



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordie Gosse

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Fifth Session

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2013

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2013

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fifth Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordie Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine, I have a brief Speaker's Ruling I'd like to give to the House today before we start.

SPEAKER'S RULING: Imputing motive (Pt. of order by Hon. M. Samson [Hansard p. 904, 04/17/13]) Disagreement between members over facts

On April 17th the honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition rose on a point of order in response to a notice of motion, a resolution given by the member for Truro-Bible Hill. It was his position that the member for Truro-Bible Hill was imputing bad motive to his Leader and the Party, because the resolution referred to tainted funds and also referred to past activities that have been found to have been illegal.

I have looked carefully at the language used in the operative clause of the resolution and concluded that it does not contain an imputation of bad motive, but I understand why the honourable House Leader objected to the linking of the two matters, and I caution all members against suggesting illegal activity by any member of the Assembly. Such a suggestion would be unparliamentary.

I have concluded that the matter is a disagreement between members over facts. Thank you.

Before we start the daily routine, I will also give the subject matter for late debate tonight. The subject matter reads:

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition explain to Nova Scotians why the Liberal Party has misled Nova Scotians by making statements like those from the member for Dartmouth East that the New Brunswick energy market is “working just fine” when the recent New Brunswick decision has blown yet another hole through the Liberal energy plan, so soon after their last misguided attempt to woo Hydro-Québec.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Lunenburg West.

The honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, just on a point of information, it’s my understanding that the member for Halifax Atlantic rose on a point of privilege some time ago in this House and I don’t believe there has been a ruling on that matter as of yet. In light of how this session is progressing, I’m wondering if the Speaker could advise as to whether we can expect a ruling on that point of privilege by the member for Halifax Atlantic any time soon.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow - very complicated but it will be done tomorrow, I promise you that. I had a meeting with my staff this morning over it.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 70 - Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals Act.

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

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 76 - Adult Protection Act.**Bill No. 78 - Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act.**

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I was asked during Question Period yesterday to table a log of the helicopter usage. I am pleased this afternoon, from the Department of Natural Resources, to table the Natural Resources flight utilization report for the period January 1, 2012, ending February 28, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: The document is tabled.

The honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in fact, his staff provided us with a copy of that yesterday, but the request was for the logs from the period of 2009 until now, so I would hope the minister would be able to provide us with that information today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, ending March 31, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize this week as Road Safety Week. The first thing we need to know is that this week is not selected as Road Safety Week on a whim. Road Safety Week begins in May every year, and that's because more cars are on the road as the snow disappears and the weather warms up.

Before I became Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I thought more traffic collisions took place in the winter, the time when roads can be slippery and conditions difficult - that is not the case. All across North America as the temperatures go up, so does the number of highway fatalities. People speed, people drink, people lose their focus, and people lose their lives. Mr. Speaker, 84 people died on Nova Scotia's highways this last year, and 39 of those deaths - that's 46 per cent - occurred in the four months from June through September. Clearly, summer can be a dangerous time for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

At Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal every time I talk about a traffic accident, I get my wrist slapped by one of our safety experts. When you say "accident," it implies it is nobody's fault; the unfortunate truth is that it usually is somebody's fault - somebody was speeding, somebody was impaired, somebody was distracted, somebody was unbuckled. Everybody knows these factors contribute to fatalities, and yet these behaviours continue. It's heartbreaking to think that most of these deaths could have been avoided - by simply following the rules of the road we all know lives would be saved.

Let's talk about seatbelts, for example - it has been 29 years since seatbelt legislation came into being in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia has an overall seatbelt usage rate of more than 90 per cent - that is excellent. However, 30 per cent of the people killed on our highways last year were not wearing seatbelts. If 90 per cent of those 84 fatalities had been wearing their seatbelts instead of 70 per cent, lives would have been saved.

Impairment - let's talk about impairment. There are many kinds, of which alcohol is only one. Society is showing an increased tolerance for the so-called "recreational drugs," but I'm here to tell you that impairment through marijuana is just as lethal as impairment through alcohol. Don't forget fatigue - that too is a form of impairment, and that too can be fatal.

Our experience and our road safety experts tell us that the person not wearing their seatbelt is also more likely to be the one who is speeding and more likely to be driving while impaired. There's basically a perfect storm for traffic danger.

What do we do to reach these people? We make new laws; we step up enforcement; we invest millions of dollars in maintaining and improving highways, roads, and bridges; we design safe new highways; we add rumble strips; and we run education campaigns.

Last week we called attention to motorcycle safety by declaring May to be Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. This week is Road Safety Week. Next week we are partnering with the Nova Scotia Road Builders on a \$60,000 ad campaign to encourage drivers to slow down through highway work zones.

Recognizing that we can't do this alone, we work with many road safety partners. These include other government departments, all enforcement agencies, and private groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Injury Free Nova Scotia, Child Safety Link, Safety Services Nova Scotia, and the Ecology Action Centre. We're part of Nova Scotia's Road Safety Advisory Committee, which examines road safety issues. We have direct traffic officers who are on the road throughout Nova Scotia to investigate when someone has a safety concern about one of our highways.

All Nova Scotians have a responsibility to road safety. We must work together to remind each other to respect everyone and themselves, by driving and riding sober and travelling mindfully and courteously. I appreciate and support all of our road safety staff and partners. Keep up the good work.

I thank our first responders - police and RCMP officers, paramedics, firefighters - and vehicle compliance officers for what they have to do when something goes wrong on our highways. Please keep up the good work.

I encourage all Nova Scotians to enjoy the summer but drive safely - slow down, buckle up, drive sober, and leave your cellphone and other gadgets out of reach. Leave enough time in your trip so you can stop to enjoy all the things this glorious province has to offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our Transportation Critic, the member for Clare, I'm pleased to rise to offer a few words in response to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's statement regarding Road Safety Week.

First, we'd like to thank the minister for providing us with an advance copy of his remarks today. Safety on our highways is the most important aspect of driving, whether it is a car, truck, or bicycle, or if you are a pedestrian. Taking precautions to ensure safety on roads saves lives.

The minister rightly points out that safety measures such as seatbelts save lives every single day. We simply cannot do enough to make certain that Nova Scotia and all motorists on our highways do not drive under the influence of any substance.

The minister speaks about investments in highways, bridges, and roads, and while there are improvements being made, I would like to remind the minister about the many secondary roads in our province that are in disrepair, where reckless driving may occur more often. I would be remiss as well to not remind the minister of the need to continue and expedite the twinning process between Highway No. 104 in New Glasgow, all the way to the Canso Causeway, which is a major thoroughfare for traffic and commercial vehicles, not only from Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia but from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is important to keep these roads in good condition and keep up our enforcement efforts to stop such incidents as bad driving. Road safety applies to everyone, not just motorists. Crosswalk safety and taking care while walking the roads and streets is just as important, and I am pleased that our caucus has been very vocal on the need for better crosswalk safety. Awareness for both motorists and pedestrians can indeed be lifesaving.

I would urge the minister to continue efforts to keep crosswalk safety and pedestrian awareness on the minds of all Nova Scotians, rural and urban. As well, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not encourage the minister to work with his colleague, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, to work in conjunction with municipalities that are trying to construct sidewalks in their communities so that residents can walk safely without having to rely on the gravel shoulder of the road or walking on the road, which can be very dangerous, and as well we have certainly been strong advocates in our caucus for bicycle lanes, especially when new road construction is taking place. Unfortunately, I don't believe a policy has been brought in.

Mr. Speaker, I was reminded of the issue of safety by one of colleagues. While our province has implemented a law that requires drivers to have daytime running lights on at all times, one just has to take a trip on our highways to see that many vehicles continue not to have any lights on while they are driving and we would question the minister as to how much enforcement is taking place on this new law, especially when one considers the weather in Nova Scotia. Driving on a highway in foggy conditions and meeting vehicles without their headlights on is extremely dangerous for everyone, not just their headlights but their rear lights as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to see a partnership with the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association. In fact, we applaud this effort as it echoes legislation introduced by the member for Clare in May 2008. Bill No. 150 was an amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act that requires a sign be posted in or approaching a temporary work area advising drivers that the fines for speeding in a temporary work area are double. We are pleased with the former Progressive Conservative Government for passing this bill in May 2008, and I'm

sure we have all seen the signs in construction areas as a result, which promote safety for the workers and motorists and increase awareness on our roads.

I also want to commend the minister for implementing more rumble strips along our roads, especially throughout his riding where I travel on a regular basis. Those rumble strips are very effective, both in the summertime and especially in the wintertime when roads are covered and it's not always clear to see where the yellow line is. I would be remiss if I did not recognize my colleague, the member for Kings West who has been a strong advocate for rumble strips and has brought forward legislation in this House to make that mandatory throughout our province.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to take this opportunity to honour our police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and vehicle compliance officers as well. These first responders often put their own lives in danger to save the lives of others, a very selfless deed, and these people should be thanked for their commitment and dedication. Our caucus would like to reiterate some of the words of the minister, to drive safely in our Province of Nova Scotia and to be very safe on our roads this summer and throughout the entire year. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: I would like to thank the minister for providing a copy of his remarks in advance of today's proceedings. It is my pleasure as well to get up and speak about Road Safety Week. Mr. Speaker, I think we've seen a shift in culture in this province. I know in the rural area that I come from . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: There is lots of Gaelic.

MR. MACMASTER: There's lots of Gaelic, yes, and I think in a lot of areas in the province, particularly in rural areas of the province, the incidence of drinking and driving has decreased. I know they are still getting people every week because we see it in the papers but I do believe there has been a cultural shift away from drinking and driving. I know the minister has mentioned some of the partners that he has been working with and I know they do a lot of good advertising. Mr. Speaker, I think the message that is given to the public is plan ahead. If somebody is planning to go out and consume alcohol, plan ahead to make sure that there is a plan in place so that when you go home at the end of the night, there is a safe method to get there, and that is really the answer for that.

