



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordie Gosse

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Fifth Session

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2013

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 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: The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 29(2), I am raising a question of privilege in the House of Assembly at the earliest opportunity upon the first meeting of the House.

Additionally, I would like to highlight that I have served notice of this motion prior to the opening of this session in order to allow your full consideration of the matter. This is because of the severity of the matter - misleading the House, especially on matters as fundamental as the budget of the province, is one of the most serious breaches that one can imagine.

The Auditor General's Report, released on February 6, 2013, clearly stated that the Minister of Finance tabled a budget that he knew was inaccurate. The Auditor General's Report states, "The 2012-13 revenue estimates were overstated by \$27 million." The Auditor General advised that ". . . all information was available to support the change in sufficient time to revise the estimates." Yet the minister made the deliberate choice not to revise the estimates.

In fact, to put aside all questions of whether the minister knew that the revenue estimates were overstated by \$27 million, the current Minister of Finance confirmed that the minister knew. An article from *The ChronicleHerald* dated February 7, 2013, stated the following: "She (the Minister of Finance) believes Steele knew of the decision to understate the deficit. 'Oh yes, I'm sure he did.'"

On April 3, 2012, the former Minister of Finance, the member for Halifax Fairview, rose in the Legislature and stated, "Mr. Speaker, pursuant to a notice of motion given by me on March 30, 2012, and the Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, I have the honour, by command, to present a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Nova Scotia, relating to the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013 . . ."

At that time the minister proceeded to table the following documents: (1) the message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, transmitting the Estimates of Sums required for the consideration of the House; (2) the Estimates Books; (3) the government business plan; (4) the Crown Corporation business plans; and (5) the Estimate and Crown Corporation business plans resolutions.

The minister moved that the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, being Supply to be granted to Her Majesty and the Crown Corporation Business Plans to be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Supply, and delivered his Budget Speech.

The Budget Speech and accompanying documents were all based on the economic assumptions that contained information which was misleading. All of these documents were based on overstated revenue projections. All of the expenditures, all of the programs provided to Nova Scotians, all of the initiatives of the NDP Government were based on a false foundation of misleading information. The Finance Minister tabled all of these documents knowing full well that the information was misleading.

It may be argued by the members of the government that contrary to the Auditor General's assertion that there was sufficient time to revise the estimates, certain timelines impeded the publication of a revised revenue estimate. However, at no time during the debate on the estimates, nor in the House, did the former Minister of Finance draw the attention of the House to the error he knew was imbedded in the estimates. Indeed, rather than correct the \$27 million shortfall in the revenue estimates, or even draw the attention of

the House to that error, the minister stood in his place and told members of the House, “In last year’s fiscal plan, the deficit for 2012-13 was projected to be \$216 million. In this budget, the projected deficit is \$211 million. In other words, we are almost exactly where we said we would be in this point in our Back to Balance plan.”

Think about this for a moment: by hiding the fact that the deficit was actually \$238 million, the minister was able to create a fiction that he had exceeded his target in his Back to Balance plan. With full knowledge that what he was saying was false, he stood in his place and told members of this House that he was almost exactly where he said he would be, that the deficit was \$211 million.

Today in Public Accounts, the deputy minister confirmed that the Finance Minister, the member for Halifax Fairview, knew that the statements that were made in the House were inaccurate. In response to the first question of whether or not the minister was made aware, the deputy minister responded with, “I would say that the Finance Minister of the day knew that there had been a further economic estimate for the fourth quarter data that suggested that the value of the revenues would have been impacted had he decided to incorporate that.”

The deputy minister made further clarification, “The staff made the minister and the Treasury Board very well aware.”

The minister was fully briefed. The minister knew that the deficit was \$238 million, and made the deliberate decision to state to the members of the House of Assembly, “In last year’s fiscal plan, the deficit of 2012-13 was projected to be \$216 million. In this budget, the projected deficit is \$211 million. In other words, we are almost exactly where we said we would be in this point in our Back to Balance plan.”

This is an egregious misrepresentation of the facts by the former Minister of Finance in this House. A shortfall of \$27 million means less money for government programs and calls into question the assertion of the minister and members of the Cabinet that they were meeting and exceeding their targets of 2016. This was an opportunity missed, Mr. Speaker. The minister could have stood in his place, drawn the attention of all members to the revenue projections, and said that due to new information, the revenues estimated are overstated in this budget, and the most accurate deficit estimate is \$238 million. The Finance Minister, the member for Halifax Fairview, not only missed this important opportunity, but at that moment, he made a deliberate choice to mislead this House and all Nova Scotians.

Furthermore, during the Subcommittee on Supply, the Department of Finance was in front of the committee for a number of hours. In fact, members of the government caucus questioned the Finance Minister for a number of hours themselves. At no time when the Department of Finance was in front of the Subcommittee on Supply did the minister draw attention to the overstated revenue estimates. At no time between April 3, 2012, when the

minister gave his Budget Speech in the Legislature, and May 17th, when the House rose to end the Spring session, did the minister draw attention to the overstated revenue estimates.

To put it in perspective, in 2011 a committee of Parliament found the Harper Conservative Government to be in contempt. This is a Conservative Government with whom the NDP Government of Nova Scotia has more in common than the Premier would like to admit. In fact, given the level of secrecy and control the Premier's Office wields over the Cabinet, many would argue the Premier is a quick study of the techniques of control that are being perfected in Ottawa. What makes this case different is that while the Harper Conservatives were found in contempt of Parliament because they refused to produce documents, our very own Finance Minister stood in this House, provided false information, and deliberately misled all members and all Nova Scotians.

This act, committed by the Minister of Finance, impeded the ability of members to discharge their duty. Specifically, the misrepresentation of the revenues estimated resulted in the members' inability to fully debate the estimates as presented, as well as effectively questioning ministers in the House on program spending. May and Beauchesne tell us, "Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively . . . and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions." (May, 203; Beauchesne, 11.)

It is clear that by misleading the House, the minister breached privileges possessed by individual members to discharge their duty, and by putting into question the veracity of the budget voted upon by the Legislature, put into jeopardy ". . . the vindication of [the House's] own authority and dignity." (May, 203; Beauchesne, 11.)

As Campion sets out, disrespect of the House collectively ". . . is the original and fundamental breach of privilege, and almost all breaches can be reduced to it." (Campion, Page 70.)

O'Brien and Bosc tell us, on a matter before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in 2002, that the Clerk of the House in his appearance before the committee, "referred to Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand where it stated that the following elements have to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt for deliberately misleading the House: one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be established that the Member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the Member intended to mislead the House." (O'Brien and Bosc, Page 86, footnote 128.)

In process of satisfying, *prima facie*, the above requirements:

The Auditor General has established that the Finance Minister knew the \$27 million error in ample time to correct the published revenue estimates, and at the very least,

advise the House that the estimates were in error prior to or during the 40 hours of debate on Supply.

The Auditor General has established that the Finance Minister knew at the time that the statement was incorrect. By stating that the revenues were \$27 million less than it was, the minister's assertion that the projected deficit was almost exactly what they said it would be prior to the Back to Balance was misleading.

In knowing that the statement was incorrect and by choosing to perpetuate it, it was the intention of the minister to mislead the House. By deliberately misleading the House, the members individually have been obstructed in the performance of their duties and the House collectively has been obstructed in the execution of its function and therefore the House has the authority to assert privilege. (O'Brien and Bosc, Page 61.)

Beauchesne states, "A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter and should be taken seriously by the House." (Beauchesne, Page 12) and on the face of it this matter of misleading the House with regard to the minister deliberately not disclosing the \$27 million revenue estimate error is a serious breach of privilege and should be deliberated on by this House.

With the above explanation if you, the Speaker, find that I have raised a prima facie question of privilege I shall move the following motion:

Be it resolved that the statements made by the member for Halifax Fairview, while Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget on April 3, 2012 be referred to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs to determine whether he misled the House and thus breached the privileges of the House, and that the committee findings be reported back to the House without delay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: This falls under the category "if you say it enough times, you believe it" and that's what this is before us today, Mr. Speaker. It's just an assertion that they think they made up something, they agree on something, and keep saying it and saying it and it's just not fact. You know, the reality is they voted against the budget anyway, this has been fully canvassed whether it's through estimates, whether today in Public Accounts Committee when it was there. It's just another venue, if you will, of a tired Party with tired tricks. There is no prima facie case here and I would ask you to dismiss it summarily. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to speak briefly on this matter of privilege that you are considering. I hear the Government House Leader describing the

Liberal Party as a tired Party, and I'm not disputing that. I'm just glad they have finally have woken up to this issue because it has certainly been one we've been raising since last February.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that we're back in the House of Assembly, it is proper that you consider this because it is indeed a matter of serious breach of privilege in our opinion. One of the most important duties we have as members of the Legislature is the examination of the province's estimates as presented by the government. It is a duty that goes back as far in time as our parliamentary system itself and the only way that any member can properly exercise that duty is if they are presented with an accurate reflection of the estimates by the Minister of Finance in this House. We now know that we were not given accurate estimates for our consideration regardless of which side of the House a member sits on. That is a serious breach of our privileges.

I heard the Government House Leader say it doesn't matter because those in Opposition voted against the estimates anyway. That is a very weak argument because we were not presented with accurate estimates and neither were government members. I will point out that the estimates are considered to be so important in our system that their acceptance or rejection by this House is considered to be a matter of confidence in the government. How can it be said that this House has expressed its confidence in that government, when the estimates that are the test of that confidence were wrong to begin with?

That's why this is such an important question of privilege. We were not given a chance as members of the Legislature on either side to properly express our confidence in the government because they did not give us accurate estimates to express our views on, yes or no.

Mr. Speaker, I was at Public Accounts this morning. The Auditor General of Nova Scotia, who is an officer of this House, does not belong to any Party, he belongs to all of us, he reports to the House of Assembly in total, and he very quickly put to bed any notion that there was a timeline that could be met or not met. He says in his report, which has been documented and tabled in this House already, that the government knew in time to make the changes if they wished to and that they chose not to. He also says that regardless of timeline, there is no timeline to actually disclose an error.

I know you'll hear that it's not material. The fact of the matter is that today in Public Accounts the Auditor General said the question of materiality is irrelevant, that when you know there's an error and you can fix it, you should - end of story. That did not happen and for me, as a member, for the members of the Liberal caucus and the PC caucus - and I would argue even for the members of the NDP caucus, their privileges were breached because they were not given a truthful set of estimates to express their confidence in the government. I encourage you to rule in favour of the breach of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I noticed in the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition's point of privilege there was additional information considered to the information that was sent to my office beforehand. But I will take the matter under advisement and I will report back to the House at my earliest convenience. Thank you.

The subject for late debate was submitted by the honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House agree that the Liberal Party's opposition to clean, Atlantic Canadian power from Muskrat Falls is in the best interest of the world's fourth largest energy utility, Hydro-Québec, and not Nova Scotia families.

That will be debated at the moment of interruption.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition entitled Mariners Day. The operative clause is:

“We, the people of Nova Scotia do hereby ask that February 18th be declared Mariners Day in Nova Scotia, in honor and remembrance of all Mariners that have been lost and all Mariners who continue to work in Nova Scotia and contribute to our province.”

Mr. Speaker, there is something like 600 names on this petition and I have affixed my signature. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report, entitled *Surplus Crown Property Disposal Report*, for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak about a very important issue facing our society - the issue of bullying and cyberbullying. Whether it is in our classrooms, on our streets, or through a text message, the act of ongoing intimidation and persecution will not be tolerated.

Mr. Speaker, in my time as Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, I've had the great privilege of meeting students all across the province. We've had many conversations about bullying, and I have to say that, as a teacher and as a parent and as a grandparent, those conversations break my heart.

We know bullying and cyberbullying are very serious problems not only in Nova Scotia, but across the country and in most of the world. We know that bullying has a major impact on young people and their families. It affects a person's self-esteem, how they function in school, or whether they want to come to school at all. We also know that it's an extremely complex problem.

There are no simple reasons why some individuals choose to act out with bullying behaviour or why some people are more vulnerable to the effects of bullying. There are no simple answers to address bullying. If we could pass a law this afternoon that would eliminate bullying for good, I would do it, and everyone in this House would do it in a heartbeat, but we know that's not how bullying works.

Students from across Nova Scotia have told me how much it means to them when they have someone they can trust on their side, someone who is listening. Now that person may be a parent, or it may be a teacher or a guidance counsellor. Maybe it's their peer group. But one thing is clear: we need to face bullying together. We must speak up, support each other, and say we will not accept this behaviour in our classrooms and in our communities.

That's why our provincial action plan is called *Speak Up: An Action Plan To Address Bullying and Cyberbullying Behaviour*. This is a foundational document that outlines why we are taking this approach and why we are addressing the root causes of bullying and cyberbullying in this manner. We also have a summary document that outlines our new actions across government. This is called *Speak Up: Actions To Address Bullying and Cyberbullying Behaviour*.

Our government has already taken many steps, such as defining bullying and cyberbullying, tracking its scope and severity, and offering more training to educators and

to school support staff. Our Speak Up plan lays out further actions over three years, from several government departments and agencies, including Education and Early Childhood Development, Justice, Health and Wellness, Community Services, and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, as well as the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Commission.

As I speak today, hundreds of crime prevention advocates, police, teachers, and youth are coming together at the province's annual Crime Prevention Symposium to help build positive relationships that support youth and prevent bullying and other crime. This year's theme is "Building Relationships: A Way Forward for Safer Communities." Participants will discuss building youth leadership capacity, the impact of cultural boundaries, the impact of bullying, building relationships with youth, and the role of police, schools, and others.

The province is also continuing its efforts to educate Nova Scotians about the devastating effects of cyberbullying by introducing a new information sheet about responsible cellphone use. This information sheet is part of the amendments to the Consumer Protection Act around fairness in cellphone contracts and responsible cellphone use, introduced in Spring 2012. I am proud to say that cellphone service providers will be required to provide the one-page sheet, which is available in English and French, to consumers as of May 1, 2013.

To make real change and to build safer communities for our youth, we need a community response for bullying and cyberbullying. Collaboration is the key to achieve this. More than anything, Mr. Speaker, what we need is change in our culture and in our society. We need to help our youth build respectful and responsible relationships. We need to promote awareness and education, not just for students but for parents and other adults, so they can recognize the signs of bullying and know how to respond.

Mr. Speaker, our Speak Up plan contains actions for schools, teachers, communities, police, health care providers, families and provincial government departments. It's about addressing bullying and cyberbullying in many ways, to get at the root cause and to reduce its effects so that our young people may one day see a world where bullying is very rare. We do that by working together, by speaking up to say that bullying will not be tolerated and by helping our youth develop positive and healthy relationships.

Mr. Speaker, we know it won't be easy and the effects won't be instant, but this plan builds on everything that we have learned and lays out a framework that will help us create a safer, more welcoming environment where all of our children can thrive. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the office of the minister for a copy of the ministerial statement. I want to begin by acknowledging that I, along with my caucus colleagues, understand the seriousness of the issue facing our young people. I recognize that in many cases these young people are caught in a web of social media. Unfortunately for some, they are unable to escape that web and, in some cases, have taken their own life in desperation.

As I've stated earlier in this House, I was encouraged when the minister struck the cyberbullying task force led by Dr. Wayne MacKay. The task force began its work in the Spring of 2011. After nine months of deliberation and hard work, the task force presented their report and recommendations to the minister in February 2012. It was a very thorough report and it contained 85 recommendations.

I want to publicly thank the members of the task force, who each brought their own expertise to the table and to thank them for their willingness to work on a report that they believed would make things safer for kids in our schools and our communities. They were respected community representatives and experts and they were optimistic. Two years later, they are disappointed and questioning why their expert advice and their recommendations have not translated into meaningful action.

The minister has had many opportunities to do the right thing. Legislation was introduced in May 2012 and October 2012. Both were shallow pieces of legislation that disappointed task force members, and disappointed parents, students, and teachers. Attempts to strengthen both of those pieces of legislation were provided through the Law Amendments Committee and at both Law Amendments Committees, presenters asked the committee to accept the proposed amendments and both times this NDP Government defeated those amendments in committee.

Unfortunately, this has translated into members of the task force feeling completely shut out of the process and the go-forward steps that are so desperately needed. The minister has stated that addressing the issue of bullying and cyberbullying will require cultural change, and I could not agree more. We know it will take time. We also know, however, that there is a need for immediate action to address what is happening right now, on a daily basis, in our schools and in our communities.

The foundation document and the summary document, of which the minister speaks today, lay out "future actions over three years." We are already now two years into the process and we are asked to support a framework that will unfold over the next three years. That's a total of five years. What message is that sending to those young people and their parents who are dealing with abusive, destructive behaviour now, as we speak, in their daily lives?

Nova Scotians have lost faith that this minister will show leadership and respond to their cries. This minister was forced to change her mind about hiring an anti-bullying

coordinator. She asked schools to collect data when the data was already available. She ignored the expert advice of her task force and she allowed her colleagues at the Law Amendments Committee to defeat proposed changes in that legislation. Now she is asking parents and students to be encouraged by a foundation and summary documents that lay out actions over the next three years.

Cyberbullying and bullying is an issue that affects everyone in our communities, in all of our constituencies. It is a non-partisan issue, yet this minister has been unwilling to accept recommendations to make our schools and communities safer.

I will ask the minister one more time, on behalf of those students, parents, victims and their families, to show leadership and respond now to the question, what will it take for this government to act now and protect our kids in our communities and in our schools across this province? Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the minister for providing us with an advance copy of her statement today.

I think every member of this House would agree that bullying and cyberbullying have become significant problems in our province. Children and young people from one end of the province to the other are seeing the impact either directly or indirectly from bullying. And another thing that all members can agree on is that something must be done - someone must protect these children and assure the proper resources are in place to prevent bullying from continuing into the future.

