pour les années à venir, Hon. W. Gaudet	1872
---	------

Res. 1118, Mahone Bay Ctr.: Thrive! Funding - Congrats.,

Ms. P. Birdsall.....	1872
----------------------	------

Res. 1119, Barnes, Marie: Queens Co. Ind. Senior Citizens

- Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad.....	1873
---------------------------------	------

Res. 1120, Doctors Day (05/01/13) - Recognize,

Hon. J. Baillie	1873
-----------------------	------

Res. 1121, Dickinson, David - N.S. Maple Industry Hall of Fame:

Induction - Congrats., Hon. J. Baillie	1874
--	------

Res. 1122, Blomidon Nurseries: Achievements - Recognize,

Hon. R. Jennex	1874
----------------------	------

Res. 1123, Pothier, Carol & Elie - Anniv. (55th),

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1875
--------------------------	------

Res. 1124, Dunham, Brady: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee

Medal - Congrats., Hon. J. Baillie	1875
--	------

Res. 1125, Dora Fuller: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee

Medal - Congrats., Hon. J. Baillie	1876
--	------

Res. 1126, LeBlanc, Nikki & Jules: Daughter - Birth Congrats.,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1876
--------------------------	------

Res. 1127, Muise, Amanda & Joseph: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1877
Res. 1128, Surette, Candace & Jacques: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1877
Res. 1129, Doucette, Chrissy & Rejean: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1878
Res. 1130, d'Entremont, Cecile - Birthday (100 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1878
Res. 1131, Cunningham, Ward - Birthday (85 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1879
Res. 1132, Swaine, Phyllis - Birthday (90 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1879
Res. 1133, Atkinson, Owen - Birthday (90 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1880
Res. 1134, Manthorne, Irene - Birthday (80 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1880
Res. 1135, d'Entremont, Floretta - Birthday (80 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1881
Res. 1136, d'Entremont, Blaise - Birthday (85 th), Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1881
Res. 1137, Poulton, Alex: Commun. Serv. - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1882
Res. 1138, Pothier, Amy: Commun. Vol. - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1882
Res. 1139, Rudback, Kay & Dick: Vol. Commitments - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan.....	1883
Res. 1140, Brouwer, Rachel: Vol. Efforts - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1883
Res. 1141, Hooper, Barb - Bedford Celebrations: Contributions - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1884
Res. 1142, Brown, Chris: Bedford Scouting - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1884
Res. 1143, Corkum, Marie: Vol. Achievements - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1885
Res. 1144, Collier, Marina: Vol. Serv. - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1886
Res. 1145, Wilson, Paula: Vol. Serv. - Congrats., Ms. K. Regan	1886
Res. 1146, Hammonds Plains Cons. Sch.: Hasey Gr. 5 Class - Crosswalk Safety Research, Mr. M. Whynott	1887



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fifth Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordie Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

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

Therefore be it resolved that unlike the previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments, the NDP Government's plan for health care is putting patients first while reducing administration costs.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Lunenburg West.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

We the undersigned, call upon . . . the Nova Scotia provincial government to restore emergency surgery at the Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital (ICMH).

This petition contains 156, plus 61, so 250 (Interruptions) Oh, there are too many numbers going around here, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, I beg leave to table this petition, and I have affixed my own signature to it as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

HON. MARILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It is a time to recognize victims and their families. It is a time to express our gratitude to the people and organizations that do the caring and difficult work to face these painful experiences every day. Sexual violence is an enduring social issue and it is not unique to Nova Scotia. These are issues that are challenging governments, community leaders, organizational leaders, and parents around the world.

Recent events have made it clear the status quo is not an option. We can and must do more. We must do things differently in our province, but making a difference will take all of us working together. We all have a role to play as parents, grandparents, legislators, friends, and community members. Let's take a hard look at the programs, supports, and policies we have in place now and figure out how to improve them. If we work together, anything is possible.

We know sexual violence in all its forms is unacceptable. We have an opportunity to effect real and substantive change in our province. Over the past weeks I've been

speaking with many community-based organizations that provide direct services and supports to victims of sexual assault. They are part of our front-line service delivery. Recent events in our province have placed additional demand on these organizations to varying degrees. The province values their work. We are responding to requests for help from these organizations so that they can deal with the increase in inquiries, program requests, and service demand.

Today's one-time emergency funding will help these organizations to continue to provide invaluable resources to those who need help. Organizations can request one-time emergency funding based on demonstrating an increased demand for services. The deadline is May 15th. For more information on the emergency fund, organizations can call the Status of Women office.

I also had the opportunity last week to visit the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The centre serves about half the province's population, and organizations from across the province reach out to Avalon when they have reached their capacity or need certain expertise. For these reasons, beyond the emergency fund, Avalon will receive \$100,000 in one-time funding to help address the recent increase in demand for their services.

We recognize there is a gap in services for victims of sexual assault in this province, particularly outside of metro; some areas have little or no service. This emergency funding is just a first step to address this gap and it will not be our last. It is time to turn our attention to longer term planning and solutions. We are focused on better coordination of current services, identifying gaps, making legislative changes, reviewing what's working and what's not.

The status quo is not an option. To bring about real, meaningful, and long-lasting change, we need a culture change in this province. Engaging in the conversation is a shared responsibility. As we launch the beginning of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we acknowledge that substantive change will require all of us working together, more co-operatively within sectors, across all levels of government, across communities and regions.

Working in collaboration with the provincial organizing committee, we will mark this important month with an event in this House on Friday, May 3rd, and I invite and encourage all members to attend. For too long, issues of sexual violence have been swept under the rug or dealt with tentatively by society. We can and must do more. The impact and prevalence of sexual violence is undeniable. Together we need to consider how to address it and what we, individually and collectively, can do to prevent it. Now is the time to engage in the conversation and take concerted action.

All citizens, families, organizations, schools, and workplaces must focus on creating safe places where people treat each other respectfully; change starts with us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey a sincere thank you to the community-based organizations and caring professionals across this province that have tirelessly and passionately worked to address the issue. Your strength, courage, and commitment to addressing sexual violence is to be commended. The collective energy we have as members in this House, as community groups, and as citizens can be harnessed to make a real difference in addressing sexual violence in Nova Scotia. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank victims of sexual assault and their families for coming forward recently to share their experiences and alerting us to this crisis. As we know, there are many victims who cannot speak out.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committed organizations and individuals across the province that work to end sexualized violence with little recognition, and even less funding. I would also like to thank the minister's office for sending her statement to us in advance.

The Liberal caucus is pleased to hear that organizations, including the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, will be able to access emergency funding to provide sexual assault services. We have repeatedly called on this government to increase funding to organizations to ensure they can meet the need in their communities.

This announcement is coming as the result of a tragedy, but let's be clear - sexual assault is not a new phenomenon in this province. The minister said sexual violence is an enduring social issue and is not unique to Nova Scotia. This is true; however, Nova Scotia has the highest rates of sexual assault in Canada, and we also have the lowest rates of conviction in the country. We need to do a better job of teaching people about consent and healthy relationships. This was made evident back in 2008 when Avalon Sexual Assault Centre submitted their needs assessment to government. The previous Progressive Conservative Government ignored it; the current NDP Government is acting now only after public pressure.

Mr. Speaker, recently this government has spent \$1.6 million on commercials. The Liberal caucus has been calling on government to advertise to people what services are available and what they can do if they are a victim of sexual assault. We are calling on this government to take some of their commercial money and spend it on real public awareness, instead of feel-good government self-promotion. The "Don't be that guy" promotion, initiated by the Halifax Regional Police Force, is a good example.

Public awareness is only part of the puzzle, however. We need to ensure that people can access services from organizations that have sustainable funding. Let's be clear - this is emergency funding only and that is not sustainable. Any investment in local services for sexual assault services is welcome, but the minister knows well that organizations need

sustainable funding, and that's why we introduced a bill calling on government to provide multi-year funding to organizations.

Sixteen months ago we asked for this government's sexual assault strategy - this minister said it was being worked on aggressively. Two weeks ago we asked again - still no strategy. I had hoped that we would see a strategy today, the first day of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. I know the minister is sincere in her desire to combat sexual violence and to protect women and girls, and I commend her for her efforts. We are happy to see some money made available to these organizations - it has taken too long and there is much more to be done. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I too thank the minister for her statement today and also for the action that she is taking in providing the \$100,000 of emergency funding.

I want to take this brief opportunity to remind all young Nova Scotians, in particular young girls and teenage girls, that when they are victimized, either by bullying or cyberbullying or by sexual assault, that we all want it to be true that there are always options for them. There is always some place to turn; there is always someone to talk to; there is always a program or service that you can turn to to get the help you need when you are a victim of sexual assault, of inappropriate activity in bullying and cyberbullying, because we all know what happens when someone reaches that terrible moment when they feel there's nowhere else to turn.

Mr. Speaker, let us all remind our fellow young Nova Scotians that there is always an option; there is always a place to turn. And let's work to make that true, both through the services of the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre and similar centres and for all Nova Scotians, no matter where they live in our province because, Mr. Speaker, I know that the \$100,000 emergency funding today is the result of a surge in requests for help from the Avalon Centre and from others over the last little while. As awareness of sexual assault and the terrible victimization that occurs, the lack of options that sometimes victims feel, because of the increased awareness of those things there is now increased attention to where one should turn and increased need for those services and the \$100,000 will be greatly welcomed, I know, by the Avalon Centre and others that provide similar services.

Let me also say a thank you to them, many of the volunteers, many of them working on a shoestring budget, for all the work they do to plug those holes in our social fabric, to do all they can to make sure that victims of sexual assault, that young girls, that young Nova Scotians do have a place to turn, do know that there are options available to them, do know that there should never be and will never be a point where they give up hope, that they can get the help that they need.

So this is an emergency funding, Mr. Speaker, but let's also work towards a day where Avalon Sexual Assault Centre and others have the permanent long-term funding that they need to provide that service. Let's work today to make sure there is a long-term, permanent, sustainable plan to provide help and assistance to victims of sexual assaults, so that emergency funding does not become an ongoing part of the scene. For example, just last year the Avalon Centre had to cut from their budget a legal support advocate because they didn't have the funding, if there is ever an example of a false savings that would be it.

Here we are today with emergency funding when ultimately what's needed is appropriate funding at all times to make sure that that great wish we all have that people know that the services are there when they need them will be true all the time. Mr. Speaker, this happens to be this year we have Sexual Assault Awareness Month and their campaign this year focuses on healthy sexuality and child sexual abuse prevention as a reminder that instead of providing one-time funding from time to time that we should make investments of a permanent nature to protect our daughters, our nieces, our granddaughters, and all girls and all young Nova Scotians. We focus on girls because two-thirds of sexual assault victims are girls between the ages of 13 and 25. That is a startling fact that requires a government that addresses it beyond just on an emergency basis.

I will say, as we've all known, over the past month Nova Scotia has been the centre of attention for the whole country because of some of the tragedies that have occurred. Now we have an opportunity to get this right, to fix and plug those holes in the system of services, programs, and counselling that is available, not just on an emergency basis but on a permanent basis so that when we rise in this House, when we remind our young Nova Scotians that they always have options, that they always have a place to turn, that they can always get the help that they need, that that is in fact true for all time, Mr. Speaker, not just for sometimes, so let's use this occasion to make that true once and for all. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the members' attention to the west gallery where we are being visited today by some members of the 1st Bedford Scout Troop with their leaders Al Havill and Brent Newsome. I would like the Scout Troop to rise and please receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I too want to welcome the Boy Scouts here. Being a former Boy Scout and a leader at one time, it's always great to have them here with us in the Legislature.

Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Global Forest Watch Canada released a bulletin looking at Nova Scotia's proposed new protected areas. This organization is part of a network of independent organizations that monitor and map logging, mining, road building and other development within major forested regions of our world.

The bulletin focuses on our government's efforts to conserve an additional 124,000 hectares of large intact forests, raising the overall level of protection to about 46 per cent of all remaining large intact forests in our province. In the bulletin Peter Lee, executive director of Global Forest Watch Canada, said, "This would be a significant contribution to protecting large intact forests. . . With these new protected areas, about half of all remaining large intact forests in Nova Scotia will soon be protected if the government of Nova Scotia proceeds."

Mr. Speaker, if all of the proposed protected areas being considered are implemented, over 13 per cent of our province will be protected, placing Nova Scotia second in Canada only to British Columbia for the total per cent of protection.

Mr. Speaker, if members recall that Nova Scotia had the second-lowest amount of Crown land in the country, then they would truly appreciate the significance of what we are achieving in our proposed protection plan. In today's Halifax ChronicleHerald, Chris Miller, with the Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, said his organization is ". . . really pleased to see this analysis come out and affirm the government is headed in the right direction." He said the public response to the proposed site has been encouraging and it is hoped the government can move quickly to keep the tracts safe.

Mr. Speaker, our government will ensure that these intact forests, and many other important areas, are legally protected. Just two weeks ago my colleague, the Minister of Environment, delivered a statement in this House to update members about the recent work our staff have been doing as they toured the province, consulting with communities and answering questions, in a series of open house meetings. Hundreds of Nova Scotians attended these sessions and today, May 1st, is the final day for feedback and suggestions on the proposed Parks and Protected Areas Plan. The final plan will, of course, be shaped by the important input that has been received from the public.

Mr. Speaker, our government listened to the concerns of Nova Scotians. We are changing forestry in this province with new rules around clear-cutting and whole-tree harvesting, we've repealed the Stora Act, and we're working with the forest industry to make it, and all our forest land, sustainable. Thank you for listening.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for the copy of his statement earlier today. I think many Nova Scotians would be happy that the

protected areas that were originally envisioned through all-Party support of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act and later expanded, again with all-Party support, is working towards becoming a reality.

Of course I'm not surprised the minister would offer a ministerial statement today, given the bulletin by Global Forest Watch Canada and I do think it's actually a good thing that we're getting large areas of contiguous forests. I probably shouldn't be surprised, though, that the minister did not do a statement last week when the Mining Association of Nova Scotia released a statement pointing out that on February 28th, when the minister made the announcement on the new protected areas, he also committed that all the impacted landowners would be contacted by his department or the Department of Environment, in advance of the public consultations. Most of those have not yet been contacted and, as the minister noted, those consultations wrap up today, which means they haven't been able to participate. I will table a letter that notes that.

Mr. Speaker, I am left to wonder why the changes, which allowed the expanded protected areas, and received all-Party support - why the minister would then not follow through on his obligations and commitments to contact the potentially impacted landowners and right holders so that they could have buy-in from them as well. It's unfortunate that the minister has missed that step.

Here we are, two months after the announcement of the protected lands, and many of the people have yet to be contacted. So will the minister, and maybe the Environment Minister, get up and congratulate himself on a similar ministerial statement when and if these associations or landowners, as suggested in the letter I just tabled, result in some of these lands becoming mired in legal troubles? We don't know because the minister hasn't contacted those.

Mr. Speaker, this is no different than the issue of clear-cutting, where the government created a definition where it considered very little actually ended up being clear-cut. It is no different than the delays in the natural resources study being completed.

Mr. Speaker, it is good news that they're moving ahead with further protected areas, and that's why we supported that. In fact, that's why, in the last government and this government, the move toward protected areas received all-Party support. My hope is that in the future, the minister will be willing to also recognize those organizations who have questions that they feel are not being answered, because I think this is something where it's important to have buy-in from everybody.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me observe that yesterday we had a statement on protected areas by the Minister of Community Services, and today we have a statement from the Minister of Natural Resources on the same topic. I say to the Minister of Environment, whose portfolio the government says protected areas fall under - hopefully one day they'll let him speak too. Thank you very much.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for providing us with an advance copy of his statement today as well.

We all want balance between industry and preserving our natural, pristine Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is home to some of the most beautiful forests and scenery in the world, and that is something that Nova Scotians want to protect. Our landscape is part of our culture, and must be protected for future generations. When a Progressive Conservative Government brought in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, we did it because we have a firm belief that we must always keep our future generations in mind with every decision that we make. We must make sure that our environment is protected as we find new ways to harmonize economic prosperity with environmental sustainability. Forest preservation means working to protect the forests and ensure sustainable forestry practices, and working with the harvesters and industry to create a balance that works for Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, the government's claim about changing forestry in our province is thinly veiled. They let deadline after deadline after deadline pass while woodlot owners were kept in the dark on a clear-cutting definition. Not only that, but they finally revealed it nearly two years after the fact. Harvesters need to have access to forests. They yield good economic value for their business and the economy of the province, and we must ensure they are aware of the risk of overharvesting. By protecting our lands and forests, we can do part of this, but the government needs to work better with those in the industry to ensure that both industry and environment have a future in our province. There are few examples beyond land and forest protection where we see this government take an interest in protecting future generations.

We believe that this must apply to all the decisions made by this government. We do not want to leave our children with our debt. We do not want to see them have fewer services because we were not financially responsible ourselves. This government has added more than \$1 billion to the debt, and cut front-line services in health and education. Future generations care about these things, and in this caucus we care about them too. We are pleased to see this government's continued interest in land and forest protection, but I would be remiss if I didn't remind the government how important it is to consider future generations in all decisions that this government makes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

RESOLUTION NO. 1090

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

Whereas the Excellence in Public Service Award is the most prestigious award a Government of Nova Scotia employee or team can receive; and

Whereas the Mills team was selected for its work developing and executing a plan to protect jobs, sustain the forest industry, and set the groundwork to transform the sector; and

Whereas the exemplary public servants who make up the Mills team broke new ground for government by pioneering a new approach to respond to and support communities in need;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Mills team for being recognized with the 2013 Excellence in Public Service Award for their innovative approach to protecting jobs, communities, and the province's forestry industry, and thank all public servants for making life better for Nova Scotia families.

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 Gaelic Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1091

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

Whereas today, May 1, 2013, for the first time, the province raised the flag with the symbol of the Gaels at Province House to mark the beginning of Gaelic Awareness Month and to recognize the work and effort that the Gaelic community has committed to advancing the Gaelic language and culture; and

Whereas in the face of adversity, Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and culture have persisted and contributed to the province's diversity and way of life; and

Whereas the Gaelic story in our province is continuing to unfold, with many active individuals, groups, and communities working to learn and pass on the language and culture of the Gaels who settled here more than 240 years ago;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize the contributions that Gaels, through their language and culture, make to Nova Scotia's identity, and wish all Nova Scotians a great Gaelic Awareness Month.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, may I have your indulgence for an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge several guests who are with us here today in the gallery. It has been my honour and pleasure to meet these guests earlier this afternoon. I would ask them to stand as I introduce them. Dr. Shelly Whitman is the executive director of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, based at the Dalhousie University Centre for Foreign Policy Studies.

Also accompanying Dr. Whitman here are her staff. We have Tanya Zayed, the deputy director; Lori Ward, the director of fund development; Carl Conradi, programme officer; and Matt Campbell, for communications. We must not forget a wonderful, lovely family: her husband, Ben, and her children Aaron, Egan, Jade, and Jonah. Their last name is John. I am extremely pleased that Dr. Whitman, her staff, and her wonderful family are here today, and I would like to encourage everyone to give them a fabulous, warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1092

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

Whereas the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, based at Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, is a global partnership committed to ending the use and recruitment of child soldiers worldwide through ground-breaking research, advocacy, and security sector training; and

Whereas this initiative is being led by Nova Scotian Dr. Shelly Whitman, a native of Tantallon, who has made ending the use of child soldiers worldwide a major priority in her life; and

Whereas there are more than 250,000 children who have been recruited to participate in armed conflicts worldwide, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as parts of Asia and South America, and Nova Scotia is the home of many new Canadians who have left conflict zones, so a number of our children have been severely affected by this issue;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the leadership role of Dr. Whitman, her staff, and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative at Dalhousie University, in ending the practice of recruiting children as soldiers, and extend a heartfelt thank you for making a difference in the lives of the world's children and for shining a positive light on Nova Scotia on the global stage.