I also know texting. I did some travelling in the southern U.S. recently and I noticed people looking at their phones while they were driving. I've noticed a cultural shift already in this province where we don't see that anymore, certainly not as much. Mr. Speaker, I think there has been a cultural shift move there and I think that is a good thing. I know here in the Legislature our own Sergeant-at-Arms, Ken Greenham, keeps an eye on us and maybe if Nova Scotians pictured him in their rear-view mirror when they have their

cellphone at hand, they might decide to put it back from whence they picked it up. If we had the Sergeant-at-Arms with his mace in the backseat, it might be a good image for people to have in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is also Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and as a motorcycle driver myself, I know the importance of safety. I remember when I was taking my testing to get licensed, we were required to drive at a very slow speed and to navigate turns. It certainly is much more difficult to drive a motorcycle at a slow speed than a fast speed. I know the police officers here in Halifax - I was watching the news last night - they were actually doing their spring training to make sure they're ready for riding the big Harley-Davidsons that they have.

So that testing is good practice, and I know motorcycle drivers around the province, most of them are responsible, most of them go through those tests, but it's certainly good to do a refresher now and again on our own. It is so important for motorcyclists to be defensive drivers, because often motorists may not see motorcyclists on the road. I know when I drive myself, I'm very careful. If I see somebody who looks like they're going to pull out onto the road, I'll usually slow down and assume that they might just pull out onto the road.

I know slippery conditions - when it rains it can be a very slippery time for motorcycles, and you don't know that until you start riding a motorcycle. You learn that some of the oil and whatnot that is coming off vehicles and these being deposited on the road surface, it becomes very slippery at the start of a rain. With a motorcycle you don't have much contact with the road.

I'd like to also remind everybody that it is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, the month of May, and the importance of that. I want to say something else, Mr. Speaker. I think pedestrians have a role to play in road safety. We must not only expect safety-minded actions for motorists, but also from pedestrians because they share the road as well. We must be careful never to assume that motorists are seeing pedestrians, and it is important to be defensive about that.

This is also North American Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Week, Mr. Speaker. When I was in Port Hastings earlier this week, at a flag raising for that, I was actually telling them about a gentleman I was working with on my motorcycle on the weekend, and we were talking about it, and he was telling me about a program that he went through. There were four critical states of mind. It was a safety program from real-world application, and the four states of mind that can lead to critical errors and to injury. I think they are very applicable for our roadways, Mr. Speaker. The four of them are frustration, fatigue, rushing, and complacency.

Those are all things that can, of course, not just cause accidents in the workplace but certainly on the highway. Mr. Speaker, I leave that as a point for members to think

about and for the public to think about, and thank you for the opportunity to speak about this important week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Community Services and the minister responsible for housing, it is my priority to make life better for Nova Scotians through safe and affordable housing. On Monday our government announced the province's very first long-term Housing Strategy. It was an historic day, and caused me to reflect on how central my grandparents' home has been throughout my life. Beginning as a young child visiting with my parents, continuing as a parent myself, raising a child in that same house, and providing the touchstone for my family's life today, I feel so fortunate to live in my grandparents' home with my family. I recognize how this enables my strong and continuing connection to my childhood community.

Mr. Speaker, until now, Nova Scotia has been missing a blueprint to deal with the housing needs of Nova Scotians. Recently we consulted and we listened to more than 500 Nova Scotians who shared their struggles, as well as their suggestions, openly. Our new Housing Strategy has been shaped by their voices, their needs, and their opinions.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why previous Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments have always operated without a clear plan to deal with this crucial issue, but those days are finally over. As a result of the leadership of our Premier, I am proud of the fact that Nova Scotia now has a long-term strategy to address the housing needs of our fellow Nova Scotians. As we heard many times during the public consultation, Nova Scotians want more access to homes that are affordable. That's why, Mr. Speaker, one of our top priorities will be to build more affordable homes and create home ownership opportunities. We will build diverse communities with smaller homes that reflect the current needs of Nova Scotia's families. We will support developments with a mix of income levels, housing types and length of stay. Tenants will pay full-market rent to live next door to homeowners with subsidized rent. Subsidized housing will be indistinguishable from market-priced homes.

Mr. Speaker, we're excited about a number of immediate opportunities where we will showcase our mixed-market approach. Some of the most promising include College Park in Windsor, Bloomfield in Halifax's north end and some neighbourhood revitalization initiatives in Sydney, Truro and other areas.

We heard over and over again about the importance of ensuring affordable housing choices for owners and renters. In the past, anyone who wanted to rent had to choose between fully subsidized rent or full-market rent, with little or nothing in between. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that we will soon offer a full range of affordability options for tenants, offering full and partial support based on income.

Mr. Speaker, the houses we build or finance will address an immediate, critical need for more affordable housing for low-income families and individuals, as well as many middle-class Nova Scotians.

During the consultations we also heard that for many once rent, groceries and other necessities are paid for, there is little if anything left over. Mr. Speaker, saving money for a home can seem like a distant, if not impossible, dream for many hard-working families. We will be there to help these people who need a hand up, not a handout. Nova Scotia will become a leader in innovative financial solutions to help Nova Scotians who may not yet be in a position to secure a mortgage from a bank or a credit union. We will enable Nova Scotians to save for a down payment, build equity and buy their home. We will offer lease-to-own options such as dedicating part of a tenant's rent to building equity in their home. We will offer a graduate home ownership program that lets recent graduates get a jump-start in building equity and provide an incentive to stay right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, this comprehensive Housing Strategy ensures that we take care of the generation that took care of us. We will look at new and improved programs for seniors to help them stay in their family homes as long as they can. Seniors, as well as people with disabilities, lend diversity and vitality to our communities. Ensuring that they are able to live in the community was another key theme from the consultations, in fact, moving towards providing more options specifically for people with disabilities has been a key pillar for me. The right housing options can support the goal of ensuring dignity and independence.

Mr. Speaker, our government has made it clear that we want people with disabilities to be able to live in their communities, with real opportunities for social inclusion. As we build more diverse housing, we will integrate supported and accessible units directly into these developments. This strategy will help our most vulnerable citizens. As I'm sure members of this House are aware, homelessness is a real problem that requires all levels of government and community partners to work together. We will adopt a Housing First approach that will help homeless people find a safe place to live and provide them quickly with the support they need.

Mr. Speaker, the government cannot fulfill this ambitious strategy on its own; it will take the entire community working together. This includes all levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations. We will also work closely with our municipal partners to make sure we integrate with their community planning and zoning strategies, and we will co-operate across government departments and agencies.

Over the next 10 years we will invest at least \$500 million to help achieve our goal of building new, vibrant communities, revitalizing existing ones, and offering affordable new housing choices for Nova Scotia families. That is in addition to our existing investments. Let me repeat: we will invest \$500 million more to create affordable homes and help Nova Scotians have better access to home ownership. We will do this by

leveraging our housing corporation's working capital. This fund is currently used for a variety of development purposes. In the future, it will also be used to help finance developments of all kinds.

Finally, greater utilization of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation will result in a Housing Strategy that works effectively and provides opportunities to bring forward housing solutions based on the specific needs of Nova Scotia communities. Nova Scotia needs a modern housing agency to meet the realities and challenges facing today's families and communities. That's why the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation will become Housing Nova Scotia and will be responsible for the implementation of this Housing Strategy.

I was happy to hear that my colleagues from the Opposition Parties are in agreement with the government's vision to address the housing challenges this province faces. I have also heard some criticism around the so-called lack of specific targets. This can only come from people who have failed to read the strategy. It is not our intention to tell communities what they need. They will know what works best for them, and they will come forward with housing plans that meet their needs. Housing Nova Scotia was developed with the assistance and guidance of a new advisory board - a solid business plan which will include specific targets.

Anyone reading the strategy will see clearly-identified targets that are in our action plan in the coming months. I also want to be clear that our strategy commits to the development of a clear and transparent accountability framework focused on measurable outcomes. The key will be the supply of more affordable housing options for Nova Scotians. Thank you.

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

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I apologize in advance for my voice. I'm suffering from allergies.

I'd like to first thank all of those community members and housing advocates from across the province who have been working to ensure that Nova Scotians have safe and affordable housing. As well, I'd like to thank them for their advocacy work in bringing their issues and the issues of Nova Scotians facing housing crises to the forefront. I'd like to also thank the minister's office for sending her remarks to my office in advance.

Nova Scotians had high hopes for this strategy, and there are some good visions for the future of housing in it. We are pleased that the government has taken the idea from Liberal legislation tabled in Fall 2012 and again earlier this session to create an advisory board for the housing corporation. We're also pleased that they are going to spend money from the deferred federal contribution of the Social Housing Agreement, something we've

been asking them to do for quite some time. We applaud the government for recognizing the demographic challenges in working with builders to provide small options homes.

Hundreds of people came out to consultations and made submissions for the strategy in the hopes they would see real action from this government. Let's be clear - this isn't a strategy. It's a framework. It's a wish list. In fact, this morning at Public Accounts Committee the minister's deputy referred to it as a starting point to rethinking housing, and that's all it is. It's being dropped in the laps of Nova Scotians on the eve of an election to make it look like this government has done something about the housing crisis - it's been four years and they've built just 200 units.