However, opinions in this House do divide on how we get there. The government has, once again, missed an opportunity to do the right thing - our kids deserve better than this. The baby steps the government has taken fall short of what is necessary to truly protect our children. The government invited highly reputable individuals together to form an anti-bullying task force. They offered their expert opinion; the government disregarded many of their recommendations.

When we bring in experts we are graciously accepting help on topics that we feel need the attention of highly trained, experienced individuals. When the government didn't like the recommendations put forth by the task force, they decided they, themselves, had the expertise to form an anti-bullying plan. Dr. Wayne MacKay, the chairman of the minister's task force on cyberbullying, concluded an interview on CBC Radio saying, "To be fairly brutally honest about this - break my heart might be a bit strong - but I am a bit disappointed that the governments have not reacted more forceful and quickly, specifically, I guess, in Nova Scotia." Professor MacKay said governments and others must move quickly to prevent tragedies due to bullying. We shared Dr. MacKay's disappointment.

The government has yet to define bullying and cyberbullying in law. The Liberals and the government together refuse to make it an offence - how does either Party expect to protect their children if they stand together in opposition on that issue? The minister should ask the children and young people who have fallen victim to bullying and cyberbullying if they feel an offence was committed against them - I can promise that the vast majority would say yes.

The information sheet the government has released for cellphone providers is valuable but is, at best, the tip of the iceberg. Police and judges need the power to take phones and to shut down Internet accounts of people who abuse the technology for bullying.

The minister said she wished she could pass legislation today that would put a stop to bullying - well, the minister is well aware of the legislation previously introduced by the PC caucus and I can assure her it has teeth required to have an impact on bullying and cyberbullying.

We have to send bullies a signal that their behaviour will not be tolerated; we need to stop bullying in its tracks. Providing an information sheet with new cellphones will not cause bullies to change their ways. Every member of this House wishes it were that easy. We feel that government isn't moving fast enough, too many children are scared to go to school, scared of what they will see on the Internet or their cellphone, and scared to be themselves in a safe environment. The government needs to stand up for these children and finally take concrete action. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1

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

Whereas Jean MacAulay, a teacher, volunteer, and resident of Cole Harbour, was also the number-one fan of her son, Stephen MacAulay, a forward for the Halifax Mooseheads and former member of the Saint John Sea Dogs; and

Whereas Jean's infectious warmth, generosity, and tendency to put everyone before herself forever touched the lives of her son, his teammates, her students, and virtually everyone who knew her; and

Whereas Jean lost her lengthy battle with cancer on March 11th, leaving behind her husband Garth, daughter Suzanne, Stephen, and countless other friends and loved ones;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House take a moment to reflect on the life of this wonderful woman and to send our deepest condolences to Garth, Stephen, Suzanne, and all those who were fortunate enough to have known Jean.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Energy.

RESOLUTION NO. 2

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is moving away from our reliance on costly imported coal and toward clean local renewable sources of energy; and

Whereas government introduced the Community Feed-in Tariff, or COMFIT, the only program of its kind in the world that enables communities to generate their own electricity using renewable energy sources while creating jobs and helping the environment; and

Where this power will be sold to the electricity transmission grid and used in the same area benefiting the very communities in which it was generated;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this Legislature recognize the 75 community groups from across Nova Scotia who have received approval from COMFIT to move forward with their applications to generate power in their own backyards.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if we could revert to the order of business, Presenting and Reading Petitions.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request to revert in the order paper to Presenting and Reading Petitions.

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

The motion is carried.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads:

“We, the undersigned, call on the NDP government and the CCRSB to complete the upgrade to River Hebert District High School this year.”

It is signed by many residents of the area. I have affixed my own signature and I present it to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the House may I do an introduction before I introduce this bill?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. CORBETT: In the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, are - I say they are friends of mine - two friends of mine from New Waterford who helped shape this bill I'm about to introduce. It's Ms. Valerie Loveys and her daughter Holly Finlinson-Campbell. I'd ask them to rise and receive the appreciation of the House. (Applause)

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 3 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Labour Standards Code, to Support Parents of Critically Ill or Abducted Children. (Hon. Frank Corbett)

Bill No. 4 - Entitled an Act to Require Balanced Budgets, Limit Government Spending and Reduce the Harmonized Sales Tax to Thirteen Per Cent. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 3

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

Whereas John Kahrs, a 1990 graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, recently won an Oscar for the Best Animated Short for his romantic film "Paperman"; and

Whereas Mr. Kahrs started out as a painting major but soon switched his focus to animation and filmmaking, calling NSCAD "one of the great art schools in the world"; and

Whereas our government fully agrees with Mr. Kahrs and wants to see a strong NSCAD continue with the same excellence, intimacy and identity that has made it special for 125 years;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House congratulate John Kahrs on his Oscar win, and recognize the exceptional work of the current students, staff and faculty of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 4

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I'll be asking for a moment of silence after I read this resolution.

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

Whereas in February, Nova Scotians received a sad reminder of the power of the ocean when five fishermen aboard the *Miss Ally* were lost at sea; and

Whereas the *Miss Ally*, with its crew of five men under the age of 35, was on an extended fishing trip when it was caught in hurricane-force winds and capsized in the Gully near Sable Island; and

Whereas Captain Katlin Nickerson, Steven Cole Nickerson, Joel Hopkins, Tyson Townsend, and Billy Jack Hatfield will be forever missed by their families and friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly send sincere condolences to the loved ones of Katlin Nickerson, Steven Cole Nickerson, Joel Hopkins, Tyson Townsend, and Billy Jack Hatfield, and let their South Shore communities know all Nova Scotians are thinking of them at this sad time of loss.

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.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

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

RESOLUTION NO. 5

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

Whereas the Future Shop's Future Generation Tech Lab Grant offers \$25,000 to secondary schools across Canada to provide students and teachers with the technology they need to foster creativity and innovation; and

Whereas Lockview High in Fall River was one of the 12 schools across Canada selected to receive the grant; and

Whereas funding from the grant will be used to expand their interactive whiteboard technology, tablets, document cameras and projectors in more classrooms, and continue to engage students with a variety of learning styles;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Lockview High on receiving this grant, enabling them to expand their use of technology in the classroom.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 6

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

Whereas in February the Auditor General uncovered the NDP's \$27 million cover-up in last year's budget; and

Whereas the NDP, when faced with a decision about whether to fess up, chose to cover it up to give the illusion they were “on track” with their financial plan, when in fact they weren’t; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has a sorry history of governments that fudge budgets, like the last year the Liberals were in office and said they had a balanced budget, which in fact contained \$600 million of debt that they didn’t count;

Therefore, be it resolved that all members of this House condemn the NDP for covering up the \$27 million hole in last year’s budget, and call on them to not use accounting trickery to balance the budget this year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 7

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

Whereas Lee Bagnell is a resident of Lower Sackville and the father of three children; and

Whereas Lee has established the Get the Kids Off the Couch Association in an effort to promote active youth; and

Whereas for the past three years Lee has been involved in organizing a 60-foot by 100-foot outdoor skating rink located behind the public library on Sackville Drive, as well as a new pilot project with indoor table tennis at Sackville Heights Community Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Lee Bagnell of Lower Sackville for his efforts in organizing an outdoor skating rink and indoor table tennis to promote active living for local youth, and wish the Get the Kids Off the Couch Association future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 8

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

Whereas on March 9th, the late Joe Peter MacLean of Boisdale was honoured with the Stompin' Tom Award at the 2013 ECMAs in Halifax; and

Whereas the Stompin' Tom Award is awarded to those who have made a long-term contribution to the East Coast music industry and have paved the road for successful East Coast artists; and

Whereas Joe Peter's fiddle was with him everywhere he went, showing how proud he was of his heritage, his culture, and of encouraging others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the significant contributions of the late Joe Peter MacLean to his community, his music, and the Gaelic culture of Cape Breton.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 9

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

Whereas 8-year-old Josh Perry of Doctors Cove, Nova Scotia, has given out more than 300 of his Josh's Caring Bears in the past year, after accepting a \$5 challenge to see what he could do to make a difference; and

Whereas Josh Perry's simple act of kindness of giving a teddy bear to anyone he felt could use one to brighten their day has touched the hearts of many Nova Scotians, from nursing home residents and hospitalized children to Josh's next-door neighbours, as well as soldiers serving overseas in Afghanistan; and

Whereas Josh Perry was recognized by members of the Canadian Armed Forces for his humanitarian efforts during a special assembly at the Evelyn Richardson Memorial Elementary School in Shag Harbour on November 28, 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly applaud Josh Perry for his acts of kindness and compassion that have warmed the hearts of many, and wish him well in future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis on an introduction.

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the attention of the members to the west gallery where we have a committee from Digby that is working on a fairly big project for our area and they've been working on it for a long while. I won't get into the details of that, but I would like to mention their names first . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: A few words.

MR. THERIAULT: I'll tell you later. They'll tell you later probably, I'm sure they've told the government. First of all I'd like to mention Ben Cleveland, our mayor, Greg Turner from Digby, we have Saskia Geerts, Dean Kenley, and we have Joy O'Neill. Last but not least is Dianne Theriault, my wife for 40 years. How she has put up with me I don't know but if you make it 40 years you're good I guess. Anyway I would like for the House to give this committee from Digby a warm, warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 10

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

Whereas yesterday was Purple Day, the Global Day of Epilepsy Awareness; and

Whereas this day was created in 2008 as a way to educate, raise awareness, and encourage dialogue about epilepsy; and

Whereas organizations, schools, and businesses across this province promote Purple Day each year to remind those living with epilepsy that they are not alone;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize March 26th as Purple Day and help to raise the awareness and to dispel myths about the disease in our communities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 11

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

Whereas the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, with leadership from Executive Director Gordon Stewart and in partnership with 23 bars and restaurants in Halifax, led the development of the Patron Accountability Safety and Service program to reduce incidents of violence and underage drinking in downtown Halifax; and

Whereas between January 2012 and February 5, 2013, the PASS program resulted in the suspension of 99 offenders and its success is demonstrated by the planned expansion of the program throughout Nova Scotia; and

Whereas on March 27, 2013, the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia was awarded the 2013 Minister's Award for Leadership in Crime Prevention in the business category;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Gordon Stewart and the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia and partners in the PASS program for their commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for bar patrons and employees, and congratulate them on winning this distinguished award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 12

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

Whereas two years ago, Alley Anderson held a yard sale to help her family raise money to purchase a wheelchair-accessible van for her twin sister Cassidy who has cerebral palsy; and

Whereas Alley's school, St. Joseph Elementary School in Sydney Mines, became involved in the fundraising to help the Anderson family in their quest; and

Whereas all these efforts, together with a donation from the local Superstore and President's Choice Children's Charities, and a \$5,000 donation from local business made the purchase of the \$40,000 van possible;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank all those whose efforts made Cassidy's chariot become a reality.

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. 13

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

Whereas Joseph Eugene "Jeep" Deveaux, from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, was a veteran of World War II who rose to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer in the Royal Canadian Navy, a rank which he held with pride until his retirement in 1975; and

Whereas Jeep was a tireless advocate in his community of Eastern Passage-Cow Bay, as Halifax County Councillor from 1972 to his retirement in 1996, a role in which he oversaw the development of infrastructure and community services, contributing significantly to what Eastern Passage is today; and

Whereas Jeep passed away peacefully at the age of 86 on January 12, 2013 after a long, vital and successful life of giving;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly remember and honour the life and memory of Joseph Eugene “Jeep” Deveaux, an exemplar of community service to his home and to his country.

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.

MS. BECKY KENT: Mr. Speaker, in acknowledgement of the fact that Jeep was the father of former NDP MLA Kevin Deveaux, and a long-standing and respected elected official, I would ask the House for a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 14

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

Whereas Canada lost a music legend with the recent passing of Stompin’ Tom Connors, although as one recent newspaper editorial put it, “Connors is not really gone, the land remains strong with song and northern prose”; and

Whereas Stompin’ Tom was honoured in 2009 when Canada Post put his picture on a 54-cent stamp, the *Globe and Mail* described that Connors had a wise sense of humour and knew Canada and its people, was better than any other English Canadian wordsmith, and spent his life celebrating and defending his home with unfailing humour and uncompromising pride; and

Whereas Stompin’ Tom will live forever in his eloquent music with songs such as *Big Joe Mufferaw*, *Tillsonburg*, *The Consumer* or *The Ketchup Song*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly rise today for a minute of silence as we remember a true Canadian ambassador, Stompin' Tom Connors.

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.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 15

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

Whereas in Canada every day there are approximately 174 injuries related to impaired driving; and

Whereas MADD Canada, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, is a charitable grassroots organization that is committed to stopping impaired driving and supporting the victims of this violent crime; and

Whereas on February 22, 2013, the RCMP Bisons and the Sobey's South Shore Wild squared off in an annual hockey game to raise awareness and funds, totalling over \$2,224, for the Lunenburg-Queens chapter of MADD;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the RCMP Bisons and the Sobey's South Shore Wild for their continued support and fundraising efforts for the benefit of MADD and MADD's important mission.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 16

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

Whereas the people of River Hebert are frustrated with repeated delays with the reconstruction of the River Hebert District High School; and

Whereas over 1,000 residents have written letters demanding the school be completed; and

Whereas no child should be denied a quality education because of where they live;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Education listen to the people of River Hebert and build the school they deserve.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 17

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

Whereas the legendary Midtown Tavern, from its opening in 1949 until the present day, has gained a reputation for supporting worthwhile community causes; and

Whereas the Midtown recently held an auction of 100 well-used chairs from the original tavern, in an effort to assist veterans; and

Whereas over \$22,000 was raised from the auction of these chairs for Veterans Emergency Transition Services and the Walter Callow Wheelchair Bus;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate and thank the owners and staff of the Midtown Tavern, and all auction bidders, in the effort to support our veterans.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 18

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

Whereas a general store that has held a special place in the hearts of Georges River residents for some 50 years reopened on March 5th; and

Whereas Mark and Kelly Jackson opened the doors at George's Country Convenience, hoping to follow in the footsteps of Mark's uncle and the former owner of the store, the late George Haggett; and

Whereas thanks to Mark and Kelly, locals and visitors alike can continue their habit of dropping into the store for their supplies and to have a chat;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mark and Kelly Jackson on the opening of George's Country Convenience, and wish them every success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 19

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

Whereas CFTA Tantramar Community Radio, in Amherst, recently celebrated two years on the air; and

Whereas the hard work of the many volunteers and staff at CFTA is a prime example of the Cumberland County spirit; and

Whereas this radio station expands the definition of community by broadcasting to Amherst, Nova Scotia, and Sackville, New Brunswick, and many surrounding communities - they reach across provincial borders and unite many communities of interest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating CFTA on two successful years on the air, and wish them many more in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 20

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

Attendu que le 18 mars 2013, un défenseur bien connu de l'histoire et la culture acadiennes et françaises, Joseph Denis Cottreau, est décédé a l'âge de 73 ans; et

Attendu que Joseph Cottreau de Dartmouth, anciennement de Wedgeport, a eu une carrière professionnelle très fructueuse qui l'a mené à travers le pays et lui a permis d'être actif dans de nombreuses organisations communautaires; et

Attendu que Joseph Cottreau a été premier directeur général du Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, et a été membre du comité organisateur du Congrès mondial acadien 2004;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de cette Assemblée se joignent à moi pour cet hommage à Joseph "Jos" Cottreau pour honorer sa vie et célébrer sa mémoire.

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

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

Whereas on March 18th, a very well-known advocate of Acadian and French history and culture, Joseph Denis Cottreau, passed away at the age of 73; and

Whereas Joseph Cottreau of Dartmouth, formerly of Wedgeport, had a very successful professional career that took him across the country and enabled him to be active in many community organizations; and

Whereas Joseph Cottreau was the first CEO of the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse and was on the organizing committee of the 2004 Congrès mondial acadien;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in this tribute to Joseph "Jos" Cottreau, to honour his life and celebrate his memory.

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. 21

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

Whereas 4-H Canada is celebrating 100 years of “learning by doing” in 2013, a century that has enriched the lives and developed the skills of young people from communities throughout Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the 4-H movement has evolved from a small organization that focused on traditional projects like animal husbandry, cooking, and sewing to a vibrant collective of over 35,000 members nationwide, including 2,400 here in Nova Scotia, which is providing those members with the technical skills, personal qualities, and confidence to become successful leaders today and into the future; and

Whereas Kings County, with its rich history and six active clubs engaged in a wide range of projects and skill development activities, will celebrate the 4-H centenary throughout the year;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate and thank 4-H Canada, and particularly 4-H Clubs in Kings County, for 100 years of service, and wish the 4-H movement continued success in its second century.