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. (Applause)

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1093

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

Whereas the month of May is Speech and Hearing Month and millions of Canadians are living with the daily challenge of communication, swallowing and balance disorders which significantly affect the work, school, and social aspects of their lives; and

Whereas individuals with these challenges, especially children and seniors, could be greatly assisted through early detection and intervention; and

Whereas greater awareness of where to find help is paramount to ensuring these individuals are able to lead richer and more productive, enjoyable lives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize May as Speech and Hearing Month, and acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Speech and Hearing Association of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, before I read this resolution, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PREYRA: Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislature, sitting in the east gallery today are three distinguished members of my constituency, three leaders of Neptune Theatre: Rob Batherson, president, who is known to members of this House; George Pothitos, artistic director; and Amy Melmock, who is general manager at Neptune Theatre. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm applause of this House. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1094

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

Whereas in July 1963 Neptune Theatre opened its doors on the corner of Argyle and Sackville Streets in downtown Halifax; and

Whereas in the Fall of 2012 Neptune Theatre opened its 50th Anniversary season showcasing a mix of Broadway musicals and local plays, such as *Legally Blonde*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Eighteen*, not to mention the *Glace Bay Miners Museum* by local playwright Wendy Lill; and

Whereas Neptune Theatre has provided world-class live theatre for five decades, along with considerable economic, social, and educational benefits to the Province of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Neptune Theatre and all of its artists, administrators, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and ticket buyers, who have made it the success it is today and over the last 50 seasons.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 1095

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

Whereas there are more than 26,000 motorcycles registered in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas May is the month when many motorcycle owners begin to bring their vehicles back on the road; and

Whereas awareness of motorcycles on our streets and highways and extra vigilance of all drivers will help reduce injuries and fatalities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join us in acknowledging that May has been proclaimed as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1096

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

Whereas an estimated 36 per cent of Nova Scotians provide care to someone because of a long-term health condition, mental illness, or temporary difficult time; and

Whereas those men and women give freely of their time, energy, and income to provide the care and support someone needs; and

Whereas May is Caregivers Month, a time to recognize the dedication, energy, care and support caregivers provide;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in celebrating Caregivers Month in Nova Scotia and in recognizing those who provide important care and support to those in need.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the members' attention to the east gallery. Joining us today, we have Karren Fader who is the president of the Nova Scotia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists; Lisa Bourne who is the chairman of the Active Steering Committee of the Nova Scotia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists; Catlin Dent who is the president of the Nova Scotia Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers; Joanne Chapman who is the chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Nova Scotia Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers; and they are joined by members of their committee who have worked hard to prepare the government for the introduction of the bill.

Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 70 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Practice of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals. (Hon. David Wilson)

Bill No. 71 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2012, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Hon. Darrell Dexter)

Bill No. 72 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2012, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Hon. Frank Corbett)

Bill No. 73 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2012, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Mr. Jim Boudreau)

Bill No. 74 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2012, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Ms. Lenore Zann)

Bill No. 75 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2012, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Mr. Mat Whynott)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1097

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

Whereas in the 18th and 19th Centuries, the Gaels immigrated to Nova Scotia and quickly contributed to the cultural diversity of our province, and

Whereas both the preservation and promotion of the Gaelic language and culture significantly contribute to the cultural, social, educational, and economic vitality of our province; and

Whereas since 1996, the month of May has been designated as Gaelic Awareness Month, a month dedicated to remind all of us of the invaluable contribution the Gaelic culture has played in shaping Nova Scotia's identity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge the month of May as Gaelic Awareness Month, and take time to celebrate the contributions of the Gaelic language and culture and the role these contributions have had in the development of strong, diverse communities in our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1098

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: A Labhraiche Urramaich, tha mi a' leigeil fhaicinn gum bi mi, san àm ri tighinn, a' cur air adhart an rùin a leanas airson gabhail ris:

Whereas May is Gaelic Awareness Month in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Gaelic continues to live because of the interest of Nova Scotians who speak and who try to learn this founding language of our province; and

Whereas modest government support for Gaelic is an investment in education and the maintenance of a language and culture that contains insights, wisdom, and humor that date back thousands of years;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House acknowledge Gaelic Awareness Month for recognizing the spirit of Nova Scotians who are Gaels.

A Labhraiche Urramaich, tha mi a' guidhe gun tèid brath-gluasad an darna taobh agus gun tèid a' chùis air adhart as aonais deasbaid.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East on an introduction.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Mr. Speaker, there are several people in the gallery today whom I would like to point out, but two in particular. One is the Liberal candidate for Pictou East and community activist, he is Francoise Rochon, and I want him to receive the welcome of the House. But before doing that, I would also like to recognize Peter Boyles who is an environmentalist, an activist in Pictou County who is always there for a number of important environmental causes in the county. Would the House please extend to both of them a very warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 1099

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I too welcome our guests here this afternoon.

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

Whereas the National Wheelchair Curling Championship was held in Ottawa in March 2013, and 10 teams from across Canada attended; and

Whereas Devin Forbes of Pictou began curling at the New Caledonian Curling Club in Pictou, and in his first full season of curling he became a member of the curling team that won the Nova Scotia Championships held at the Halifax Curling Club; and

Whereas Devin Forbes and his teammates, as well as many family members and supporters, travelled from Nova Scotia to Ottawa to be the provincial representatives at the National Wheelchair Curling Championships;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Devin Forbes for being part of the Nova Scotia Wheelchair Curling Team at the National Wheelchair Curling Championships held in Ottawa, and wish him continued success in the sport of curling.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1100

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

Whereas Canada has one of the highest occurrences of multiple sclerosis in the world, with approximately three people being diagnosed every day; and

Whereas May is MS Awareness Month, a time dedicated to helping Nova Scotians understand the symptoms and the impacts of this disorder; and

Whereas across the country fundraising events are held to raise money for research, equipment, and support groups for children and families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge May as MS Awareness Month and commit our resources to helping Nova Scotians understand the disorder and do everything in our power to support them.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 1101

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

Whereas the Guysborough Recreation Department's mandate is to provide access to recreational opportunities, to increase the level of participation in recreational activities, to provide an impact on healthy lifestyles and community wellness, to have the highest quality of facilities, equipment, and parks, and to build and strengthen relationships with other organizations and agencies; and

Whereas Philip Hochman was employed as the Municipal Recreation Director and Special Projects Coordinator for the past 38 years, and has received such accolades as the Professional Achievement Award in 2005 and the Province of Nova Scotia's Honorary Lifetime Membership Award in 2012; and

Whereas Philip Hochman retired in February 2013, after his long-time service to the residents of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Philip Hochman on his retirement and thank him for his dedicated service to both his position and his community, and wish him a happy and healthy 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 member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 1102

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 has the highest rates of sexual assault and the lowest conviction rates of sexual assault cases in the country; and

Whereas service providers across the province who counsel victims, deliver outreach programs, and advocate for change are chronically underfunded; and

Whereas May marks Sexual Assault Awareness Month;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House call on this NDP Government to take real long-term action to address sexualized violence in the province and ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to service.

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 Inverness

RESOLUTION NO. 1103

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

Whereas Jeopardy! has been broadcast on television for nearly five decades, has an average of 25 million viewers each week, and won 30 Daytime Emmy Awards; and

Whereas last night during the Double Jeopardy round, under the category “Canadian Provincial Newspapers,” contestants had to name the province in which the papers are published, and the Inverness Oran was not only a clue but a Daily Double clue; and

Whereas this small but mighty newspaper has a following big enough in the United States to be known on Jeopardy!;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the Inverness Oran for being part of April 30, 2013 Jeopardy! Program, and that the champion for that night was able to answer the question correctly.

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. 1104

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

Whereas Truro Fire Chief Blois Currie and firefighters from the Truro Fire Service, along with other volunteer firefighters, emergency services, and more than 60 volunteers worked together on Thursday, April 18th to extinguish a fire at the historic A.J. Walker building on Prince Street in Truro; and

Whereas the firefighters of the Truro Fire Service are commended for their excellent work during 10 hours of fighting, containing and extinguishing this fire, and managing to keep other local businesses in the area safe from fire damage; and

Whereas the citizens of Truro, including a group of small children who brought the firefighters chocolate chip cookies and letters of thanks, hailing them as heroes for saving our town and wanted to thank the Truro Fire Service for their great work;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature thank the Truro Fire Service and Fire Chief Blois Currie for their work on behalf of all the citizens of Truro.

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.

I'm going to ask the honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove to read the operative clause on a resolution she read earlier.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

[RESOLUTION NO. 1102]

MS. KELLY REGAN: Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House call on this NDP Government to take real long-term action to address sexualized violence in the province and ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to service.

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 Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 1105

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

Whereas today, May 1st, has been proclaimed Doctors Day in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas physicians play an integral role in our health care system, providing care to about 30,000 Nova Scotians a day, in a variety of settings, across our province; and

Whereas the choosing of today's date to honour physicians is significant as it commemorates the birthday of Dr. Emily Stowe, the first female physician in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge today, May 1st, as Doctors Day, and extend our appreciation to all physicians across Nova Scotia for their dedication and commitment when it comes to the provision of quality patient care on a daily basis.

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. 1106

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

Whereas Retired Captain Medric “Cous” Cousineau of Eastern Passage was seriously injured during a helicopter rescue operation of two American fishermen 27 years ago, which left him with a lifelong struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and today is aided by his canine assistant Thai, a service dog provided by the Canine Assistance and Rehabilitation Services Program of Concordia, Kansas, the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Fund, and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 164 of Eastern Passage; and

Whereas Medric, whose life has been aided immensely by Thai, hopes to raise awareness of veterans suffering from mental health issues associated with PTSD by raising funds for 50 dogs in 50 days for 50 veterans through his “Paws Fur Thought” Long Walk initiative; and

Whereas Medric’s “Paws Fur Thought” Long Walk from Eastern Passage will begin in August and continue for 50 days, with stops including Gagetown, Montreal, Trenton, and Toronto, ending in Ottawa, averaging 21 kilometres per day;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly thank Retired Captain Medric Cousineau for his service, bravery, and advocacy on behalf of all of Canada’s veterans, and wish him great success in his Long Walk initiative with his faithful assistant, Thai.

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. 1107

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 federal New Democratic Party Leader, Thomas Mulcair, is calling on the federal government to release archive documents related to the constitutional negotiation that led to the patriation of Canada's Constitution in 1982; and

Whereas Mr. Mulcair has criticized the Supreme Court of Canada without foundation, accusing it of never intending to investigate the allegation of inappropriate communications between judges and members of the executive branch; and

Whereas this is simply an attempt by separatists in the NDP to foment anti-federalist feeling in Quebec;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly condemn the federal New Democratic Party and its leader Thomas Mulcair for his irresponsible actions, for attempting to politicize the application of the Access to Information Act, for criticizing the Supreme Court without foundation, and for playing the game of separatist leaders.

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.

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1108

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

Whereas the Canadian Business Hall of Fame is a prestigious institution that recognizes and celebrates the lifetime achievements of Canada's business leaders; and

Whereas Joseph Shannon, a Cape Breton native, has been chosen for induction in the Canadian Business Hall of Fame on May 1, 2013, for his business excellence as the president of Atlantic Corporation and as former president of the Cape Breton Development Corporation; and

Whereas Joe Shannon exemplifies the ingenuity, determination, generosity, and leadership that defines the Cape Breton and Nova Scotia business community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Joe for being inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame, recognizing his professional achievements and enduring contributions to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Canada.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 1109

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

Whereas Ralf Pickart of Bald Head, Nova Scotia, launched Nova Scotia Webcams through his company QVISTO Inc. only four years ago; and

Whereas Nova Scotia Webcams now has 60 high-definition cameras across the province, from historic Cape Fourchu to Cape Breton's Highland Links; and

Whereas novascotiawebcams.com registers 15 million page views per year and brings 800,000 distinct visitors from more than 180 countries to the virtual shores of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Ralf Pickart and his Nova Scotia Webcams company, operating out of Herring Cove, were recently recognized as the winner of Extreme Group's inaugural Extreme Tourism Fund, established to provide strategic and creative communications services free of charge to a deserving tourism-related organization;

Therefore be it resolved that this House extend congratulations to Ralf Pickart for his innovative Nova Scotia Webcams, bringing our province closer to people around the world, and for being the unanimous choice as winner of the inaugural Extreme Tourism Fund.

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 Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1110

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

Whereas workers around the world have fought hard and won labour rights; and

Whereas good jobs, fair wages, and a growing economy is essential for the well-being of our province; and

Whereas workers around the world are celebrating May Day, or International Workers' Day, at rallies and events;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the contributions of workers on this occasion of International Workers' Day.

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 Chebucto.

RESOLUTION NO. 1111

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

Whereas the Honourable Robert Elgie, lawyer and neurosurgeon and former minister in the Government of the Province of Ontario, died on April 3rd, aged 84; and

Whereas Robert Elgie, as Minister of Labour, brought in legislation to amend the Ontario Human Rights Code to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination, thus setting a model for the rest of the nation; and

Whereas Robert Elgie subsequently became founding director of the Health Law Institute at Dalhousie University Law School and was also chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board;

Therefore be it resolved that this House note the passing of Dr. Robert Elgie and offer its condolences to his family.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1112

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

Whereas recently the senior concert band from Amherst Regional High School travelled to Boston, Massachusetts, to take part in the annual Boston Festivals of Music; and

Whereas this trip, which took place at a difficult time, was yet another expression of the special bond between Bostonians and Nova Scotians; and

Whereas the band, led by Stephanie Mizuik, was given a superior rating and took first place in the concert band A division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the ARHS senior concert band and thanking them for being great cultural ambassadors for Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1113

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

Whereas according to a recent report by Food Banks of Canada, the number of people who are now relying on food banks across Canada is increasing and the use of food banks has expanded to include working people, two-parent families, seniors, and homeowners; and

Whereas reporter Heather Killen of the Annapolis County Spectator has undertaken to shine a light on the face of poverty in the Valley by producing a thoughtful, provocative, and insightful three-piece series on the real cost of poverty and how poverty affects the quality of life of Valley residents; and

Whereas Ms. Killen not only examines the problem of poverty, but gives readers a better understanding of what measures are being taken by groups such as Annapolis Valley Health, the Annapolis County Family Resource Centre, the Women's Place Resource Centre, Chrysalis House and the Kids Action Program, some of the members who make up the Annapolis Valley Poverty Coalition;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Heather Killen and the Annapolis County Spectator for bringing this excellent series to the public, and thank them for raising the profile of poverty and contributing to the discussion around its elimination.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1114

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

Whereas the Dynamite Trail Association, the Bay to Bay Trail Association, and other groups along an existing shared-use trail system between Halifax and Lunenburg are attempting to lure tourists from across the world with a new tourist destination; and

Whereas a recent assessment of the trail by the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism scored the stretch of trail between Halifax and Lunenburg at 93 out of 100, meeting destination qualifying criteria; and

Whereas the group existing along the trail has an official expectation that tourism experience will bring significant benefit to local businesses, restaurants, and accommodations, and is considering names for the combined stretch of trail including the Bluenose Coastal Trail, the Halifax Southwestern Trail, and the Rum Runners Trail;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the importance of a recreational trail network between Halifax and Lunenburg, and its recreational benefits for the destination possibilities.

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-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 1115

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

Whereas Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated School was founded in 1963, merging its predecessors Caribou, Chaplin, Dean Settlement, Greenwood, Henry, Hutchinson, and Pleasant Valley Schools; and

Whereas Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated School demonstrates exemplary levels of parent and volunteer involvement, and serves as a model of the kind of school community connection that is widely recognized as integral to a quality education; and

Whereas the people of the Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated School District are gathering May 8, 2013, to celebrate a half-century of excellence in elementary education;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly extend its warm congratulations to the students, staff, and volunteers of Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated School on the occasion of the school's 50th Anniversary, and affirms the continuing contribution of Upper Musquodoboit's "Small School - Big Spirit" consolidated school.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1116

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

Whereas in our busy lives, we all strive for balance; and

Whereas Doug McManaman of Amherst, also known as the Balance King, has balanced his way into the record books by balancing everything from two-by-fours to turkeys on his chin and on his forehead; and

Whereas Doug is known to proudly wear his Nova Scotia tartan while showing off his skills, whether internationally or at work at the Nova Scotia border tourism site, right in our own backyard;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Doug “The Balance King” McManaman for being a fine ambassador to a balanced life here in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: It is now 3:14, we will finish at 4:44.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - EDUC. ADS: SPENDING - JUSTIFICATION

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the amount of money the Premier has spent on marketing the NDP's agenda has many Nova Scotians shaking their heads over this government's priorities. For example, when it comes to public education, the NDP has cut \$76 million from the classrooms, resulting in over 700 teacher-cuts, and wait lists for nearly 2,000 kids across the province, to access speech-language pathologist and school psychologist services.

So my question to the Premier is, how can the Premier justify cutting tens of millions of dollars from students in this province, while he spends tens of thousands of dollars to promote his education ads?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course as usual, the preamble is entirely incorrect. We have not cut that money out of education and, in fact, we spent a great deal of effort and time in ensuring that we get the programming in place to deliver the best quality education to students in this province. In fact I can proudly say that the per capita funding for students in this province is at its highest level ever in this province.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, this NDP Government has cut \$76 million out of public education and this province has the second-lowest funding in the entire country when it comes to public education. Meanwhile, between radio ads, TV ads and those famous promotional lunch bags, this government spent nearly \$0.75 million on political advertising.

Could the Premier please tell this House, why he thinks it is more important to do political advertising instead of investing in Nova Scotia children?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's not true. I would just point out that when the Liberals were in power, we had the worst record of funding education in the country and we have finally been making progress on that. When the member for Colchester North was the Minister of Education, we had the worst funding in the country and we now have increased the per capita funding.

I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that at one point in time in this province we had 216,000 students in P-12. This year we have 120,000 in this province; almost 100,000

students less in our public school system. It has been difficult to adjust to that kind of reduction in demand but we are following a course that is designed to support rural schools, designed to support and defend the quality of education in this province and deliver to the young people of our province the best possible education.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, when the member for Colchester North was the Minister of Education, she invested in Nova Scotia students. She didn't ask young people to pay for the political advertising that that government is doing. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor, please.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, most recently the NDP Government has spent \$139,520 on their fairer power rate ads, ads which have no value to anyone outside the NDP election war room. These government ads were quickly followed by very similar advertisements by Emera and Nova Scotia Power.

Given the cozy relationship the Premier has with Nova Scotia Power, it should come as no surprise to Nova Scotians that they've teamed up on their advertising. So my question to the Premier, did the Premier actually seek approval from Emera before he aired those advertisements?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, wants to defend the member for Colchester North but I think she made those investments when she was actually a Progressive Conservative member of the Legislature. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Let's remember the actual record of the Liberal Party when they were in power. First of all, they smashed the collective agreements of the teachers, they fired them and they ensured that we had one of the worst funding levels with respect to education anywhere - no, the worst - anywhere in the country.

Now they didn't have any problem with doing their own ads, they just took the money from their trust funds and they put it into advertising.

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

PREM.: JOB LOSSES - EXPLAIN

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on to more serious topics. In the last four years full-time employment for young Nova Scotians, those aged 15 to 24, actually dropped by a staggering 12.6 per cent, a loss of 4,600 jobs for Nova Scotia young people.

I'll table that seasonally-adjusted report from Statistics Canada. That's despite having a government that spent \$200 million on their jobsHere plan and other expensive NDP bailouts and giveaways.

Mr. Speaker, there is already talk of elections around here. Young Nova Scotians are voting with their feet. In the last four years, 4,600 of them have lost their jobs, and we know where they've gone: they've gone out west.

My question for the Premier is, how did he manage to spend \$200 million and lose 4,600 jobs at the same time?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, everyone who watches Question Period knows that that's not true. They know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party simply cherry-picks pieces of Statistics Canada reports that don't reflect the reality of Nova Scotia at all. People who watch carefully know that Nova Scotia was the only province in the country to actually have a net gain in jobs in the last year. Every reporting organization, whether it's the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council or CIBC World Markets or the Bank of Montreal or any of them, says the same thing: Nova Scotia's economy has been resilient.