The minister says the houses they will build will address an immediate critical need for more affordable housing. There is nothing in this plan that calls for anything to be built immediately - this is a plan to plan some more. Meanwhile, 1,777 families are waiting for public housing; 2,518 seniors are on the wait-list for public housing; and 650 are waiting for small options homes. Housing organizations are begging for more money, and this government has used this strategy to deny organizations like Morris House funding that would help them provide Housing First. (Interruption) You know, I listened to the minister quietly while she made hers, I would appreciate the same opportunity here. (Applause)

The community organizations that devoted their time and their energy to the strategy have been excluded from this initiative; the NDP have turned their backs on the people who have done the lion's share of the work for many years. This minister states that the Opposition Parties have raised concerns about the lack of targets. We are not alone in this - the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities expressed concerns about the lack of targets, actions, and responsibilities this week at the Community Services Committee, and the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia has also expressed concern about the lack of targets. Again, this framework is an election document. If it were an actual call to action it would have included things like targets, timelines, responsibilities - those do not exist in this document.

Last election the NDP promised to end emergency room closures, and last year they were closed for 17,000 hours; they promised not to raise taxes, instead they raised the HST by two per cent and increased 1,400 user fees, twice; they promised to cut the provincial portion of the HST on electrical bills, and then they added the efficiency tax. They cut funding to public education and universities - there was no mention of that in their election promises; and they doled out over half a billion dollars in corporate welfare - that wasn't in their election document. Given this government's track record we can see why community and social justice advocates are skeptical of this plan.

Paul O'Hara is quoted in a media co-op article today stating: "The strategy is very non-committal on specific action, they are still talking and not doing, and by now it is four years on in their mandate." And I'll table that article, Mr. Speaker.

It has been four years and this government is still talking. This is not the NDP people thought they elected. Nova Scotians are tired of talk.

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

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

You know, it goes without saying that every member of this House would agree that all Nova Scotians deserve to have access to safe and affordable housing. We know how important it is to have a place to call home. Although we welcome the minister's announcement of a Housing Strategy, it's lacking in details - it is unclear what the finished product will look like, or when Nova Scotians can expect certain projects to be completed, or certain programs to be available.

The biggest missing piece is a lack of a plan to pay for this. A program of this size, with a \$500 million budget, needs to be accompanied by a clearly defined plan to pay for it. The government has no plans to grow the economy and unemployment levels across the province are staggering - there appears to be no plan to turn that around to bring in the revenue to pay for this Housing Strategy. The minister mentioned in her remarks today that Nova Scotians told her their personal budgets were stretched too thin. After paying their rent, buying groceries, and paying bills they have little, if anything, left over - and that's something, Mr. Speaker, that this government will do well to address.

Affordable housing is essential but something the government needs to understand is that the issue of poverty is multi-faceted. We cannot point to one single cause or one single solution. By making life unaffordable through high taxes, high power rates and stagnant wage growth, Nova Scotians are struggling to keep their heads above water.

The need for affordable housing has grown because of the financial stress the government has put on the people of this province. The government should have coupled this Housing Strategy with a plan for job creation, a plan that will put the right conditions in place for Nova Scotia's economy to prosper. By failing to do that, they've only guaranteed Nova Scotians that struggle to pay bills, maintain a home and keep a job will continue.

Though we're pleased that more families will have access to safe and affordable housing, we're worried that our economy will not turn around and that the need will grow even more. The Housing Strategy does not contain the specifics that Nova Scotians were looking for. It is very difficult to envision what will be done in each community when the government has not made up their minds.

In the strategy itself it says, "Some of the programs we are considering . . ." How are Nova Scotians to understand the strategy if the department hasn't even made up their mind? The consultation process should have included discussions about these programs so

that the government could present specifics. We could wait years to see these programs, Mr. Speaker, whichever ones they choose.

The bottom line is this, Mr. Speaker - we're happy to see that safe and affordable housing will be coming to more people in this province. However, it is disappointing to see no accompanying plan to pay for it or a plan to turn the economy around and break down the barriers and financial pressures put on Nova Scotians. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, am I able to do an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: I'd like to draw members' attention to the east gallery. With us is a group who came together to plan an educational and emotionally fulfilling opportunity for women of all ages. These are women who belong to the Women's Wellbeing Association, which has turned this gathering into a weekend-long conference-style expo promoting health and well-being for women in HRM and beyond.

With us - and I'd ask them to rise - is Kathleen Leadon, Kathy MacPherson, Cathy Burgess, Julia MacPherson, Rhonda Baxter and someone who is unable to be with us is Shelly Arsenault. I wish all members to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1281

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 from May 24th to May 26th at Cole Harbour Place in Dartmouth, the first annual Women's Wellbeing EXPO will take place; and

Whereas the expo will bring together health care providers, researchers and specialists in the areas of financial, social, physical and spiritual wellness, among other exhibitors; and

Whereas the expo could not be made possible without community support, the efforts of volunteers and the sponsors who promote all aspects of the importance of women's health;

Therefore be it resolved that all the members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of women's health and provide their support to the first annual Women's Wellbeing EXPO.

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.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I too beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: I'd like to draw the attention of the members of the House to the east gallery. It is my great pleasure to introduce Ken MacKinnon, the chairman of the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council's Board of Directors. Ken MacKinnon has been involved with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council for the past four years and has served as the board chairman for the last three years. He has worked as a commercial banker in the financial industry for the past 16 years and lives in Baddeck with his family. Ken is here representing the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, which many members of the House are very familiar with.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask members of the House to give Mr. MacKinnon a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

RESOLUTION NO. 1282

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 Nova Scotia Co-operative Council helps the economic social well-being in every region of our province; and

Whereas the province and the Co-operative Council have worked together for 10 years on the Credit Union Small Business Loan Guarantee, which has helped more than 1,100 small businesses, resulting in more than 2,000 jobs created and 5,000 jobs maintained; and

Whereas the Council recently won three Progress Innovation Awards in the categories of Economic and Community Development, Social Enterprise, and Overall Economics and Community Development;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council and the Credit Unions of Nova Scotia, and the work that they do in creating sustainable and innovative small businesses in 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. 1283

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

Whereas *CSS Acadia*, the largest artifact at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, was launched 100 years ago today, May 8th, in Newcastle, England, as a Canadian hydrographic survey vessel; and

Whereas the *CSS Acadia* worked for 56 years as a survey and research ship and is the only vessel still in existence that served Canada in both world wars; and

Whereas this summer, Nova Scotians will have an opportunity to experience the work and mystique of the *CSS Acadia* with celebrations that include an exhibit and talks at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and a reunion for former crew members;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of the Assembly thank the *CSS Acadia*'s former crew members, staff at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and all of our partners who have helped shared the vessels tremendous story, and wish them great success with the 100th Anniversary celebrations.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. WILSON: I draw all members' attention to the east gallery where I'll ask our guests to rise. Joining us today is Jone Mitchell, the director of development for The Arthritis Society Atlantic Region, and Erin DeBodt, a Joints in Motion participant, who recently returned from the Rome Joints in Motion Marathon, and I ask all members to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1284

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

Whereas Joints in Motion is a successful fundraising event for The Arthritis Society, with Nova Scotians participating in various marathons around the world; and

Whereas one in four Nova Scotians are living with arthritis; and

Whereas the Joints in Motion training team has raised more than \$135,000 for The Arthritis Society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Joints in Motion staff, volunteers, and participants on raising a tremendous amount of funds to help Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

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. 1285

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

Whereas since 1982, Anne Rapson, an accomplished violinist, has served as associate concert master for Symphony Nova Scotia, building on a lifelong love of music to strengthen the leading orchestra in Atlantic Canada as it delivers top-notch classical and popular musical performances; and

Whereas John Rapson has served as principal clarinetist with Symphony Nova Scotia and has won several prestigious Canadian and international competitions during his career, including the CBC Talent Festival, the Canadian Centenary Festival of Music, and the bronze medal at the Geneva International Clarinet Competition; and

Whereas Anne and John Rapson will be retiring from their roles at Symphony Nova Scotia, after having built successful careers as performers and contributing to making the orchestra a world-class arts and culture institution;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Anne and John Rapson on their successful careers, thank them for their tremendous contributions to Symphony Nova Scotia, and wish them good health and much happiness in their retirement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1286

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

Whereas Mr. Benjamin L. MacLean, formerly of Hubbards, Nova Scotia, and now working with the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, Germany, working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, was recently awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas since graduating from Forest Heights Community School, Mr. MacLean has pursued a career which has taken him to Haiti and Brussels, and to study in New Zealand; and

Whereas the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade chose Mr. MacLean to thank him for his exceptional work and professionalism during the 2011 Egyptian evacuations and temporary assignment in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but also for his work as Berlin's consular head;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Benjamin MacLean on receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and wish him continued success as he continues with a very successful career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth on an introduction.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the House of Assembly's attention to the west gallery. We have one of my many favourite constituents in the gallery with us today, John MacDonald, who used to take care of my money at the Bank of Montreal in Yarmouth, and who informed me that he's here today to ensure that I behave myself in the Legislature. I would ask John to stand up and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1287

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

Whereas today marks 68 years since the Allied victory brought the Second World War in Europe to an end, otherwise known as VE Day; and

Whereas after more than five long years of unprecedented human suffering and nearly a year after the largest land invasion in history, the people of Europe could start to rebuild their lives and communities; and

Whereas for Canadians, today reminds us of the vital role our Armed Forces played in liberating countries across Europe, including Holland, Italy, and France, and the ultimate sacrifice made by 45,400 Canadian heroes;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House reflect on the end of the most deadly military conflict in history and the role thousands of Canadians played in bringing that awful conflict to an end.