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. 22

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

Whereas the organizing committee of the first annual Louisbourg Shark Derby recently presented the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation with a cheque for \$5,000; and

Whereas the first annual Louisbourg Shark Derby donation will be put toward the purchase of a SBRT Body Pro-Lock system for the Cape Breton Cancer Centre; and

Whereas more than 80 participants took part in the Louisburg Shark Derby, which will now be an annual event held in Louisburg every summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank the organizing committee and volunteers of the first annual Louisburg Shark Derby, and wish them success in many more derbies to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 23

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 Metro High School Hockey League holds an annual all-star hockey game; and

Whereas Sackville High School was represented by four players from the Sackville Kingfishers who were selected to play in the all-star game, held on January 20, 2012, at the Sackville Arena; and

Whereas Carter McMullin (goalie), Joel Schaller (defence), Darcy Gittens (centre), and Geoff White (centre) were members of the White team, who defeated the Blue team with a final score of 6 to 4;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Sackville High School students and members of the Sackville High Kingfishers hockey team - Carter McMullin, Joel Schaller, Darcy Gittens, and Geoff White - for being selected to play in the Metro High School Hockey League's annual all-star game, and congratulate the White team on their 6 to 4 win.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 24

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

Whereas the North Sydney Superstore, through the President's Choice Children's Charity, has helped local children live better lives; and

Whereas manager Fred Bourgeois and the staff of the Superstore recently viewed the wheelchair-accessible van that they helped purchase for the family of Cassidy Anderson, to make her life easier living with cerebral palsy; and

Whereas over the past five years, the North Sydney Superstore has supplied \$147,111 to assist local children live better lives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly salute the North Sydney Superstore and the President's Choice Children's Charity for their monumental act of charity and community 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 Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

RESOLUTION NO. 25

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

Whereas eight Nova Scotians received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award in recognition of their contributions to the Coaching Association of Canada's National Coaching Certification (NCCP); and

Whereas Steve Fairbairn of Fall River received this honour for his 20 years of dedication to the sport of snowboarding; and

Whereas the recipients of this medal were nominated for their significant contributions to coaching development and coach education in their particular sport, province and community within Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Steve Fairbairn on his outstanding achievement and wish him continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 26

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

Whereas the Bread Gallery on Highway 14 in Brooklyn, Hants County, is a scratch bakery and art gallery owned by Michael and Mary Joan MacKenzie, offering a wide variety of freshly baked goods; and

Whereas the Bread Gallery is also home to the 2nd Annual Spring Show, put on by the Hants County Arts Council from March 15, 2013 to April 28, 2013, featuring local artists such as Dora Warren Davis, Tacha Reed, Jim Tracey and Karen Harvie; and

Whereas other artists featured in the show include G.A. Jank, Mary Lou Bennett, Elizabeth Robinson and Kelly Mitchelmore, with a variety of items from pottery, paintings, jewellery and folk art carvings;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael and Mary Joan MacKenzie for their entrepreneurship in rural Nova Scotia and recognize the outstanding work put forth by these talented artists.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 27

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

Whereas Clark's Harbour resident and 2011-12 Barrington Municipal High School graduate Justin Cottreau is a recipient of both the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship and Medal; and

Whereas Justin Cottreau's strong leadership skills, excellent organization skills and his natural ability to relate to others in a positive and encouraging manner earned him great respect and admiration from students and staff at BMHS; and

Whereas Justin Cottreau is also active in the community as a volunteer and as a member of the 327 Unicorn Sea Cadet Corps, where he has been presented with many prestigious awards over the years for excellence in citizenship and seamanship;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Justin Cottreau for being presented with both the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship and Medal in 2012.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 28

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

Whereas Dr. Lesley Steele founded the Eastern Passage Village Veterinary Hospital in 1999 and is also a co-founder of Atlantic, Central and Western Vet Alliance, the largest affiliate veterinary buyers group in Canada; and

Whereas Dr. Steele was chosen by the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to join 21 other delegates forming Team Canada at the G20 Young Entrepreneur Summit in Mexico City, Mexico in June 2012; and

Whereas Dr. Steele's input, along with that of other delegates from around the world, to identify the ways government and business can raise the voice and harness the potential of young entrepreneurs to aid in the influence of public policy, resulted in an official communiqué that was presented to the G20 world leaders in Cabo San Lucas at the end of June 2012;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Lesley Steele of Eastern Passage for her entrepreneurial spirit that has benefited not only Nova Scotia but public and business policy worldwide.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens.

RESOLUTION NO. 29

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

Whereas Curl for Cancer is an annual event to raise funds for cancer research and to promote participation in the sport of curling; and

Whereas this event brought together experienced and novice teams for an afternoon of curling on February 26, 2013, for its 26th year at the Liverpool Curling Club; and

Whereas participants raised over \$6,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the participants of the 2013 Curl for Cancer at the Liverpool Curling Club for their fundraising efforts toward the fight against cancer.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 30

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

Whereas on June 19, 1943, Elsie and Allen MacNeil of Upper Tantallon were married; and

Whereas this legendary couple will be celebrating 70 years of marriage this Spring at the Hubley Community Center with friends and family; and

Whereas Elsie and Allen MacNeil are great supporters of our community, wonderful neighbours to their MLA, and thoughtful neighbours to all;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Elsie and Allen MacNeil on 70 years of marriage, with best wishes and good health in the years ahead.

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. 31

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

Whereas 17-year-old Jenna Cottrill of Wallace Bay was recently named one of the five finalists for Canada's Top Teen Philanthropist Award for her work with God's Little Angels Canada; and

Whereas through this program, Jenna has been assisting those affected by the 2010 Haitian earthquake, and her dedication has resulted in substantial donations and supplies making their way to Haitian orphanages where they are badly needed; and

Whereas Jenna has also reached across cultural and linguistic boundaries by visiting Haiti twice since the earthquake, in an effort to help and better understand Haitian young people;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Jenna Cottrill for her dedication to helping 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 member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 32

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce (AVCC) is the chief advocacy group for more than 300 businesses, organizations, and individuals in Kings and Annapolis Counties; and

Whereas the AVCC held its first annual Valley's Best business awards on Tuesday, February 21st at the Fountain Commons at Acadia University in Wolfville; and

Whereas Annapolis Valley Radio, which serves the entire Annapolis Valley with up-to-the-minute news, weather, farming information, sports coverage, and music programming, and is an important sponsor of numerous Valley charity drives and festivals, such as the Apple Blossom Festival, was the winner in the category of Best Media;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Annapolis Valley Radio for its achievement in being named the Best Media for 2013 and acknowledge its exemplary contributions to the Annapolis Valley community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: As we begin Oral Question Period, I remind all honourable members that the use of BlackBerrys, laptops, and any electronic device is not permitted during Question Period so they are to remain off during that time period.

The time is now 3:26 p.m. and we will end at 4:56 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM.: PROMISES - CREDIBILITY

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, in 2009, the Premier went to the doorsteps of families across this province, looked Nova Scotians in the eyes and told them, no tax increases, no program cuts, and we will balance the budget every year of our mandate. What Nova Scotians got were tax hikes - the Premier hiked the HST, increased over 1,400 user fees, and added the NDP energy tax to every power bill in the province.

Now we learn that the Premier and his Finance Minister tabled a misleading budget so that the Premier could say that the NDP was on track.

Mr. Speaker, after misleading Nova Scotians time and time again, with broken promises and misinformation, will the Premier tell Nova Scotians why they should believe him now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is a government that prides itself on the accomplishments set out in the Throne Speech. We took one of the most difficult economic recessionary times in our history and managed to not only get through that without massive labour disruptions - including getting us back into balance, having inherited a government that was on the road to a \$1.4 billion deficit. We are turning the corner of this province to a brighter future for all our citizens.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, that's one long corner. It has been fully established by the Auditor General that the Finance Minister stood in his place and delivered a budget that he knew to be false. In March 2012, the Finance Department had the updated revenue estimates, and had run them through their economic models. In an article published in the ChronicleHerald on February 8, 2013, the Auditor General said, "They had the later numbers, and they ran on them. And that's why we said, 'Well, why wouldn't you use them? . . . You have to use the more current information because you have it.'"

So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier allowed a budget to be published based on over-estimated revenues, and did nothing to correct this misleading information. How can he expect Nova Scotians to believe anything in this upcoming budget?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. He knows it's not true. In fact, the preparation of the last budget was done exactly the way that it should have been. It was based on the economic data that was in the Department of Finance when the cut-off date arrived, which, incidentally, is exactly the way that past governments prepared their budgets.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier that said no tax increases - hiked the HST, increased 1,400 user fees; no program cuts - took \$65 million out of public education, Now he wants Nova Scotians to believe him over the Auditor General. When will the Premier own up to his broken promises and misleading information and start respecting hard-working Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what this government did was take one of the worst economic situations in our history, and during the years of that recession, protected the most vulnerable people in our society, put more money in their pocket through the Affordable Living Tax Credit, put more money in their pocket by taking the HST off of home electricity - something that the Leader of the Opposition voted to put in place when he was supporting the Progressive Conservative Government.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is proud of its accomplishments, it's proud of its budgets, and it's proud of the direction we are taking this province.

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

PREM.: FALSE BUDGET (2012-13) - PRESENTATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report clearly shows that the 2012-13 budget contained a known error of \$27 million. It could have been corrected and it wasn't; they could have told us about it and they didn't. I ask the Premier, why did he allow a false budget to be presented to the people of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary, the budget that was presented was presented on the basis of the economic information as of the cut-off date, as I've said before, which is exactly the same process that former Progressive Conservative Governments used in their budgeting process, the exact same process that was used by former Liberal Governments.

Mr. Speaker, what the Auditor General did do was come forward with recommendations which we have adopted and which will lead to an even cleaner audit of the books of the province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, when you know it's wrong and you don't fix it, it's false. Only this government has that kind of record. The Premier is the head of the government and it is his responsibility to make sure that the budgets that are given to the people of Nova Scotia are right and not false.

I will ask the Premier, when did he first know that his budget contained a \$27 million falsehood?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can only say again that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party actually is the person who is creating misinformation. The budget was done in accordance with the practice that has been done every year. It was done correctly; it was submitted for the House to consider as it should have been.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we have had budgets in this House year after year after year, and we've had Auditors General review them year after year after year. Only this year did the Auditor General say that the budget was knowingly wrong. That's what happened under this Premier's time.

In fact, today at the Public Accounts Committee, the Deputy Minister of Finance said that her department informed "their political masters about the error." Clearly the decision to fudge the budget was a political one - either the Premier made it or someone

else made it in his name. I will ask the Premier, who in his government made the decision to falsify the budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I find the inflammatory language of the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to be unbecoming mainly because the people of Nova Scotia have the right to expect that all of the work that is done in this House is done in good faith. The method for determining the estimates of the budget in the previous year was exactly the same way as it has always been done before. Any information that came in after the cut-off date was referred to the first forecast, as it has always been done and was done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM.: BUDGETS (2012-13/2013-14) - DIFFERENCE EXPLAIN

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the budget is only as good as the information used to make the estimates. Last year the Premier produced a budget that deliberately overstated the estimates by \$27 million of revenue. A shortfall of \$27 million means less money for government programs and calls into question the assertion of the Premier that the NDP is on track, and calls into question the estimates and assumptions used for the upcoming budget.

My question is, Mr. Speaker, based on the Premier's previous sleight-of-hand budgeting, how is it possible that this coming budget will be any different than the misleading document used to market the NDP political agenda?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this government did something that the past governments of the other Parties have never done, which is every single year we have come in under the expenditures set out in those budgets. Revenue forecasts are just forecasts. In fact, the Auditor General's letter points out that revenue forecasts will change over the course of the year.

What we control is expenditures, Mr. Speaker, and the ministers who are responsible for these departments make sure that every dollar that citizens put into our hands is well managed and each of the departments ensure that they get maximum service delivery for the money we get. Over these years we've managed to bring them in under budget. That's an accomplishment.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is right. His government did something that no other previous government has done and this Premier has done something that no other previous Premier has done and his former Minister of Finance did. They stood in this House and completely misled the people in this House, which no other government has done.

Mr. Speaker, this deliberate over-estimate of \$27 million in revenue projections is just one more way the Premier has published faulty estimates in his budgets. Year after year, employee estimates are estimated higher than actuals show to be the case, expenditures in all departments are consistently estimated higher, as required in practice.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell Nova Scotians what accounting sleight of hand he is using in this year's budgeting to attempt to divert attention away from his poor economic development performance?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the Leader of the Opposition's question. The reality is that we have, in the Leader of the Opposition, a person who has said that they would never invest in good jobs in this province. He spent the last number of months criticizing the working people down at the shipyard. This is a shameful thing for the province. Our budgets are the hallmark of good government.

MR. MCNEIL: No, Mr. Speaker, what I've criticized is the Premier giving \$260 million free money to one of the richest people in Canada, at the expense of Nova Scotia taxpayers. Nothing that this Premier has done in the past four years is giving him any credibility. After promising no tax increases, the Premier has hiked the HST, increased 1,400 user fees, and added the NDP electricity tax to every power bill in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has chosen Irving over classrooms, Daewoo over emergency rooms and Resolute over universities. After all of the broken promises and faulty budgets, how can the Premier's projections in this coming budget be any different than the overestimated revenues, university prepayments and other fiction of NDP budgets past?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just doesn't get it. It's not about a company, it's not about Irving or Daewoo; it's not about any company. It's about the workers who work there, it's about the communities, and it's about the people who get to bring home a paycheque. It's about the people who are able to support their families as a result of the jobs that are created. That's what it's about. It's about our citizens and it's certainly not about the Leader of the Opposition.

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

FIN. - DECREASED REVENUE/PROMISES: BUDGET BALANCING - EXPLAIN

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In the 2009 election, the NDP made a lot of promises and a lot of promises that turned out to be empty. They told Nova Scotians in no uncertain terms that there would be no tax increases, no cuts to programs, and balanced budgets every year. Well, that was then.

Now we've seen how the NDP have raised the HST, increased 1,400 user fees, slashed education funding, and also resorted to budget schemes like the university prepayment in previous years. Now they're asking Nova Scotians to trust them as they promised to lower taxes that they weren't supposed to have raised in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, given this financial backdrop, will the minister explain how she intends to deal with the very real problems of decreased federal transfers, decreased personal revenue for the province, and still keep the round of promises that are being made?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question and the opportunity to stand here and talk about how proud I am that this government was able to keep virtually all of our platform promises. That includes taking the HST off of home heat and electricity, something that that Party does not support and given an opportunity would put back on.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting answer given that while they took off the HST with one hand from home heating fuel they allowed Nova Scotia Power to increase the rates 30 per cent from three years ago. We know that there were 1,400 user fees hiked two years ago under the NDP Government, and this is the very same NDP Government that called fee increases across-the-board tax hikes, and that was when they were in Opposition. But just like the promises to not increase taxes, the NDP has no trouble saying one thing and doing quite another. My question to the Minister of Finance is, can the minister tell Nova Scotians if she will be hiking fees for the coming fiscal year?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as members of this House know, this government had a four-year plan to bring this province back to a balanced budget. It's a plan that's working. Next week we will table a balanced budget and there won't be some trickery like we've seen from the Liberal Party the last time they brought a budget into this House that had a huge - millions of dollars off the books, the Health Investment Fund. It will be a balanced budget and it will be transparent to the people of this province as the result of a four-year plan that was sensible and that reveals good results.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. "Trickery" is unparliamentary language and I ask the honourable minister . . .

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly will withdraw that comment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that clarification because I was going to use the same word myself, so I will not do that. The NDP have lost

the trust of Nova Scotians; with each broken promise they have chipped away at their own credibility. While he was in Opposition, the Premier called user-fee hikes across-the-board tax increases, and he even called on the government of the day to make user-fee hikes part of the budget.

My question to the minister is, given that the last time the NDP Government hiked user fees it was done outside of the House and late on a Friday afternoon, will the Minister of Finance - the new Minister of Finance as well - provide greater accountability and include the NDP fee hikes in the budget so that they can be properly debated in the House?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for an opportunity to respond to the honourable member. I look at the various provinces across the country that are struggling to bring their promises back to balance and the way we will be able to do this, as I explained earlier today at the chambers of commerce luncheon, where the honourable member was, we are able to do it because we have a sensible plan. The plan had three components which included raising revenue, expenditure management, and growing the economy, and it's a plan that has worked. We will have a balanced budget here in this House next week.

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

PREM.: REVENUE ESTIMATES (2012-13) - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: In his most recent report the Auditor General said that \$27 million is “. . . significant enough to be corrected.” - and I will table that page from the Auditor General's Report. It is significant enough to be corrected. Certainly, Nova Scotians would believe that \$27 million is significant enough to be corrected, and they are the ones who rely on accurate reports from their government to know the true financial position of the province.

My question to the Premier is, does the Premier agree that \$27 million is significant enough to be corrected?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the revenue estimates that came in after the posted date for the budget were in fact corrected, and they were corrected in the first financial forecast update, just exactly as they should have been.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Auditor General says in his report, and I know that Nova Scotians would say there is no deadline to tell the truth. That is what is at issue here today.

In fact, in his report, which I just tabled, the Auditor General says it was already known that the deficit included as part of the budget was unachievable when it was presented to the public. Clearly the government was desperate to show that they were on

track, when in fact they were not. My question to the Premier is, why tell Nova Scotians the government was on track when they knew it wasn't?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has seen this, although he chooses to ignore it. It is the letter of the Auditor General. It's dated April 2, 2012, and I'll just read this part of it. It says, "The 2012-13 revenue estimates comply with presentation and disclosure standards established by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants."

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish the Premier would read the entire report, because the Auditor General says that the government knew there was an error in their budget in time to correct it and chose not to. I know we learned yesterday in the Speech from the Throne that the Premier and his government live in some world of virtual reality where they virtually believe that they virtually have kept their promises.

One of their promises was really balanced budgets. Now we know, four deficit budgets later, \$1 billion in more debt later, and a \$27 million known error that not only did they not correct when they should have, but didn't even tell Nova Scotians about when they presented the budget - that is the kind of virtual world the Government of Nova Scotia now inhabits. Now the Premier is making another promise to the people of Nova Scotia that the upcoming budget will be balanced - after four deficits, after \$1 billion of new debt, after knowingly presenting a budget that was wrong in this House and to the people of Nova Scotia.

My question to the Premier is, how can Nova Scotians trust his government ever again?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the good work done by our Finance Ministers, we've managed to bring down the \$1.4 billion deficit that was left behind by the Progressive Conservatives, which was a great burden to the citizens of this province.

I want to table something that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party said just in the last little while, when commenting on the Speech from the Throne. He said, "I really want that to be true. This province has a sorry history of budgets that people said were balanced that really weren't." I wonder if he understands how ironic that is, given the last 10 years of budgets that were presented by the Progressive Conservative Party.

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

FIN. - NDP GOV'T.: FISCAL CAPACITY - CREDIBILITY

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. For the months leading up to this Spring sitting of the Legislature, the Finance Minister went around the province lowering expectations for a balanced budget. She refused to say

whether she'd be able to balance the budget, and she dodged the question on the matter. This time last year the former Finance Minister was telling Nova Scotians that the deficit was \$27 million less than it actually was, and in the first budget that the NDP brought in they resorted to distorting the budget by making a huge prepayment to universities - a practice they had previously condemned when in Opposition.