In fact, they say that finally, after 20 years - the 10 years captured by the last Progressive Conservative Government, and of course capturing the last Liberal Government - after having the worst economic development over all those years, Nova Scotia is finally poised to turn the corner to a more positive economy, and we are going to move up among the provinces in terms of growth. Mr. Speaker, that is good news.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier is beginning to believe his own TV ads; he is the only one that does. It's time to change the channel back to reality TV, because that same report from Statistics Canada shows that for Nova Scotians in mid-career, full-time employment dropped by 10,600 jobs during his term of office - a drop of 4 per cent for those in mid-career. That's despite \$590 million of corporate welfare borrowed and underwritten by the NDP.

A workforce larger than the entire Town of Truro lost in four years - that's the reality of the situation. Those Nova Scotians are also voting with their feet already, because we know where they've gone to find work, and that's also out west. So I will ask the Premier - in the real world, does he understand why so many Nova Scotians have lost their jobs despite all the money he's borrowing and spending here in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party apparently - I mean, they spent years doing business cases on the backs of envelopes and handing out money to folks. He's not used to seeing a government that makes good investments, that makes sure that we actually receive a benefit - a government that on its loan portfolio has made some \$80 million in returns for the people of Nova Scotia.

We know that he's opposed to the 440 jobs predominately, which will keep young people here in the province with PROJEX. He and his members actually stood up and insulted the employer who came to our House to talk about the 440 jobs that they were creating. He's opposed to IBM opening the Global Delivery Centre here in Nova Scotia, while people were cheering that announcement. No wonder he doesn't understand what economic development drivers actually look like.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, you know what a good investment is? One that actually creates jobs, not one that loses 4,600 for our young people and costs \$200 million. Nova Scotians aren't interested in what interest rate he's getting on his investment account which he has lent out to the Irvings, which he lent out to all these companies. They want to know whether jobs are going up or down. For our young people they're a minus 4,600. For those in mid-career, they're minus 10,600. I know that the Premier likes to blame it on the global recession, but you know what? For the rest of Canada, for that exact same time, the labour force grew by over 300,000 jobs.

What's unique about Nova Scotia is that we have the highest taxes in the whole country and the highest power rates in the whole country. That's his jobs plan, and the return is minus 4,600 jobs for young people. Will the Premier admit that the real reason jobs are being lost is because of his high tax and high power rate policies?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, just again, nobody out there believes a single word that he has said is true because none of it is. In fact, we have the lowest business taxes in this province in 20 years, that is the record of this government. We have invested in Port Hawkesbury Paper, we have invested in ensuring that jobs are created in this province through RIM, through IBM, through PROJEX and he has the nerve to call it corporate welfare. It's not corporate welfare, what he wants is to make sure that people are on real welfare.

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

PREM. - HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION: EXECS - DETAILS

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, our health care system is facing immense pressures, escalating cost pressures, public frustration with wait-times and the Harper Conservative Government that will fundamentally change the way it funds health care which will negatively impact Nova Scotians. In light of all these pressures, could the Premier explain why maintaining 10 CEOs and 90-plus VPs and directors would be better adding than putting more money in front-line health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad he brought up this topic because in fact our record in health care administration is one of absolute success. We took a health care administration that had as a percentage of its budget some 6.7 per cent going into administration. We've reduced that below the national average. The one thing that we have

not done is entered into the extraordinarily wrong-headed idea that somehow you amalgamate into a gigantic bureaucracy that takes away the voice of ordinary Nova Scotians from health care decisions and cost more expenses to patient care. That is the result of what he is proposing.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the only Party in this province that could eliminate 10 CEOs making over \$200,000, another 90 employees making over \$100,000, and increase the expense would be the NDP. No other Party could meet that feat but that group across there.

We must find a way to allow patients to get the surgeries fast and enable them to travel to any health care facility in the province they wish to, even outside of their district. Right now, budget turf protection between the nine administrative boundaries prevents this from happening as frequently as it could or quite frankly, as it should. My question to the Premier is, does the Premier agree or disagree that we need to find a way to allow patients to travel to any facility in this province that they choose in order to access the health care they need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I realize this is another profound example of the inexperience of the Leader of the Liberal Party. Patients can travel to the various facilities they want to get the services they want, they can do that now - of course they can. The rest of us out here have lived through amalgamations that came about as a result of the Liberal Party. We watched the forced amalgamations and no money was saved.

In fact what happened is more expenses, bigger bureaucracies were created, no efficiencies were created and what happened was that money was taken out of patient care in order to pay more bureaucrats. The Liberal Party has done it before and now they want to do it again.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, patients can travel to any facility in this province, but the problem is that we have nine districts that are trying to protect their own turf and not allowing patients to do that on a regular basis. It's not a first option, it's for those Nova Scotians who can find their way through the massive amount of bureaucracy we have in this province in order to do that. Ordinary hard-working Nova Scotians who can't find their way through the massive bureaucracy that is supported by this NDP Government have no choice but to languish on wait-lists in the districts where they live. So, while this Premier wants to protect the 10 CEOs, we want to give Nova Scotians quicker access to primary health care.

Mr. Speaker, our plan will put decision making back in the hands of those who know their patients best - our front-line health care workers - and take it out of the board rooms. Our plan will remove the administrative burden that has been stifling our health care system and once again - our plan will remove the administrative burden that has been

stifling our health care professionals and will let them once again play an integral part in our health care system.

My question to the Premier, could the Premier please tell us how allowing health care professionals to get greater access is going to hurt Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, that is exactly what this government is all about. We have smoothed the ability of people to move from district to district to get the service they require, because that is about dealing with basic administrative rules. We've done that in order to make sure that people get the best possible service.

What they want to do is what they've done before. What they want to do is they want to create a much larger bureaucracy. Let's remember, the last time the Liberals talked about health reform, what they actually did. What they did was they paid 1,000 nurses to leave the system. They closed 1,500 hospital beds. They took away the administrative help of nurses so that they had less time to spend on the bedside and more time had to be spent on administration.

That is the record of the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker, and now they want to do it again.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

PREM.: HEALTH CARE SYSTEM - ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'll try round two on the same topic and I guarantee the Premier one thing, that a Liberal Government won't have 60,000 patients without a family doctor.

Mr. Speaker, over the last four years we have seen a health care system that no longer puts the patient at the centre. Instead, the top-heavy administrative structure, operating in silos behind administrative and artificial boundaries, serves itself, not the patient.

Could the minister please explain why his government is so against the health care system that puts the needs of the patients first?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that is so far from the truth. Over the last four years, when we came into government, we had one of the, if not the highest health administrative costs in the country. Across the country we are below the national average today. Other jurisdictions are looking at our example and our leadership, here in Nova Scotia, on how to handle health administrative costs and reduce that and put that money in front-line health care - not like the Liberal record, we're doing it in a responsible way.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that nothing has changed in the Annapolis system, just a little bit of restructuring, that's all, people who are no longer on the organizational chart but remain in administration.

Mr. Speaker, health care in this province is not standardized and uniform across the province. Wait-times in each district are different. There is too much competition for services and resources, too much administration at the top, and too many silos. We need to have one, fully-integrated system where the two boards, one for the IWK, one for the province, work together to plan and create one health care system - 943,000 Nova Scotians deserve nothing less.

Could the minister please tell Nova Scotians why top-heavy administration is more important to this government than an accessible health care system for patients?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I think the comments from the Liberal Party are quite disrespectful to all the men and women who are dedicated in the communities across the province, who ensure that we have good health care and health care delivery. What the Liberal Party is proposing is a Super Bowl (Interruption) - super board - it would be a Super Bowl of a super board. What they are suggesting is a super board that will make all those decisions that are being made in communities across this province, out of Halifax.

We don't want that. We want the engagement of communities because communities are different. Their needs and wants, within the health care system, are different and the only way to ensure that their needs are met, Mr. Speaker, is engaging those communities and it is through the system we have now. We know we need to find savings within the health administration. We rely on health administrators to help those front-line health care workers, we need them to ensure that they're there and ensuring that they're supporting health care providers. We're doing it in the responsible way; I don't know what way they're going to do it - they would create chaos within the health care system.

MR. GLAVINE: All this minister has to do is ask the people of Inverness, the people of Digby, and the people of Berwick, where decisions are being made.

Mr. Speaker, one provincial board operating through four regional zones, increased site-based management and decision making by health care professionals, and enhanced responsibilities for community health boards - that's our plan. We have listened to frustrated patients and we have heard from frustrated health care professionals who feel their voices have been silenced - it's high time we have in place a government who has a vision to ensure our health care system empowers our health care providers; it's high time we have in place a government who has a vision to ensure our health care system serves the patient, not the system itself.

Could the minister please tell us why faster wait times and empowered health care workers are not important to the NDP Government?

MR. WILSON: This is a very serious issue. Across the country governments are trying to harness health care budgets. We talk as we meet on a regular basis, ministers from all provinces and territories, Liberal ministers, Conservative ministers, and some of the jurisdictions have taken the steps that are proposed by the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker, and each and every one of them have told me, do not go there, it does not work - it costs more money, services and money that should be going to front-line health care are not there because we pay to have a larger board. Look at provinces like Alberta that now have made that tough decision to try to go to a super board and are now reverting back to the system we have.

It's wrong to go that route; it's right to go the route we've gone. Work with administrators, work with the district health authorities to reduce health administration costs, and put that money into front-line health care services.

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

PREM. - MUSKRAT FALLS: URB - TIMELINE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the evidence is mounting at the URB that Muskrat Falls is not the lowest cost option for Nova Scotia electricity ratepayers. The evidence that's mounting seriously contradicts the assertions of both the NDP and Nova Scotia Power about that megaproject; in fact the review board's own consultant found: "that Muskrat Falls has not been demonstrated to be a definitive least cost incremental supply source for our province's energy future." In other words it costs too much.

Will the Premier allow the Utility and Review Board to set its own timeline for review of this expensive project so that Nova Scotians can be assured that it's the best way forward by someone other than his government and Nova Scotia Power?

THE PREMIER: The way the Progressive Conservative Party must be - they must be disappointed because the fact of the matter is exactly the opposite is true than what he says. In fact a number of consultants from the board have been hired, and all of them but one found that this was the best project for Nova Scotia, for ratepayers. They are looking at this project in-depth, as they are supposed to - in fact this project has more scrutiny than any project that has ever come before the Utility and Review Board, at least so far as I know, and I've been around for a while.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that this energy strategy, which includes Muskrat Falls means that the energy that will be used by Nova Scotians will be local, it will be secure, it will be green and, thanks to this government, it will be tax-free.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the URB's own consultant says it's not the lowest cost option; the Consumer Advocate consultant says it's not the lowest cost option; the Small Business Advocate says it's not the lowest cost option - those are the people who are there at the board representing the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. The only person who has made up his mind regardless of the cost is the one that Nova Scotians are supposed to look to to protect them and that is their Premier but he is close-minded on Muskrat Falls. That is why he has ordered the board to approve that project within six months and no more. I will ask the Premier, if he truly wants to know if it's best, why not allow the board to do its work in its own timeframe?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know yesterday a member of the federal Party associated with the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was in town, the Honourable Jim Prentice. He was in town to speak to the MEA, the Maritime Energy Association, and I didn't want to read, again, because apparently the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party missed this yesterday, I don't know if he was - I don't know what he was doing - I know it gets noisy in here so perhaps he didn't hear.

This is what Mr. Prentice had to say yesterday, "When I was in politics, I had the privilege of serving as both the Industry Minister and the Environment Minister. These experiences left me with an affinity for the kind of development that helps generate widespread and long-term prosperity - and is, at the same time, environmentally sustainable. In my view, Lower Churchill is all this and more. It is a transformational project for Atlantic Canada that will take the region to a new level of industrial development."

I think that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should heed the words of his former colleague. I think he should understand that this project will deliver the lowest, fairest rates for people in Nova Scotia, but more than that, it will help transform the economy of our region. This is the first of the major regional projects among the Atlantic Provinces and is important for the welfare of all of us.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prentice is a fine fellow but he doesn't have to pay the bills, we do, and that is the whole point. We are the ones, all Nova Scotians have to pay for this expensive project, not just today's Nova Scotians, but it's a 35-year project. A whole other generation of Nova Scotians are going to be asked to pay for that project, and that is the problem. We all want renewable power. We all want a great energy future but we have to make a decision today that respects 35 years of Nova Scotians. My point is, we tell our kids to do their homework, in this case, \$1.5 billion, 35 years, why won't the Premier do his?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've done my job and I understand that these are the lowest, fairest rates for Atlantic Canadians. Unfortunately for Nova Scotians, the Progressive Conservative Leader doesn't seem to care about that. A short time ago when the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was in Ottawa, he was speaking to

national organizations and he was talking about the benefits of Muskrat Falls, not just to Nova Scotia but to all of Atlantic Canada. He was promoting this project as one that was building the country. He was right then and he is wrong now. Muskrat Falls will deliver the lowest and fairest rates for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - TRENTON POWER STA.: FLY ASH - UPGRADE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Has the minister met with citizens in the Hillside-Trenton area regarding the fly ash emissions from the Trenton Power Station as the NDP promised, as well as the environmental and health concerns and the promised health studies?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in the Department of Health and Wellness we have Public Health. We have Dr. Strang who leads a team of dedicated professionals who try to ensure that there is good public policy, that any issues that arise in communities across the province, no matter where they are, that they look at it and ensure that people are living in an environment that is healthy for their citizens, for the community.

We're committed to that and I know that the Public Health Division has been working hard to meet the needs of those who request reviews and look at issues around the province, and I think they'll continue to do that into the future.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, since the minister has trouble answering questions about his schedule, I'll help him - he is not. I asked his predecessor in 2010, 2011, and 2012 whether she would meet with them, and on April 5, 2012, she said, "I do set priorities in terms of what needs to be addressed in making those decisions," and she goes on about accommodating people and so forth. So I guess this isn't a priority, which is funny because it was such a priority for NDP members from the Pictou ridings when they were in Opposition, and they championed having a health study done. In fact, the Environment Minister, on April 5, 2011, said that he understood the Department of Health and Wellness was going to undertake a health study on this issue. Yet there's no study that anybody is aware of and no meeting has yet occurred, despite the fact that the previous Health and Wellness Minister has been through Trenton.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister continuing his predecessor's position of avoiding this group from Trenton, when in Opposition the NDP were so committed to meeting with them?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Nova Scotia is someone who is dedicated, someone who is trained, and who is a professional within that field of public health. He has met in the past with this organization that the member brings forward.

I think he is the most appropriate person to engage with communities when they have concerns around health issues, no matter what it is. If it's fly ash, if it's anything else that is of concern to a community or an organization, our public health officer is there to support them. They are there to investigate, they are there to inquire, and really come forward with any ideas or any changes that need to be had, or any warnings.

I have full confidence in the Medical Officer of Health here in Nova Scotia, that he is doing his job just as he is supposed to. I look forward to continuing to work with him in the coming months.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt about the qualifications of the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health. The issue is that the NDP MLAs from the Pictou area had committed that the Health Minister would meet. In previous Question Periods, this minister's predecessor said that she would make every effort to meet with this group. The Environment Minister stood in this House, on the record, and said that he understood a health study on the effects of the coal ash was underway through the Department of Health and Wellness. Now this minister is saying, well, it's not up to him to meet with this group.

This group of people represents a large number of people who have very serious and real concerns about coal ash from the Trenton plant. The Premier stands up time and time again and talks about the evils of coal, and yet now his Health Minister won't even give the time of day to these people.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister meet today with the residents from the Hillside-Trenton area?

MR. WILSON: I do want to make a correction. It was a district medical officer who has met with groups, so I don't want to say anything - the Medical Health Officer for the whole province.

I've been very open with organizations and people around the province - more than happy, if I could facilitate meeting with anybody today, I will do that.

We take the job seriously to ensure that the people who are working within the Division of Public Health have the training and the professional background to give advice and to move forward any issues or concerns that communities have around the province. We do that. The office, the division - they promote issues that are going on around the province. If we can do that, I will be more than happy to accommodate that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**ENERGY - RENEWABLE ENERGY:
SMALL COMPANIES - OPPORTUNITIES ALLOW**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the government has gone out of their way to make it difficult for small businesses to prosper. Independent power producers learn the lessons the hard way when they enter into competitions run by the renewable energy administrator to supply renewable energy to NSP. Those independent companies lost out to Nova Scotia Power. The URB says this is a policy matter for the government.

My question to the Minister of Energy is, will the minister examine the process used by the renewable energy administrator to ensure small, independent companies have the same opportunities as bids backed by Nova Scotia Power?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Certainly Nova Scotia is blessed with lots of wind, in fact it is estimated we have one of the best wind regimes in all of North America. We have small wind projects; we have large wind projects; we have the COMFIT Program for small wind projects in our communities, and that has been very popular; and we have our large wind projects administered through the Renewable Electricity Administrator. He went through the competitive bidding process. People knew going in that the minority partnerships were possible, and we have ended up with three projects that are the best possible opportunity, on the large wind projects, for Nova Scotians.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, last Fall, the Renewable Energy Administrator himself was concerned that the bid process would become less competitive if Nova Scotia Power was allowed to win every bid. He argued that the independent power producers might choose not to bid at all when the cards are stacked against them. Even the minister must realize the reduced competition for energy contracts means higher bills for ratepayers.

My question to the minister is will the minister create a fair bid process that gives independent producers a chance, or will he continue to always favour Nova Scotia Power?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the honourable member is getting his research from, but in reality there were 19 applications under the Renewable Electricity Administrator program. Three of those were awarded contracts, and those were the three who had the lowest price for Nova Scotians, somewhere in the 7.5 cent rate per kilowatt hour, and in total, we are going to end up saving approximately \$50 million - \$50 million for the ratepayers of this province, over the lifetime of those projects.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, since the minister is so certain that the process is fair, he should welcome the scrutiny. Unsuccessful bidders are not allowed to appeal the decision. The rules say only Nova Scotia Power can appeal rulings, which is unlikely to

happen when they are both the sellers and the buyers on the contracts in question. This is not fair. We know that.

My question to the minister is, why does the minister insist on always stacking the cards in favour of Nova Scotia Power?

MR. PARKER: Certainly going into the bidding process, all the applicants knew the rules. They knew that under the 2010 Renewable Electricity Plan that minority partnerships were allowed, and in fact, it is the best possible deal for ratepayers - \$50 million in savings over the lifetime of the project. Here's what the URB had to say about the process. They said: It's a low-risk deal that is a good investment on behalf of the ratepayers of this province.

So again, it's the lowest possible - the fairest rates for Nova Scotians in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT - CORPORATE HANDOUTS: ECONOMIC GROWTH - RESULTS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the provincial economy stalled last year. The GDP increase was 0.2 per cent province-wide. The province assumed a 1.2 per cent GDP growth rate last year, and were off the mark by a whole percentage point - so I guess they were turning the corner on accurate estimates. This disappointing result came at a time when the NDP was spending hundreds of millions on corporate giveaways.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development explain how, after he spent hundreds of millions on corporate handouts, economic growth still ended up being flat?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I am only too happy to stand in my place and talk about what they term as giveaways and what we term as investments. At no time do we give money away. What we have done, and what we will continue to do, is make sound investments in the Nova Scotia economy.

What we have done, whether it be with Irving, with PROJEX, with IBM, with Michelin, whether it be with any of those companies that we made these investments in, Mr. Speaker, the people who gain from this are Nova Scotians. By these investments, we get to hire more people. We get more in the way of tax revenue, more money so that we can invest, re-invest in health, in education, in all those things that are of value to Nova Scotians. These are investments.