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 Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1288

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

Whereas the Cole Harbour Pee Wee B boys and Bantam AA female hockey teams co-hosted this year's provincial championship in Cole Harbour; and

Whereas thanks to the support of volunteers and parents, it was the first time Cole Harbour had been selected to host this event;

Whereas both teams played hard, with the Pee Wee boys winning the bronze medal and the Bantam girls team finishing second and bringing home the silver medal;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join together in congratulating the members of both teams for their hard work and commitment to their respective teams and thank the many volunteers who made the event possible.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1289

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

Whereas the Under-14 volleyball provincials were held at the Canada Games Centre in Halifax over the weekend of April 20th and 21st; and

Whereas the Fusion Muisse team from the Yarmouth Southwest Volleyball Club was among 29 teams competing in tiers one and two; and

Whereas the Fusion Muisse team consisting of Sophie Surette, Julie Phillips, Kaylie Amiro, Madison Burbidge, Renee Cleveland, Meggie O'Brien, Sydney d'Eon, Kristine Babin, Kaitlyn Mooney, Bailey Gushue, and Rileigh Mosley, under the guidance of coaches Ricky Muisse and Jacinda Amirault, won the gold medal game in this tournament;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Fusion Muisse on becoming provincial champions at the Under-14 volleyball provincials and wish them every future success in the sport of volleyball.

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. 1290

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

Whereas the Municipality of the District of Argyle held a special by-election on Saturday, April 27, 2013; and

Whereas Nicole Albright, a teacher from Belleville, won the by-election for District 5; and

Whereas Nicole Albright's late father, Arthur Muise, served several terms on council for the same district, starting in 1988 until his death in 2008;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Councillor Albright on winning this by-election and wish her success in her new role as the newly-elected councillor.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

RESOLUTION NO. 1291

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

Whereas in 2004, Fred Connors and Joel Flewelling opened FRED, consisting of a salon, the wonderful Whet café and an art gallery, all located at Agricola and North Streets in Halifax's North End; and

Whereas Fred Connors and Joel Flewelling are well-known for their active support of many arts and cultural organizations in Halifax and for their support of advocacy and outreach groups, including Family SOS, Leave Out Violence Everywhere, Stepping Stone and Laing House; and

Whereas the café and gallery at FRED have hosted exhibitions of contemporary art by many local artists, with a special emphasis on challenging work by young, emerging

artists and have been the venue for many special events and celebrations, such as Laing House's recent Splash of Spring fundraiser;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly express their thanks to Fred Connors and Joel Flewelling for their ongoing efforts to expand and enhance Halifax's cultural landscape and to help make Halifax a better place to live for all its residents and hope that Fred and Joel will continue their efforts for many years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1292

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

Whereas in 1983, L'Arche Cape Breton was founded by Tom and Anne Gunn when they invited Janet Moore to come and live with their family; and

Whereas for three days at the end of April, the community of L'Arche Cape Breton celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a variety concert, anniversary dinner, a humdinger of a dance, and a service at the community chapel; and

Whereas L'Arche Cape Breton has impacted people's lives, those with developmental disabilities and those who choose to share life with them;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize L'Arche Cape Breton for creating, growing, and sustaining a community where all are welcomed, accepted, and celebrated.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 1293

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

Whereas Jacob Works of Truro is one of 120 youth chosen from over 500 worldwide submissions to attend the prestigious 4-H Youth Ag-Summit in Calgary in August; and

Whereas the Feeding a Hungry Planet 4-H Youth Ag-Summit tasks participants to discuss challenges of feeding a growing global population and identify agricultural sustainable solutions to these challenges; and

Whereas the summit is part of 4-H Canada's 100th Anniversary celebrations and offers youth an exciting opportunity to make a lasting contribution to agriculture worldwide;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature applaud Jacob Works for his outstanding achievement, and wish him enjoyment and success in Calgary this August.

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. 1294

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

Whereas Bhreah Ross organized a 30-hour famine at Calvary Baptist Church, in North Sydney, with 10 of her friends in order to bring awareness to countries where people go without food for much longer periods of time; and

Whereas this World Vision program takes place around the world every year to educate people about hunger and to raise funds to help the hungry; and

Whereas through the 30-hour famine, Bhreah and her friends helped to make people in their community more aware of the plight of people dealing with hunger locally and abroad;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly salute Ms. Ross and her friends for their compassion and leadership in the fight against world hunger.

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. 1295

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

Whereas Seaside FM, a not-for-profit radio station in Eastern Passage, is now in its 11th year on the air; and

Whereas Seaside's Annual Radio-thon held in March of this year raised \$52,300 from 1,123 donors for its continuing operations, which is a new record; and

Whereas 1,742 Seaside FM teddy bears were given out for donations over \$25, and 1,354 of these were re-donated by recipients to local charities including shelters and the IWK;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Seaside FM and its staff for a record-breaking Radio-thon, and wish them all the best for another successful broadcasting year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1296

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

Whereas last year, in one month alone, 23,561 Nova Scotians were assisted by food banks; and

Whereas almost one-third of Nova Scotians accessing food bank services were under the age of 18; and

Whereas the member for Kings West and I, along with other MLAs, are participating in Feed Nova Scotia Hunger Awareness Week and are fasting until tomorrow morning to help bring attention to the challenges that many families face with hunger and poverty in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize that today, although members of this House are choosing to fast, many Nova Scotians are unfortunately unable to make that choice, and that we must continue to fight hunger on their behalf and improve services for 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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 1297

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

Whereas today was the Heart and Stroke Foundation's annual Walkabout event; and

Whereas 159 walks were organized across the province and drew 1,475 walkers out to raise awareness about the benefits of walking for good health; and

Whereas the goal of today's event is to create a culture of walking in Nova Scotia, and to remind people of the mental, physical, and environmental benefits it has;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank those who organized and took part in today's walkabout event, and encourage Nova Scotians to choose walking for their health and their environment.

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. 1298

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

Whereas the month of April was Autism Awareness Month; and

Whereas Ethan Ringer, a Grade 3 student at Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy in Liverpool, has created a PowerPoint presentation explaining what autism is and how it affects him, as an individual who has autism; and

Whereas Ethan Ringer has posted this PowerPoint presentation on the Internet, where it reached more than 2,000 viewers during the first week it was made available, effectively spreading awareness of autism in the words of one who lives with it daily;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Ethan Ringer of Liverpool for sharing his experience and spreading awareness of autism.

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. 1299

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

Whereas May 6th to 10th is Hunger Awareness Week, and an opportunity for Canadians to acknowledge that hunger exists in our communities; and

Whereas the number of Nova Scotians relying on food banks and food support continues to grow; and

Whereas Feed Nova Scotia helps feed hungry people by collecting and distributing food to more than 150 member agency food banks and meal programs, while working tirelessly to eliminate chronic hunger and poverty through research, awareness, and support programs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature commend Feed Nova Scotia executive director Dianne Swinemar and everyone at Feed Nova Scotia for their commitment to ending hunger in our province, and wish them success during Hunger Awareness Week activities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1300

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

Whereas the Liberal energy plan is based on inaccurate, incomplete, and erroneous information; and

Whereas the Leader of the Liberal Party said in October 2012 that “There are other options . . . As a matter of fact we talked about allowing competition in a highly regulated environment . . . The province of New Brunswick actually does that now”; and

Whereas the Leader of the Official Opposition has been proven wrong with the New Brunswick Government’s announcement yesterday that an open market in their province has failed, just as it has in several other provinces and states;

Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Party admit that it’s time to unplug their energy plan and embrace the NDP’s local, sustainable energy plan that is providing fairer rates for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1301

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

Whereas 14-year-old Callum Pickles of Coxheath has developed a computer program called Your Privacy that scans social media and Web sites looking for threatening or insulting words, and helps delete them; and

Whereas Callum said the tragic suicide of British Columbia teen Amanda Todd inspired him to create the program; and

Whereas Callum is also working on a mobile app that will filter text messages in the same way as his full program filters social media;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly salute Callum Pickles for his efforts to do something positive about cyberbullying and its impacts.

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. 1302

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

Whereas Amherst Regional High School is known not only for its great teachers and students, but also for its sports teams and coaches; and

Whereas as head coach of the ARHS basketball team, Matt Gamblin and his assistants have been important to the success of the Viking basketball program; and

Whereas nearby Mount Allison University has recently recognized the excellence right there in their own backyard, when it appointed Matt Gamblin as head coach of the Mounties women's basketball team;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Coach Matt Gamblin and his assistants, and wish them best of luck 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 Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1303

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

Whereas Rick Weisner of Canning, who both in his volunteer life as Fire Chief for the Canning District Volunteer Fire Department and in his professional life as a driver for Oulton Fuels, shows his concern for the safety and well-being of those in his community; and

Whereas Rick Weisner was recently recognized for his outstanding contributions to safety excellence by being awarded the Steve Bennett Memorial Safety Award, Professional Driver, by the Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association; and

Whereas this award acknowledges Rick Weisner's outstanding performance in the area of safety and risk management, as well as his contributions to safety in his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Rick Weisner for receiving the Steve Bennett Memorial Safety Award, Professional Driver for 2013, and thank him for the care and dedication to safety he demonstrates every day in his community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 1304

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

Whereas on December 5, 2012, the representatives from the Rainbow Food Bank visited the Sheet Harbour Consolidated School; and

Whereas the Grade 4 students had been learning about how compassionate it is to give donations of food, clothing, and shelter to those who need assistance; and

Whereas the students presented the local food bank with a donation of four boxes of food;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Grade 4 students at the Sheet Harbour Consolidated School on their generosity, kindness, and dedication to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1305

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

Whereas the Liberal caucus has cobbled together an energy plan that has more holes in it than the California power grid after they deregulated their market; and

Whereas the Leader of the Liberal Party has repeatedly defended a plan that would cause significant chaos in our electricity market and result in increases of 30 per cent to 50 per cent; and

Whereas the Leader has admitted several times in interviews that it would be difficult to say how opening up the electricity market would help reduce power bills;

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Liberal caucus explain why they have chosen cheap politics over good policy and continuously mislead Nova Scotians in their reckless energy plan.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I cannot hear the member reading the resolution with the chatter in the Chamber today. If you want to take those conversations outside I would greatly appreciate it.