My question to the minister is, after all of these financial distortions, will the Minister of Finance explain how she thinks Nova Scotians can believe the NDP now?

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we had a plan to restore this province's budget back to a balanced position. The plan consisted of a temporary increase in the HST, the plan consisted of bringing department budgets in as we tabled them, and it included growing the revenue of the province through economic development.

The budget that will be tabled next week will be balanced and it will be a result of the very hard work of many people, and it will be a balanced budget because that plan worked, unlike the Liberal Party who have no plan. I have yet to hear any plan articulated by the honourable member or any members of her caucus.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that good planning is what leads to balanced budgets and results, and we'll be very pleased next week to have the details available for the people of the province.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the minister is missing so many important facts in her answers. She's missing the \$300 million deficit that this year is already racking up. How is she going to overcome that \$300 million? How can she convince Nova Scotians that this has been done without cuts to programs, without increased taxes, without the usual tools that you would have to do such a thing? Really, you cannot pull a rabbit out of a hat.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have created fiscal fictions every step of the way. There has been no talk about the huge and escalating debt, \$1.5 billion already more in debt in the last four years. This is all chipping away very seriously at the credibility of the NDP and the minister knows it - and the Premier knows it.

Mr. Speaker, after all the fictions and last-minute budget magic, how does the Finance Minister expect Nova Scotians to have any faith in the fiscal capacity of the NDP Government?

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, again, we had a plan. It was a plan that was very well thought out, it was a plan that rested on some analysis of what the financial position of the province was. It sought expert advice from an expert panel that indicated that a comprehensive approach was required that included growing revenue

which resulted in a temporary increase in the HST, something that the Liberal Party opposed.

They don't have a plan, Mr. Speaker, they have no idea what is required to bring this province back to financial health. However, we made the hard decisions, the tough choices, and next week we will see the payoff for those tough decisions.

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

TREASURY BD.: BUDGET ERROR (2012-13) - DETAILS

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Chairman of the Treasury Board.

The Deputy Premier has failed to answer for the \$27 million cover-up - I mean misinformation - that has left Nova Scotians in the dark about the true state of the province's finances. We still don't know who knew what when, but we do know that the decision to keep taxpayers in the dark was deliberate and political.

My question to the minister is, will the Chairman of the Treasury Board confirm what the Deputy Minister of Finance told the Public Accounts Committee this morning, that it was her political masters, the Treasury Board, that made the decision not to inform Nova Scotians of the \$27 million error?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is simple, no.

MR. MACLEOD: That's probably the shortest answer I've ever heard him give, but then again. (Interruption) Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Finance have a responsibility to treat Nova Scotians with respect and that begins with telling them the truth. When it comes to the \$27 million budget error, everyone on that side of the House failed to tell the truth about it. The Premier is even on record as saying that he was never told about the \$27 million error and that he had no knowledge of this misinformation.

My question is, if no one told the Premier about the significant \$27 million budget error, who should have told the Premier what was going on in his Cabinet?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance prepares the estimates for the budget, the Minister of Finance is the one who brings the Budget Speech to the House of Assembly and tables the budget documents. He did that in accordance with the practice that has been followed, so far as I know, by all governments - certainly during the time that I've been in this House which, believe it or not, is now going on some 16 years - and presented to the people of this province a clear picture of a budget process that is working and a plan for government that is bringing this province back to economic stability, back to financial stability, and back to a balanced budget.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary will go to the Deputy Premier. It's surprising that no one seems to know who knew what, when, who didn't know or who should have known. Certainly Nova Scotians should have been told about this big mistake of \$27 million.

What taxpayers want to know is, who knew and why did they allow a deliberate misinformation to take place?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The word "deliberate" has been ruled many times in this House as unparliamentary so I'd remind the honourable member - and probably by yourself.

MR. MACLEOD: And many times it wasn't appropriate but this time it is. Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that comment. They allow this misinformation to continue on to the public, after the Auditor General said this morning that there was time to correct such a mistake.

My question to the Deputy Premier is, was the chief of staff for the Premier kept informed about the budget developments and did he know about the \$27 million error?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is when we gave the announcement and it was made public at the appointed time and it was done, who was in the room? I don't know, there's many people who come in the room. If people had been in Cabinet or in various committees, people come and go all the time.

What I'm telling you is when it had to be tabled, we tabled it. Thank you.

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

COM. SERV. - BENN CASE: INDIVIDUAL NEEDS - CONSIDER

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Nichele Benn, a 25-year-old woman with cognitive and physical disabilities, faces criminal charges because of this government's refusal to act. As a result of her organic brain disorder, Nichele has violent episodes and has been a harm to herself and, at times, to others. The protocol, as directed by the Department of Community Services, is to call police when Nichele has these episodes.

Will the Minister of Community Services consider Nichele's individual needs and the pleas of her mother to reverse departmental protocol that forces this young, cognitively-disabled young woman into incarceration?

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, firstly, I understand the issues with families when they have a loved one who has a disability. I have personally met with Nichele's mom to discuss the issues. It's important to know that Nichele is deemed

legally as a competent individual and that we have had many discussions, the staff has had discussions with her family. These issues are much, much more complex than the Opposition member is trying to portray and we have been working through the issue that is at hand for us to do.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Nichele Benn's mom is worried about her daughter's future; she's worried her daughter is going to be the next Ashley Smith. The current probation order against her daughter has no deterring effect because it can't - Nichele has a brain disorder. There are other Nicheles across the province who are being directed to the criminal justice system because this government invokes police intervention.

Will the Minister of Community Services please tell Nichele Benn's mother, and all the parents advocating for children with cognitive disabilities, why this government will not change this devastating policy?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, in fact the member opposite once again is misleading people with the wrong type of information. The fact is each case is different, you cannot put them all together as one, and it depends on the circumstances. There was a third-party individual who was at risk at that point in time. There are other options that we have spoken to the family about with regard to bringing down the level of the aggressive behaviour.

So there are many different particulars that go along with this issue, but we have worked very hard to communicate with the family by sitting down and speaking personally with her mom, and all those who have been involved have been working very hard with this young lady and she is seen to do well at this point.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, that's very interesting because I spoke to Nichele's mom this morning and she told me she feels as though she's in the dark about her daughter's fate. If this minister is in fact working with the Minister of Justice on the issue, as she said last week, why is she not communicating with Nichele's mother about it?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, after I met with Nichele's mother, I put a team of staff together to be working towards programming for Nichele and we also have been talking with the facility where Nichele - and the main point that the member opposite doesn't understand is that Nichele is competent within the law, which means that Nichele is the one who is able to speak for herself. I do understand the frustrations from the mom, because when you have a child that has an issue, you love that child. I have a child myself and I would go to the ends of the earth for him, so I respect Nichele's mother for doing the advocacy work that she has been doing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**TREASURY BD. - BUDGET ERROR (2012-13):
BD. AWARENESS - TIME FRAME**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier and Chairman of the Treasury Board as well.

The Auditor General identified a \$27 million error in last year's budget on March 28, 2012. We know that it was drawn to the department's attention, we know as a fact that other charges were made but mysteriously the \$27 million change was not made, even though, from what we can see, there was plenty of time to make that change. So does the Deputy Premier confirm that the \$27 million error was known by the Treasury Board at or before the meeting on March 28, 2012?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, and I answered in the previous question, when it was materially responsible to make this figure public, we did it.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, as the minister said in one of the previous questions, many people come in and out of those meetings. Typically, various officials attend Treasury Board meetings; typically the Premier is kept informed about the budget as it is being developed because, of course, it's so fundamental. If he isn't, it's a serious abdication of that responsibility. It would be incredibly surprising if the Premier's Office staff were not at that March 28th meeting.

Were officials from the Premier's own office kept informed of the budget developments by Treasury Board, including the \$27 million, and specifically, was the Premier's chief of staff kept informed by the Treasury Board or Finance of budget developments, including the \$27 million error?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the member who is asking the question knows that out of the Treasury Board we issue minute letters, and people would read those minute letters. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, these are very basic questions, and we believe that Nova Scotians deserve those answers. Really, the question we're trying to answer, or trying to get an answer to is, was the \$27 million error known by the Treasury Board at or before that March 28th meeting? Who from the Premier's Office was kept informed of budget developments, including the \$27 million, and was the Premier's chief of staff provided with information about that \$27 million error?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that there was no error. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENERGY - MUSKRAT FALLS: KWH PRICE - CONFIRM

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. This government has been in favour of the deal presented by Emera for Muskrat Falls since before they knew what the deal was - before they knew what would be in the deal, and before they knew what the costs were. In fact, despite this splashy roadshow they've just gone on, they still can't answer basic questions that people have - which, frankly, since the Premier and Energy Minister have said this project is so cost beneficial to Nova Scotia, they should have right on the tips of their tongues.

Will the minister tell Nova Scotians, what will the price per kilowatt hour be from Muskrat Falls once it reaches Nova Scotia?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, the Maritime Link - Muskrat Falls - is a very important project for Nova Scotians. The project has been well-researched and worked on by both Emera and by Nalcor in Newfoundland and Labrador. The URB has the responsibility to determine what the best price is: is it fair and just for the ratepayers of this province? That process is now underway, and will be wrapped up by mid-summer. We'll await the determination of the URB.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, basically the answer is that the minister doesn't know what it's going to cost. The minister talked about research. He commissioned the Dalton report under a set of very limited conditions, which he knew would result in the answer he wanted.

I suspect the government did not expect that so many people and experts in the field would point out the errors in the assumptions made in that report. For example, the fact that the imported power assumptions were incorrect, as has been recently presented; the fact that he costed in an additional natural gas pipeline on the natural gas prices, despite the fact that Nova Scotia Power has announced they're probably proceeding with that anyhow, even with Muskrat Falls.

Why was the Dalton report limited in the options it could look at, and why did the government allow estimates to be made of imports without Dalton even directly contacting export suppliers such as Hydro-Québec?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I guess the honourable member probably has a better direct line to Hydro-Québec than others would have.

Mr. Dalton is a well-respected energy expert. He has worked for the Province of Nova Scotia for more than 12 years. He has worked for the Province of New Brunswick and various states in the U.S., and he lives by his credibility. He lives by his reputation. He is called to be an expert witness at public hearings, and the evidence he has, he has to defend. He has to present it to be fully tested by interveners at whatever hearing he's at. He

is going to be before the URB and he'll have to defend the evidence, the information he has found that shows that the Maritime Link is the lowest-cost option for Nova Scotians.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I know this government has suddenly become very anti-Quebec, with the Premier consulting on a federal bill with the NDP to help break up Canada more easily. Once in the last session - and I will table this - the Premier actually trumpeted energy from Hydro-Québec. This was just about a year ago, almost exactly a year ago, when he said this will be our chance to bring more energy from Hydro-Québec. Now he's suddenly against it - very odd.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Power has submitted information to the Utility and Review Board saying they approached Hydro-Québec a few years ago and it was available, but at the time they couldn't get the price they wanted - and I'll table that. But they publicly claimed it was available. Yet, in the Legislature in Quebec - and I will table this - a month ago it was found that Hydro-Québec has extensive surplus energy, which they are trying to off-load cheaply to suppliers. We know that Vermont and Rhode Island have since signed on for that.

Mr. Speaker we know that that energy is available; we know now from the Legislature in Quebec in February that that energy is available cheaply. Will the minister commit to having the evidence that is submitted to the board by his department updated and corrected for all the errors - and, frankly, will he have the report corrected so that it seeks out formal proposals from possible import suppliers before the hearings begin?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, you know, it's really, really hard to determine if the Liberal Party is supporting Hydro-Québec or supporting the Maritime Link. And the member mentioned a quote from Quebec - and I want to, maybe, bring up a quote as well. The Leader of the Liberal Party had this to say, in Hansard, about a year ago, March 30th, he said, ". . . that the Lower Churchill Falls is an important project that I believe will allow us to move towards a more renewable, sustainable energy market in Atlantic Canada." Yet, just a few months later, he had this to say about the Lower Churchill - he said it's a bad deal. So I'm trying to figure out why they're flip-flopping around here in two different directions.

So is the Liberal Party supporting Nova Scotians, or are they supporting Hydro-Québec?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENERGY - URB: DEPT. EVIDENCE - UPDATE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: You know, Mr. Speaker, the position of the Liberal caucus has been quite clear, and unfortunately nobody else in Nova Scotia has had a problem identifying it. We think Muskrat Falls has potential. The deal that this government

has signed onto lacks answers, and this government doesn't have them. And let's be clear - we are not the only ones. The Premier received a letter recently, which I will table, which asked the minister to give the Utility and Review Board more time; the consumer advocate wrote a letter to the Premier asking that the Utility and Review Board be given more time, because the answers are not available; the small business advocate wrote a letter - and I'll table that - to the Premier, asking for more time; and the Canadian Wind Energy Association has also criticized this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, why is this government continuing to refuse the URB more time to review the Muskrat Falls deal when almost every intervener, except for his department, is asking for it?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess we can both answer the question but, you know, we were in this House here last Spring and we debated and talked about the Maritime Link Act, and as I recall the Liberal Party fully supported the Maritime Link Act - as did the Progressive Conservative Party. We had regulations out last summer that everybody had an opportunity to comment on. Not a comment from the Liberal Party about those regulations - and now I hear that they want more time. I understand that a lot of that information that is available has been previous documents and reports that have always been available to them, and we feel strongly that half a year is sufficient time - and the URB, if they want more time, they'll come to us. But really, half a year is sufficient time.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, to clarify - first of all we did point out that the time might be an issue at the time, and even recently this minister said that the consumer advocate was okay with it, so it was fine. Well, you know what? The consumer advocate is not okay with it now - I tabled that letter, so it's time for the minister to fix that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the fact is we won't even know the cost. He stands up and says the Utility and Review Board can look at it. Well, here is the overview, from Emera, which says that the final cost won't be known, for the Link, for ratepayers until 2017. That is well after the review. They're not even going to file the final capital costs until this Fall, which is months after the Utility and Review Board has to make a decision.

So, Mr. Speaker, does the minister think it's right that the NDP timeline, which basically nobody thinks is correct anymore, or is enough time, means a decision will be made on a project while the final numbers won't even be filed until late this Fall, and Nova Scotians and the URB won't even know what the rate is until 2017? Does he think that's okay?

MR. PARKER: Again, I'm trying to figure out whether the Liberal Party is in favour of the Maritime Link, or perhaps more in favour of something else.

We fully consulted with the URB. We consulted with the other interveners there: the small business advocate, the Avon Group, the consumer advocate, and so on.

Everybody said yes, they had enough time. If the URB feels they need more time, it's up to them to come forward with that proposal.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed in the Minister of Energy. We've come to expect that the misleading and incorrect statements about the Opposition would come from the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville, not from him, but I guess he is picking up some tips there.

He just stood and said, well, if people want more time, they should ask. I just tabled letters from almost every single intervener, signed, asking for more time. The consumer advocate, who the minister said was one of the people who said six months was enough, has said more time is needed. The small business advocate says more time is needed.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the government heed the call of the consumer advocate, the small business advocate, the Canadian Wind Energy Association, and so many more who have asked for more time so that this project can be properly reviewed and we can have the answers that Nova Scotians deserve, that these guys want to hide?

MR. PARKER: As I said previously, we have fully consulted with the URB, and we're still continuing to work with them if required. I just want to quote what the honourable member for Dartmouth East had to say on May 10th of last year, talking about legislation that requires the URB to review the proposed undersea cable. It says, "Liberal Energy Critic Andrew Younger said he's satisfied with the legislation." I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable minister would know that calling somebody by their name in the Legislature is unparliamentary. The honourable minister would know that naming somebody in any manner, whether it's a resolution or a question - I would ask the honourable member to retract that.

MR. PARKER: I'll retract the first name.

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

ENERGY: MUSKRAT FALLS - TIMELINE

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, he did call me "Mr.," so I was happy with that.

This really isn't complicated. The Act did not have the timeline in it. We supported the bill because it was the Premier who went out and said, oh, we don't need an Act; it's going to be reviewed. Then he found out that you actually do need legislation and he was wrong, as he so often is. He had to come in and fix that. We were happy he fixed that. We were happy he brought in that legislation. Too bad they gutted it in the regulations.

The fact is, this is just about strengthening the monopoly that Nova Scotia Power has. In yesterday's Throne Speech, the government claimed to support increased competition in the electricity market, and I will table that. This is despite the fact that at every turn they have opposed competition in the energy market. They have chosen a deal which allows Emera to make a profit at every turn for Muskrat Falls, rather than the other option which Emera has put forward, which is through a power purchase agreement.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government talk about increasing competition in the electricity market in its Throne Speech while at every turn fighting competition and choosing to give Nova Scotia Power the upper hand?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: The Maritime Link is the lowest-cost option for Nova Scotians, according to the Dalton report that has been commissioned. It's the best option on the environmental front as far as reducing our greenhouse gas targets and meeting the federal coal regulations. I know the URB will look at all the evidence and test that, and interveners will question it and determine what is right for ratepayers. The rate of return is also part of that. The URB has that responsibility and goal, and I'm sure that they will look at all the evidence before they make an informed decision.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, this morning the board put out a letter to the interveners, basically saying we're responding to the request to extend the timeline to the board. They said they can't, because the minister won't let us. They said, we will adjust some of the other timelines within there but the decision date and the hearing date has to stay the same. I'm going to table that. I would hope the minister has already actually seen that letter that amends the timelines.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day this government is choosing to support a deal that he stands up and says is the cheapest and lowest cost, yet he can't tell us what the cost is. He says there's going to be enough time at the board to review it and yet every intervener except his own department has said that more time is needed.