MR. MACLELLAN: Rather than corporate giveaways, the minister needs to focus his efforts on setting a competitive economic playing field for the province as this would

allow businesses in the province, large and small, to succeed. Yet, in an effort to get some quick-and-easy photo ops, the minister and the government preferred to sign over blank cheques to large businesses with no targets or guarantees - 0.2 per cent growth across the province, which is a weighted average, of course, and Halifax is doing well, as we hear about the cranes in the sky. So if the 0.2 per cent was our entire GDP growth, what does rural Nova Scotia look like in terms of economic growth?

Why does the minister think that photo ops and marketing slogans are more important than economic fundamentals?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we make sound investments, strategic investments for Nova Scotia. We made sound investments all over the Province of Nova Scotia, including southwestern Nova Scotia, including the Island of Cape Breton. We continue to make those investments and those investments are paying off.

We are on the verge of the greatest economic boom in my lifetime, in our entire lifetime, Mr. Speaker. Maritime Link, when we think of the enormous benefits that will be just to Cape Breton itself, and when we think about IBM and PROJEX coming - these are investments that these companies otherwise would not be locating or relocating here to the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times, instead of the east going west, under our watch the west is coming east.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, businesses and consumers have lost confidence in this government's ability to manage our economy, and it's no wonder: a stalled provincial economy, 0.2 per cent growth; a rural recession; double-digit unemployment rates across the province; and as we've heard many times, an alarming 18.6 per cent in Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about sound investments but with that much - \$600 million of sound investments does not result in 0.2 per cent GDP growth. Meanwhile, the minister is more interested in picking winners and losers and issuing press releases and getting quick-and-easy photo ops.

My question is, when will the minister start putting the needs of Nova Scotian businesses first and get back to creating an economic environment where all Nova Scotian businesses can succeed?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I'd like the member opposite to understand is that our investments are very, very accommodating. We don't have blanket investments; we've made huge investments in small businesses in the Province of Nova Scotia by streamlining process, by eliminating red tape.

Mr. Speaker, under our watch we've had 400 companies that have benefited from the investments that we've made. We've had 10,000 Nova Scotian employees that have benefited by our investment in them. I've had invites from Stream in Glace Bay, when I visited them, giving me a tour, and very grateful and thankful for the efforts of this government.

Mr. Speaker, what we hear from chambers of commerce, not just here in Halifax but also in Cape Breton, where they say stay focused, you're on the right track, and stay there.

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

**LBR. & ADVANCED EDUC. - APPRENTICESHIP REVIEW REPT.:
RELEASE - TIME FRAME**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. This week the Premier committed to an Atlantic Workforce Partnership that will standardize apprenticeship programs between the Atlantic Provinces. On December 8, 2011, his department launched a review of the apprenticeship program. Then on January 15, 2013, the department launched a new review of the apprenticeship program.

This government is dragging its feet on making changes to the apprenticeship program and on getting our own workforce trained for projects like the federal shipbuilding contract with Irving. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, when will the minister finally release the findings of the apprenticeship review report and get on with taking action?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Well, we are working with the private sector, the unionized workers, the Merit employers, we're working with everybody. What we're not doing is stopping growth in that area where people can actually get work. We're not cutting down jobs in Cape Breton and getting rid of Veterans Affairs, getting rid of people who work for Service Canada, where we go to for some of our training. Instead of that, the federal government is poking around trying to get rid of the LMAs. He should be here supporting us and fighting with Nova Scotians, fighting with the Tory Premier from Newfoundland and Labrador, the Tory Premier from New Brunswick, the Liberal (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, I'll sit down because I just feel sorry for that lot.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, this caucus feels sorry for the people who are out West who want to come back home to work.

The minister and the former minister refused to look at increasing the apprenticeship to journey person ratio - this is something Newfoundland and Labrador has done successfully. Newfoundland and Labrador also has an agreement in place with

Alberta that allows apprentices from Newfoundland and Labrador to accumulate work experience in Alberta, something the NDP cancelled here.

Since we are now taking a regional approach to apprenticeship, will the minister adopt the programs Newfoundland and Labrador have put in place for its apprenticeship programs?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that every question over there follows the flawed logic of their Leader.

That's just not true, we have working agreements with the Province of Alberta. As opposed to what they would want to do (Interruptions) They may not want to hear this, but the reality is we have workers and employers working together with academics to find out which works best for our apprentices. They don't want to do that; they want to be the top-downs. What we're doing is we're building . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Get it done already, get it done.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, the member over there is quite upset about getting it done. More importantly than getting it done, we're going to get it done and we're going to get it done right.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, we're just waiting for when, because the government is delaying the apprenticeship review, it's stalling on changing the ratio. Who can forget the backdoor union drive they created last year by forcing Nova Scotia apprentices to sign the union card in order to gain valuable work experience in Alberta? We all want apprentices to stay here and learn their trade here, and that's why we think it's time for the government to finally take action to make that happen.

My question to the minister is, when will the government put the employment futures of younger Nova Scotians ahead of the demands of special interest friends and implement the programs Newfoundland and Labrador have successfully put in place?

MR. CORBETT: Two members are asking the same question - neither one makes sense. We have never (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, there have been no changes. I don't know what planet that group lives on, but there have been no changes. We have allowed workers to freely move from Newfoundland and Labrador, or whether from Prince Edward Island, or whether from Alberta. The reality is, he just wants us to, holus-bolus, take somebody else along. What we want to do is - but the leadership of our Premier, we found at CAP this week and we're all working together, a system that that Party doesn't understand. We are working together, apprentices will be trained here, they will be working here, and they'll be able to travel all across this country, not limited like that group did.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EECD: EARLY INTERVENTION PROGS. - FUNDING

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, this government has recently announced its Early Years Initiative. The announcement was typical of this government - grand photo ops and no details. The government's April 10th release states that the initiative will help bring "seamless access to regulated child care, early learning programs, early intervention . . . parent education."

Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is impeding any access to those services is this government's chronic underfunding of the organizations that deliver them.

My question to the minister is, will the minister tell members of this House how much the government is investing in early intervention programs - those very programs that provide family-based services to our youngest?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: We continue to invest in our early intervention programs, and I'm looking forward to working with the working group that we are going to be forming so that we can look at all aspects of our early years in terms of their wages, accessibility, and affordability. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: The question was how much; the answer is \$2.9 million to 23 agencies serving 900 families. Mr. Speaker, imagine - I wouldn't clap about it - imagine the surprise when the government announced an early years intervention with a focus on intervention without properly funding that.

So my question to the minister is, will the minister commit to putting her words into action and increase the funding for early intervention in this province?

MS. JENNEX: What we have done as a government, that no other government has done, is we've recognized the importance of the early years by creating a department within the Department of Education: the Early Childhood Development department. We are in the process of bringing all of our services from Community Services and Health and Wellness into one department, so that we can look at our children from birth to age six and make sure that we're supporting our families and our children appropriately. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: At the present time there are 200 families across this province that are on a wait-list, waiting for access to early intervention programs. Some of these families, Mr. Speaker, will have to do without the supports as their children age out of the program before they start school. Early interventionists and families are begging for more resources to serve their children and to address the wait-list.

My question to the minister is, what will it take for her NDP Government to make kids a priority in this province and increase funding for early intervention?

MS. JENNEX: Our young children and children who need early intervention are a priority of our government, and we are funding the programs. It is part of our budget process. We are making sure that we are going to be looking at our children through our new department in a seamless manner to make sure that our children are getting the services they need across the province equitably. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North on a new question.

EECD - EARLY LEARNING INIT.: MCCAIN FDN. FUNDING - CONFIRM

HON. KAREN CASEY: My question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Mr. Speaker, we know that it is the McCain Foundation that is funding the early learning initiative in this province, and we congratulate and thank them for their commitment.

My question to the minister is, why did the minister fail to acknowledge publicly that the early learning initiative in this province is being funded by the McCain Foundation and not the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: The McCain Foundation has been instrumental in the development of the work that we are doing here in the province. They were acknowledged publicly. We are working in partnership with them, and they are contributing to our Early Years Centres, along with our - it is a partnership, it is definitely a partnership, and they were acknowledged. I will say again that we really appreciate the leadership that the McCain Foundation has provided the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: The significant contribution from the McCain Foundation was not acknowledged in the Throne Speech. It was not acknowledged in the ministerial statement on the day of the announcement. It was not acknowledged in the press release on the day of the announcement. I will table those documents so the minister can read them.

The government's only commitment to the initiative is \$1.2 million for the province-wide implementation of this. Educators and parents recognize that this is not adequate, so will the minister admit that without the McCain Foundation funding, the early learning initiative would be one more program for kids that is underfunded in this province?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that the Early Years Centres, our sites that we are setting up, for the three of them in the province, our budget included \$450,000 for that, and \$100,000 of that will be from the McCain Foundation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

WCB - DORSEY REPT.: RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, the 2002 Dorsey report on workers' compensation made a recommendation about benefits saying, "... over time, indexation of benefits should be increased from 50 per cent to 100% of the Consumer Price Index." I will table that.

The Pictou County Injured Workers' Association has been working to have these changes made to ensure that the injured workers are not forced into poverty. They are calling on the government to implement the full indexing of compensation benefits as per the Dorsey recommendations. My question to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Act is, why has this government done nothing with respect to this recommendation?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I can say to that member, we inherited a mess with WCB and it was all thanks to those guys in 1999 and 1996. Thank you.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, in other words, the minister is going to do nothing. Workers who were injured before 1990 had high hopes the NDP would change legislation to ensure that all injured workers would be treated fairly. Injured workers are feeling ignored by this government. Will the minister tell those injured workers who were hurt before 1990 if they can expect to be treated equally by this NDP Government and receive workers' compensation benefits?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I should probably introduce that member to Jay Abbass, the former Minister of Labour, who put on those onerous rules. Maybe the member can read the Hayden decision, as he was a member of that former Liberal Government. What they have done - that is what caused that stuff. It's the hypocritical position of the Liberal Party and what they did to injured workers in this province. It's not this government.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it seems this government can only blame things on every other government around, everybody else around. They've been in government for four years and have done nothing except ruin the economy. Since the NDP took office, power rates have gone up by 30 per cent, fuel costs are skyrocketing, taxes have increased, and people are finding it harder to make ends meet. Injured workers are having a particularly difficult time because this government is more focused on penalizing employers through penalties, rather than supporting workplaces and workers. It seems that this NDP has changed their stripes when it comes to protecting workers. Will the minister tell the injured workers today when they can expect any action from this government?

MR. CORBETT: I stand in my place as a proud person who represents many workers and I haven't changed any stripes. When it came to automatic assumption, the former Minister of Labour passed a bill in here to protect coal miners. That's action, Mr. Speaker. A couple of weeks ago there was a bill in front of this House on protecting widows; that's action, action that was ignored by that lot. We take action. We don't change stripes; we do it.

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

SNSMR - HARP: USAGE THRESHOLD - REASONS

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. As the minister knows, my area has over 9,000 apartment units in the Clayton Park riding and a lot of those are small, one-bedroom apartments, and people are often very careful with their usage of energy in those small apartments. My question relates to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program which, when the NDP came to power in 2009, they cut from \$450 per recipient down to a maximum of \$200. I have the form, there is no \$450 rebate anymore, so the new program - the minister can say he didn't do it, but this program maximizes at \$200.

The point of this is that not only is there an income threshold to the access to this rebate there is also an energy usage threshold. It says very clearly - and I'll table this from the government Web site - that you have to show you used at least 6,000 kilowatt hours of electricity in a 12-month period to get any rebate.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is exactly why they have a rebate threshold for usage when many low-income Nova Scotians are keeping the heat low in order to just manage - I want to know why that's there.

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Actually it's a good question.

When we came into power the threshold was 18,000 kilowatts. We reduced it to 10,000 then we reduced it to 6,000. I guess it would come down to, like lots of priorities and decisions that the governments have to make that at some point - you know you have only so much money for any particular program, so that we actually increased the number of people who could qualify by reducing from 18,000 kilowatts down to 6,000 kilowatts.

I would say that yes, maybe we could say you don't have to show any evidence of what power that you use but we didn't want to be giving a rebate if somebody used a hair dryer. We wanted to make sure that they were actually heating their apartment or heating their home. That really is the thinking behind it.

At some point in the future, if government is able to take a look at that, I think we would be glad to do that but we also offer money to the Salvation Army to help people in need as well so we'd always be interested in looking but at some point. If the member has an interest in lowering that, then I have to ask her, what is it you would like us to cut in order to do that, Mr. Speaker?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it's simply backward thinking to cut the very poorest people out of this rebate program, it's backward. The people living in small apartments, who are keeping their temperature as low as possible and using as little energy as possible because they simply don't have the money to pay those bills. They will have bills that are above the \$200 that the minister is referring to as the threshold. I think it's not a way of making money, we're not suggesting it's a way to get money when you didn't spend it, it's a rebate program, the maximum would be what you had spent on your power, up to a \$200 limit, which is already too small for many low-income people. It isn't even enough for people getting oil to have a delivery for \$200.

Mr. Speaker, I think the minister should review what he is saying - perhaps in his answer to me he will. I'm saying there's very few people that this would affect but they are the most vulnerable, the people who are really living in a very stark way. I've heard from these people in my riding, they are people who have very little income and are keeping the temperature really low because they simply can't afford it and they are the ones who are being kept out of the rebate program.

I know it's May 1st, I know the weather has warmed up but now is the time to think about how this program could be better next year. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, I'd like him to endeavour to tell me how many people may be affected by this threshold, by the usage threshold, and I'd like a commitment for him to reconsider that it be taken off.

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm not opposed to reconsidering anything - I'd be glad to reconsider this going into next year. The member asked how many people I think this might affect, and I think that at every point when the government looked at setting the level, they always said that this will get most of the people. Then they reduced it to 10,000 kilowatts from 18,000, thinking this would catch most of the people, then we reduced it from 10,000 to 6,000, thinking this would catch most of the people.

I have to say that for complaints otherwise, that someone who actually contacts my department to say you have to lower this, and we look at those cases individually, if we can help, I generally tell my staff, do something for this person.

There are very few, extremely few, I'm thinking two, maybe three. The one thing I want to remind the member opposite is that we pay the HST on people's electrical bills in this province, something that turns out to be 10 per cent of their electrical bill, which helps these people as well, something that her Party voted against, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - MACINTOSH CASE: INQUIRY - JURISDICTION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. If we read The ChronicleHerald this morning we would read a letter from Jonathan Rosenthal. In that he commented on the delays in the Fenwick MacIntosh case as being outrageous and they remain virtually unexplained. Last week the Premier said that he had asked the federal government to participate and to do the right thing in calling the inquiry.

Does the minister believe that an inquiry must be done by the federal government, or is he just passing the buck?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the member - and thank him for the question - as early as this morning I met with my staff and discussed this very issue further. We are still looking to when we get an interim report from the Public Prosecution Service, to get a little bit of an update there. We should be getting the RCMP report within a week or so.

Once I get that information, I think it's very critical in this matter that we acknowledge the abuse to individuals who have made those allegations - that we're sensitive to that, we're caring about that. I too share the same concern that the member does in getting to understand the complexity of this issue and how this happened and what we can do to ensure that it doesn't happen in the future. In the interim, I really need to get the overall picture to understand, because such an historical context in this matter is required to be understood.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that the federal government did address the problem, and the Premier acknowledged that last week when the federal government returned this predator to Nova Scotia. I appreciate what the minister is saying here, but I think we on all sides of this House want to find out what went wrong. We believe that this minister and his department do know what went wrong internally, that they have access to that.

My question to the minister is, why won't the minister call an independent inquiry now to get answers for the victims of these horrible crimes?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain to him a couple of things on the structure of our justice system in Nova Scotia. The Public Prosecution Service is an independent unit under its own direction, with its own director. That director has taken it upon himself to do a review so that he understands what has occurred within the Public Prosecution Service. At the same time, the RCMP is another branch of the justice system providing service within this province, and they, in fact, are doing a review as well. It's a responsibility on my part, then, to collect this information.

In the interim I am gathering additional information on the historical relationship between this matter. I don't want any Nova Scotian out there to be confused - I am committed to trying to find out and understand how this could occur. It's a matter of being well-informed before I make a decision. I will not react in an inappropriate manner. I will be informed and will react accordingly.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that this matter - and we know how long it has dragged on, and the whole reason that it was not productive in facing the - the whole reason the justice system was not able to address this matter is because - Mr. Speaker, I apologize, I think my blood sugar is a little low. I'm having difficulty concentrating, and I'm actually serious.

I want to make the point that people have been waiting a long time, and I want to make that point about the minister, that people are hoping that this minister will make sure that this happens quickly and that he honestly looks at an independent inquiry. Mr. Speaker, my question, once again, for the minister is, when will he look at doing an independent review?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, as I stated in the earlier part of my answer, it's very important, as Public Prosecution is an independent body at arm's-length from this House, that I do get the information from them, that I get the information from the police, and then we look at what the best way is to approach the concerns and the issues that are outlined there.

There is an issue in this whole process about the renewing of the warrants, which we've raised with the federal government. We'll continue to do that. People waiting a long time, I understand that, and I think all Nova Scotians deserve an answer. When I have the appropriate information to make an informed decision, I will make one, and we're hoping that is sooner than later.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENERGY - URB: EVIDENCE - MIN. MISREPRESENTATION

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Earlier in Question Period today the Premier talked about there being all these studies tabled in the Maritime Link hearings in favour of the Maritime Link saying it is the lost cost. Yesterday, the Minister of Energy said that nine of 14 studies that were tabled, in fact, said that, and I will table his comments from yesterday.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, he was only right about one thing and that's that there 14 studies tabled, and I'll table that - the list of the 14 studies. Of those 14 studies, in fact, only one of them says that the Maritime Link is the lowest and cheapest cost, and I will table all 14 studies so that maybe the minister will take some time to read them.

Two of them offer no comment as they weren't asked to look on that. Two of them look only at whether the project is technically possible, which everybody agrees it is. One is against the project because it violates aboriginal rights and all of the remaining studies say that - the Enerco study says the costs are underestimated, the Woolridge study says Emera is proposing a level of profit double what it should be and will gouge ratepayers, the Booth evidence says Emera is making too much money on the project, and the Anatec, Synapse, Levitan, CanWEA, and LPRANS evidence all say Emera overestimated fuel costs to make the project look better and the other options worse for ratepayers.

Will the minister please explain why he is misrepresenting the evidence filed at the Utility and Review Board?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: There is a lot of evidence, obviously as the honourable member is tabling some of it. Again, I'll stick to my understanding. There were about nine that were pro and five that were con, in these connections. You know, it all depends on your interpretation of how you read the evidence. The role of the URB is to determine what is the evidence, what is the best information, and they have to test the evidence; they have to review the intervener's evidence, and they have to cross-examine everything that is there. That is the role of URB, to look at all that evidence, determine what is right and what is fair - is it the best deal for Nova Scotians?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I really do hope the minister will take the time to read the 14 studies that I tabled, which included his Dalton study, because only one of them actually said it's the lowest and fairest cost. Even if you include the two that don't talk about cost and say that the project is technically possible, and that's the only thing they looked at, you still only have three studies that are in favour of the project. The minister should stop representing the facts. Yesterday, the Premier was saying that because the repeat recipient of the fossil of the day award, Mr. Jim Prentice, said the Muskrat Falls was a good deal, it must be. Oh my goodness, I'm sure the Premier is also aware that many financial magazines have speculated that CIBC, where Mr. Prentice works, is trying to get some of the loans and investments for that project.

If the minister truly believes that the evidence will support the deal currently proposed by Emera for Muskrat Falls, rather than made in Nova Scotia solutions, then why won't he extend the hearing? The Premier and minister may wish to put Newfoundland and Labrador first; we want to put Nova Scotia first. Is the minister concerned that by giving the review board the time it takes to make a decision, it will become crystal clear that this deal is structured against Nova Scotians?