The honourable member for Lunenburg to start over again so I can hear the resolution.

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

Whereas the Liberal caucus has cobbled together an energy plan that has more holes in it than the California power grid after they deregulated their market; and

Whereas the Leader of the Liberal Party has repeatedly defended a plan that would cause significant chaos in our electricity market and result in rate increases of 30 to 50 per cent; and

Whereas the Leader has even admitted in several interviews that it would be difficult to say how opening up the electricity market would help reduce power bills;

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Liberal caucus explain why they have chosen cheap politics over good policy and continuously mislead Nova Scotians with their reckless energy plan.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 1306

MR. GARY BURRILL: Madam Speaker, on behalf of the member for Cape Breton Nova, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas on May 22, 2013, Carol Beaton, executive director of Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design, will be inducted into the Cape Breton Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas after 14 years of dedicated service, Carol Beaton will be retiring at the end of June 2013; and

Whereas through Carol Beaton's guidance, the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design has become a leader in the development of the craft industry on the island;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in wishing Carol all the best in her retirement, and thank her for her dedication and commitment to the craft world.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 1307

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

Whereas for five years the Premier used taxpayers' dollars in order to pay his own barrister fees; and

Whereas this use of taxpayers' dollars by the Premier amounted to \$10,642.67 of taxpayers' money so that the Premier could retain his own status; and

Whereas the Premier kept using taxpayers' money to pay his barrister fees and retain his status until such time as he was discovered and eventually racking up \$10,642.67 in fees, which were a benefit to the Premier;

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier did use thousands of dollars out of the pockets of taxpayers over the course of many years in order that the Premier could retain his own status, and that the member for Halifax Chebucto urge the Premier to apologize to all Nova Scotians for using their money for his own advantage.

Madam 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 Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 1308

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

Whereas the Province of New Brunswick has repealed their failed deregulated system and is returning to a regulated market because it will bring low and stable electricity rates, energy security, reliability of the electrical system, and environmental responsibility; and

Whereas the savings from reintegration of NB Power for New Brunswick taxpayers are estimated to be in the millions of dollars; and

Whereas the Liberal caucus has misguidedly continued down the deregulation path based on New Brunswick's model, despite the fact the New Brunswick Government stated in 2011 that an open market has not worked in their province;

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Liberal caucus admit their energy plan is a failure, and support the NDP's plan that is successfully providing local, green, efficient, tax-free energy across Nova Scotia.

Madam 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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1309

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

Whereas Monday, May 6th marked the opening of Martell's PharmaChoice, a full-service pharmacy in Arichat; and

Whereas in 2009 Dalhousie University Pharmacy graduate Tracey Martell and her husband, Jason, have decided to open the pharmacy as they set their roots down in their home community of Isle Madame; and

Whereas with four employees, Martell's PharmaChoice will offer refill reminder programs, medication reviews, blister packing, and patient counselling, and will be available for after-hours emergencies;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating pharmacist Tracy Martell and her husband, Jason Martell, on the opening of Martell's PharmaChoice, and wish them and their staff great 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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 1310

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

Whereas the objective of the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is to help eligible individuals who are not able to prepare their income tax and benefit returns by themselves; and

Whereas Petit-de-Grat resident Joan Clannon, an employee of Development Isle Madame Association and a volunteer with several organizations, has been giving her time to help residents complete their income tax and benefit returns for the past number of years; and

Whereas for the 2012 taxation year Joan has completed 120 income tax and benefit returns for seniors and other residents who cannot afford to pay for the service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the efforts of Joan Clannon as a volunteer with the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program and thank her for giving freely of her time to assist members of her community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill.

RESOLUTION NO. 1311

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

Whereas the Ontario Government stated in 2010 that “a brief market-deregulation scheme saw electricity prices spike an average of over 30 per cent in just seven months”; and

Whereas in Alberta, RBC Dominion Securities (Interruptions)

I’m going to wait until there’s quiet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That’s twice today. I played a lot of ball, and three strikes and you’re out in my game. I’m going to remind the honourable members to let them read the resolutions and stop the heckling.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill has the floor.

MS. ZANN: Whereas in Alberta, RBC Dominion Securities stated in 2001 that “in unnerving similarity to California’s experience, this process [deregulation] has resulted in Alberta’s power prices increasing from amongst the lowest in the world to among the highest prices in North America”; and

Whereas the Province of New Brunswick has said that “the competitive market has not developed in New Brunswick as anticipated - and given what has occurred in British

Columbia, Ontario and elsewhere where competitive electricity markets have also failed to thrive - there is little likelihood that it will happen”;

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition explain immediately to Nova Scotians why he has been ignoring the facts for so long and has continued to advocate for an energy plan that has failed time and time again.

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 Yarmouth.

RESOLUTION NO. 1312

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

Whereas for five years the Premier used taxpayers' dollars in order to pay for his own barrister fees; and

Whereas this use of taxpayers' money by the Premier amounted to over \$10,642.67 of taxpayers' money so that the Premier could retain his own status; and

Whereas the Premier kept using taxpayers' money to pay his barrister fees and retain his status until such a time as he was discovered, eventually racking up \$10,642.67 in fees which benefited the Premier;

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier did use thousands of dollars out of the pockets of taxpayers over the course of many years in order that the Premier could retain his own status, and that the member for Truro-Bible Hill urge the Premier to apologize to all Nova Scotians for using their money for his advantage.

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 Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1313

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

Whereas the Government of New Brunswick admitted yesterday that deregulation of their electricity market has been a massive failure, costing millions of additional dollars; and

Whereas the woefully misinformed Leader of the Official Opposition pointed out just a few short months ago that he thought New Brunswick's deregulation plan was the answer to Nova Scotia's electricity needs; and

Whereas the New Brunswick Government stated that “. . . the competitive market has not developed in New Brunswick as anticipated - and given what has occurred in British Columbia, Ontario, and elsewhere where competitive electricity markets have also failed to thrive - there is little likelihood that it will happen”;

Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal caucus explain why they think such a failed and costly plan would be good for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1314

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 Leader of the Official Opposition has stood by his baseless and reckless energy plan for Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Liberal caucus has continued to champion a plan to deregulate electricity in Nova Scotia despite the fact that it has failed in Ontario, Alberta, California, and now right next door in New Brunswick; and

Whereas the Leader of the Liberal Party has never been able to explain how his plan would bring cheaper or more stable rates to this province, and has admitted that it probably won't;

Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Leader give serious thought to flipping the switch on his failed energy plan and, instead, support the NDP's plan that is working right now for Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1315

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

Whereas it is the responsibly of members of the Legislature, regardless of political Party, to work to improve Nova Scotians' confidence in our political system; and

Whereas the Legislature has not received an update on the disposition of the \$2.2 million from the Liberal's segregated funds since the 2009 legislation was passed, and it is important for all members to be better informed on this issue; and

Whereas the creation of the Allan J. MacEachen Institute is of interest to all members of this House of Assembly, given its stated focus on public policy matters;

Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition table with the Clerk of the House of Assembly, on or before May 17, 2013, all trust documents, the names

of the trustees, financial statements, and all other relevant documentation related to the For the Public Good Trust and the Allan J. MacEachen Institute.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

I hear a No.

A recorded vote is being called for.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[3:33 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Are the Whips satisfied?

A recorded vote has been called. I shall read the operative clause:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition table with the Clerk of the House of Assembly, on or before May 17, 2013, all trust documents, the names of the trustees, financial statements, and all other relevant documentation related to the For the Public Good Trust and the Allan J. MacEachen Institute.”

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[3:34 p.m.]

YEAS

NAYS

Mr. Landry
Ms. More
Mr. Smith
Ms. Peterson-Rafuse
Mr. Corbett
Mr. Dexter

Ms. Maureen MacDonald
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Paris
Ms. Jennex
Mr. MacDonell
Mr. Belliveau
Mr. Boudreau
Ms. Zann
Ms. Kent
Ms. Conrad
Mr. Preyra
Mr. Parker
Ms. Raymond
Mr. Epstein
Mr. Prest
Mr. Ramey
Mr. Skabar
Mr. Whynott
Mr. Morton
Ms. Birdsall
Mr. Burrill
Mr. Manning MacDonald
Mr. Glavine
Ms. Whalen
Mr. McNeil
Mr. Samson
Mr. d'Entremont
Mr. Baillie
Mr. Bain
Mr. MacMaster
Mr. Orrell
Ms. Casey
Mr. Colwell
Mr. Zinck
Mr. Theriault
Mr. MacLellan
Mr. Churchill

THE CLERK: For, 43. Against, 0.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 1316

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

Whereas for five years the Premier has used tax dollars in order to pay for his own barrister fees; and

Whereas this use of taxpayers' money by the Premier amounted to \$10,642.67 of taxpayers' money so that the Premier could retain his own status; and

Whereas the Premier kept using taxpayers' money to pay his barrister fees and retain his status until such time as he was discovered, eventually racking up \$10,642.67 in fees which benefited the Premier;

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier did use thousands of dollars out of the pockets of taxpayers over the course of many years, so that the Premier could retain his own status and the member for Kings North urge the Premier to apologize to all Nova Scotians for using their money for his advantage.