Mr. Speaker, why does this government think that this deal is better with Emera having the opportunity to make as much profit as possible, rather than waiting until we actually have the numbers?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Muskrat Falls-Lower Churchill is part of our energy plan but there's a whole lot more to it than that. We've had the opportunity to go around the province over the last number of weeks and engage with Nova Scotians in our energy tour. In fact we had over 500 Nova Scotians who came out to our various meetings from Yarmouth to Sydney. They're able to talk about our energy plan. It includes Muskrat Falls but it includes diversification into wind power and tidal power and sustainable biomass and natural gas and native hydroelectricity as well as what we're importing from Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

It's all designed to get us off coal that governments in the past have relied on for far, far too long. It's all about diversification and providing the lowest, fairest rates in electricity for Nova Scotians.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, this is no different than when the government rigged the South Canoe project so that Nova Scotia Power could hide some of their costs and then bring it to ratepayers, in turn, to not have a fixed cost when the other renewable energy suppliers were offering to supply cheaper energy at a fixed cost, over a longer term.

Mr. Speaker, this minister is doing everything he possibly can to pad Nova Scotia Power's bottom line and to protect their monopoly, time after time again. Now he doesn't want to give the board more time.

I just tabled a letter which showed their amended time frame, part of a three-part filing they did today, the cover letter for that which showed that they are amending the timeline. The other day they put out a statement which clearly said (Interruption) Well I did. Mr. Speaker, he asked me to table the letter I had, I tabled the letter I had. I said at the time it was part of a three-part document.

Mr. Speaker, why does this government give Emera and Nova Scotia Power whatever they want, while throwing independent renewable energy suppliers under the bus?

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know I had an opportunity to have a look at the Liberal Web site on their energy solutions on power rates. On there I find a quote, one of their solutions is to provide energy by importing power from Hydro-Québec. So again, I have to ask, is the Liberal Party supporting Nova Scotians or are you supporting Hydro-Québec?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM.: CBRM CAPITAL PLAN - REQUIREMENT

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the CBRM Mayor and Council released the details of a five-year, \$300 million plan to combat crumbling capital and community infrastructure, supported wastewater strategy, facilities, recreation and fleet modernization programs. The proposal includes a \$150 million commitment from Ottawa with the CBRM and the province investing \$75 million each over the next five years.

My question to the Premier, recalling his recent visit to Sydney and meeting with CBRM Mayor Cecil Clarke, does the Premier agree that CBRM's finances are beyond troubling and a major capital plan for the region is required for our survival?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to travel extensively throughout Cape Breton to work on a number of different projects with a number of different communities. Of course I was in CBRM and I did meet with the mayor there. I must say I did recognize him. His office surroundings and view of the city waterfront is unparalleled.

I also agreed with the new mayor that planning a five-year strategy was the appropriate thing to do. I pointed out to him that this is very similar to the type of approach that we've taken, for example, with the five-year road paving plan. It's so that we can plan for infrastructure improvements down the road.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the numbers related to the CBRM are alarming, and have led to the development of a long-term plan for addressing our many challenges. Sydney is the only city in Atlantic Canada with double-digit unemployment. The CBRM unemployment rate itself sits at 17.5 per cent, and even higher in some Cape Breton communities. The CBRM owns 20 per cent of all required wastewater upgrades in Atlantic Canada, a whopping \$454 million. With aging infrastructure and shrinking revenues, our municipality needs an innovative path to develop assets and keep our communities sustainable.

My question to the Premier is, at this critical crossroad, would the Premier agree that the province must engage in active and immediate discussions with the CBRM to determine their level of support?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we have been in touch with CBRM and having those discussions with them. What we told them was that what they have produced is kind of a one-line estimate of various projects, and that, given a new infrastructure Building Canada Fund, we'd be willing to work with them on some of those projects in order to develop them further, to actually see what the costs of them would be. Of course, there will be infrastructure spending in the province over the next number of years, and Sydney would be included in that kind of budgeting. Cape Breton would be included in that kind of budget.

You may also have heard the member ask about innovative ways of doing infrastructure, and you always have to be careful when the Liberals use language like that, because "innovative" to them the last time they were in government meant toll roads.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, during his visit last week the Premier told CBC that a five-year plan is the right way to go, and stated that the province would look at sharing in this type of program. The Premier also used social media to say the province will work with the CBRM on its needs. For the CBRM plan to succeed, they require a \$75 million commitment from their coffers and \$75 million from the provincial government.

I'm sure the federal infrastructure funding of \$70 billion coupled with the infrastructure needs being included in yesterday's Speech from the Throne are encouraging for the mayor and councillors. As we stand now, road work will be virtually halted in the CBRM this year due to funding restrictions.

My question to the Premier is, as the CBRM elected officials and staff pore over their budget today in an attempt to determine how to proceed with exhausted reserves and residents who are taxed to the breaking point, can the Premier tell the House if he intends to support the CBRM's five-year capital plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe I just said I thought the five-year capital plan is indeed the right way to go - multi-year budgeting. We're pleased to work with the mayor on that plan to look at how it fits in with the new, renewed federal Building Canada plan. That's what we're going to do.

We wonder what the Liberals will do - are they going to bring back tolls on highways? Is that the way they're going to bring infrastructure? Is that what they would do to bring infrastructure into the province? Is it more P3 schools? Is the Liberal plan all about selling infrastructure in Nova Scotia to private owners?

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): GABARUS - SUPPORT

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Deputy Premier. Residents of Gabarus have been patient as they wait for their seawall to get fixed. The wall continues to deteriorate without repairs, and as the Deputy Premier would know, last weekend it suffered some more damage. In the Speech from the Throne, on Page 11, it states, "It is the responsibility of government to provide for the safety of the citizens. This is a responsibility my government accepts and backs with action."

My question to the Deputy Premier is, is this statement a statement that the people of Gabarus can believe that your government will stand by and support?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I'm not one to say this line "I thank the member for a question", I really don't do that, but I will do it in this stance. I appreciate where it's coming from. I appreciate that the member himself and the mayor went to see the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture on this very subject of looking after the seawall in Gabarus and in particular how we're going to come about doing that.

In my conversations with the mayor and so on, it's that if the federal government just own up to their ownership of that wall and go forward, we are willing to listen to any kind of funding formula that if we can accommodate, we will certainly do that for the good people of Gabarus.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Deputy Premier for that answer. A number of homes in Gabarus could be damaged or destroyed if this wall is breached. The seawall protects a multi-million dollar fishery that employs roughly 25 Nova Scotians and as we heard earlier, unemployment in Cape Breton exceeds 17 per cent, it's one of the sixth-highest regions in the country and every job is vital and we can't afford to lose any of them.

The CBRM has committed to moving forward and the federal government has agreed to look for funds, hoping a sharing agreement can be reached. So I take it from the minister's last answer that his government will be prepared to be a funding partner in such an agreement, is that accurate?

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, it's neither wise nor prudent to negotiate agreements on the floor of this House. The federal government has said time and time again that it doesn't own the seawall, but indeed if there is apparently a change in that and they want to sit down and talk to us, we'll talk to them, we'll see where it's at. Let's not kid ourselves, the responsibility for that wall is the federal Tory Government.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, let's not kid ourselves, this wall was built on provincial land. The government of the day, of the federal government, 70-odd years ago (Interruption) You guys might think it's funny, but if you lived in the Village of Gabarus and you were looking out your window every day and wondering if your house was going to stay there, it wouldn't be so funny. Now I'm trying to be calm.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants to answer this question for the people of Gabarus, that would be refreshing because he hasn't answered anything so far today. The reality is for the people of Gabarus, a report that was done by the provincial Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal identified that there needed to be work done soon. The former Minister of TIR has visited the site and has seen the damage that has been created in the community.

What we are asking for is that this government be part of a solution; that's all that we are asking for. I want to know if the Premier will finally show the residents of Gabarus that he stands by his Throne Speech and that he will convince his Cabinet colleagues that it is time to fix the seawall in Gabarus?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I just wish that the people of Gabarus had a representative who actually had some sway with their own Party, their own representatives in the federal government.

The reality is we take all of the infrastructure deficits in this province very, very seriously. They were left to us by a government that didn't have the foresight to make the proper maintenance repairs at the time and we, of course, are struggling among those priorities to make sure that they are properly dealt with.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: CORPORATE HANDOUTS - EFFICACY

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: The people of Nova Scotia are not buying the fiction that the NDP keeps trying to create. Our economy is struggling. Nova Scotians from across this province know it. In the last year, employment has fallen. There are 6,400 fewer jobs in this province; in fact, while we experience employment losses here, the rest of the country gains jobs.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism explain why he can't seem to face the facts that his \$100 million corporate handouts are simply not working for Nova Scotians?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, after 250 years of Liberal and PC Governments, they couldn't get it right. We all know that the last 20 years were the worst 20 years in Nova Scotia in recent years. We also know that we came in at a time when most things were pretty well devastated, including the economy. We came in at the worst recession in recent history, and we were able, through good management, we've managed to turn that ship around. And now, the future for Nova Scotians - for the first time in 20 years, Nova Scotians are optimistic.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives put it best when they said that Premier Dexter's assertions of levels of employment were misleading. In the last year, employment has fallen 6,400; not 20 years, not 250 years, but in the last year, employment has fallen by 6,400 Nova Scotians. Our unemployment rate is one full point higher than it was last year, and at 9.3 per cent, is over two points higher than the national average of seven. We have not turned any corners; we are in the same poor economic environment we were under the previous government. In fact, this NDP Government has made us even less competitive.

Mr. Speaker, why does the Minister of Economic Development continue to ignore the data? Instead, we need to focus on fundamentals and diversification of our economies, not corporate handouts.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, in 2012, we had more people in Nova Scotia employed than we did when we took over as government. That's a fact. In the last seven years, we've earned \$80 million off the interest - the interest alone - of our investments. That's \$80 million for more investment into schools, into hospitals, community services. We are doing all the right things, and the proof is in the pudding.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate of 9.3 per cent masks the regional disparity outside of Halifax - 10.4 per cent in the Valley, 12.2 per cent in southern Nova Scotia, 12.5 per cent along the North Shore, and of course, over 17 per cent

in Cape Breton. What's even more troubling is that our youth are struggling with an unemployment rate of a whopping 18.5 per cent. As the CCPA states, "Despite Premier Dexter's assertions, Nova Scotia is not turning the corner with regards to unemployment." And I will table that document.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, why has the minister forgotten about the unemployed in rural Nova Scotia, and the youth who want to stay here and work?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on my feet and talk about rural Nova Scotia. We know that nobody likes to see job losses anywhere in the Province of Nova Scotia. If the Liberals had their way, the 1,400 jobs at the Port Hawkesbury mill wouldn't be there today. That's rural Nova Scotia - that is rural Nova Scotia. If the Liberals had their way, IBM wouldn't be coming to Nova Scotia; if the Liberals had their way, PROJEX wouldn't be coming to Nova Scotia - a thousand jobs coming to Nova Scotia that they would have killed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC. - SCH. BDS.: BUDGET CUTS - DETAILS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education. Will the minister tell members of this House today how many school boards will see budget cuts this year?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I was very pleased to meet with all our school boards over the last number of weeks and I've discussed their targets with them, so every school board in the province knows their target number.

MS. CASEY: I will repeat the question. How many school boards will see budget cuts this year?

MS. JENNEX: One of the things that we did with our target is we are making sure that we are investing in our students and we have increased our investment, especially within terms of special education. As in all governments and all budget preparations, the budget for the Department of Education is based on our students who are in the province and the students that we serve.

Based on our declining enrolment, some of our school boards are seeing increases in their budgets and a number of school boards are seeing decreases in their budgets based on their enrolments. But we have made sure that we are protecting those areas of the province that have had extreme losses in terms of their student population, so we have capped it at 1.5 with our school boards, so that we are making sure we are protecting those school boards to make sure we are investing appropriately in our children.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I guess that would be five boards that are receiving budget cuts - so for the minister I will clarify it as five. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union states that 700 teachers have already been cut from the system. Students are losing their education assistants and boards are being forced to choose between paying for power or providing educational programming and much-needed supports.

Under this government power rates have gone up by 30 per cent. Failing to adequately fund public education is an insult to our students and to our educators. So will the minister commit to the students and the parents today that she will provide the additional funding to boards that they need to cover power rates so students will not have that money taken from the classroom?

MS. JENNEX: We are investing appropriately in our students in this province. With the target numbers that I was able to provide to our school boards, a couple of weeks ago when I met with them, we recognize that there is a 3 per cent increase per student investment for our children in this province. Our budget has increased and we are making sure that our school boards that have seen significant decline are protected.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EDUC.: SCH. PSYCHOLOGIST/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST - WAIT LIST

HON. KAREN CASEY: Another question that could have a quick and easy answer - can the minister tell members of this House how many students are waiting for direct service from our school psychologist and our speech-language pathologist?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: I don't have that data at my fingertips - that would be information that I would need to ask the school boards. But I will say that under the target budget numbers that we gave out a couple of weeks ago we recognize that we need a few more people in our system to serve the needs of our students, so there will be more psychologists and speech pathologists hired in the coming year.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information and all others here - that information was requested of school boards, it was submitted by school boards, the department has it - and I will table it for all of the boards. It comes to approximately 2,000 students who are on the wait-list for speech-language and school psychologists, I would encourage the minister to look at it, and it was submitted in June. Was the minister aware of these wait-lists when she announced further cuts to public education?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I look forward to during our Budget Estimates debates - I look forward to the questions from the honourable member and I will answer them willingly at that time. I do not have the data in front of me to answer the questions that she is asking about the budget, but I am looking forward to that in the coming days. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I guess my question to the minister - that information was available, it was in the minister's hands. It should have been used when the minister was preparing budgets. With five boards getting funding cuts, with wait-lists of over 2,000 students to be assessed by speech-language psychologists, it would seem that the announcement a few months ago that the minister once again is looking to balance the books on the backs of the kids of this province.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, why should students and parents across this province trust their children's education to a minister who cuts funding when our most vulnerable students cannot access supports, assessments, remediation or programs?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am very proud to be part of a government that is investing in our students. We have made sure that we have put investments in place to meet the needs of every student in this system. We have a situation with declining enrolment and we are meeting that by being innovative in an NDP way, by providing Virtual School, Succeeding in Reading, Skilled Trades. We're making sure that the math is appropriate. We are investing in the students in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - PARAMEDICS:
NEGOTIATIONS - GOV'T. CONCESSIONS**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Paramedics have been engaged in negotiations for some time. In late February we learned that paramedics voted 98 per cent in favour of rejecting their employer's offer. That was with 95 per cent coming out of the membership. The government and paramedics are reportedly far apart.

My question to the minister is, has the government made any significant concessions to paramedics yet to prevent a strike?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member. We all want to know that our paramedics are there, ready to respond in emergencies across the province. No one - I know the member opposite and definitely myself - wants to see a strike. That's why we're continuing to encourage both sides to work through the collective bargaining unit process. We don't want to see a work disruption and I'm very confident that the two sides will work extremely hard to avoid that.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister as well for that answer. I know I'm certain that he does not want to see that group on the street by way of a strike. The fact that 98 per cent of paramedics came out was quite significant and they could be off the job as soon as April 12th.

In the days leading up to the last paramedic strike - and some of us might remember that in 1999 - the Premier, then in Opposition, asked for a detailed contingency plan to ensure emergency services were not disrupted. I'll table that - that was in Hansard, Mr. Speaker.

These valued health care professionals handled about 450 calls these days in this province that Nova Scotians rely on these services. My question to the minister is, what's the minister's plan for those 450 people each day who will call for an ambulance and it won't be there, potentially, after April 12th?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we're working extremely hard to encourage both sides to sit down at the bargaining table but we respect the collective bargaining process. But knowing and being a responsible government, we are preparing, in case there is a labour disruption here in the Province of Nova Scotia.

We're taking that job very seriously and we're working to ensure that we have everything in order in case that happens. But I do encourage both sides to get back to the table and go through the process so that we can come to an agreeable collective agreement between the paramedics and EMC.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. Again, I'm sure that having been part of that in 1999, he nor I nor anyone else in Nova Scotia wants to see that happen again in this province. Paramedics play a big role in providing overnight care, as an example, at CECs when no physician is present. This is what the NDP did when it broke its promise, though, to keep the ERs, like Cobequid Centre, open. We put these paramedics in place and they are a valuable asset in their communities where they're at.

They also provide services in nursing homes and a variety of other things. So Nova Scotians are going to be very concerned, come April 12th, if something is not done. The question I really have today is, the minister states there is something being put together, will he table in this House in the coming days, as we lead up to this without a resolution, that contingency plan so that all Nova Scotians will have some comfort that services will be available if, in fact, paramedics do walk out on strike?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure Nova Scotians, as minister, as a member of this government, that my colleagues and the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education are working extremely hard to ensure that we minimize any disruption in services here in Nova Scotia, especially from health care providers, especially from our paramedics. That's why we believe in the principles of collective bargaining.

We are optimistic that a solution can be found, Mr. Speaker, but we also are preparing.

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

**JUSTICE - MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS:
RELOCATION - NUMBERS**

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, in the move to relocate jobs to a rural area, this government closed maintenance enforcement offices across the province, in places like Kentville, New Glasgow and Amherst, centralizing them in the riding of the minister formerly responsible for the Public Service Commission.

Will the Minister of Justice please tell us how many trained, experienced maintenance enforcement officers actually moved with the program?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: I'm very happy to report that the hiring is going on. The team is just about completed and we're putting together quite a team of young, vibrant, energetic people who are going to live in Cape Breton - not like the Opposition that are concerned about taking jobs away from there, we're looking at putting people in there to work. So we're excited about the new team that's going to go in there and provide high-quality service.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information, 11 officers were transferred from the Sydney office to New Waterford. There is over \$80 million in owed, court-ordered payments not going to women and children across the province. Given the loss of 24 experienced staff people, with some enforcement officers already with caseloads of over 700 cases, can the Minister of Justice tell us what impact closing five offices, moving these offices, opening a new office, hiring a new workforce and training a new workforce will have on the families who are owed over \$80 million?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I really value that question because it certainly outlines the difference between us, as a government, and the Opposition. The Opposition believes in just spending more money, continuing to do the same thing over and over again, without making any changes or improvements. Their philosophy is, if it didn't work 10 years ago let's put more money into it and let's see if it will change. Our belief is, let's be more creative, let's invest in people in Cape Breton. We know the talent is there, we know the intellectual wealth is there and we're going to enrich that area by putting people in the neighbourhood.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that by closing those smaller satellites - we're in a virtual world today. The technology in bringing people together and ensuring that the skills are better so the communication system is better there today and that team will be able to work more efficiently and effectively. Their belief is, let the money grow. We're believing in taking approaches to attack it. That's the difference between us and the Opposition.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, this government moved jobs out of rural areas to a rural community. This is the NDP's economic development plan. This move was purely political. The NDP used to tout its commitment to women and to children but here is a clear

example of the NDP putting politics over women's economic security. And the minister over there may be laughing, but I'll tell you, the people who are waiting for payments are not laughing right now.