MR. PARKER: Obviously we firmly believe that the Muskrat Falls, Maritime Link is the best deal for Nova Scotians and will provide stable rates for 35 years. But since this Spring session, maybe the Fall session, maybe the Spring before that, I have been trying to figure out what the Liberal policy is on energy. I know they want to put the HST back on home energy. They want to eliminate Efficiency Nova Scotia - that will cost over \$100

million. They want to deregulate electricity, 30 to 50 per cent increase in the rates, and they want to cosy up to Hydro Quebec. So what is the real energy policy for the Liberal Party?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it is this government's own Minister of Health and Wellness that wrote a column suggesting we should get energy from Hydro Quebec so I'm not sure why he's criticizing us about that.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier stood in this House and said that this project would allow us to get more energy from Hydro-Québec, yet they are criticizing us for repeating what the Premier said. Yesterday on News 95.7 the minister stated there would be thousands of jobs from the Maritime Link - maybe, but not in Nova Scotia. Of course he forgets to mention the jobs that will be lost at Lingan, that Nova Scotia has already come to acknowledge. I guess the government doesn't think the unemployment rate in Cape Breton is high enough.

Mr. Speaker, so they believe, the NDP believes that a few temporary construction jobs are better than a made-in-Nova Scotia solution of renewable energy with long-term investment in long-term jobs here. So why does the NDP believe that short-term construction jobs, few of which will be in Nova Scotia, are better than the permanent jobs and investment that will come with made-in-Nova Scotia alternatives of renewable energy that almost all those studies endorse?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, the Lower Churchill Maritime Link will provide the lowest, fairest energy rates for Nova Scotians, but I'm still trying to figure out what the Liberal policy is on energy.

I went to the Liberal Web site to try to find out - here I have a copy of it. One day they're up, one day they're down. But one day the Leader of the Liberal Party said that the Lower Churchill is crucial to Nova Scotia's energy future; another day the Liberal Leader says it's a bad deal for Nova Scotians, but great for Emera.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East said the Premier must ensure ratepayers are protected in the Lower Churchill deal. Again the Leader of the Liberal Party is saying the Energy Minister's position of Lower Churchill is not going to work for Nova Scotians. It's very, very difficult to figure out where they're at - are they for the project or are they against the project? Are they supporting Hydro-Québec or are they supporting Nova Scotians? I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT - PERSONAL INCOME TAX: SURGE - EXPECTATIONS

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, last year the economy of Nova Scotia stalled; in fact, in rural Nova Scotia the economy contracted. Labour income growth was a

slower pace than was observed during the recession, and retail sales were the slowest in four years.

Mr. Speaker, this year the government fully expects that there will be 1,100 fewer Nova Scotians employed. There is already double-digit unemployment across the province and Nova Scotia had the biggest dive in business optimism of any province in April. With these facts in front of him, does the Minister or Economic and Rural Development and Tourism still believe there's going to be a surge in personal income tax?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Finance to respond to that.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, when we put the Budget Estimates together this year we did what is done every year - we put the forecast together, the assumptions, we test them with economists in all of the major financial institutions in the country, the Conference Board of Canada, the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, economists who are academics in our universities, and then we submit all of that to the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, all of that process resulted in the conclusion and the consensus among those folks that the economic estimates of the province were reasonable.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in Nova Scotia is now 9.5 per cent, and as we know, with Halifax weighing down that average, it's extremely high in most rural areas. Unemployment has increased in every region of this province since 2009. The 0.2 per cent growth is a clear indication that rural economies are shrinking. Businesses state that energy is the number-one cost pressure, increasing 30 per cent in the last three years. Business confidence is the very worst of any province in this country.

These are undisputed facts, I don't think any member of the government can say that anything I just offered is incorrect. With the economic realities in Nova Scotia, how can the minister suggest that our province provides a sound environment for entrepreneurs?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, with the investments that we made and the proof when we signed agreements with Michelin, with BlackBerry, with PROJEX, with all these companies - the list goes on and on. Do you know what? There are still more to come. We reduced the small-business tax three years in a row. We are helping small businesses. We've included the Web portal so we can streamline and make things more efficient and quicker, reduce red tape for small businesses that are seeking all the programs that we offer - cut to the chase. They are investing in us.

We still have - and the member wouldn't know this, but we have companies coming from all over the world, coming to Nova Scotia. We sit down, we talk to them, and we try to accommodate in the best interest of Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

TIR - SUBDIVISION PAVING: MUN. LEADERS - MEET

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The province's five-year paving plan was announced to address issues across Nova Scotia and to make certain a strategy was in place for paving and chip sealing. In the past I've spoken to the former Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and now the current minister, and I have put the concerns in writing to the current minister. Those concerns are the concerns of Nova Scotians about paving in subdivisions. I want to acknowledge that I did receive a written response back from the minister. I appreciate that, and I thank you for that.

My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to meeting with municipal leaders as part of that discussion?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member has indicated, we have had some discussions about this and have exchanged correspondence. I will meet with anyone who has a concern about their roads, if they want to meet with me to discuss them, and I intend to (Interruptions) I guess it will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

In reference to this particular issue, again, it's a situation where we are prepared to work with people who have these J-class roads, municipalities that have J-class roads, but of course, it's a 50-50 shared investment. If they want to come forward, we'll certainly look at their concerns.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the expensive costs and priority placed on paving and repaving the 100-Series Highways, as well as the routes and trunks in Nova Scotia - with those added costs every year, subdivisions have become less of a priority, and they very rarely make it to that list. Many of those roads are identified, but there is never any funding for those, and thus the need for some plan to address those.

My question to the minister is, rather than waiting for municipalities to come to him, will he take the lead and go to the municipalities?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I suppose the answer to that question is, I'm available. I don't know in particular which municipalities want to discuss this issue with me. If they want to get in touch - I'm not trying to avoid getting in touch with anyone, but until they come forward with their issue I don't know which municipalities in particular would want that kind of attention.

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

ERDT: TRADES POSITIONS - OVER-QUALIFICATION

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, we know Nova Scotia's economy is suffering. High unemployment, business closures, and shrinking opportunities make that very clear. Now we've learned that even those who have gone elsewhere for training and education are being turned away when they return home. Many working in trades have been told they are overqualified. Those people are unemployed. Despite their hard work, they are in the same position as 47,600 other Nova Scotians.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, what does the minister say to the people who are trying to call our province home again, but are overqualified?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question because, first of all, I want to say, as a practitioner of diversity - and maybe not all members in the House will understand this - there is no such thing as being overqualified for a job. There are minimum qualifications for a job, and if you're qualified, you're qualified. That is where it should end. And you know what, again, not all members may understand that, and I would certainly welcome those members who don't quite grasp that to come to me any time, and I will try my darndest to explain what is meant by that.

MR. BAIN: You know, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia doesn't have the capacity for these highly-trained workers. More than 18,000 people left our province in 2012. And now we're telling them that our economy is too weak to welcome them home. The message we're sending to young people is not inspiring. Nova Scotians want to be here. We should be able to offer them the same opportunities they have elsewhere and we should never turn them away because they have succeeded.

So my question to the minister is, when will the minister finally address the problems in our economy and put Nova Scotia in a position to welcome growth and skilled labour?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, it's quite obvious that this government has welcomed growth. The things that we have done when we stand here, or certainly when I stand in my place, and I talk about those strategic investments that we have made so that companies can grow, where new companies can come here, which members from the opposite Parties have criticized or spoken against. You know, we made that investment in Port Hawkesbury NewPage - 1,400 jobs associated with that. Nobody on this side of the House disagreed with that. Members on the opposite side of the House disagreed with that. When we make investments regarding 10,000 current employees so they can improve upon their skills, that's investment - that's investment in Nova Scotians. We are making strategic investments, and we will continue to do so.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, you know, the expensive policies of this government have had entirely negative impacts on business development in this province. The NDP have shown no desire to keep our young people from going out West to find good jobs. They either can't find a job here or they're too qualified for a job here. That's not a very inspiring message for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, when will the minister turn what looks like a have-not province and do what needs to be done to make it a have province for future generations?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, we did that three years ago when we were elected, and we will continue to do it. We are improving the economy; we are improving the opportunities for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

DEP. PREM. - CBRM CAPITAL PLAN: SUPPORT - CONFIRM

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering if I could ask a question to the Deputy Premier. Will he support the CBRM capital plan?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Yes we have, Mr. Speaker.

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

MR. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 64.

Bill No. 64 - Maritime Link Act.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to rise and speak in support of Bill No. 64, which in basic terms is a bill to allow the URB, the review board, to do the job that it has always been able to do in the past, which is to hold hearings on behalf of ratepayers, take the time they need, set their own timeline, review all the evidence, and then make a decision that is in the best interests of electricity ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, it's kind of sad that we need a bill like this today, because for the first time, on probably one of the biggest projects that this review board or any review board will ever face, they don't have that ability, and the reason they don't have that ability is because the Premier and the NDP passed a bill in this Legislature last year and it put it in law that the URB doesn't get to set its own agenda to review a \$1.5 billion, 35-year project. In fact, they passed the law which essentially says they must approve the project within six months of the date of application if the project is consistent with the NDP's electricity plan.

Mr. Speaker, we all know where this is going. The government, afraid that the URB might actually come to a conclusion different from what the government wants, has handcuffed their ability to do their job, and that is not right. That is not right, and the evidence that it's not right is piling up every day. It's piling up in the reams of expert opinions that are flowing in that question whether this is truly the best way forward for our province, whether it's truly the best project environmentally for Newfoundland and Labrador, whether it's truly the lowest cost option for Nova Scotians. Thousands and thousands of pages, thousands of charts and graphs and projections that need a thorough examination, not just for today but for all time.

If today's Nova Scotians and tomorrow's Nova Scotians are going to look back on this time and see if the government truly did its homework before it committed them to this big project, then they need to know that before their NDP Government signed on the dotted line that they did their homework and that they allowed the URB to do its homework. This government is failing on both accounts.

First, they didn't do their own homework. The Premier signed on the dotted line a year and a half ago before he knew the cost of the project to our homes and our businesses, before all of the evidence had been collected. Rather than sit back and say, I'm responsible to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia and the ratepayers so I'm not going to jump on board until I get all of the facts on their behalf, he couldn't wait to have that press conference a year and a half ago and announce his support, and then sign on the dotted line. In fact, he's already allowed Emera to begin work on the project, even before the URB starts these hearings that are going to begin later this month. The Premier has failed in his job, which is to represent the taxpayers and ratepayers first before jumping on board and getting excited about a project that costs so much.

So then Nova Scotians, giving up on their Premier turned to the URB as the one place where they are supposed to be protected and represented to determine whether this is

the best option or not. Seeing that happen, the government passed a bill that short-circuits the usual URB process, gives them a very tight timeline which the Consumer Advocate, the Small Business Advocate, both Opposition Parties, and many Nova Scotians have said it's not enough time for a decision of this magnitude.

It's a shame that we have to have a bill like this one today to set matters right. I know the Premier's mind is made up and we can't change it - regardless of the cost he wants this project. What we can fix is to give the URB back the tools that they usually have to do their job and that is to let them set their own timeline to do a thorough review compared to all of the other options. That is the only way Nova Scotians will ever have confidence in this project to know whether it's the right one or not.

In fact, I believe that Dan Leger, a journalist with The ChronicleHerald got it right when he said a few days ago that the NDP have shown their "tub-thumping support for the Labrador link and friendly dealings with Nova Scotia Power." That is why Nova Scotians are so nervous about where the NDP are taking this, Madam Speaker.

Now, at some point in the future, Nova Scotians will be asked to judge the power policies of the government and of all Parties in this House. Mr. Leger has given them a heads-up, both on the "tub-thumping support" for a project that they don't know the cost of on the government side and for their "friendly dealings with Nova Scotia Power."

He also points to the policy of the Liberal Party where he says, "Some of the chatter on rates has been downright simplistic. You can't just wave a wand and break NSP's monopoly. Barriers to entry are too high for that. And even if you could, it wouldn't guarantee lower prices."

I hear some members say they did in other places, and that's right. He points out that Ontario broke up its monopoly in 1999 and prices have risen there steadily since. New Brunswick, the same policy, and their own auditor determined it was an absolute failure.

The government wants as much green energy as they can, regardless of the price right now. We want green energy within the current rates, within a rate freeze - go green as fast as Nova Scotians can afford. Only the Liberal Party has found a policy which both raises our prices and kills investment in renewable energy at the same time. That's quite an accomplishment, Madam Speaker. Those, in summary, are the positions of the three Parties.

Do they want higher prices and no renewables? No one is going to invest in them under the Liberal policy. Do they want renewables at a pace that we can afford, which is the PC policy, or do they want the NDP's tub-thumping support for the Labrador link and friendly dealings with Nova Scotia Power? That is what Mr. Leger has highlighted for all Nova Scotians. I want to commend him on his work, and I will table that for the benefit of the House.

Madam Speaker, now that I have outlined the differences of approach between the three Parties, I will say this: I truly hope that when it comes to something as obvious as allowing the Utility and Review Board to do their work on their own timeline, to review all the information on a \$1.5 billion, 35-year project, all Parties can come together today and support this bill so we can look today's Nova Scotians and future Nova Scotians in the eye and know that we did the right thing at the right time in the right way. Thank you.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Madam Speaker, I'm glad to stand in my place to respond to some of the comments from the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. Asking questions of a game-changing project is certainly a thing that we should be doing, as Nova Scotians. We absolutely should be asking questions.

The real question in this whole debate, Madam Speaker - I'm really glad that the Progressive Conservative Party brought this bill forward today so that we can have another discussion, and at least another Nova Scotian who might be listening might understand where we, or, in fact, where the Liberal Party stands on the question of the Maritime Link. Are they in support of the Maritime Link? That is the real question here.

We know where the Progressive Conservative Party stands, we know where our Party stands and our government stands on the Maritime Link, but the one thing we don't know is where the Liberal Party stands on the question of the Maritime Link. The reason why we don't know where they stand is that they simply can't make up their mind. They can't make up their mind on this whole question of this game-changing project that will bring stable rates to our province, that will be part of an overall plan for renewable energy in this province - something that the other two Parties didn't have the foresight to do when they were in government. This is exactly what this government is doing - a plan for renewable energy, a plan that will see great results for our future generations.

The federal Conservative Government is coming down with greenhouse gas emission reductions, and the reality is that the Liberal Party doesn't actually have a plan to address those. If you just go and Google the Liberal Party - and the Minister of Energy already tabled the document today - go and Google what the Liberal Party stands for on Muskrat Falls. At one time there is a headline that says, "Lower Churchill Crucial to Nova Scotia's Energy Future." They said that at one point and I remember the Leader of the Liberal Party was, in 2008, over in Newfoundland saying how wonderful this project is going to be for Nova Scotians. Then another release comes out from the Liberal Party and it says, "Lower Churchill Deal Bad for Nova Scotians," then another release comes out from the Liberals and it says the Leader of the Opposition supports the Energy Minister's position on Lower Churchill.

So one day they say one thing, another day they say another thing and that's just a typically Liberal thing to know. I consider myself a young man, Madam Speaker, and I haven't been in politics too long but that's typical with Liberals, one day they say one thing and the next day they say another. That's exactly where they stand is they don't know but one thing we do know about the Liberal Party is that they will cozy up to Hydro-Québec at any point and any time, for sure.

Madam Speaker, we know that Nova Scotians want change when it comes to how we generate our electricity in this province and they want change with the electricity. They no longer want to have the majority of our power produced by dirty imported coal that's traded on the international market. They don't want that. That's why in the last seven years our power rates have gone up by 75 per cent, that is exactly why the international price of coal has gone up by 75 per cent in this province, so that's the reality and that's the position of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. That's what they want us to do, they want us to stay on that road. Other provinces saw the foresight to get off that dirty energy; Nova Scotia lagged behind. It was the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party that saw that.

I had the opportunity to go across Nova Scotia with the Minister of Energy talking to everyday Nova Scotians and I certainly saw a lot of head-nodding in the rooms that we were in, over 500 people, everyday Nova Scotians that we talked to about the Maritime Link and the types of economic development, the types of opportunities that this project will see for our province. That, Madam Speaker, is something, again, we don't see from the other two Parties, we don't see that. Absolutely, I think one of the things we need to do is begin to understand the project and that's exactly the sort of thing that we did as a government when we brought forward the Maritime Link Act, that's exactly what we did, we brought forward an Act that will allow us to move forward with a project that will give us energy security in our Province of Nova Scotia.

That was important step, in fact I stood and I sat in this place when I heard members of the Opposition, from both Parties, say that they supported the Maritime Link Act. I know on May 10th of last year the member for Argyle actually said,

“I think all Parties in this House have spoken to this issue on a number of occasions now. I can say that our Party will be supporting this bill because it is something we've talked about for a really long time as well.”

In fact on May 17th, the member for Dartmouth East said:

“I think we'll certainly support the bill . . . My hope would be that the minister and the Premier would actually be willing to consult with the Opposition Parties on some of the issues that should be covered in that, or even if they ultimately don't agree with this, at least if the minister and the Premier would seek out our feedback in terms of what issues should be

covered by those regulations. We would certainly appreciate that opportunity and we hope that the minister and Premier would do so.”

I will certainly table that, absolutely I will table that. Madam Speaker, we had the opportunity - in fact in a news release that went out to all Nova Scotians asking for comments on the regulations, who did we not hear from? (Interruption) No, not once has the Liberal Party brought forward any idea around regulations, not once, neither from the Progressive Conservative Party, so he can chirp on over there all he wants but he did not do that and we know that. The Liberals talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk, they don't. They say things in here and they say something different out there.

Consultation around the regulations spanned over two months last summer and the Liberal Party didn't bring forward any ideas around timelines, nothing, but now they say that they think there needs to be more time. We believe that there is sufficient time to consult, to bring forward things that will ensure that this project, the Maritime Link, will move forward in our province. In fact, even the federal Conservative Government came on board to guarantee the project, saving ratepayers \$100 million. In the last federal election all three Parties, the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Conservatives all supported the project, all Parties, all Parties, every single Party. So that's where this Party stands. I just wish, I really wish the Liberal Party would stand up and finally tell Nova Scotians where they stand on this project because nobody knows. One thing we know is that they're moving forward with Hydro-Québec.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, I'm not sure if I'm sadder that I think the member might actually believe some of the stuff that he spews or that his government actually lets him stand up and say some of those things and misrepresent the positions of others. If the government can't actually stand on its own facts, and has to misrepresent everybody else around them, then you know they're in trouble.

The member talked about Googling things. Well his Googling was selective because if he had Googled, he actually would have found that last year, during the regulations, we made a statement, well quoted in the media, that, in fact, his own minister responded to, saying that we would endorse the position of the Consumer Advocate and if the Consumer Advocate felt, at that time, that he was satisfied with the things around the time, then that's fine. So that was fine, but do you know what? The Consumer Advocate has come forward and said do you know what? There is an issue here. A lot more information has come forward. The question becomes, why is it that this member believes that the timeline should be strangled?

Let's look at what has happened. In Newfoundland and Labrador, they put an artificial timeline on the Utility and Review Board there and the board decided it could not

come to a decision. As a result the government had to legislate the project. Why would this government want to make the same mistake here?

The NDP can go on talking about flip-flopping to try to muddy the waters, but that's not true at all. In fact, what we said all along was that we supported the development of Muskrat Falls in principle, with the right deal for Nova Scotians. Even when the Muskrat Falls Act came before this House that deal was not available, in fact, that deal was not tabled in the Legislature until January 28th, so this is a Premier and a government that decided that they would support the project before they even knew what the deal was.

We said yes, having an energy loop makes sense. In fact we have continued to acknowledge that there is a strategic value in that link. But much like some of the interveners in the evidence filed by people on behalf of the Consumer Advocate and the board, we have said that there is a better deal for Nova Scotians. If Emera does not want to put that forward, well then, we will not stand by a deal that breaks the backs of Nova Scotians, that will raise power rates, that will ensure that 35 years from now, when the deal runs out, we don't have access to that energy. The fact that when we move along, we stand by the evidence. There are 14 studies filed and all the ones that talked about alternative options, with the exception of one, said that the cheaper, better, longer-term solution for Nova Scotia is made in Nova Scotia, investing in jobs in Nova Scotia with renewable energy in Nova Scotia. In fact they said that the Newfoundland and Labrador hydro project, the Nalcor project, the Muskrat Falls project, was the most expensive of any of the options they looked at.