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.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The time now is 3:39 p.m., we will finish at 5:09 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: NDP ADVERTISING/HEALTH CARE - IMPORTANCE

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, sadly, for the past four years the Premier has consistently put the interests of the NDP ahead of Nova Scotians by wastefully spending millions of taxpayer dollars on political advertising. Recently more than \$1.1 million has been spent to promote the NDP political advertising campaigns. The Premier

has become so out of touch with Nova Scotians that he has chosen political messages over conducting 110 knee surgery replacements, 91 hip surgery replacements, hiring new nurses or doctors, Mr. Speaker.

My question is, could the Premier please explain to the people of this province why his NDP political messages are more important than the health care for our citizens?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, much, I'm sure, to the chagrin of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the reality is that the advertising we do is aimed directly at informing Nova Scotians as to the services that they can receive from government offices, whether it happens to be services like Telehealth, like the 811 service, whether it's the use of the Collaborative Emergency Centres in order to get the care that they need in the communities they have. It is advantageous to the people of Nova Scotia to know that they can get better care sooner.

MR. MCNEIL: Yeah, they're still trying to find out where, Mr. Speaker. This Premier doesn't respect Nova Scotians or their hard-earned money. His government continues to spend wastefully at the expense of seniors waiting for surgeries, homeowners struggling with heating costs, and children who are faced to deal with the burden of the NDP education cuts.

A federal NDP Member of Parliament has criticized the federal Conservative Party for their political advertising and went so far as to suggest that the federal Conservative Party repay the taxpayers of Canada. So my question to the Premier is, will the Premier commit to identifying all of the advertisements that were partisan and political in nature and direct the NDP to give the money back to the people of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can commit to do that because there are none. All of the advertising that we do through the department is aimed at ensuring that people understand the services that they get. In fact, the government is dedicated to ensuring that no matter where you live in the province, no matter what your income level is, you are entitled to the best possible service, and this is particularly true in our education system where it is this government that puts kids and learning first.

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

PREM.: NSP PROFITS - NDP GUARANTEE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Emera and Nova Scotia Power released their first-quarter 2013 profit results yesterday. Under the NDP's so-called rate stabilization plan Emera's profits are up 41 per cent to \$115 million, Nova Scotia Power's profits are up six per cent to \$63 million. Under the NDP, Emera has been helped by special NDP legislation to force the URB to approve the Maritime Link within six months; they gave approval to Nova Scotia Power to go ahead with the Maritime Link even before

URB approval, and the NDP continues to support their guaranteed return on their profits. So I'll ask the Premier, why has the NDP gone so far out of its way to guarantee such a huge financial windfall to Emera when so many Nova Scotians are struggling to pay their power bills?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know that every time the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party stands up and tries to ask a question like that which is dripping with irony, it must leave a vacant space in him. Of course, it is the Progressive Conservative Party that privatized Nova Scotia Power, it is the Progressive Conservative Party that for 10 years continued to propagate the conditions under which the increases in power which we have seen in this province have continued to perpetuate. It was they that tied us - along with the Liberals, to be fair - to the fossil fuel markets which guaranteed the increases that we see.

It is this government, Mr. Speaker, that is trying to ensure that Nova Scotians get the fairest possible rates. It is us who are trying to ensure that the politics is taken out of power and that we allow the best possible rates for consumers.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only irony here is that the Premier tells Nova Scotians they have turned the corner but the only ones that have turned the corner in a good way are the shareholders of Emera under his government, that is the sad irony that Nova Scotians see today.

While Emera's earnings grew by 41 per cent no other Nova Scotian has enjoyed such success under the NDP. In fact, average weekly earnings for everyone else have flatlined growing one full percentage point less than the Canadian average while Emera's earnings go up by 41 per cent and Nova Scotia Power's by six. My question to the Premier is, why does he guarantee growing profits for Emera while standing idly by while average Nova Scotian earnings stagnate?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the opposite is actually true. The reality is that the increases in power that we see are related directly to the Progressive Conservative economic policy that was there for a decade. We're changing that policy but the electricity grid, the generation that we have in this province is what it is when you come into power and it takes time for us to be able to rebuild that kind of an energy supply. That is why we need initiatives like Muskrat Falls. It is the Progressive Conservative energy policy which led to the increases you see. It is the policy of this government that led to the immediate 10 per cent decline in power rates, when we took the HST off home energy.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it didn't take much time for the NDP to come in and jack up our power rates by over 30 per cent. It didn't take much time for the NDP to come in and Emera's profits to grow by 41 per cent, but the Premier tells Nova Scotians it's going to take time to deal with their needs, which include jobs and growing earnings and a cheaper electricity but for that the Premier tells them it's going to take time.

The Premier managed to create the ideal conditions for Emera and Nova Scotia Power for their earnings to grow, but not for anyone else. He sanctioned the Maritime Link project. He allowed them to go ahead without waiting for URB approval - the one place Nova Scotians look to get a true, independent analysis of the project. I ask the Premier, why did he allow Emera to go ahead with the Maritime Link project instead of finding the true, lowest-cost alternative for Nova Scotians, the ones who pay the bills?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course, the Maritime Link is the lowest-cost option. That is being proven over and over again before the Utility and Review Board and I think is evident to most people who have looked at this.

There is another irony in the question posed by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and it is simply this: as I understand it and as was reported in the news, the increase in profits for Emera was tied to the fact that they were reselling the very volatile natural gas product that it had. The skyrocketing price of natural gas actually led to an increase in their profits. This is exactly the kind of energy policy that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party would like to pursue, to handcuff us to those kinds of energy fuels that see these massive spikes and then make all of the consumers of Nova Scotia hostage to those markets.

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

PREM.: NSP/EMERA - ENERGY MONOPOLY

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that Nova Scotia Power's parent company's first-quarter profits soared to 53 per cent. This company's profits continue to surge under the NDP Government's failed energy policies, policies that include a new deal for the Maritime Link, a deal that will bind Nova Scotians to rate increases over the next 35 years. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier so satisfied to allow Nova Scotia Power and Emera to expand their energy monopoly on the backs of Nova Scotia ratepayers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the energy policy of the province is to pursue a number of different kinds of initiatives in order to make sure that consumers in this province get the lowest and fairest rates. We want a proper energy efficiency program that will allow people to cut their consumption and therefore bring the actual cost of their energy down. It is to get off fossil fuels not only because they cause greenhouse gas emissions, but also because they are extremely volatile.

We have seen over the last number of years - because of Liberal and Progressive Conservative energy policies, we have faced these spikes in the cost of electricity. Instead, move to energy sources that have stable, long-term cost curves that allow us to be able to predict what the costs will be in the years ahead. This is good energy policy. This is reliable energy policy. This is secure energy policy and that's what we are pursuing.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, one thing we know, it's good for Emera. Many Nova Scotians are questioning whether it's good for Nova Scotia. In the last four years power rates have increased by 30 per cent and the NDP have legislated another 3 per cent increase next year. The Premier likes to pat himself on the back for removing the provincial portion of the HST off home heating, but at the same time the NDP added a tax to every power bill in the Province of Nova Scotia. My question to the Premier is, will the Premier explain to Nova Scotians why he champions Nova Scotia Power and supports their every move, but won't stand up for ratepayers in the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition is right about one thing - it was this government that took the HST off of home energy which is the only time it led to an immediate 10 per cent decline in the price of electricity. It is because we have delivered to Nova Scotians not only that particular program, we moved out of government Efficiency Nova Scotia so they could be an independent, arm's-length organization, delivering to Nova Scotians the most efficient way to consume the power that they must consume and save themselves money.

Nova Scotians managed to receive from that program \$100 million in savings - \$100 million. If the Liberals had their way, it would simply be added on to the bills of ordinary Nova Scotians. We object to this and, thank goodness, they are not the government.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, they removed the HST before they increased it by 2 per cent, so it was actually an 8 per cent reduction and not a 10 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER; The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM. - PROG. SPENDING: FED. TRANSFERS - LEVERAGING

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: This government has been sitting on a \$58 million deferred federal contribution that was transferred to the province through the social housing transfer. Meanwhile, in March 2013, 1,777 families, 2,518 seniors were on a wait-list for public housing.

My question to the Premier is, why do these families and seniors have to sit on a wait-list for housing while the government sits on \$58 million of federal money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, although the Leader of the Official Opposition understands there are transfers, he doesn't obviously understand they are restricted transfers which means they can only be used for specific program initiatives. What we have done is we have developed a multi-faceted plan for housing in Nova Scotia. The creation of Housing Nova Scotia, leveraging the portfolio of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation so that we will, over the next 10 years, put more than \$500 million into

building various kinds of affordable housing alternatives for people right across the province. This will be one of the most visionary programs with respect to housing in the history of this province.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, the social housing transfer, the total amount of transfer coming from CMHC over the next 10 years, plus the deferred federal contribution, equals \$470 million. This government has committed to \$500 million to its Housing Strategy over the next 10 years; the numbers are pretty close to one another. My question to the Premier is, is the money for the Housing Strategy actually new money or is it money that Nova Scotians were going to receive anyway under the 1997 agreement from our federal partners?

THE PREMIER: Finally, a good question, I'm glad he asked that one because this is all new money. This will be \$500 million of new money which allows us to leverage money from other sources including the federal government, including municipalities, including private investors, including any partners we can find. If there are universities, if there are non-profit groups, we will use this money to leverage with them to provide the kind of housing that people need.