Will the Minister of Justice admit today that moving the Maintenance Enforcement Program will disadvantage women and children waiting for support while their arrears payments are already further delayed, not just by delinquent payers but by a delinquent government?

MR. LANDRY: In my area, for example, we moved some jobs from the Pictou County area, but we built the new corrections facility there to help bring stability back and make a sound decision that made good economic sense. We also, for example, invested in the LED lightening and moved jobs from Amherst and put them . . .

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Opposition House Leader.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: 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 Deputy Opposition House Leader.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 1.

Bill No. 1 - Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: First of all, I welcome the opportunity to speak on behalf of our caucus on Bill No. 1, the Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act, an Act to Ensure Accountability in Providing Economic Development Assistance in Nova Scotia.

First, I'd like to just talk a little bit about the summary of what this bill entails, and what the focus of Bill No. 1 would be. A recipient of economic development assistance must provide upon request the details of an economic development assistance agreement signed with the province, and the terms and conditions and how the recipient is proceeding with regard to meet any targets and timelines set out in the terms of those conditions.

Secondly, the government must publish this information on agreements and progress on a publicly-accessible central Web site so Nova Scotians have access to this information.

That is the gist of the bill. Before I talk about some of the merit of the bill and why it is important, I think that it has, without question, a tie-in directly to the economy and how we do economic development in this province. Just some notes from the CCPA, and I will table this document when I'm finished. This is the state of our economy as of now, March 2013.

Between February 2012 and February 2013, employment across the province fell by 6,400 jobs - 6,400 Nova Scotians. There was an increase of 9.4 per cent of unemployed youth over the past year. The employment rate for youth now stands at an unacceptable 18.5 per cent. The unemployment rate in Nova Scotia is a full point higher than it was at this point last year, a direct result of the policies by this government, and stands at 9.3 per cent.

A 9.3 per cent unemployment rate for Nova Scotia is more than two points higher than the national average, and the rest of the country, with the exception of New Brunswick, added jobs. We took job losses. From the CCPA, compared to other provinces Nova Scotia experienced the worst economic performance in Canada, and as we talked about in Question Period, 9.3 per cent unemployment provincially hides the serious troubles we have outside Halifax - places like the Valley with 10.4 per cent, Cape Breton obviously above 17 per cent, and that depends on where you go.

This bill is not an extremely flashy bill. It's nothing that is worthy of a big announcement and a backdrop, and certainly not something you would advertise on CBC Television during Hockey Night in Canada, but you know, while it's not a big splash in terms of public interest - short term at least - it's something that has a profound impact and says a lot about the direction that the government is going in.

Basically this would allow people to see and question the spending that is made by their provincial government with their tax dollars. If you are giving people the opportunity to go on-line and see very detailed descriptions of economic development decisions by their provincial government, it's a good thing. Again, on the surface it probably does sound like something that is not that significant, but I think it will be. I think that as time goes on, these kinds of initiatives and this kind of legislation that you bring forth speaks volumes to what kind of government you're going to have and how representative of the people your government is.

For us, and certainly for our caucus, when we speak about Bill No. 1, we talk about a new direction. That new direction is allowing Nova Scotians to see every detail of what you're up to with ERDT dollars, with Economic and Rural Development and Tourism dollars, which are tax dollars. We know the plight of small businesses. We know the plight

of many of those SMEs and mid-size operators in Yarmouth and the South Shore area that have been hit hard in recent times. We all know the story and the impact the ferry has had.

This bill for me speaks to a couple of things. It speaks to the voter's mindset and I think we would probably all agree in the Legislature that people have become pretty skeptical of what's happening with governments and with politicians. I think anytime you get a chance to address that, I think it's something that has developed over time and rightly so, it will take a long time to gain that collective trust back and make sure people understand that you're with them and that you're making every effort to spend their dollars properly and you're making sure that their investments - because they are the people of Nova Scotia's investments - that they're protected.

You look at the seniors, the baby-boomers and that generation, of course, they vote, they get out and they vote because they think it's their duty and their right and they want to make sure that they impact change or they support what they believe in. Many of that demographic have probably voted for all Parties, they vote for the person, they've supported ideals or particular strategies and platforms of particular Parties, but across the board you know they are going to get out and vote. I certainly felt that in 2010, during my by-election - and I still hear it to a certain extent - that that group are losing trust and losing a little bit of faith. I think when you publish information, that helps support that.

As for the middle - sort of my generation - we're certainly an informed age and I like to think we're interested in what's happening. When you look at every community outside of Halifax - and Halifax, to a certain extent - you feel that outmigration. When you have to leave and you get the opportunity to come back, I tell you, you really understand the value of your tax dollars and when you work hard and make a wage, you want to know that goes somewhere and your investment is being protected.

I think my generation probably don't vote enough, but I think they're informed and I think as we increase that information that we offer, that will increase their interest in politics, in governance and certainly in economic development. Of course, for the younger generation, I'm not going to talk at length about my own endeavours in my community, but when I visit OVEC or Glace Bay High and talk about different policies and different things that the government is doing they just sort of react as if it's over their heads and they don't get it and it doesn't apply to them.

As we know, of course, every decision we make in here and everything we do applies to the next generation and applies to the youth. If they say they don't understand how politics or the nature of finances work, I think they're certainly an on-line generation and if you could prompt them to look at some of these things and if you had a breakdown of agreements and how the province spends money, I think you would find that youth would be a little more inquisitive and would pay attention.

Again, it's a generational shift that has to take place, but I think it's these types of measures that start to get you there. We're moving away from that traditional model of government and of politics and getting into one where we want to put our cards on the table and let people see what we think and what we know and how good we are at our jobs and let them evaluate for themselves.

For me this bill, Bill No. 1, speaks to many things. It provides a window into government decision making and it says to me a few things. First of all that we know what we are doing and that we're confident enough to put the information we have in terms of money we've invested on your behalf, we're going to put that out there and you can take a look and you can decide for yourself if it's well spent, you can decide for yourself if you think that was the right thing to do, you can certainly ask questions of your MLA and you can send questions to a particular minister, the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister, to see if that minister or the department has those answers. It also tells people that folks, we do our homework. There is a lot to these and I think some of the decisions - I've said this in the past with respect to the corporate support that we've offered as a province here with this government in the last few years - they were done hastily.

I think that if you look at some of those integral issues and the key issues for business development or a business venture or a business plan, it's very specific. First of all we are representing money that is owned by the taxpayers so, what's the cost? What is the overall cost? What's the social cost? What are the financial costs? What is it that we're supporting? I think people want to know that and generally I think people feel these days that this is their money and obviously it is and these are their projects so that's a good thing. We have to show them that what they're spending is worthwhile.

Also, the economic impact is significant, it's not just about what the revenue is or at the end of the day what the economic generation is going to be, it's about the entire impact - what did you spend, what are your investments, what are those costs involved, and then at the end of the day what is the net gain for the people of Nova Scotia and the regions that these initiatives are found in, and how much better off are we by making this decision?

Return on investment is along those lines - what did we put in and what are we getting in return? The long-term viability - this is a corporate welfare problem that has existed for many generations. We fund corporations, organizations, initiatives, and they stay until the money is gone, so it's used to prop up operational losses or operations in general and then when those funding streams dry up then it's less feasible to be here. That's not the investment that we want to make. They're not the investments that we should be making and that's kind of a direction that we have to change.

I think people believe in that and they want the companies to be here for a long time. Again, it speaks to the fact that supporting entrepreneurs and investing in those small businesses and coming up with initiatives to spend that \$600 million that doesn't involve

one big cheque for one industry, that sort of ties the community to those industries. I think they're important.

Of course the regional implications - I think what a region will look like after those investments are made is something that we have to consider and that's all out there. If you have a mechanism to provide that information to Nova Scotians, I think that's all the better and they know whether it be Cape Breton or Yarmouth, or metro or the South Shore or anywhere, all points in between, what the impact is for that area and, obviously, the impact for the entire province - and Nova Centre would be one example of that.

What it also tells us when we publicize this information is that we're basing our information on facts and the facts are all there. If you lay out the details to the extent possible of what this investment was and where that investment came from, I think that you'll be able to allow people to rest assured that you've put the time in and, as I said, the homework. You've put that analysis to work and you figured out this is what the cost is going to be, this is the net benefit, this is why we signed the agreement with this firm or this operation, this is the kind of thing we support and it's fact-based.

Finally, certainly not least, sort of left for last, we're open to scrutiny. If we're a department like economic development and we're spending \$200 million tax dollars per year, we've got to be making good decisions. And if we're making good decisions - first of all I've always believed that starts with the minister, and it's a philosophy that's pushed through the department, but if we're making those decisions and we believe in those decisions - you know we can argue with the government about some of these decisions that are made, PROJEX is certainly one that I always like to talk about because I think that was an industry that was growing anyway and we supported a firm that will better be able to compete using tax dollars - and I still believe that and I always will believe that unless someone can tell me otherwise. Had I seen that on a Web site prior to, then it would certainly ring alarm bells for me. I think that's important to keep in mind and we have to put the information out there and let Nova Scotians see it.

By adopting this legislation - again this is where it's bigger than it first seems - this will change the government and it will change the departments that we're talking about. With this one, ERDT, simply put - and this isn't just about the current government, although I think there is a certain extent - the minister will have to be better, the Cabinet will have to be better, NSBI will have to be better, and the funding agencies that we rely on, like the RDAs, they will have to be better.

If we're providing a broad stroke of information, publicize to Nova Scotians that we want them to look at it and we want them to scrutinize that information, then we can put it out there. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. I think that if you have a department that understands that their jobs and their performance are important and they have a very specific role to play, I think that will improve the performance of that department.

I think when you introduce legislation that says everything that we do will be on a public Web site, on display for people to read and people to understand, then I think that you're going to have people looking closely and figuring out how it affects them and what the impact is going to be. I think that will cause change in the department in a lot of ways because again, you will be directly measured on what you have done, what your contribution has been to a particular line item in the ERDT budget which again, is substantial at \$200 million per year.

If we're talking about releasing information, we're talking about things like the terms of the agreements. Now we're not looking at private sector protected information, we don't want to jeopardize any sort of company or firm that the Province of Nova Scotia invests in, but there are generalities of the agreement that we've seen them with after the fact - DSME, Scanwood, those types of things - where that information would have been helpful.

Again, people who are interested in this are people who are interested in this, so you would have those in the financial sector, those in the legal, the accounting, looking at these types of investments and trying to figure out if they're good for us.

We've always been a proponent of loan guarantees, as opposed to grants that are non-repayable. I think that if you had information on loan guarantees and showed sort of what the terms of those loans were, it would certainly make sense.

The established job targets - if people knew what the targets were for a specific investment, I think it would make a difference for them and I think they would follow closely what the development and the progress of those jobs targets are for a particular entity. I think the media would be interested in that because it becomes a public issue and, obviously, in a large case that's what drives the media.

I think establishing the job targets, the time frame and, of course, the government rationale - again this comes back to the people who are making decisions. This department, Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, in my opinion has to be absolutely led by the minister and his philosophy and his understanding of - his or her understanding - of the investments they're making and the things that we're getting into on behalf of the taxpayer of Nova Scotia. That's shared to the deputy minister, and the deputy minister is responsible to pass that through the department.

I think they're the things that people want to see. They want to see where the research has been, they want to see what other agreements were explored that are similar. They want to see the core competencies of the region or of the company or of the sector that we're looking at investing in. I think that when governments are showing the information that they're choosing to - the agreements that they're choosing to get into and they're showing that information to the taxpayers and to the people of Nova Scotia, I think we're better served for that.

Looking back, if we were to talk about DSME and that investment, should that have been publicized, I think that people would have had a little bit more to say about it and only after the fact. Again, it's human nature, people make decisions and you have to live with those decisions. That's the reality of government, Madam Speaker. I think we're at a point now where we haven't hit even close to those job targets for DSTN; \$60 million invested and now we're switching gears in terms of that facility. So I think that's one that would have been nice to be out there.

In closing, my thought on this is that this is one way to let people know that we're open and accountable and we're diversifying the economy and we've got to get back to focusing on small business and entrepreneurs because they are, after a while, what make the economy pump and I think that it's time for a new direction in general, no more corporate handouts and no more blank cheques.

You know, information is important to people because they want to see what we're up to. This generation, this day and age, 2013, it's worth it and what are we so afraid of? With that, I'll take my seat. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. PERCY PARIS: Madam Speaker, I did prepare some written words. I know that my time is very limited, but I think I'm just going to sort of go off the cuff a little bit because I heard the member mention at least eight things that I'd like to speak about that are directly related to Bill No. 1.

I heard first about things being done in the world of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and in business and not to be done in a hasty manner. I think it's for those who have been in government and for those who have been, if I can say, around the block at least once, the deals that are done in Economic and Rural Development and Tourism are certainly not done with haste. Most of the deals that we do today are an accumulation of years and years of hard work. Sometimes what happens in the world of business when a deal is done with a company, especially a company that's coming here for the first time, then things begin to move rather hastily. But the actual lead-up to that, if I can call it that "haste period" is very timely and it's years in the making. I just want to point that out.

The second one that I heard was the return on investment, and I can say that for the almost four years that we have been in government, our return on investment is great. We don't do investments where the Province of Nova Scotia is going to do money. A good example would be payroll rebates. The member mentioned, and I've got it down here as number four, that companies oftentimes leave when the payroll rebate expires. (Interruption) I heard the members say, that's not what he said. He said something to that effect, and I want to make it clear that payroll rebates are paid in arrears. So when a

company that's coming to Nova Scotia is the recipient of a payroll rebate, the way the deal works is that the company has to reach certain milestones, and generally speaking, those are employment milestones. There are certain targets that that company has to meet. If the company does not meet those targets, then there's no cost to government, there's no cost to taxpayers, but it's a great incentive.

It's been a very, very good tool for us to use, and certainly in a number of cases our return on investment - and one would think, and I think maybe from the inside looking in that this is strictly Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, but we also run all of our numbers by our Finance Department, so we do have some checks and balances in place to ensure we are making good investments, sound investments, and investing taxpayers money in an appropriate way.

There was also some discussion that I heard around, and I did hear this very clearly, corporate welfare being mentioned. You know, I hear that, and certainly for me I sometimes wonder what somebody means when they talk about corporate welfare, Madam Speaker. Now, when somebody is accusing this government of corporate welfare - and I'm going to use Irving as an example. I heard in this House, members mention corporate welfare in association with Irving and the shipbuilding contract that we assisted in Irving getting. I can remember very, very clearly Mr. Irving, the CEO and president of Irving, getting up in public and saying publicly, if it hadn't been for the Province of Nova Scotia's involvement, we would never have gotten that contract. (Interruptions) I was very attentive when the member from Cape Breton spoke, and I wish I could have my time.

So, corporate welfare associated with Irving, that is 11,500 jobs; that's 30 years of employment in the Province of Nova Scotia that we wouldn't have got, that Irving wouldn't have got. The reason that Mr. Irving says that they would not have gotten that contract without the province's involvement was because there was a clause in there; one of the terms to get that contract had to do with the cost to Canada. And you know, if we hadn't been involved, if we didn't invest millions to get back billions, that money would be out there somewhere else, but not in Nova Scotia. We did the right things for Nova Scotia. We made that investment, so now, as a result of that, in the future, we are going to have more money so that we can invest in education, health, and social services - all those things that cost taxpayers money. We are going to have billions of dollars as a result of that contract, so the future is bright.

I also heard reference being made to the Web site. I agree that our Web site should be simplistic. It should be more user-friendly to the consumers, and we've done just that. We've even taken all those things that are associated with small and medium-size businesses, and we've bundled them up. I'm looking forward to estimates, because it's during estimates that I'll be able to get into more detail about our Web site and all those things that we've done for small and medium-size businesses. Here in Nova Scotia, we know the contributions that small and medium-size businesses make to our economy.

Back to that Irving contract, because those payrolls, the money that those 11,500 workers are going to earn - not only is it going to have a direct impact on the tax revenues coming into the province, but just think of the impact those payrolls are going to have on car dealerships, on grocery stores, on movie theatres. These are going to be the backbone. It's going to have an enormous impact.

This 11,500 is not only in Halifax. It's around the entire province. That's why we spent money with the Duke study, so that now small and medium-size businesses - hundreds of them - here in Nova Scotia will know how they can take advantage of the supply chain that's going to be traded by that shipbuilding contract.

Unlike other governments in the past - in the past, I can remember when they talked about the offshore. I remember when they talked about the offshore, and what they didn't do during the offshore: they didn't prepare Nova Scotians for discovery with the offshore. We would have thought that governments of the past would have learned from that experience, so that when the offshore came onshore, they would have been prepared, but what happened to those jobs when offshore came onshore? The same thing with the - they weren't Nova Scotians getting those jobs. They had to bring people in.

What we are trying to do is, we are forward-thinking. We are looking toward the future. We are trying to avoid the mistakes of the past, Madam Speaker. We want to make Nova Scotia a better place. When we talk about "corporate welfare," I get a little confused. IBM, a global company that is setting up a centre of excellence where? In Nova Scotia. They could have set up anywhere in the world. IBM could be anywhere, but they chose Nova Scotia. There are reasons for that - 500 jobs.