Now, Madam Speaker, the government obviously doesn't believe any of those experts. Apparently the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville knows more about energy policy, knows more about finances than every single one of those well-respected, international experts. I'm glad they have someone like that on their backbenches to help them out with that - I'm amazed that the board hasn't called him to do all the evidence for them since he obviously knows much more than all those interveners.

What we're saying is if they are so sure, if the government is so sure that they are correct on this, then they have nothing to lose but to give the board the time it asked for. In fact, during the consultations that the member just spoke of, where they asked about the regulations, the board said six months was the absolute minimum time and, in fact, they should be allowed to have as much time as they want.

Madam Speaker, is that too much to ask? If they truly believe that this should be a non-partisan project, if they truly believe they should have the support of Nova Scotians, then maybe they should stand up and allow the independent board, which previously they spoke so highly of, the time that they want to make that decision. After all, what is the rush? The project is already under construction; the construction is not going to slow down.

Madam Speaker, there are options here and the government has an option to stand up and to say, do you know what? We believe so much in this project, we believe the evidence will prove that the government is right, that we'll let the board make a decision, we'll let the board do their review. But no, they don't want to give that information. They stood up and said no to the Small Business Advocate - the Small Business Advocate, if I recall correctly, they brought in the legislation to create that position in their first term in government. Yet now they're saying whoa, no, no, don't criticize us, don't tell us we're doing something wrong - you're supposed to stand there and back up the government, not point out issues where we could improve.

They're doing the same thing to the Consumer Advocate, so Madam Speaker, who are Nova Scotians to believe? The Consumer Advocate, the Small Business Advocate, or the government that signed on to a deal before they even knew what the deal was? It makes no sense.

We said all along that having that strategic link makes a lot of sense. Of course it does, of course it makes sense to have that strategic link, but we said the deal has to be right for Nova Scotians. In fact, many interveners in the evidence I tabled earlier today pointed out the different deal structures which would benefit ratepayers.

Madam Speaker, the government's own expert, John Dalton, looked at a cost structure for a lifespan of that undersea link of over 70 years, in the evidence he filed the other week. Emera's own evidence says the line will only last for 50 years - why would you do a study on the cost of energy coming across the link for 70 years? That's 20 years beyond the lifespan of the line.

Those are the kinds of things that the interveners have pointed out that are fundamentally flawed.

Madam Speaker, I had a chance to speak at the Renewable Energy Conference the other week. The minister refused to go. I give credit to the Leader of the Third Party for going, even though he wants to extend coal. He was happy to stand up in front of people who disagreed vehemently with his position, but he went - but the minister wouldn't go. The Minister of Energy wouldn't show up, despite three days at least - I know of three days of requests because we were copied on the e-mails - maybe there were more. He wouldn't show up to tell them what their plan was.

You look at that and you say, why is this so confusing? Madam Speaker, we believe, and increasingly there is evidence coming out from many organizations that supports the fact, that allowing renewable energy producers access to the grid makes sense, has reduced rates in every jurisdiction where it has been done. Now we have evidence before the board saying that that actually would be the cheaper option for ratepayers.

The fundamental part of this bill is just saying give them more time. It's not even saying don't approve the link or approve the link, it's just saying if you truly believe that the link is the best option for Nova Scotia, is the cheapest option as the government keeps saying, then let the board make that decision. Let the board make that decision and why shouldn't they have the time that they need, that they feel they need.

We're not saying let the Legislature make an artificial decision, we're saying let an independent body, the Utility and Review Board, have the time it needs so we avoid the mistakes that happened in Newfoundland and Labrador where the board came to the end and couldn't make a decision. What is the government going to do if they come out on July 28th and say, I'm sorry; we didn't have enough time? The government will either have to abandon the project or they'll have to legislate it and I'm sure they don't want to get stuck in that kind of position. Of course, they know by then there will probably be a different government. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: It's a pleasure for me to stand up today and have a little chat about Bill No. 64, the Maritime Link Act. It's a very short bill but what it says, basically, is that you allow the URB to have the time it needs to make a proper decision.

This would be what my children would call a no-brainer. It's a common sense bill and I guess that is probably why we're not getting any support for it, because it is about common sense. It's about making sure that the deal that is being entered into is a deal that is good for all Nova Scotians. It is a deal that is going to tie us into this for 35 years. If we are going to be tied into something for 35 years, let us be sure we get it right the first time. There's an old saying that a lot of the old carpenters from around home use, they say measure twice and cut once. There's a reason for that. That means don't rush into something too quickly or it will end up costing you more. Measure twice, cut once.

All we're asking here in this bill is to make sure that the right decisions are made at the front end, not at the back end. If it takes a little longer to make the right decision, isn't that what we should be doing? Isn't that our job, as members of this House of Assembly?

I couldn't help but listen to the comments of the member for Dartmouth East. He talked about coal and how this Party wants to go to coal. He's a very knowledgeable individual and if you look at the energy plan that has been put out by the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia, he would know that coal is going to be used until 2040. What we're advocating for is, instead of bringing that coal in from overseas, why wouldn't we use Nova Scotia coal? Why wouldn't we put Nova Scotians to work and why wouldn't we make that part of what we have to do in order to move forward to get to a more sustainable energy system, here in the Province of Nova Scotia?

Getting back to this particular bill, let's make sure that we take a thorough look at the project. There have been 14 reports and only one identifies it as the best route to take. I'm not an expert on any of this, and I don't know how many in this House are, but what I do know is if you have 14 reports, and it shows some real concerns by the Consumer Advocate who is out there to look after the individual rights and concerns of the people who are going to end up paying for this, I would say to you that's worth listening to. That's something we should be doing. If we have a decision against it, we should have at least made sure that we looked at it hard and understood what it is that he is telling us.

That's what this bill asks. It's just common sense, as I said earlier. Do your homework and get it right. There is nothing wrong with that. We tell our children that all the time, make sure you have all the facts before you make a decision. I heard earlier today the Minister of Service Nova Scotia saying basically the same thing. You have to have all the facts in order to make a decision. He's a pretty sound individual.

Now, Madam Speaker, it's hard for Nova Scotians to understand why this government is in such a hurry to push this megaproject through in only 180 days - something that is going to have an impact on this province for 35 years, and they want to make a decision in 180 days. After all, we will be paying this for over three decades. So if it turns out to be a mistake, it will be a costly mistake, and it will be a long time before we know the final impact.

I believe, and our Party believes, and the people of Nova Scotia believe, that this project needs and deserves a thorough, independent review, which 180 days will not allow. And \$1.5 billion in 35 years, that's two generations of Nova Scotians who will be on the hook for what is being rammed through by this NDP Government.

As members of this House of Assembly, don't we owe it to our kids and our grandkids to take a really close look at this project and make sure it's the right project for them and not just a trophy for the Premier? The Premier wants to make sure that he has a legacy to leave behind Nova Scotia. Well, I'm going to tell you, he probably is right in trying to get a legacy because this is going to be his last kick of the can, but it should be a legacy that he can be proud of, not one that's going to have an impact on the children and grandchildren of the people of the House of Assembly and the residents of the Province of Nova Scotia.

I believe that we owe our children and our grandkids more than just 180 days of consideration on a project of this size. We owe our families time that needs to be taken. Like I said earlier, Madam Speaker, measure twice, cut once, make sure you get it right now - not worry about it when we get down the road and decide that it's been the wrong decision for this province.

It seems that the Premier wants to make this project go ahead regardless of what anybody else has to say. Here's what the Premier said to the people in the Cape Breton Post

in March, "People, I think, may think that it has to do with the URB hearing. But that project is going ahead and the only question is how that's going to happen." I tabled that article.

He says it's going ahead regardless. They tell us that the URB is going to be the one that is going to make the decision, but he has already determined that it's going ahead regardless. Is that the way to treat Nova Scotians? He ran on a platform of a better deal for the families of Nova Scotia. Well, how is that a better deal, by telling them they are going to have it regardless of what the URB says? That's not right. This government should measure twice and check once, and they're not doing that. It's 180 days. It's not enough time for this project to have a clear view of what it is. Nova Scotians expect and deserve that the 14 reports that have been filed should be looked at.

Last week, as I said earlier, the Consumer Advocate and the Small Business Advocate said they needed more time to review the project. They asked the minister to give them more time, and I'm telling you, that's not happening. This bill would allow that to happen. This bill would allow the people of Nova Scotia time to make sure that we're getting it right and not leaving it to the period of time so that in 35 years we're still paying for the mistakes of today, that your children, my children, and the children of all the people of the Province of Nova Scotia aren't paying for the mistakes of that Premier. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Acting House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 4.

Bill No. 4 - Balanced Budget Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I think my blood sugar has returned so my brain is firing again, I'll be able to give a speech here. I want to thank the members who were so kind to come forward so quickly with some sustenance, from all sides of the Legislature. It makes it harder to give a speech now and say anything bad about anybody. (Interruption) But I'll find a way, I guess, yes.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a bill we put forward because we believe, first of all, that it's a bill that a responsible government would put forward and we would live up to what we say in government, the things that we're saying today in Opposition.

The first part of the bill talks about controlling expenditure and nobody likes to control expenditure. We would all like to have bottomless wallets and purses, but the reality is there always is a bottom unless we go and borrow money. This bill is designed to

force governments to be controlled in their spending and to limit that spending, based on the population of the province. If the population is not growing we should not be spending more. Why? Because one of the chief determinants of GDP is a growing population, when populations are growing that helps to drive the economy and, of course, that drives tax revenue.

If the population is not growing, where we see ours in Nova Scotia is very flat, we should be controlling our expenditure and ensuring that if we're not growing and our economy is not growing, we should not have government spending beyond its means because we're only sinking ourselves further into a situation where an economy like ours can't recover. It can't grow because it puts more pressure on the activities, on the risk-taking in the economy that takes place by small businesses, because they're taxed more. It takes away from their ability to compete in a global world. We know many of our businesses in the province are competing outside of this province. The businesses that aren't competing on a global basis, most of those businesses are dependent on those businesses that are competing globally.

I can tell you about a reception I was at last week with the Manufacturers Association. One of them told me it's all about manufacturing, when you think about it. If we don't have companies in Nova Scotia manufacturing, if you take that away, all of the remaining companies that provide services to those companies are suddenly losing revenue from their ability to sell to those manufacturing companies. We must remember that every business in this province depends on an economy that is competitive in a global environment.

One point was population, the other was inflation. If inflation is growing, then something can be said about that, about the need for government to spend more because its costs are going up, the same as everybody else's costs are going up. In the case of government, it might be costs for fuel, for government vehicles, the same as it might be cost for fuel for your average Nova Scotian, in their monthly home budget.

This bill requires government to limit its year-over-year percentage increase in spending, based on whether or not the population of the province is growing and based on the inflation rate of the province. What have we seen in recent years? We've seen, after this year, in the recent budget, \$1.67 billion in debt. That works out to \$1,700 per person in the province and that is for every person, including the five-year-old who is going to start school, or maybe has started school this part year. That is \$1,700 more that they owe and that we all each owe, just to pay for what has happened in the past five years. Madam Speaker, to me that is irresponsible and that's why we are putting this bill forward - so that that can't happen in the future.

We also look at the fact - I'm going to raise this point about the HST in a minute - but I want to make the point if we don't do something to control spending now, it just spirals out of control. A government that doesn't tighten the reins and bring budgets into

balance - as soon as it starts adding budget deficits every year it starts adding increased interest payments on the debt every year thereafter to pay for that incremental debt.

The next point about this bill is that it requires the Minister of Finance to table a budget that is balanced. People say well, governments can't always run balanced budgets. I believe in economies that are cyclical, and I think of resource-based economies like Alberta, they certainly have had periods in their history where, because of the cyclical nature of their economy, because of the oil and gas there, one could see them needing to run deficit budgets. In this province I think we've run them for far too long and we've run them at points in history when they weren't necessary.

Madam Speaker, the problem with it is it's all those things that I've just been speaking about, that we're just adding more debt. If we look at our Nova Scotian economy, our economy is very defensive. We have one in three people who work for the government and, as we know, a very stable part of the economy. We don't have fluctuations in our economy to the same degree as they would in a place like Alberta.

Also, Madam Speaker, while we don't have those fluctuations, we - I'm going to move on from that, I want to talk about HST because I know I have only a couple of minutes left here.

In terms of the HST, we've seen the federal government reduce the HST by 2 per cent, which certainly helps people by keeping more money in their pockets when they go to buy things, and keeping more money in the economy. What we've seen is this government take that benefit away and increase the HST by 2 per cent. That is putting strain on the economy and it is taking money out of people's pockets to the tune of \$1,000 per person since that increase in tax has been implemented by this government.

Madam Speaker, this bill would reduce the provincial portion of the HST back to 8 per cent, and we believe that is something that would help the economy. All of these things are important in our minds, because one of the most important things we can be doing is creating an economy where entrepreneurs in this province can create jobs because when people have jobs it takes care of a lot of the problems people face every day. They can pay their bills, they are gainfully engaged in something they enjoy, they feel productive - and we know that certainly has social benefits. When people are feeling good about their state in life, families are healthier, we see fewer instances of abuse and, of course, we know that saves government money, too.

With this kind of legislation I believe we will build a better economy, and with a better economy we can grow tax revenues through that economic growth instead of increasing taxes. That is the direction we would like to take this province, Madam Speaker. With that, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to join in the debate on Bill No. 4, the Third Party's bill on balanced budgets.

You know, Madam Speaker and members of this Chamber, Tommy Douglas balanced 17 budgets in the Province of Saskatchewan when he was the Premier. He did it without having to have any legislation like this in place. He did it because he had common sense and compassion and values that said it's important to live within your means and, at the same time, delivered good public services for the people of Saskatchewan in the things they needed.

These are the values and the philosophy of this government, Madam Speaker. Our government committed to balancing the budget before we were elected in 2009 and we believe that balanced budgets are the most responsible way for governments to manage public money. However, we do not subscribe to the idea that you have to have a rigid set of rules that you always need to follow, regardless of the circumstances. You have to look at the circumstances in which you govern, and govern accordingly. When we came into government, it's well accepted that we did so during the worst global recession in decades. In those conditions, governments require some flexibility. Imagine if a government in a global recession withdrew their spending capacity right at the same time that your economy is contracting because the private sector is contracting - the hardship that that would impose on the people, the small and medium businesses in your province.

In fact, history is there for us to see when that occurred. There is quite a large body of information and analysis on the Great Depression and why it lasted so long. In many cases, there were governments that were fundamentally opposed to using their capacity as government to borrow, to spend, and to try to even out the difficulties that people were experiencing during a recession. We have to remember that during those times, the Great Depression, there were no social programs, either. There are many lessons we've learned from the Great Depression - many of us have learned, but apparently the Progressive Conservative Party isn't one of those entities that has learned from the Great Depression.

When we came to government, we sought the advice of expert economists, the best in our region. They confirmed that we had inherited a structural deficit left behind by the Leader of the Third Party, and they advised us - in fact, they supported the Premier's decision to rescind previously-legislated balanced budget legislation.

Let me read precisely what they say in their report for the members here, and I will table this after I read it. On Page 1 of their report, they say, "The panel supports the province's decision to rescind the balanced budget legislation and urges that it not replace it with another rigid fiscal rule."

So we followed the recommendations of the expert panel. We also listened to Nova Scotians. They recommended that we do a very broad-based consultation, and the former

Minister of Finance did precisely that. The outcome of that was a plan to get us back to balance over a four-year cycle.

We are one of only four provinces in Canada with a balanced budget this year, and we will be the only province in Atlantic Canada with a balanced budget. We are very proud of that fact. We have had to make some hard decisions, but we've also made some very compassionate decisions. We reduced the unsustainable level of government spending that went on for a decade under the previous Progressive Conservative Government, but we didn't adopt austerity as our mantra. We didn't rush to balance at any cost. We worked with our municipal and federal partners to improve our roads and our infrastructure to keep Nova Scotians working during tough times.

We reined in the 6 per cent to 8 per cent year-over-year increases in spending that the Opposition, particularly the Official Opposition, likes to call cuts when, in fact, what it was was a slowing of the rate of growth in departmental spending. Regardless of the political rhetoric, Madam Speaker, we soldiered on and brought forward a plan that did not slash programs, like other governments had done, with the incredibly negative consequences that we have seen.

We temporarily raised the HST by two points and I'd like to point out that this bill is redundant in that it purports to legislate what already is in legislation, which is a gradual reduction in the HST, beginning in July 2014 and indeed, we reined in the rate of growth in spending.

We also offset some of these impacts of tax increases on the lowest-income Nova Scotians by introducing the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit, as well as initiatives that would assist seniors, low-income seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement so they no longer would pay provincial income tax.

All Nova Scotians have shared in getting our province back to balance but everyone will also share in the benefits of the hard work, as we return to a more favourable financial position. We have been able, in the budget, as a result of the balanced approach we took, we've been able to reinvest in important things: children's health, children's dental, things that have been cut by previous governments, both Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments. In that way our budget is truly balanced, Madam Speaker, and with those few remarks, I'll take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, I'm happy to join the debate today here on Opposition Day. We're debating a Tory bill, a Progressive Conservative Bill No. 4, the Balanced Budget Act. Really the debate has been wide-ranging, as is clear for anybody who has been paying attention. Again, the bill itself is rather simplistic.

I noticed the minister saying things like there's no need for legislation and we don't need to be so rigid or have a rigid set of rules like that. I think what Nova Scotians need to know is that there was balanced budget legislation in the province and that it was repealed when the NDP came to power. So when they had the first opportunity, they did not have a balanced budget and it was necessary to repeal the legislation that said you should have it.

I think for anybody who is paying attention, it's pretty clear that having this legislation is not going to be meaningful because any government will have the chance to do exactly what the NDP did when it didn't suit them and that is to repeal the legislation. So it's really not worth much at all in terms of guiding the future of our province, guiding the spending or the management of our province.

There are a lot of things that have to be taken into account for governments, I know that. The accounting and the financing is not an easy matter, it's not simplistic, and a bill like this makes it rather simplistic. I think the main point is that this legislation we're discussing really does not have any place in our government, because not only here but in other provinces, it has been shown to be very easy to overturn such legislation.

It is interesting that the government tried this year, themselves, in the budget and the Financial Measures (2013) Bill, to put exactly those kinds of simplistic things into place to try to legislate certain taxes that they have set rates on, or reduced or eliminated taxes on, and tried to set that into legislation, as if that rigid approach is going to be any different than what the minister says here about having a rigid approach to a balanced budget. If it's good in one place it should be good in both, but it's the political attempt to basically create a scenario where they can mislead Nova Scotians about what the other Party's intent is, because if we vote against the Financial Measures (2013) Bill, there might be the idea that we would be voting against the tax benefits that have been given to Nova Scotians.

And nothing could be further from the truth, but there are political ploys and political games that are played here, that are done to try to jam the other Party into the corner. There are a lot of sports analogies used, Madam Speaker, as you know here in the House - about getting your elbows up or getting people in the corner and things like that which have to do with, I guess, hockey or other sports. I don't always relate well to those analogies, but I get the idea, I know what they're saying when they say they're trying to jam us one way or the other.

As I said in the dying days of the PC Government, they tried to do some creative accounting which would allow them to pretend that there was a surplus, and I'm thinking of the 2009 budget that didn't pass because we went to an election. But in that creative accounting there was the prepayment to universities, that was in more recent memory. The first time there was a big loading up of this year's cost on last year to show a balanced budget - that is exactly what the Progressive Conservative Government did. The NDP Opposition at the time howled about what a misuse of power that was, they howled and

complained that you can't do that, you can't prepay the universities all this money and pretend that you have a balanced budget, which did keep the Progressive Conservatives within their legislation, but it was very much creative accounting, it was very much taking liberties with the truth, really, in terms of how the financial figures were being presented.