MR. MCNEIL: I would just like clarification from the Premier. He's talking about over the next years using federal money to lever money in the private sector, I'm assuming he's talking about using the federal transfers, or is he suggesting he's going to (Interruption) Mr. Speaker, if the Premier would just let me ask my question he could probably then answer it. Is he going to double the money he's going to spend, and would one of those partners, by the way, be Irving?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I understand this is very complicated for the Leader of the Official Opposition, he doesn't have any experience in dealing with these kinds of things. The way that program spending works is that we have a Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation, and they have a very extensive loan portfolio. We're actually able to leverage that portfolio to take money out of it, new money, which will then be used to leverage the federal money from other - money out of the province's portfolio (Interruption) That's right, he's getting it now, I'll speak slowly. The reality is that that money (Interruptions) Do you want me to continue to explain it?

That money will come out of the housing corporation. It will be used to leverage many different kinds of initiatives, whether they come from municipalities, whether they come from universities, whether they come from the private sector, whether they come from the federal government, we will leverage those to ensure that people get new forms of co-op housing, that we assist them with down payments, that we put in place initiatives for new graduates to be able to access housing. I know that disappoints them, Mr. Speaker.

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

PREM. - BALANCED BUDGET: LACK - CONFIRM

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is trying to convince Nova Scotians that they are about to turn the corner but his own budget projections show more gloom ahead for all Nova Scotians. The budget itself says that unemployment will grow in each of the next two years - 9 per cent this year, 9.1 per cent next year, 9.2 per cent the year after that and it says that employment, our labour force, will decline next year. That's not exactly what Nova Scotians mean when they say they want to truly turn the corner.

Yet despite projecting fewer people working, Mr. Speaker, it also somehow magically says that personal income taxes will increase by 6.8 per cent, adding another \$83 million to the budget. That's more than five times the surplus that the government alleges it has.

I'll ask the Premier one more time, since his own budget makes so little sense that more people are losing their jobs but somehow he is going to collect more income tax at the same time, will he finally admit that the budget is not actually balanced?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many different organizations have to endorse the budget for the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to understand that the budget is not only balanced, it has undergone the most rigorous examination and been tested against virtually every credible financial monitoring organization in the country.

You can take your pick of the banks. You can talk to the Conference Board of Canada, it doesn't matter, they all say the same thing. They all say that the budget - including the Auditor General - they all say that the budget is based, in fact, on very conservative projections for revenue for the next year and they expect that our budget is completely sustainable.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that none of those agencies have said any such thing. Even the Auditor General, as the Premier well knows, doesn't actually express an opinion on the bottom line of the budget and when it's balanced, so let's turn to the common sense of everyday Nova Scotians. They are the ones the Premier should really be concerned about. What they see is that the budget projects that our population is going to decline next year by 0.1 per cent but somehow magically HST revenue, the take the government has out of the pockets of all Nova Scotians, is going to go up by 6.8 per cent, adding another \$80 million to the bottom line, a nonsensical conclusion in a declining population.

That number alone is also five times the surplus that the Premier is claiming that he has, so I will ask him, in the interest of common sense - since his budget says there will be fewer people in Nova Scotia but somehow they're going to pay \$80 million more in HST, will he finally admit that the budget makes no sense and is, in fact, not balanced?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact what the budget actually does is it projects the fact that the labour force will expand, that the level of income will be higher and, of course, as a result of that, the level of spending will continue to increase, as it does every year.

He is quite wrong; the Auditor General actually gave us an unqualified opinion with respect to the reasonableness of our budget assumptions.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the Premier's final answer, I do want to table, for the benefit of the House, the opinion of the Auditor General from his most recent report where he said there's no such thing as a structural deficit, because I know where he's going to go next; and also the message from the minister for 2009, the audited financial statements, which show that the Premier inherited a surplus of \$19.7 million. So I'm glad the Premier respects the opinion of the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, in last year's budget we learned that the Treasury Board knew there was a \$27 million error and chose not to correct it and chose not to tell the people of Nova Scotia that their budget contained an error. That is twice the amount of the alleged surplus from this year. I'll ask the Premier, with such a terrible track record managing the finances of the province, how can Nova Scotians believe anything that is in this year's budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we managed to hit every single budget target that we made over the last four years. Unlike the previous Progressive Conservative Government which, year in and year out, brought in budgets that had no bearing on reality whatsoever, that they overspent by sometimes \$300 million and \$400 million a year and then they tried to claim that they are balanced. This is a past government that received \$450 million in offshore revenues and when we got here, there was \$20 million in offshore royalty revenues.

We had to backfill all of the mess that they made before we could put in place one new program and yet in the last budget we brought insulin pumps for kids, replaced the children's dental program that was cancelled by the Liberal Government, reduced the amount of tax paid by seniors and we balanced the budget.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EECD: GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS - TARGETED FUNDING

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the cyberbullying task force, which was led by Wayne MacKay, presented a report with 85 recommendations to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. One of those recommendations was calling on the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to target funding for guidance counselors in our public schools.

My question to the minister is, is the funding that school boards currently receive for guidance targeted specifically for school-based guidance counselors?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we have a funding formula and we have one guidance counselor for 500 students. It is not targeted funding. The funding formula was changed with consultation, 28 meetings with the school board, that they have that money in their general revenue. But it is in the funding formula, one to 500. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, we know from recent tragic events that young people are finding it very difficult to cope with the social and emotional challenges in front of them and recognizing the recommendation from the task force that it be targeted, recognizing that our young people need more services, will the minister commit to revisiting the model for funding for guidance to ensure that it is based on student need and not a mathematical calculation?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we've been working together on a team around the recommendations so I ask the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act to respond to that question. Thank you.

HON. MAILYN MORE: Mr. Speaker, we certainly are looking at all the recommendations that have not to date been part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's action plan. This is one that is under serious consideration.

Personally, I've had some ongoing consultations with students and teachers and superintendents. There is some question about whether it is guidance counselors or whether we need to expand professional services within the health centres or whether we should be looking at mental health clinicians. It's under serious consideration and we certainly hope to report on that in the future. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my apologies, I forgot that that file was taken from the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development so my question to the new minister is, will the minister get information from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff that speaks to the effectiveness of comprehensive guidance in our schools?

MS. MORE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure everyone that the relevant departments, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, are very much a part of the ongoing daily work of the action team on sexual violence and bullying. They are providing expert advice and ongoing consideration and background information, so they're very much a part of our go-forward planning.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

ENERGY - MUSKRAT FALLS: URB - TIMELINE EXTENSION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. The NDP have a history of ignoring their own timelines and extending them as they see fit. In 2009, the government made it law to report emergency room closures annually to the House, but 18 months elapsed between the 2010 report and the 2011 report. The NDP believe it is acceptable to ignore their own law and take as much time as they want on ER accountability reports, but they refuse to give a \$1.5 billion energy project the appropriate amount of time for review.

My question to the Minister of Energy is, why do the minister and his colleagues think that it's okay to ignore their own timelines, but not to extend the URB review of Muskrat Falls?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, the process that is underway at the present time with the Utility and Review Board is very important. An important decision will be coming down later this year on whether the people there feel that the process is the best for the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. They will determine whether opportunity is there not only for Muskrat Falls' power but also to look at additional power at market rates and additional power from other sources.

The URB process, I believe, is very transparent, and we are waiting for the results of that review. All the evidence will be tested, all will be cross-examined by the experts, and in the end, an informed decision will be forthcoming.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I guess it's okay to extend other things except for this one. Nova Scotians wait more than a year to get an MRI in this province. Seniors in Cape Breton are waiting up to three years for placement in a long-term care facility. More than one year after this government's physician resource plan was introduced, ERs are still closing and Nova Scotians are still waiting to find their own family doctor. This government makes Nova Scotians wait for everything, but they will rush Muskrat Falls through the process before anyone can say whether the \$1.5 billion project is the best option.

You guys can fight it out on who answers the question - either the Minister of Health and Wellness or the Minister of Energy can answer this one - but why do the minister and his colleagues think it's okay to ignore their own timelines and keep people waiting for health care, yet will not extend the URB review of Muskrat Falls?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, we remain confident in the URB process and we remain confident that the Muskrat Falls Maritime Link is the lowest-cost option for ratepayers in this province. The process is unfolding as it should. It's going to give Nova Scotia a great opportunity - not only to have hydroelectricity from Newfoundland and Labrador but really opening up opportunities for us to look at other renewable sources like

wind power, tidal power, and sustainable biomass. It will help intermittent sources to be balanced by the firm source of energy from Muskrat Falls.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, not only does this government have a bad track record of ignoring their own deadlines, but they also have a record of knee-jerk decisions that hurt Nova Scotians. The government released a scathing report on Talbot House last year, which damaged an innocent man's reputation and led to the closure of the recovery house. It took more than a year for the NDP to realize what a mistake that was.

Nova Scotians can't afford to have this \$1.5 billion project to be a mistake, and the NDP can't afford to ram it through the review process. As much as I think the answer from the Minister of Community Services would be entertaining, my question to the Minister of Energy is, does the minister believe or does he intend to add Muskrat Falls to their list of bad decisions made in haste?

MR. PARKER: Mr. Speaker, this government has a policy of green, clean, renewable energy, not only from Muskrat Falls but from any other renewable source in this province, unlike past governments like Progressive Conservative Governments that have lived in the past and relied on one single source of energy like coal. Stop being such a Luddite.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: MOBILE BREAST SCREENING PROG.
- SCHEDULE (2013)**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The 2012 Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program Annual Report shows 11 fixed sites for the digital mammography units across the province. This provision provides an opportunity to increase screening capacity at those sites and that's something we all are very proud of and happy to hear. Unfortunately, that report also indicates that there will be a reduction from three to one for the mobile units - 30 stops for this unit will be part of the provincial digital mobile route but there are only 24 stops that are on the current schedule for 2013.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, could the minister explain why the communities of Glooscap, Eskasoni, Indian Brook, Pictou Landing and Whycomagh were included on the list of stops for 2013 but have been left off the schedule for 2013?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I think all members would agree that ensuring that women have access to the most up-to-date equipment for mammography is the key here. That is why there has been a process in place. Even when the member opposite was a former minister, she would have known about some of the advancements

that have been working with the program to try to get all 11 fixed sites to have the digital mammography. That was the key with this program. We used to have one fixed site in the province then we moved to three in Yarmouth, Sydney and Halifax.