In the Fall, when we made an announcement around PROJEX and IBM - nearly 1,000 workers, a great day. I was here in the House when those companies were here in the gallery. Do you know what, Madam Speaker? PROJEX alone, they have a great supply working out West that works for PROJEX in Calgary. Guess what? They are now going to be able to come home and spend their money.

Members of the Opposition, both Parties, made fun. They insulted those companies and we know that those companies, including Irving, wrote letters to the editor. I, myself, was embarrassed that day, as the Minister of Economic and Rural Development. I wrote a letter to the company wanting them to know that this government wasn't of the same thought process, that we valued them coming to Nova Scotia, and we appreciated the fact that they were going to locate here and bring hundreds of jobs with them, bring hundreds of thousands of dollars with them to add to our economy.

I also heard during the second reading by the member opposite about staff and about the role that staff has to play, not only staff but also the minister - I think the words were he or she, whoever he or she may be. I also heard about the deputy minister and all of those at the head of staff and I want to say right here today that I'm very fortunate, I'm one

of the luckiest ministers in government because I have good, competent staff. I have staff that care about Nova Scotia, I have staff that care about investments that other companies make in Nova Scotia. I'm proud and I would sing the praises of those staff anytime, anywhere, any place.

I heard it mentioned also about RDAs. RDAs are on the wind-down, there's a new way of doing things, they're called RENs, but what we've done with this - this is completely different than what previous governments have done - and this is being led by the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. The municipalities are playing a lead role in this. The RDAs are winding down, RENs are coming aboard. Times have changed, we knew that, we knew that when we came into government and we knew that if we continued down this same path that previous governments had done for the last 20 years, we'd have the same results.

We did not want the same results as previous governments, we knew we had to do things differently. That's what we're doing, Madam Speaker. We are doing things differently, we are creating jobs. For the first time in years, I walk the streets of Nova Scotia and what I see and what I hear are voices and faces of optimism. For the first time in years I hear people that are optimistic about the future, they're optimistic about PROJEX, IBM, Irving Shipbuilding, they're optimistic about so many things that are going on in this province - so many things that weren't going on in past years but we are making it happen.

Now we are leading Atlantic Canada. Our unemployment is the lowest in Atlantic Canada, we are the leaders. We are the leaders. I see P.E.I. adopting some of our strategies when it comes to health. I see New Brunswick adopting some of our strategies when it comes to economic and rural development. This is all complimentary because people are sitting back and looking at what we're doing and they're saying Nova Scotia is doing it right. We want to emulate what Nova Scotia's doing and, by golly, that's what they're doing. What a compliment that is.

We want to keep on moving this province forward. We see people in Nova Scotia so inspired. We've talked to the Chambers of Commerce who are now saying great, this is the way to go. We're very, very confident, Madam Speaker, and we know that Nova Scotians, like any other jurisdiction in Canada, want good, high-paying jobs.

What we've also done in preparation for the jobs of the future is, we've invested in 400 companies through the PIP. Also through PIP, we've invested in tens of thousands of Nova Scotians so that they can have the right skills, not only for the jobs of today but for the jobs of tomorrow. We are preparing Nova Scotians for the future - a future that is bright.

Nobody in the Opposition wants to talk about Port Hawkesbury NewPage - 1,400 jobs that we saved there. You know, Madam Speaker, I got Christmas cards from workers at that Port Hawkesbury newspaper. They were saying thank you. They said thank you.

Those are 1,400 jobs that the Liberals - if they had had their way, Port Hawkesbury NewPage would not be there today - 1,400 lost jobs.

Madam Speaker, we are on track, we are in control, and we are moving up. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'll be very happy to speak to Bill No. 1 in a few moments, but I really can't let it go, not speaking to some of the comments that the minister has said. Then I'll move on to the comments that I do want to make to Bill No. 1, the bill that's being provided to us by the Liberal Party here today.

First of all, I do find it interesting that the minister continues to talk about a number of jobs in the Port Hawkesbury area at NewPage. He keeps quoting a 1,400 number - one that is not substantiated by a piece of paper or by anything that he has been able to table in this House of Assembly. Maybe what we can ask for from him, if he is so optimistic about the economy of Nova Scotia, is that he might be able to table that in this House of Assembly, just to show us.

I'm seeing 150 people working at Port Hawkesbury right now. Maybe if you roll that out by a little bit - I'm still not getting to 1,400 jobs in that area, so maybe he can provide that information to us. I look forward to the minister providing that information to us as well.

The Minister of ERDT also said that he was confident with the economy of Nova Scotia, yet we're still short a whole bunch of jobs in a whole bunch of places around Nova Scotia. Maybe it would be great if I would offer my chauffeuring services to the minister to drive him around Nova Scotia to see the tranquility that we have in our Nova Scotia towns today because there are no jobs, and nobody is working. That's what I want to show that minister, to bring him around and have a look at it.

Come to Yarmouth and see how it's going. Go to Glace Bay and see what's happening. Come to Clare and Digby and all those areas that there's absolutely nothing going on since this government took place. Even down in Chester, I'm sure that they're crying for jobs, looking for something to happen, because that minister who is responsible for it has done nothing. (Interruptions)

It's funny how a little bit of criticism makes them get all spinny here, trying to find and blame other people as they go.

Madam Speaker, I do offer the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to come to my community, to come to the community of the member for

Yarmouth, to see what's going on and maybe to find solutions for areas like that, that are seeing the highest unemployment rates that they've ever seen - to find a way to talk to the 7,600 people who have not had a job.

The member for Truro-Bible Hill talks about the global recession. How come every other province in Canada is doing well except for Nova Scotia? Because there's an NDP Government (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Order. The honourable member for Argyle has the floor.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you, very much, Madam Speaker. It does get everybody warmed up when we talk about this, because ultimately as we travel around Nova Scotia - and I know that the members of the NDP have travelled around Nova Scotia, too, they were just in Cape Breton the other day and I'm sure they got to see some of the good things and, of course, some of the bad things that are happening there, the requests of those communities. And we're hearing the same things.

Now let's get to Bill No. 1 for a little bit. Bill No. 1, what does this really do? I listened quite attentively to the member for Glace Bay when he talked about a number of things. Some things I do have to agree with that he did say, that Nova Scotians tend to be skeptical of politicians and they're losing faith in the political process. He also said that we need to put information out there for Nova Scotians to see it - and I think those are very important lines as I continue.

I can say that this - in my mind, and what I've seen in my time here at the House, this is a very typical Liberal initiative, lots of words, but does it actually accomplish anything? The Liberals would have Nova Scotians believe that this is a cure for Nova Scotia's sick economy. But it's not a panacea; it's not a cure. I have kids, and many of you have kids, too, and this is sort of like a Spiderman Band-Aid, it just sort of covers up a little boo-boo. It actually doesn't do anything good - it looks good, but it really doesn't do anything. They want people to believe that it will put an end to the decades of old practices of bribing companies to create and maintain jobs in our province.

The Liberals complain about corporate bailouts - and I'm sure you guys will enjoy this one, you guys will enjoy this one here, the NDP - the Liberals complain about corporate bailouts, but when the time comes to put their money where their mouth is, like introduction of bills like this one to stop bailouts, they introduce a bill to help government keep better track of the money that they're giving out in the first place. Typical Liberal approach - all talk and no action. Nothing but sizzle and no steak, Madam Speaker.

Open and accountable - this bill pretends to be about transparency. It passed bills about putting information on a Web site so that people can see it and judge. The Liberal

track record on transparency under that Liberal Leader has not been very good - as a matter of fact, it's kind of horrible.

The one big decision that the member for Annapolis had to do as Leader, the one test that Nova Scotians can look at to see if he's fit to be a Premier, was whether to use the tainted trust funds his leadership inherited from the dark days of previous Liberal regimes. Instead, by all appearances he chose to use the money - money over principle. Instead of coming clean with Nova Scotians and saying we have ample grounds to suspect some or all of this money came from tollgating, he chose to allow his Party to use the trust money; instead of being transparent and saying we're just going to use it, the current Leader allowed the money to flow until it was pried from his grasp; and instead of being transparent and just admitting he was being used, they created a web involving internally restricted funds.

Bill No. 1, that we're debating today, doesn't say we need to do things differently to create jobs in this province; it doesn't say that. Bill No. 1 says let's continue to do the same thing that we complain about in expensive attack ads. Let's keep doing that, but let's add a Web site while we're at it. It will make it look like we're actually doing something; it says we're going to build a database and a Web site to let people know what we're spending in this province and how much money we're actually taking from taxpayers and handing out to big business.

It puts into law procedures about how to document, and details of a failed system. Putting those details on a public Web site, though, won't tell Nova Scotians everything that we don't already know. Everyone knows that the bailouts aren't working. Just ask the 7,600 Nova Scotians who lost their jobs last year. They'll tell you that handouts to corporations aren't putting food on their tables or paying for the kids' braces, or putting oil in their tank. The only job this bill will create is the one for the guy who looks after the Web site in the first place, and it will create a bunch of reports, and forms, and red tape that actually will kill jobs in Nova Scotia. It's just a bad idea. This bill is a bad idea. Again, it tries to create a false impression that the Liberal Party is about transparency, but here are some things they should be posting on their own Web site - because I know they have a Web site, they probably have a couple of them now.

Maybe the member for Halifax Clayton Park could write some of these things down as I'm saying them. I know they're going to be in Hansard, I'll print them out for her, too. One, if they hadn't had the use of those trust funds for all those years, how, without huge borrowing could the Liberals have spent money on expensive advertising and polling? Not just before they were forced to get rid of the fund, Madam Speaker, even in the last year, because of the shape of their books today, would be vastly different if the Liberal Leader had to decide they would have nothing to do with that money.

I went to their meeting just the other day, I know the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville was there too, and there was very little information on where those

trust funds actually went. Madam Speaker, they could, on their own Web site like they're proposing in Bill No.1, name names. How about they do that? This is information that maybe the minister should adopt to put it on theirs as well. Who did they transfer the funds to? Name names. In specifics, who are the current trustees or directors who control the money, and what ties have they had with the Liberal Party over the years? Because Nova Scotians will want to be able to see and judge whether the money has been put out of the reach of the Liberals. That's the information, I think, that we should be seeing in Bill No. 1; all the information that should be available to it.

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

The honourable member for Argyle.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, Bill No.1 says we need to create a Web site to list off the information that is available, whether it's through Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, and exactly where those bailouts are going. Maybe they could use that same thought on their own Web site and provide Nova Scotians some information on where the trust fund money went. We had no information when we went to the Liberal AGM just a few weeks ago.

The third point that maybe they should put up on their Web site, that could be actually a part of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism planning, would be to disclose who paid for any part of the bill, for the polling, for the research and advertising done, since they were forced to give up the funds. Maybe that's some information that we can find out about bills, contracts that are being provided to Irving and those organizations of how that's all laid out. Because we have been asking for information on these loans over the last number of months, so, you know, why don't we just learn from that to actually roll it out into the Liberal Party as well - all of it, who paid for David Hurley's company's work? Does any part of it come from policy research conducted by a third party, like, say, the former trust funds? Or does it come from any part from the federal Liberals? Those are some good things, maybe we can talk about those.

You know, maybe the Web site that they're talking about in Bill No.1, they could emulate it with theirs as well to commit to full, ongoing disclosure; to keep with the money principles in this bill, the Liberals should put their money where their mouths are, and disclose annually the sources of payments and co-payments and loan provisions and any way of data, polling, research, et cetera, so that Nova Scotians can plainly see that none of it came from the old, tainted trust fund. And should keep the public informed about who controls the old trust funds, and what it is going to be spent on.

If the Liberal Leader had had any significant experience in politics, he would know that the judgments a person makes on such issues are all anyone has to weigh their credibility on. What did they do about it? They did nothing. They had a little, tiny piece in their financials that said something - it was very small. I know the member for Hammonds

Plains-Upper Sackville can say it. It had no information on where their trust fund went. Maybe that trust fund on the side is doing some polling for them; maybe they're doing some advertising for them. We don't know, because they won't tell us.

Back to the bill a little bit, it's time to stop the insanity here. It's time to stop corporate handouts and bailouts. It's time to truly transform Nova Scotia's economy. We need to get the fundamentals right: lower taxes, lower power rates, stop wasteful spending. We don't have to bribe corporations to be here. We don't need a fancy Web site and a whole bunch of reports that will keep track of those bailouts.

In the consolidated statements, I'm sure every year we can have a look at where our money is going, where taxpayers' money is going, and I know there are many press releases put out by Communications Nova Scotia - that's a whole other issue we could be talking about in this House of Assembly. We know and they tell us where taxpayers' money is being spent in this province. A bill that shows that maybe we can be a little more transparent cuts to the problem that this Liberal Party has had for a number of years now: that they can't be transparent themselves to what's going on.

If we stop pulling the wool over the eyes of Nova Scotians with silly bills like this one that won't do anything, and concentrate on creating a provincial economy with the conditions that encourage growth and job creations, and that Nova Scotians will be better off.

Some of the comments that came from the member for Glace Bay - I know he had a number of good comments in here as well. There were some good things in here, and some things that he did say - we need to do our homework. I just hope they can do it with their financials. Maybe the Leader of the Liberal Party can stand here in this Legislature during this time and tell us exactly what they're doing with it. The member for Glace Bay also said that we need to put information out there for Nova Scotians to see it. Let's get their own information out there so that we all can make a decision on whether or not they are being forthright with Nova Scotians.

Bill No. 1, in my estimation, is nothing but a little bit of window dressing. Something that goes to the core of what maybe the Liberal Party can provide with is that level of transparency in the Province of Nova Scotia, because they haven't shown it to us in the past, and I don't think they're going to be able to show it to us in the future.

With that, I know I'm a few seconds short of my full time here, but I really want to see what they're going to be saying in response to my comments and in response to the comments from the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. I look forward to the comments that are going to be coming from the member for Halifax Clayton Park. I'm sure she has all the answers, as she always does. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to wrap up the debate today on Bill No. 1, which is the Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act.

I don't want to be deflected from discussing this bill, because I think there is great substance in this bill, absolutely. I think that we have a bill here that is in response to \$500 million-plus that has been given out to large corporations in this province in just the last three and a half years. We know that with that amount of money that has been committed and handed out - and to go to the minister's point just for a moment, he said that we don't give out money, we give job guarantees and monies tied to performance.

That is not true. We don't have that information. We have no way of getting it, Madam Speaker. When we try to FOIPOP this kind of information and make it public, we are told repeatedly that it is proprietary, we can't share it. Companies are willing to take public money but they are not willing to provide information back and that's wrong, that's absolutely wrong.

Madam Speaker, people are frustrated by not knowing the details. Daewoo, for example, was not a job guarantee loan, it was a direct equity investment, it was the first big deal done by the NDP Government for the old TrentonWorks; \$60 million went into that directly, money bought into it for an equity stake in that business. Now we were told there would be 500 jobs at that location and we know there have been a couple of job layoffs but we had a caucus meeting in that area in Pictou, I think it was May, and when we drove by on a workday there were six cars in the parking lot - six cars during the workday in this facility. There was nothing going on in that area at all and we have a \$60 million stake in it.

We would like to know what was the deal, what is the requirement, what do we get back for \$60 million invested in a community where we want to see the jobs, we want to see the improvement but we don't believe that the money that is just thrown around is going to make a difference.

Let's talk about what the minister said. Madam Speaker, I don't know if people can hear me right now and I'd like to reply to the minister's comments. The minister spoke about this, as well, saying that years and years go into these deals that are made and I don't see how that is possible when the Minister of Finance entered into a deal with IBM where clearly we were approached, there was no call for proposals, we handed away the baby and the bathwater, out it goes for a revenue neutral, as we had today, in this case cost neutral.

When have you ever heard of outsourcing government services and not saving money? When have you ever heard of that? If you are going to outsource it's because it's a better way to do it, it saves you money. But we have guaranteed IBM as much money as we pay today to run that service and we have guaranteed them - and I'd love to see this on a Web site - we've guaranteed them an industry inflation escalator. Nobody knows what the industry inflation rate is for technology; it's not the cost of living, we know that. So we've

signed on to a deal with a guaranteed increase that we can't even define, or it is not defined for the public here in Nova Scotia, for the Opposition here in Nova Scotia.

I think the idea of saying that if you are going to get public money, millions of dollars of public money, or smaller amounts, that you could be upfront and honest about the details in that. Madam Speaker, that is the reason for this bill before us: it is about opening up the door to accountability and to openness because the government has been very, very closed about information that they will provide on any of these deals.

Madam Speaker, I'm glad to see PROJEX here working in Nova Scotia but I believe they would have come without the money that we've guaranteed them for jobs. The Minister of Community Services maybe forgets that the Consulting Engineers of Nova Scotia, as a group, sent a letter to this government and they said this is blatantly unfair that we have a thriving engineering sector here in Nova Scotia and that bringing in one company . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter is getting a little high, perhaps you can take your conversations in the back.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park has the floor.

MS. WHALEN: Madam Speaker, it is my opportunity to speak to this bill and I'd like to point out that the Consulting Engineers of Nova Scotia, as an association, with many, many different companies that are active and successful here in Nova Scotia, signed a letter to the government saying it is simply unfair to offer these extra amounts of money that allows PROJEX to pay more for their engineers than the companies that are homegrown here in Nova Scotia are getting. In fact, a lot of engineers will come from their existing companies and simply move over for the higher salaries that PROJEX can pay. It's not going to add to the workforce, it's not going to add to the success or the prosperity of this province.

I think that you have to listen to the business community when they speak out and that this has been done in haste, that's my point, it wasn't done with years and years of study, no. Was there any consultation with consulting engineers in Nova Scotia? No, clearly. So that wasn't done from the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, it was not done with due diligence and with care, and that is exactly what we're asking for.