That became a bit of a moot point because we had an election, a new government was elected and, lo and behold, Madam Speaker, did they not do the same thing after hiring Deloitte to come in to tell them what the problem was and create, under false assumptions, an idea that we were going to face an enormous deficit if we didn't have the NDP riding on a white stallion to rescue us from this made up \$1.4 billion deficit that they saw coming. Then they created their own fiction, and part of that relied on the very same tool, the same accounting mechanism that the Progressive Conservatives had done in 2009, which was prepaying universities.

The NDP had learned well and they did exactly the same thing, only now they weren't howling about it, they were boasting about it - and even though the Deloitte study said don't do that anymore, don't prepay universities and build up your deficit from the year before to show a budget that's balanced.

I think there is an important thing here, Madam Speaker, that people need to remember. You can bring forth a balanced budget, but the real truth and the real proof of it is if you can come in at the end of the year in a surplus position. That is not happening. The NDP Government of our day promised in the election four years ago that they would have balanced budgets every year, that has not happened every year, but it was important to the scenario in an election year that they show a balanced budget.

We all know that the minister, herself, mused very loudly about the possibility that this wasn't going to be possible, it might not happen, right up to just short weeks before the budget came down. Clearly there was a lot of uncertainty about whether this could be done and then somehow, just as the cartoonist showed in the paper, the Premier pulled a rabbit out of a hat, somehow this great big financial rabbit got pulled out of the hat and we see a balanced budget, so-called, based again on the incorrect handling of finances which is to prepay universities, or prepay anybody in a period of time when the funds don't correlate to - they don't belong in that previous year, they belong this year, in the costs that are this year's.

Madam Speaker, we've been over that on every discussion, and time and time again I have shown that this budget is not balanced and the Leader of the Third Party has shown the same thing. We've been on the same page on this one (Interruptions) It is not - we have shown it. I guess some of the members want to hear again how this happened, how is it that it is not balanced?

It's not balanced because \$34 million was prepaid to Acadia and NSCAD, and that \$34 million should have shown up in this year because it relates to running and operating

those universities this year, but we gave it to them on March 28th, the last business day of 2012-13. Because of that, last year's deficit for the province went up by \$34 million, but really the government didn't care too much, because it was already \$277 million or \$290 million in deficit, so just push a bit more into that year.

The most important thing was the narrative for this year - what would show as a balanced budget this year - so that there would be a good story to start the election. But that is not the way you balance a budget in reality. That's the way you manipulate figures to look balanced, and we don't accept it. We say it is not a balanced budget. That's only one thing that was done. There were other things done. And I will go - I would love to go to (Interruptions) Only two universities, why only two? Maybe it was okay to show a razor-thin surplus. You could have prepaid all of them, because you broke the rule anyway.

Madam Speaker, the NDP, the Finance Ministry, and the people who constructed this budget all broke the rule that Deloitte set. Deloitte, who are often touted as being these great saviours of the government, having set out the course, specifically said, don't prepay universities. But if you're going to break the rule, why not go whole hog? You could have shown a \$300 million surplus, which would have been just as fictitious, by paying everything last year. Let's just pay everybody last year and show a billion dollar deficit last year.

Madam Speaker, is my time elapsed? Ten seconds left. My point is, this year's budget is not balanced. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, I do want to say that I appreciate the remarks, or at least most of them, of the member who just spoke.

I do want to say to the Minister of Finance, who spoke a few moments ago, who brought up my time when I worked as chief of staff with Premier John Hamm and questioned the financial record of that year. I just so happen to have with me, Madam Speaker - quite by luck - the Budget Highlights for the fiscal year 2004-2005, the last year that I did work with Premier Hamm before I went and ran the credit unions for six years. I just want to share with the Minister of Finance the record in that budget that she finds offensive.

I quote from the Budget Highlights document of the government - not a partisan document, the government itself - that it's the third consecutive balanced budget; that the actual surplus for the previous year, 2003-2004, was reported as \$14,500,000; that the surplus contained in that budget is \$2,100,000 - and I know the actual result came in much higher than that. In addition, the budget contained the province's first deposit in its debt retirement fund - something we used to have that seems to have gone strangely missing in the last few years, Madam Speaker.

Here's another fun one. In this last budget that I worked on with Premier Hamm, the one the Minister of Finance disagrees with so much, GDP is forecast to grow by 3.4 per cent. That's 68 times the 0.2 that the current government is turning in, Madam Speaker. Federal sources of revenue grew by a grand total of \$6 million under the Liberals, of course, but my point is that the government of that time was not getting a windfall from Ottawa like this one is. Provincial sources grew by \$267 million - 8 per cent - because the economy was strong.

So here's the first lesson: one of the most important ways to balance a budget is to run a strong economy, like we did then, unlike the 0.2 that we see today. Now, Madam Speaker, I do also want to point out that in the budget, the last one I worked on, the small business tax threshold was implemented a year earlier than scheduled, and set at \$300,000, which is the exact opposite of the current government's approach, which is to cut back on the small business threshold, make it harder for small businesses to get ahead.

Seniors living in nursing homes will no longer pay for their medical costs. I know the NDP like to take credit for it, but they seem to have forgotten that it was actually a Progressive Conservative Premier, Premier Hamm, who relieved seniors of that cost in the very budget she's now criticizing. And it contains funding for long-term care beds, something we are still waiting to see from the NDP, which gets more money than any government in their history and still can't manage to balance the budget or buy a single new long-term care bed. I'll table that for the benefit of all members who criticized the past when they've managed to make things much worse.

I do also want to say that I hear the Minister of Finance continue to claim that she somehow inherited a structural deficit, whatever that is - can't audit one, the Auditor General can't find one. In fact, the Auditor General went looking to see if what she was saying was accurate and he said in his most recent report, and I quote directly from the Auditor General, "The following exhibit shows the fluctuation in Nova Scotia's results over the past five years and does not indicate the existence of a structural deficit."

There's a myth that we can finally put to bed. Whatever deficits we have today are 100 per cent entirely NDP deficits. They inherited a stronger economy. They inherited a surplus. They inherited a debt that was heading down and they made them all go the wrong way. That's the problem.

I don't want to let the Liberals totally off the hook. The Liberals like to talk about creative accounting, but the mother of all creative accounting, ever in the history of Nova Scotia, was the Liberal attempt to hide \$600 million off the books of the province, add it to the debt and the backs of our kids and not count it. That has got to win an Academy Award for creativity as the most creative of creative accounting. There should be an Oscar for that. Of course, we're still paying for that, even today. We'll pay for that for years to come and our kids will pay for it and that's why it's wrong; it's wrong.

It's time that these ways were put behind us. Who loses when we have a government, whether it's Liberal or NDP, that does these things, who loses? They will eventually because they're only fooling themselves when they claim a surplus when it's actually a deficit. The Liberals only fool themselves when they don't count \$600 million of spending and try to tell us that their budget is balanced.

I've provided the record - Premier Hamm in his time - it was very clear and audited. That's the right way to do it. That's why Nova Scotians have as much respect as they do for Premier Hamm, particularly the way he managed our economy and the finances of the province. That is what we need to do.

I return to my question, who loses when a government - whether NDP or Liberal - goes so horribly wrong? It's the young Nova Scotians who lose. They're the ones who are left to pay the bills when they rack up our debt, when they pass those bills on to someone else to pay - \$1,700,000,000 under the NDP, \$600 million and hiding under the Liberals. It's our kids who have to mop up the mess and pay those bills. That is why the Auditor General has said that it is an ethical question, whether it's right for governments to run deficits of this magnitude.

I know I heard the Minister of Finance say, well, in the depression someone figured out that you should spend to make things better. You know what? We all get that, that's Economics 101. The problem for the NDP is the other side of that theory is that you have to make up for those deficits with surpluses someday. But they've never done that. They run deficit after deficit; they only take up the deficit side. Maybe the reason is because we have a weak economy and they like it that way because then they can trot out that old excuse that they can continue to borrow to infinity, because the economy is weak.

They have it exactly wrong. The best way to balance the budget, pay for the services that we need, and stop passing on the bills for somebody else to pay, is by growing the economy and creating jobs and opportunity here in Nova Scotia. The best way to do that is not by \$200 million job schemes that lose jobs, not by shovelling bucketfuls of money off to companies that come and go, the best way to do that is by lowering taxes for everybody so families can start to get ahead again; like the HST, which this bill also talked about, a real plan to lower the HST equally, for everybody, by paying for it by stopping wasteful government spending; like the 10 health authorities and all those CEOs and VPs that the NDP defend, that the Liberals finally yesterday got on - we raised that a year ago last Fall as the right way to go, and the Tim Hortons that they subsidize and so on, that is the best way to create jobs and grow the economy, lower the HST, pay for it by stopping wasteful government spending, create more jobs.

Only one Party is talking about that; they're the Party of debt, they're the Party that hides it. We're the Party that stops it in its tracks and creates real jobs for young Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Progressive Conservative Party.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I want to thank everybody for a great debate. That concludes the business for today so I'll let the Government House Leader tell us what else is going to be going on tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I wonder if we could have the consent of the House to revert to the order of business, Presenting Reports of Committees.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Madam 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. 51 - Financial Measures (2013) Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendment.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, tomorrow, after the daily routine and Question Period we will be doing Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 3, 32, 36, 37, 42, 54 and 57; Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 and Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

With that, I move that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow from the hours of 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at 12:00 noon.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

“Therefore be it resolved that unlike the previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments, the NDP Government’s plan for health care is putting patients first while reducing administration costs.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - HEALTH CARE: NDP GOV’T. - PRIORITY

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, I really do appreciate that. I heard on the news just a while ago that today is the International Day of Love so I’m expecting a wave, a veritable tidal wave of love to come from that side, I can already feel a little bit of it coming that way.

AN HON. MEMBER: What’s not to love?

MR. RAMEY: What is not to love? Anyway, to debate the resolution that not unlike previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments, the NDP health care plan is putting patients first while reducing administrative spending. I’m very pleased to speak on this because in all seriousness it is a very, very complex and important issue for our province. I’m sure many are aware that health care continues to be the largest portion of the provincial budget, I think we all know that. In fact the health care budget accounts for about 41 per cent of our total provincial spending this year and I think equates to roughly \$3.9 billion, with a “b”.

Madam Speaker, under previous governments, health care budgets had been allowed to grow at an unsustainable pace and that has been talked about in here quite a little bit, in fact for a long time this province saw the health care budget increase roughly 6 per cent or 7 per cent per year, and that clearly is not sustainable. Yet despite those increases to

which I just referred, there was no real improvement in health care outcomes and that's the very sad part of the whole thing.

It was clear, when we formed a government, that we had to do things differently within our health care system and we knew we had to find innovative and better ways to deliver services, while reducing unnecessary spending. Our government was not content to repeat the failed health policies of previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments. We knew we had to make a change, not easy to do, a lot of planning involved, but we set about doing it.

We knew, for instance, just as an example, that paying nurses to leave Nova Scotia - I think to the tune of around 1,000 of them - like the Liberals did, would devastate our health care system and that applied as well to closing hospitals and acute care beds. I think, during a previous Liberal Government, about 1,500 were closed. Let's remember that it was the Liberals who invented the unfair, and I would say downright cruel, practice of charging seniors for health care in long-term care facilities. I think we all remember that, a practice that forced people to sell their family farms or homes and hand over their life savings to the bureaucracy. Those were bad days, indeed.

The Liberals seemed to be masters of creating bureaucracies that waste lots of money and I'll talk about that in a second. They created the current health boards and the individual bureaucracies that accompany them and now they once again think they can fix health care by building a bigger - what are we going to call it - super bureaucracy based in Halifax, a Halifax-centric bureaucracy (Interruption) Super board. As usual, the Liberals are out of touch with Nova Scotians who only want, this is what I think Nova Scotians want, they want better health care, sooner.

Nova Scotians want to know that when they need health services they can get them and they want to know that their emergency rooms are going to be open. Not that long ago people couldn't be sure that their ER would be open when they needed it. The former Progressive Conservative Government was frozen with really no plan for emergency care and both of those Parties were ready to give up on ERs. Both the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives said 24/7 access to emergency departments couldn't be done. Well, Madam Speaker, we said, just watch us and we did it.

Our Collaborative Emergency Centres are ensuring that in communities across Nova Scotia, the people who need emergency health care are getting it, any time of the day or night. For instance, in Tatamagouche today, residents know that they can rely on their ER. Just a couple of years ago the emergency room there was closed on almost a weekly basis. In just six months, in 2011, the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, in Tatamagouche, was closed 856 hours. Just one year later, with their new CEC in place, that number had dropped to - are you ready for this - 13 hours from 856. Madam Speaker, that is significant.

I'll table this. What this says here is a comparison of CEC closure hours from date of opening to ED closures, emergency department closures, in the same time period for the previous year, here we go: South Cumberland Community Care Centre, Parrsboro, closed 426 hours, under the new plan, closed 12; All Saints Springhill Hospital, 688 hours closed before, with a new CEC, 20; Tatamagouche, I just mentioned that one, Lillian Fraser, 856 down to 13; Annapolis Community Health Centre, 60 down to zero; North Cumberland, 64 down to zero.

So today, thanks to the NDP, a mother in Tatamagouche, who needs to take her child to the ER - and we're getting lots of screaming over there, Madam Speaker - but a woman in Tatamagouche who needs to take her baby to the ER during the night knows that she can. What will the Liberal super bureaucracy do for her? Well, zippo, nothing.

In the last four years we have turned the corner on the ER crisis in Nova Scotia and we can't go back now. I know they want to go back, I know the member for Cape Breton North wants us to return to the bad old days - not going to do it. So let the Liberals and let the Progressive Conservatives focus on health bureaucracy, let them do that. Let them take this plan to Nova Scotians, let them do it and say, this is how we'll fix health care, we'll build another big bureaucracy. That won't solve the problem.

In the meantime, we're just going to continually keep on fixing health care. In just four years we've found ways to save money that don't impact on care. We're saving money by buying prescription drugs in bulk, something that was never done before, and by putting a cap on generic drug prices. Our shared services initiative is reducing redundancy and freeing up money that can now be spent on front-line health care. This initiative is already resulting in millions in savings, and there is still much more work to be done. We know that, and we're going to keep doing it.

We're cutting up to 20 senior executive positions, and we've reduced administration spending from above the national average to below. I think the Minister of Health and Wellness in this House today mentioned that: we're below the national average, and we were way above it before.

We've done this through moderate, measured changes that won't throw our system into chaos, as happened in Alberta. We are already saving \$8.8 million per year without affecting patient care and without moving all health care decision making out of local communities and into Halifax. We do not want to move health care decisions out of the regions. The people in the regions know what they need, and we're going to listen to them.

The Liberal plan will throw the entire system into chaos, as it did in Alberta in 2009. This is what happened in Alberta, Madam Speaker: five years and almost \$1 billion later, Alberta has seen worsening front-line care, doctors leaving the province, and almost no administrative savings. In fact, just last month Alberta announced that in order to reduce admin costs by 10 per cent, they would freeze salaries and implement a hiring freeze in

health administration. That's the Liberal plan, and that's the Tory plan in Alberta. That's not our plan.

Since the creation of the super-bureaucracy in Alberta, emergency room doctors have revolted, paramedics have called the system on the edge of failure, and the head of the Alberta sciences association said the situation has gotten so out of hand that we now have patients calling 911 from the ER because they waited so long in hospital emergency departments. Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, patients calling 911 from the emergency department? I'll table those.

In contrast, in Nova Scotia ER closures are down, patients are getting better care through CECs and 811, and Nova Scotia has the best, most stable relationship with front-line health care workers that we've had in decades. We've done it with the co-operation of X-ray technicians, lab technicians, and doctors. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to join in late debate today. I'd have to say first, right off the mark, that I believe the member for Lunenburg West perhaps lost some pages along the way - definitely lost some material on his way here for late debate.

First of all, look, any time we have people in the front-line who are able to provide primary care, such as we have in all but one CEC, we have to remind Nova Scotians that they do not have emergency care. In fact, in the CECs, the nurse and the paramedic - the PCP - they've had to call 911, because they can't deliver clot-busting drugs. They can't do the emergency work.

I think it's a great thing. It's a great comfort to have somebody available, but it is not emergency care. That's what we need to know, and that's what the communities now are starting to discern. They can go there and they can make an appointment with their doctor for the next day, which I think is a very good thing.

What the member for Lunenburg West really forgot to tell us is the kind of state of the union about where we are in terms of some of the measurables of health care in the province. I was hoping that he was going to talk about the 2,200-plus patients waiting for knee replacement. You know, that's what's on the minds of Nova Scotians. And he conveniently forgot to state that 85 per cent of those waiting for a knee replacement have been waiting longer than the national average. That's the reality that we're facing in our province. Those waiting for a hip replacement also didn't make the honourable member's remarks - 867 were waiting as of last month, 72 per cent of whom are waiting well beyond the national benchmark. And you know, even with the blitz, we didn't reach the goal that was outlined there.

I think the honourable member's speech also lost another page along the way, which highlighted that over 4,000 patients are waiting for cataract surgery and 47 per cent of these 4,000 have been waiting longer than what has been deemed to be a national benchmark. I think anytime we stand in our place, we need to talk about some of the realities that do face us here in the province around health care challenges.

When he talks about the emergency rooms being open, the emergency rooms are open, but they're not providing emergency care. They're providing primary care. He also should have told us about the overall picture of emergency rooms for the province, which - the last year that there's statistical data available for, 17,717 hours of emergency room closures. That's the reality, Madam Speaker. So I guess that page managed to slip out of the honourable member's speech as well. To do the math on that, that represents 738 days of closures, and we have almost two years' worth of closures in a year.

It's hardly a record to be proud of, especially when it was the NDP Government. We all know that in the election of 2009, one of the major promises was that emergency care, emergency rooms, the one at Soldiers' Memorial, the one in North Sydney, that those would remain open. The one in the honourable Government House Leader's in New Waterford, that that emergency room would remain open, and we know that is not the case.

Madam Speaker, recently Capital Health released its strategic indicators report, and the results are telling. The average wait time in February 2013, for an MRI - definitely a page missing on this one - 201 days waiting for an MRI, close to seven months. And let's not forget, an MRI is a test which will determine a future course of treatment, and does not represent the full wait a patient would endure.

So there are no targets being met in any of the major emergency departments with Capital Health. In fact, the average wait that a TAS level three patient waiting to see a physician at the Dartmouth General is 170 minutes and the standard - here's the standard - is 30 minutes. At the Halifax Infirmary, the wait for TAS level three patient is 150 minutes and the standard is 30 minutes. So, Madam Speaker, for the benefit of the honourable member, a TAS level two patient is classified as having an urgent condition that could progress into a more serious problem.

So I would challenge the honourable member to speak to these patients to see whether they believe the NDP health care system is serving the patient. We all know one of the areas where we thought we would see progress over the last four years, Madam Speaker, and that is in the area of recruitment and retention of physicians. I know the honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture would love to stand here today and tell the House, and put on the record, the phenomenal need of general practitioners in his community. I believe that is going to be one of the things he's going to hear on the doorsteps soon: I don't have a family doctor, I rely on the emergency room. I know in parts of the Valley that's going to be on the minds of people: I don't have a family doctor.

With 50,000 to 60,000 patients who don't have family doctors in our province, this is a major health concern. Just today I met with representatives of the Canadian Cancer Society, and the fact is, without a family doctor, some of that early detection just does not take place. As a result, we have Nova Scotians who are progressing to an advanced level of cancer before they show up at an emergency room and realize that they are being told they have a very serious problem.

Right now when we take a look, other communities needing physicians - I'm surprised that the member for Lunenburg West did not point out that in his area, Bridgewater, Caledonia, Chester, Lunenburg, Mahone Bay, New Germany - all of these communities are in need of family physicians. In fact, down in southwestern Nova Scotia right now, the call is out for 14 physicians. That page definitely fell out of the honourable member's prepared speech for today.

We have lost a world-renowned specialist in Dr. Ivar Mendez. We've lost Dr. Don Weaver. We've lost who will prove to be, I think, one of Canada's finest orthopaedic surgeons in Dr. Andrea Veljkovic from the Valley. These are departures of specialists, and I think they speak for themselves. The honourable member railed about making substantive changes in the way we deliver health care in the province, and we know that we have to change the way we deliver health care in our province. In just one year the new federal Health Accord is going to give us less dollars. We have to move every practitioner that we possibly can to the front line in order to look after Nova Scotians. In a very short time we will have one in four, moving on to one in five, Nova Scotians who are senior citizens.

We do need change, and with that I take my place.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It's my pleasure to stand and speak to this motion submitted by the member for Lunenburg West. I'm going to echo a lot of the things that we've heard from the member for Kings West, and it's the story of all the things that were missing from the member for Lunenburg West's speech, which was probably prepared for him by the NDP caucus office, who try to come up with good things to say.

The MRI thing - I need to thank the staff for this one - is longer than the wait they're going to have to make the Muskrat Falls decision in the URB. The six months' waiting period for the URB decision - well, people wait longer than that for an MRI. It's frustrating for me, who came from a government that brought the largest number of MRIs into our province to make sure that the ratio per population was one of the highest, to see that it's being squandered. That opportunity is squandered away by a system that has not changed; as a matter of fact, it's gone backwards since this government took power four years ago.

We keep hearing worse things. If I talk to the member for Cape Breton North, I ask, how's your ER doing? You know what the answer is? It's that you have to call ahead of

time. How many emergency rooms do you know in the Province of Nova Scotia that you have to call ahead of time to make sure it's going to be open, because it's closed way more than it's ever open? Just for those people who are watching TV today, in case you don't know the number, 794-8521, call that phone number to make sure if the Northside Emergency Room is open, because it is closed more than it is open.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the member that it's not appropriate to offer messages to the viewing public. The debate is held within the Chamber, so just be mindful of that in a further debate. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much.

Or maybe for the member for Kings West, if he happens to be in Cape Breton North, he can call that phone number just to make sure the emergency room is open - maybe the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, if he's up in North Sydney, if he's got a problem, I would suggest that he go somewhere else. (Interruption)

I'm hearing the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture talking about things and maybe we should talk about how often Shelburne has been closed lately.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: One day.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: It has been a little more than that, Mr. Minister.

Let's talk about Digby and how much that one has been closed, which has been absolutely phenomenal; Soldiers' Memorial in Middleton, again probably closed more than it is open. So as much as this government continues to talk about the CECs (Interruptions) it's not an emergency room, and it's not in every part of the province. So what they really need to be doing, if they believe in this program so much, then roll it out right across the province. Put one in Shelburne, put one in Digby, put one wherever we're having these problems, and let's see how things are working - 17,000 hours of closures across the province; over 17,000 closures across the province is not acceptable and we're nowhere further ahead than we were four years ago.

They said they had a better way; they promised that they had a better way. They promised even further than what they had provided, which was to provide emergency room service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's what the promise once was, that's what the Premier said when he was talking to Nova Scotians and trying to get them to vote for him during the last election. Let's not forget that - what their actual promise was.

Now that added problem that we're going to have that the Minister of Health and Wellness has not been able to answer for us up to now is how are the CECs going to be able to work when the paramedics might end up out on strike? I want to see how that one is going to work because, Madam Speaker, what's happening here is not only are our

paramedics upset with the way they are being paid and a whole bunch of other reasons, but they do provide a very important service to the CECs as those PCPs offer that next level of service to work collaboratively with the RN or the nurse who is on duty.

Without them, what are we going to do? As a matter of fact, the CECs have exacerbated the problem of how many hours you actually can work in the northern part of the province because what is happening is that is taking up 30-some-odd shifts a week that paramedics are moving off to work at the CECs and unable to come back and work in the paramedic system, within the ambulance system, because they're working more than 12 subsequent hours.

What is happening is that ambulances are rolling out across this province right now with one paramedic on them. I don't know about you, but I had an opportunity once or twice to be in an ambulance, how can they actually work on the person who is in the back of the ambulance when you are driving it? You can't do that. That is the danger that this government has started to create in doing one thing without realizing that it has an impact on something else - that always seems to be the problem.

You know the no-doctor issue is probably the most frustrating line out of my briefing book that I had to read on a regular basis. We talked about the availability of doctors in the province and of course the first line that comes out of this minister's mouth and out of the previous minister's mouth was that we have more doctors per capita than any other province.

Well, great, wonderful. What I couldn't say when I was sitting over there is that great, they're all in Halifax and it doesn't mean a hill of beans to somebody who lives in Yarmouth or somebody who lives in Antigonish or somebody who lives in the Valley or the South Shore because they're all here and you can't access them.

Madam Speaker, what happens to my family, my brother and his wife and his daughters, they actually have to drive to Tantallon - from Yarmouth they drive to Tantallon so they can go see a pediatrician. That's not acceptable. Do you know what? There were some great ideas in trying to make sure that we train our own doctors at Dal Medical School, try to provide the seats that are available to them so that we can roll them out into places where we need them in Nova Scotia. Where is that?

As a matter of fact, they botched that one up too because what really happened, when New Brunswick pulled out of the medical school here, to create their own in Saint John, there were even more seats available to Nova Scotia to be able to access that, to provide training for more family physicians that we can use all round the province. What happened to it? They all went to, I believe, Saudi Arabia or somewhere in the Middle East, because this government, that minister, couldn't find a way to make it work, or did not understand the implications of making something like that work.

Too many people in southwestern Nova Scotia, whether they live in Barrington, whether they live in Woods Harbour, or Pubinco, or Argyle, all around that area, there are lots of people that still tell me, on a daily basis, I don't have a doctor, or even worse, I had a doctor, I've had two or three doctors, but they keep leaving on me. Every time that I hear that minister say that we have CAPP, we have the training, we train international students, or international doctors, that's great for a year and they get their training and they move off to Toronto or they go where they want to practise because they don't want to practise in southwestern Nova Scotia. Why don't we find students who are smart, ready, willing, and able to go through the medical school program right here at Dalhousie University and go back and work in their own hometown? Wouldn't that just be - it's almost so easy that it's almost . . .

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Logical.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: It's almost logical - thank you very much to the member for Dartmouth North.

Madam Speaker, what the member for Lunenburg West didn't say is that things have gotten worse since this government has taken power, absolutely worse. I continue to hear from many Nova Scotians - and maybe they're not hearing from them because they are apparently turning a deaf ear - that health care is still not an important thing in Nova Scotia. Maybe that's the corner they haven't been around yet. I think we should invest more in health care. We need to find better ways to find the efficiencies that things work. (Interruption) The corner, the cliff, they're so far around that corner they'll never find their way back.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight. I just hope that this government can do better or it's time to replace them.

MADAM SPEAKER: I want to thank all members for an engaging debate.

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 6:27 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1117**

By: Hon. Wayne Gaudet (Clare)

Monsieur le Président, par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que l'Université de Moncton a remis un prix spécial aux étudiants qui ont maintenu un haut niveau de rendement scolaire au cours de leurs études au baccalauréat tout en étant engagé dans des activités universitaires et communautaires; et

Attendu que Danielle Bilodeau de Saint-Martin de Clare a mérité le prix Pascal; et

Attendu que Danielle Bilodeau recevra le prix Bell-Aliant lors de l'Atlantic Journalism Awards;

Qu'il soit résolu que cette Assemblée offre ses félicitations à Danielle Bilodeau et lui souhaite succès pour les années à venir.

RESOLUTION NO. 1118

By: Ms. Pam Birdsall (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia is an initiative that focuses on healthy eating and physical activity, with a plan that shifts the emphasis from weight to health, and outlines priority actions to create environments that make it easier for Nova Scotians to eat well and be active; and

Whereas the Thrive! program After the Bell aims to increase physical activity in students aged 12 to 15 years, the age at which physical activity starts to decline; and

Whereas the Mahone Bay Centre has received funding from the Thrive! program to offer junior high girls an opportunity to take part in physical activities like yoga, badminton, and more two times per week free of charge, one of six communities offering the program with the aim of keeping kids active;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Mahone Bay Centre on receiving the Thrive! funding for the After the Bell program, which will encourage physical activity in junior high girls in the Mahone Bay area.

RESOLUTION NO. 1119

By: Ms. Vicki Conrad (Queens)

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

Whereas successful entrepreneurs recognize the needs of our communities and take action to satisfy those needs; and

Whereas Queens County, like many rural communities, has a growing population of senior citizens who would benefit from personal assistance in their own homes; and

Whereas Marie Barnes, a registered nurse in Queens County, has teamed up with Always Home Homecare to open the business's first satellite office to serve the needs of Queens County's independent senior citizens;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Marie Barnes for her commitment to the needs of Queens County's independent senior citizens.

RESOLUTION NO. 1120

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas today marks Nova Scotia's first annual Doctors' Day, a day meant to show gratitude and share stories about the amazing contributions made by doctors across our province; and

Whereas May 1st was chosen to honour Emily Stowe, the first female physician in Canada; and

Whereas every day, doctors in this province see an average of 30,000 patients, working tirelessly to better the health of Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize May 1st as Doctors' Day in this province and work hard to one day ensure that every Nova Scotian has easy access to a physician so they too can share stories and benefit from better health care.

RESOLUTION NO. 1121

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas David Dickinson of West Brook, Cumberland County, was honoured by the Maple Producers' Association of Nova Scotia for his contribution to the maple industry and was inducted into the Nova Scotia Maple Industry Hall of Fame; and

Whereas David Dickinson is a fourth-generation sugar maker whose family began making sugar when his great-grandfather purchased 100 acres of Crown land at a cost of 44 cents per acre in the 1880s; and

Whereas David is a charter member of the Maple Producers' Association, has served several terms on the board of directors and as president, and in many other leadership roles in the maple and blueberry industries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate David Dickinson on his induction into the Nova Scotia Maple Industry Hall of Fame and wish him many more successful years.

RESOLUTION NO. 1122

By: Hon. Ramona Jennex (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Blomidon Nurseries was most recently named the recipient of the Best Garden Centre Award for the year 2012 at the recent Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce Awards evening; and

Whereas Blomidon Nurseries maintains a very high standard of excellence in sales and service in their local nursery and greenhouse operations in Greenwich; and

Whereas the staff and management of Blomidon Nurseries work very hard to ensure that customers are well cared for and valued;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the achievements of Blomidon Nurseries.

RESOLUTION NO. 1123

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas anniversaries are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it was once said that a marriage anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance, and tenacity, but the order varies for any given year; and

Whereas on February 10, 2013, a very special occasion took place when Carole and Elie Pothier, of Wedgeport, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Carole and Elie Pothier on this remarkable milestone in their life together, and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 1124

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Brady Dunham was one of 13 outstanding Parrsboro citizens to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal at a special event held at the Fundy Geological Museum on January 15th; and

Whereas Brady was nominated for his outstanding community involvement and his many contributions to his town and community; and

Whereas the commemorative medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada and given to those who make outstanding contributions to their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brady Dunham on receiving this outstanding award, and thank him for his contributions to his community and to Province of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 1125

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party)

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

Whereas Dora Fuller was one of 13 outstanding Parrsboro citizens to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal at a special event held at the Fundy Geological Museum on January 15th; and

Whereas Dora was nominated for her outstanding community involvement and her many contributions to her town and community; and

Whereas the commemorative medal was created to mark the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada and given to those who make outstanding contributions to their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dora Fuller on receiving this outstanding award, and thank her for her contributions to her community and to Province of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 1126

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities" as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on March 28, 2013, a very special occasion took place when Nikki and Jules LeBlanc welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nikki and Jules on this miraculous event in their lives, and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1127

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities" as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on March 6, 2013, a very special occasion took place when Amanda and Joseph Muise welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Amanda and Joseph on this miraculous event in their lives, and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1128

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities" as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on January 8, 2013, a very special occasion took place when Candace and Jacques Surette welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Candace and Jacques Surette on this miraculous event in their lives, and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1129

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas “a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities” as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on February 5, 2013, a very special occasion took place when Chrissy and Rejean Doucette welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chrissy and Rejean on this miraculous event in their lives, and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1130

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas on January 27, 2013, family and friends gathered at the West Pubnico Fire Hall at an open house to celebrate the life of my grandmother, Cecile d'Entremont; and

Whereas on January 29th Cecile celebrated her 100th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 100 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cecile d'Entremont on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1131

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on April 21, 2013, Ward Cunningham of Pubnico celebrated his 85th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 85 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ward Cunningham on reaching this milestone in his life and wish him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1132

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on February 17, 2013, Phyllis Swaine of Barrington Passage celebrated her 90th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 90 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Phyllis Swaine on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1133

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on January 19, 2013, Owen Atkinson of Wedgeport celebrated his 90th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 90 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Owen Atkinson on reaching this milestone in his life and wish him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1134

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on December 25, 2013, Irene Manthorne of Yarmouth celebrated her 85th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 85 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Irene Manthorne on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1135

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on March 23, 2013, Floretta d'Entremont of Lower West Pubnico celebrated her 90th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 90 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Floretta d'Entremont on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1136

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle)

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

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on April 6, 2013, Blaise d'Entremont of Lower West Pubnico celebrated his 85th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 85 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Blaise d'Entremont on reaching this milestone in his life and wish him many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1137

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Alex Poulton is a dedicated volunteer for many organizations in Bedford, including the Go Project, a national United Church community outreach program, and Teens United Youth Group at Bedford United Church, where he has participated in many volunteer efforts like serving supper to the homeless and sorting food at Feed Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Alex also volunteers at Bedford United Church, where he has served as a church usher and lay presider, and has volunteered along with his Scout troop to complete various community-building activities, including planting trees at the BMO Four Pad and cleaning up the Sackville River;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alex Poulton on his extensive service to his community, and thank this level-headed, mature young man for his inspiration and encouraging ways.

RESOLUTION NO. 1138

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Amy Pothier has been a Girl Guide for 14 years, earning the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Canada Cord - the highest award a Pathfinder can earn - and the Baden Powell Award - the highest award a Girl Guide can earn; and

Whereas Amy has volunteered with the Sparks as a leader; with Christmas Daddies as a general assistant; with the Sir John A MacDonald High School yearbook committee; at Sackville Sports Stadium, where she developed its Facebook and Twitter accounts and

served as a certified lifeguard for special needs children; and with the Birch Cove After-School Daycare;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Amy Pothier on being such a dedicated and active volunteer in her community, and thank her for making such a difference in the lives of so many.

RESOLUTION NO. 1139

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Kaye and Richard Rudback have been volunteering with Meals on Wheels for five years, delivering nutritious food weekly to Bedford and Sackville residents alike, and also volunteer for numerous other organizations - they're part of the Tartan Team of welcoming volunteers at the Stanfield International Airport, volunteer at Knox United Church, and sell daffodils for the Canadian Cancer Society; and

Whereas Kaye and Dick sell poppies for the Legion, volunteer with Fultz House, Beacon House, and the Sackville Rivers Association, and have volunteered on many HRM special events like Tall Ships, International Hockey, and the Canada Games;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kaye and Dick Rudback on their extensive volunteer commitments to the residents of Bedford, Sackville and beyond, and thank them for making our community such a terrific place in which to live.

RESOLUTION NO. 1140

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Rachel Brouwer has been volunteering with the Bedford Academy Charity Drive for the past five years, starting as a student volunteer and now chairing the student-directed effort, which supports 25 charities; and

Whereas this year Rachel is developing and organizing original fundraising ideas to help the school reach its goal of fundraising \$20,000 for Olivia's Campaign for the IWK, named after a student at the academy who beat cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rachel Brouwer on her dedicated, committed, and positive efforts to make a difference in the lives of so many people, and thank her for being such an exemplary role model.

RESOLUTION NO. 1141

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Barbara Hooper has been a member of the Light Up Bedford Parade for ten years, the last four as committee chair, working to make this annual kick-off to the Christmas season bigger and better each year; and

Whereas Barb is a member of the Bedford Days Organizing Committee, and acts as a volunteer athlete support with the Sackville-Bedford Special Olympics, giving to each organization the benefit of her high standards and unstinting devotion;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Barb Hooper on making such important contributions to Bedford's celebrations, and thank her for being such a shining example to others.

RESOLUTION NO. 1142

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Chris Brown is an active manager with the 1st Bedford Scouting group, administering the group's funds and maintaining its Web site, which has proven to be a valuable communications tool; and

Whereas Chris also manages the Scouts' cabin, which they enjoy during the summer months, and has made a major difference to the quality of the Scouting programs delivered in Bedford;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chris Brown on his dedicated support of Scouting in Bedford and thank him for making a difference in the lives of so many young people.

RESOLUTION NO. 1143

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Marie Corkum has been heavily involved with the Fort Sackville Foundation since 2009, chairing the summer program committee, coordinating the Annual Georgian-style Bedford Days Tea, organizing the annual used book sale (which any bibliophile will tell you is the best deal in town), and also coordinating the highly successful Antiques Road Show-style events; and

Whereas the Fort Sackville Foundation and the Bedford Horticultural Society have both benefited from Marie's energy, dedication, and enthusiasm as she works conscientiously towards each organization's goals;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Marie Corkum on her many volunteer achievements and thank her for her contribution to preserving the heritage of Bedford.

RESOLUTION NO. 1144

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Marina Collier has been a devoted member of the Catholic Women's League for 16 years, holding nearly every executive position and participating in many aspects of parish life, from facilitating Mass to coordinating funeral receptions, and has been awarded the Maple Leaf Service Award, given to CWL members who provide exemplary service to the league; and

Whereas this modest, dedicated women also volunteered with Feed Nova Scotia for 13 years, with the Multiple Sclerosis Society for 15 years, with the Cancer Society for five years, and has visited weekly at local seniors' residences for the past 14 years;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Marina Collier on her quiet, steadfast service behind the scenes and thank her for her many random acts of kindness - they are most appreciated.

RESOLUTION NO. 1145

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

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

Whereas the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception annually recognizes the extensive efforts of the many volunteers who make Bedford a wonderful place in which to live; and

Whereas Paula Wilson has volunteered with many organizations, including the Multiple Sclerosis Society, which she has supported for 15 years by selling carnations for Mother's Day; and

Whereas Paula has also supported St. Ignatius Church - helping in the office, singing in the choir, serving in the outreach program - and is a constant supporter of the Catholic Women's League, as well as the Cancer Society, Beacon House, and Meals on Wheels;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Paula Wilson on her devoted service to so many organizations, and thank her for making Bedford such a terrific place in which to live.

RESOLUTION NO. 1146

By: Mat Whynott (Hammonds Plains - Upper Sackville)

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

Whereas crosswalk and pedestrian safety has been in and out of the media over the past year after a streak of extremely unfortunate, and in some cases tragic, events at crosswalks in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and

Whereas upon reading a news article about crosswalk safety, Rodd Hasey, a Grade 5 teacher at Hammonds Plains Consolidated School, had his class research the importance of crosswalk safety on the busiest road in their community, the Hammonds Plains Road; and

Whereas each of the students recorded what they saw drivers and pedestrians doing, based on four main actions: pressing the button to indicate they want to walk, making eye contact with the driver, extending hands in the direction they want to go, and showing appreciation to the driver, and their findings indicated that pedestrians require further education on how to safely cross our busy roads;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly stand and recognize that the Grade 5 students of Rodd Hasey's class at Hammonds Plains Consolidated have now become the teachers of crosswalk safety, and that we should all follow their lead and ensure that we use proper crosswalk safety every time we cross the road.