If the government needed to come clean and put the information on a Web site or make it available to the public - and you can choose your means, but it should not be through FOIPOP. That's not the right way to go, to force people to pay a lot of money to receive information that relates to how public monies are being handed out around this province.

Madam Speaker, we know that the NDP Government has now been characterized as being surprisingly, almost astoundingly, a government of corporate handouts. Whoever would have thought?

I noticed in the Throne Speech the other day that the government felt they had to say that they still stand true to their values, because nothing they have done in the last four years really has reinforced any of the values that people associated with the NDP. That's why Bill No. 1 is calling for more transparency. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Opposition House Leader.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That concludes the business of the Official Opposition for today. I now turn it over to the Government House Leader.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Tomorrow the hours will be from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. After the daily routine and Question Period we will be doing Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I move that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow from the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise until 11:00 a.m. tomorrow.

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, under Rule 5.5, the late debate, as submitted by the honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville, which reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House agree that the Liberal Party's opposition to clean, Atlantic Canadian power from Muskrat Falls is in the best interest of the world's fourth largest energy utility, Hydro-Québec, and not Nova Scotia families.”

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

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

ENERGY: MUSKRAT FALLS POWER - LIBERAL STANCE

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm glad to rise to speak on this motion that I put forward today:

"Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House agree that the Liberal Party's opposition to clean, Atlantic Canadian power from Muskrat Falls is in the best interest of the world's fourth largest energy utility, Hydro-Québec, and not Nova Scotia families."

I've had the opportunity over the past number of weeks to go around the province with the Minister of Energy, talking about the province's plan for lower, fairer rates for Nova Scotians. I want to take us back to how we got to where we are today, and that is the fact that for the longest time - and I've said this many times in this House about the expensive regime that we've been under, under the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals, of tying ourselves to coal.

One of the things the history books have told us was that in 1977 the Liberal Premier of the day said that we moved from one expensive fossil fuel to another, moving from oil to coal. One of the things that at that time the utility of the day was asking for was an extremely high rate increase, but at the end of the day, a 47.2 per cent increase was given to them. The Liberal Premier of the day said, well, at least it wasn't as much as the utility asked for. That's the type of thing that we can expect from the Liberal Party: continuing to move down a road that wouldn't see a benefit to Nova Scotians.

This project, Muskrat Falls, is an Atlantic Canadian solution to an Atlantic Canadian problem. One of the things that the Liberal Party does not mention, Madam Speaker, is the issue of the greenhouse emissions reductions that the federal government is asking all provinces - to imposing on us, talking about what their plan would be to get us to where we need to be, by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

The Liberal Party doesn't talk about that, they don't talk about how they would do it. They don't have a plan. That's not necessarily true, they do have a plan and it's on their Liberal Party caucus Web site. What it says is that they would bring in deregulation. They said they would do that. The other thing that they say they would do but we've already actually done it was ensure that executive bonuses aren't included in the rate application. We did that. The NDP Government did that. (Applause)

The other thing it said it would do is it would require cutting waste from Nova Scotia Power. I don't disagree with that. The reality though is that already happened. The Utility and Review Board requests that information and requested the utility to do that.

But the last point that they say they don't agree with, they say, no, we agree with Muskrat Falls, we agree with it. That's what they say over there but when they go out and talk to Nova Scotians - this is what they say on their Web site - they say, "Provide cheaper, cleaner energy by importing power from Hydro Quebec." That's it. That's the only thing they talk about. They don't talk about Muskrat Falls. I'll table this. This is what it says, it says it in black and white. Exactly what it says. This was taken on February 1, 2013, that's the date of it.

That's what the difference is, their energy plan is less than 100 words. You can put your energy plan in a tweet; that is what their energy plan is. They chirp on about their energy plan - they have no plan. We have a comprehensive plan, this government has a comprehensive plan to get Nova Scotians off of coal, the international fossil fuel market. This is what they would do.

I remember back on January 24th of this past year when Hydro-Québec informed their rate base, they asked their rate base to reduce their consumption on those days - the 24th, 25th and 26th - because they could not produce the power needed. In fact, they turned off their headquarters' logo. They couldn't produce enough energy for their own people. The reality is, let's think about this for a minute, Nova Scotia and Quebec roughly have about the same weather patterns, we have cold winters. We use the energy that's needed at the exact same time.

If they can't produce energy for themselves, how would it become a reliable source of energy for Nova Scotians? The reality about the Maritime Link project is that this is putting Nova Scotia into an energy loop. Right now we are at the end of a line, we've been for years at the end of a line. Whatever policy decision that the Liberal Party has made, we have always been at the end, we've always been at the bottom. This government is moving Nova Scotia forward on things like energy, health care, economic development, finances - they can't handle the fact that we are bringing in a balanced budget next week. They can't handle it. We are one of only two provinces, maybe three, in the country to bring forward a balanced budget. That's the reality. We are going through one of the worst economic depressions, that we've gone through since 2008 and we've been able to protect programs. So moving forward on the Maritime Link is something that will give stable, reliable rates for Nova Scotians for 35 years - for 35 years. Nova Scotia is being recognized as a leader in this.

The question that I want whoever stands up and chirps on from the Liberal Party, what I want to know is what would the Liberal Party do with the regulations that the federal government is bringing down to the provinces regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions - what will they do? They have no plan, Madam Speaker, like everything else

they will write it on the back of a McDonald's take-out bag. The reality is that this plan for lower power rates for Nova Scotians is ultimately what will move Nova Scotia forward. But you know the other thing that they can't handle is that we removed the HST from home heating, and if the Liberals ever have their chance - the one message that I will continue to talk to my constituents is that if they had their chance they would put it back on.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: You know, about the only thing that the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville said that was correct is that many of the NDP members are almost at the end of the line, and they won't be here in a few months. He might be one of them.

It's unfortunate that the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville is obviously a victim of the cuts to the literacy programs this NDP has had, because he can't even read the Web site of the Liberal caucus and get the information. He talks about the letter - in fact I actually tabled the rest of the information later, so he obviously hasn't read that either. I know it's tough when they get the talking points from a Communications staffer and just rely on those - and with the 300 per cent increase in Communications Nova Scotia, probably part of the problem is that they don't know what they're talking about half the time.

Let me start by saying - let me quote The ChronicleHerald here. I will read this paragraph and table it, from February 28th:

"In fact, Mr. McNeil hasn't ruled out Muskrat Falls, but hasn't accepted the case for it as proven either. He has mostly been a critic of the government being too uncritical in its support of the project and of not doing enough to examine alternatives like purchasing power from Hydro-Quebec. So the NDP ad's [sic] bashing of the Liberal leader for talking with Hydro-Quebec is preposterously silly."

Madam Speaker, let's be abundantly clear here. I'm going to give you an example - the NDP are putting their hands all wrapped around this deal with Emera. They can't tell us what the price is - even the consumer advocate has said that's a problem. Almost every intervener, with the exception of the Energy Department, has said that's a problem. They've said they haven't had enough time, they've said that's a problem to examine the details. We will not actually be told the rate until 2017, and that is a problem.

We have spoken loud and clear that having a link there makes a lot of sense, but it doesn't make sense to ask Nova Scotia ratepayers to pay 100 per cent of the cost of a link that will ultimately be owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The former gentleman wishes to speak about the economic benefits, and I was up in Newfoundland and

Labrador - there will be a lot of economic benefits there. In fact some of the dam work is already under construction.

But he wants to talk about differences - ask him why the NDP and the Energy Department refused the Cape Breton Explorations project which guaranteed a fixed rate for exactly the same amount of energy as the Muskrat Falls project, in perpetuity, not just for 35 years - and at a guaranteed fixed price at a lower total cost than is proposed by Muskrat Falls, with 100 per cent of that economic development, 100 per cent of those jobs in Nova Scotia, in Cape Breton. This was a government that decided to put Cape Breton under the bus when it came to energy, in favour of Muskrat Falls instead and tying us to that. So maybe he should explain to the people in Cape Breton, who are going to invest in that project, who had proposed that project, why he thought Nova Scotians' money in Newfoundland was better than putting it in Cape Breton. I'd like to see him go door-to-door and explain that one.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the 35 years of this deal, Emera and the new corporation they've created have admitted they have no plan to deliver energy to Nova Scotia, so this is a short-term plan in energy terms. Certainly we've said and we've been on the record in here that one of the things we should be looking at as part of the solution is importing energy from Hydro-Québec. It's interesting to hear the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville criticize that since the Premier has said the exact same thing. The Premier has said that that should be part of the plan and he is on record repeatedly in this House saying that. So for the member to criticize that, he's criticizing his own Premier.

He talks about energy shortages. Well at this moment there are two dams under construction by Hydro-Québec, one of them for export purposes only. That is the Romaine dam. There is also the Eastmain dam that is under construction. Both of those dams are exactly the same in terms of greenhouse gas emissions as Muskrat Falls. In fact many people have argued that the greenhouse gas emissions would be much less. In fact, when you look at the international studies on greenhouse gas emissions related to massive hydro projects, the proposal that was made by Cape Breton Explorations for the exact same amount of energy was actually fewer greenhouse gas emissions than the Muskrat Falls project.

Furthermore, this is a government that wants to tie our hands. Instead of saying do you know what, the deal should be the alternate deal that Emera suggested that said, we'll get a fixed price and we will buy the energy that we receive. That would have meant that we only pay for what we receive. No, instead we're going to pay 100 per cent of the cost of the undersea link. Then what's going to happen is that when we get the power outages on the line that might be 30 days, 60 days, 90 days - that Emera, Nova Scotia Power, Nalcor, all admit are possible and probably likely a few times during this deal that were in the Manitoba Hydro study - it's Nova Scotia that will suffer the brownouts. Why? Because we don't have the other options, we don't have the replacement. There is no guarantee in that deal.

In the IRs that just came from Nova Scotia Power they were asked about this and they said well, Nalcor will have to make that up at the end of the 35 years. Well that's great that more Nova Scotians will have to sit here and be cold in their homes for 30 or 60 days during a period of brownouts and rolling blackouts that this government has delivered to them. We'll make that up in 35 years. Don't worry, you can be cold for 30 to 60 days because we'll get that energy back in 35 years.

That is not a deal that makes sense for Nova Scotians and these are the questions that the Department of Energy, the Minister of Energy and the Premier are refusing to allow to be answered at the Utility and Review Board. Maybe they can be answered, maybe there are solutions to this, maybe there are ways to make sure that the potential issues with this deal can be resolved. That's what we've said but you can't do it with an artificial timeline that requires the Utility and Review Board to make a decision before the final capital costs are even in this Fall. They don't even know how much this project is going to cost until this Fall.

So instead of an opportunity to create a circle where we would be able to export tidal energy from this province, where we would be able to harness new energy options in places like Springhill or Cape Breton or many other places in this province, instead, what this minister and this government wants to do is tie us to what may be the worst possible deal, in terms of Muskrat Falls, the worst possible deal because the Premier refuses to answer the questions or he doesn't know the answers. The minister refuses to answer the questions or he doesn't know the answers, and I'm not sure which is worse. Which is worse? That they don't know the answers and they're claiming that this is the greatest deal since sliced bread? Or is it the fact that they are hiding the answers from Nova Scotians because they don't want them to know?

When you listen to what is being said by the Premier in this province about the deal and this Energy Minister, it's a whole different story they're saying up in Newfoundland and Labrador. You go to St. John's and you can sit there and you can listen to the on-line shows on the computer if you want. They are on there answering the question, saying oh, don't worry, Nova Scotia will have to find its own power when there are brownouts. Nova Scotia will have to sort out its own issues. That's what they're telling Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Well, the problem with that is that means that eight percent or ten percent - or actually, if you talk to Emera it might be 15 or 16 percent when they buy the other excess - they say, wow, that's going to be Nova Scotia's problem, to find that energy.

Well, guess what? Without entering into some of those agreements now - and looking at those options, there won't be another option. Without looking at what our plan is 35 years from now, when that Link nearly comes to the end of its useful life, and the energy is being primarily supplied to support the Labrador mining interests - you know, you can sit here and say, oh, well, that just may happen. Well, now it pours out that they're selling it to Nova Scotians.

The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is telling people in Newfoundland and Labrador that the most important reason for this project, this Muskrat Falls project, is not only taking Holyrood offline, but so that when these new nickel mining interests in Labrador come online, they will be able to supply the energy there. That's great if you live in Newfoundland, but I'm sorry, you're getting thrown under the bus if you're here in Nova Scotia, because there's no plan. Repeatedly this government admits they don't have a plan, they don't have a solution, and so instead they go running scared, and they just throw everything at the wall that sticks. One minute they're saying, oh, well, you support Muskrat Falls, and the next they're saying, you don't support it. They don't even know.

At the end of the day, this is a government that has backed a project without having the answers. There is no reason why they shouldn't have sent it to the board and said, we're going to give it - as long as the board needs to look at that project, we will give them to look at that project, because Nova Scotians deserve answers. This government won't give them to them. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I now recognize the honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. And I do get a kick on Opposition Days when we do have the opportunity to speak to government resolutions. They are entertaining at the best of times. I know full well that I'm probably not going to take up my full time on this one, because I don't want to give too much credence to what the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville was talking about.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious and it's been shown, time and time again, that both the Liberal and the NDP energy plans will be driving up power rates. It seems like these two high-cost twins can debate who is worse all they want, but it will help no one in Nova Scotia. Only our plan, in our estimation, and then by others, will freeze power rates.

Energy rates have increased 28 per cent - for shame, 28 per cent - in the last four years, since this government has taken power. Emera has said that rates will increase two to three per cent for the balance of the decade under the NDP's energy plan. Not knowing the exact cost of the Muskrat Falls mega-project, the energy coming from it, is another poor example of the fiscal management of this government.

While the NDP are poor managers, the Liberals do take the cake. (Interruption) Well, I know the member for Truro-Bible Hill is talking about balanced budgets, and I was part of a government that balanced it eight times. Eight times. I was in government eight times. (Interruption)

A message from the minister, and I'll table this one - it's for Public Accounts, signed by a certain Minister of Finance. The Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 2009, reported a surplus of \$19.7 million. Madam Speaker, I was proud to be a part of that

government. I'm getting dragged down the rabbit tracks that I really didn't want to get dragged down in on this one, and you know, some other day, I'll plan to go down those rabbit tracks once again. But I'll try to stay away from it, because really, I was talking about the Liberals on this one, so I really don't want to be drawn off on that one.

You know, the Liberals take the cake. While the Liberal Leader has no original ideas, only they could take a failed idea from one province and make it the centrepiece of their energy policy. In fact, it takes a special kind of talent to borrow a policy from another place that abandoned it because it was proven to drive up rates and impede the move to cleaner energy at the same time. That's what the deregulation plan or whatever the opening of the - I forget how they put it, they try to avoid the deregulation issue, but quite honestly that is what the Liberal plan is.

The honourable Liberal Leader's lack of decision on several issues and bad decisions on others shows that he's poorly suited to manage a modern economy. Modern economies are full of complex decisions, megaprojects and, of course, tough negotiations. Managing the economy requires dealing with such a sad track record of challenges; Nova Scotia is the last in population growth in Canada, has the oldest population in Canada. Nova Scotia has the highest tax rates among all provinces in Canada and Nova Scotia has the highest power rates in Canada. Oh, yeah, Nova Scotia's the last in GDP growth among all provinces in Canada.

We've had four years of this government to show us how devastating it is to entrust those problems with an inexperienced government; God forbid that we do it again. Imagine how bad things would be if a Leader that has no practical experience would suddenly become Premier, which is exactly kind of what happened when this gang took power in 2009. We surely do not want to repeat it once again.

With those quick comments, I want to thank the members for their indulgence, I want to thank the member for Truro-Bible Hill for those rabbit tracks because I do enjoy to debate with her. With those few words, I will take my place.

MADAM SPEAKER: I want to thank all members for an engaging debate this evening. We stand adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 11:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 6:21 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 33**

By: Hon. David Wilson (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Carter McMullin is a Grade 11 student at Sackville High School; and

Whereas Carter is a goalie for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and was selected as one of four players from the Kingfishers to play on the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star hockey game; and

Whereas Carter was a member of the winning White team, defeating the Blue team with a final score of 6 to 4 on January 20, 2012, at the Sackville Arena;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Sackville High School student Carter McMullin on his successful year as goalie for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and for being selected to play in the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star game, with congratulations to the White team on the 6 to 4 win.

RESOLUTION NO. 34

By: Hon. David Wilson (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Darcy Gittens is a Grade 12 student at Sackville High School; and

Whereas Darcy plays centre for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and was selected as one of four players from the Kingfishers to play on the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star hockey game; and

Whereas Darcy was a member of the winning White team, defeating the Blue team with a final score of 6 to 4 on January 20, 2012, at the Sackville Arena;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Sackville High School student Darcy Gittens on his successful year playing centre for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and for being selected to play in the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star game, with congratulations to the White team on the 6 to 4 win.

RESOLUTION NO. 35

By: Hon. David Wilson (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Geoff White is a Grade 12 student at Sackville High School; and

Whereas Geoff plays centre for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and was selected as one of four players from the Kingfishers to play on the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star hockey game; and

Whereas Geoff was a member of the winning White team, defeating the Blue team with a final score of 6 to 4 on January 20, 2012, at the Sackville Arena;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Sackville High School student Geoff White on his successful year playing centre for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and for being selected to play in the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star game, with congratulations to the White team on the 6 to 4 win.

RESOLUTION NO. 36

By: Hon. David Wilson (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas Joel Schaller is a Grade 12 student at Sackville High School; and

Whereas Joel plays defence for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and was selected as one of four players from the Kingfishers to play on the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star hockey game; and

Whereas Joel was a member of the winning White team, defeating the Blue team with a final score of 6 to 4 on January 20, 2012, at the Sackville Arena;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Sackville High School student Joel Schaller on his successful year playing defence for the Sackville Kingfishers Hockey Team and for being selected to play in the Metro High School Hockey League's annual All Star game, with congratulations to the White team on the 6 to 4 win.