We knew with the 11 fixed sites across the province, they are targeting - trying to make sure that every Nova Scotian who wants to get a mammography test can get that test. The mobile sites now - it used to be an analog unit, so with the advancement of technology, with the investment to make sure that digital mammography is on the mobile site, we can do more tests, be more efficient, and get around the province a lot quicker.

With the concerns the member brings forward, that is correct and we have a list of those sites, so I'll endeavour to find out why it's not on the schedule. We are committed to making sure we get to those women in remote areas with that mobile site so they can get those tests that they need.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from the minister on that. We know that when it comes to breast cancer, Aboriginal women are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of the disease than non-Aboriginal women. In fact, this squarely speaks to an ever-increasing need to make sure those communities and those folks have access close to home.

My question to the minister would be, could the minister please indicate when the women in Eskasoni, Glooscap, Indian Brook, Pictou Landing and Whycomomagh will get their communities added to the schedule?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to get that information for the member opposite and for all members. The key is to ensure that people have access to the most up-to-date technology. That's why the investment over the last decade has been to try to target those fixed sites, to make sure they have the digital mammography units on them. We've seen, and the evidence has shown, we've collected all the data on the use of the mobile unit, that the use of the mobile units has declined significantly over the years because of the use of the old analog units that were on that site. Often, many of the tests, once those analog films were delivered to the fixed sites for development, they would have to require that individual to come back to a fixed site because there was an error, it wasn't good positioning.

That's why it was important to move to the digital technology and we feel very confident that we are going to meet the needs of Nova Scotians with the 11 sites across the province. We have the one number that anybody can call so that even if someone is from Cape Breton, they might be at a conference in Halifax, they can call that 1-800 number and request to get in to get tested here in Halifax, if that's their choice.

I want to ensure that all women in the province, no matter where they live, have access to the most up-to-date technology and as close as we can to their home.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: AQUACULTURE STRATEGY - TIMELINE

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has consistently governed and operated with a no-rush approach, yet they restrict the URB's review process for a \$1.5 billion financial commitment both for the province and the ratepayers to a mere six-month period. There's no shortage of examples to prove that when this government chooses to, they take their time delaying decisions or make no decision at all. A week ago today, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture stated that the panel tasked with reviewing aquaculture had 12 to 18 months to research and report back on the issue.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, will the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture explain why it's acceptable for his department to allow 12 to 18 months for a decision on aquaculture, when the URB is only given six months to decide on the Maritime Link application?

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, unfortunately, the member opposite had years of time to develop an aquaculture strategy. We take the time. We're going to do it right. Thank you very much for the question.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, let's try someone else. The fracking review process has dragged on for over two years now with no end in sight. When announcing this review would be extended, this government made a point of citing numerous expert reports that were published that needed adequate time to review, including a 2001 Sierra Club Atlantic study and 2011 reports from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Duke University, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Given all of this additional research, the government has recently decided to again postpone their fracking review until 2014.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Natural Resources is, would he explain why it is acceptable for his department to allow additional review time for a complex matter involving numerous research reports, yet the URB is only given six months to review the larger, more complex matter involving thousands of pages of expert testimony - the Maritime Link application?

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: I guess I'm speaking in my role as Minister of Natural Resources, but hydraulic fracturing is a sensitive issue. This government is taking the time to review it carefully and is looking at it. There is no hydraulic fracturing going on in the province at the present time. The only fracturing that has occurred has been under the previous Progressive Conservative Government.

MR. BAIN: Let's try another one, Mr. Speaker. This government's track record of mismanaged decisions has spread across all departments. The errors are not limited to

delayed decisions; they're also seen in rushed, knee-jerk reactions. The short-sighted decision to cancel the funding for the Yarmouth ferry has been shown to be the wrong decision. The amount of government funding to the area since the ferry was cancelled is roughly the amount that would have been needed to keep it going. Increased unemployment, business losses, and decreased tourism revenues all could have been avoided if this government hadn't rushed into a quick decision about the ferry.

So I'll try this question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development, could he explain how making a rushed decision is ever in the best interest of this province?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the subsidy around the ferry, I think it's common knowledge that the question around the ferry and around the subsidy had been around for years. It's not a decision that we made lightly. We put a lot of thought into the decision. It was a tough decision.

It's also common knowledge that since 2001, the ridership with respect to the ferry had been on a steady decline. By the time a decision was made respecting the ferry, the ridership was down by over 75 per cent. Economics certainly played a significant role since the decision around the ferry. One of the things that we've always tried to do and continued to do with respect to Yarmouth and the entire southwestern region, is we want the southwestern region - and I'm sure that the people who live there want it - to become a destination. They want it and we want it a place that people are going to go, they're going to go there by choice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: MOBILE BREAST SCREENING PROG.
- SCHEDULE (2013)**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, women in the Preston community face similar challenges as do women in rural and remote communities throughout Nova Scotia. Accessing health care services is directly related to the ability to access transportation and when tough decisions need to be made preventive health care that is only available outside their communities is oftentimes ignored.

In order to deal with the day-to-day pressures of trying to make ends meet, could the Premier please tell us why Preston was left off the 2013 mobile breast screening schedule?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're very proud of is that we have increased access for women across this province not only to a faster breast screening but also to new technology, which means that the work being done is being done more quickly and with greater accuracy. This work was done in conjunction with the Canadian Breast Cancer Society who recommended the approach that is being followed, and

endorsed the approach being followed by the Department of Health and Wellness. I'm sure, or at least I would hope, that the member for Preston would not suggest that those who work so hard to ensure that women who get the services that they need would somehow try to disadvantage one community over another.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to table a ChronicleHerald article dated January 6, 2001, with a headline which reads: NDP Irked Province Cutting Preston Mammogram Services. In fact, they're quoted in the article, the former NDP Health Minister states: "The reason the clinic is going to Preston in the first place is because the area has been identified as high risk for breast cancer and a low take-up in mammography."

To the Premier, if the breast cancer screening unit is so important to the NDP then, when they were in Opposition, why did they not do everything possible in their power to ensure that Preston was on the mobile schedule for 2013?

AN HON. MEMBER: That's amazing.

THE PREMIER: Hard to believe really; hard to believe, you know. He's using a 2001 article, it doesn't seem - and I'll give that back to you so that you can do whatever you like with it. Mr. Speaker, 2001 when technology was completely different.

We are investing literally millions of dollars in new technology in order to provide better services, and one of the sites that has this new technology is the Dartmouth General Hospital, as you know it is the hospital that also serves the Preston community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

LBR. & ADVANCED EDUC. - NSCAD: INDEPENDENCE - GOV'T. POSITION

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Last week the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour refused to answer my question around this government's position on an independent NSCAD. We realize that NSCAD had some financial issues, they put together a plan to address those, but the problem is this government's continued actions are prohibiting NSCAD from reaching some of their financial goals because it's impacting fundraising and recruitment because people don't know if that institution is going to exist anymore.

My question to the minister is, will the minister tell the members of this House why this government is so intent on forcing NSCAD to merge with another institution and lose its independence?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Nothing can be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. We've invested over \$17 million into that institution. There are people in this House who are graduates. I don't know where that member is getting his information, but it's wrong.

MR. CHURCHILL: I'm getting this information from the coalition that has put itself together to defend the independence of NSCAD. There is a reason why they did that. Despite what the minister says here, I don't know where he's coming from, this government's actions have been from one point of view and that is to get rid of NSCAD and its independence and merge it with another institution. That's clear to everybody.

If that is not the case, will the minister say today, on the record, that he is committed to maintaining the independence of NSCAD and supporting our creative economy and our arts community in the Province of Nova Scotia?

MR. CORBETT: I think they want me to say it, Mr. Speaker. What I will say is that \$17 million was over and above regular funding. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I don't know, did dinner disagree with that group over there? I'm going to tell you, we're committed to NSCAD.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

AGRIC.: HOME GROWN SUCCESS PROG. - FUNDING

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's agriculture sector is having difficulty with the cuts to programs and services the NDP Government has made. We know the Farm Investment Fund, now ironically titled Home Grown Success, has been cut drastically in recent years by the NDP Government. One aspect that has been reduced, but is critically important to farmers, is the drainage program.

My question for the Minister of Agriculture is, why has the NDP Government cut funding to this program?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that the member opposite is finally getting engaged in the agricultural sector. First of all, I want to remind the member that last year Statistics Canada indicated that Nova Scotia was the only province in the country where the number of farms was growing.

The relationship I have with the Federation of Agriculture and with farmers as I move around the province, Mr. Speaker, the issue of this program is one that I would have to say is almost never asked about. As a matter of fact, the only people who asked me about this program, really, are people who actually do the work; the subsidy applies to them when they do the contracts. The actual farmers on the ground who need the service, I hear very little from them.

I have made a commitment to the industry that after this year of balance, if it's possible in the 2014-15 budget, I would put money back into that program for both tile

drainage and for land clearing, Mr. Speaker, and I stand by my commitment to them. I said I would do it, and if it is possible to do it, I'm going to do it.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, if the minister hasn't heard, he is going to be hearing because I spoke to the federation this week and the funding for the programs may not be available until June. June is simply too late for farmers and producers. Why is the minister taking so long to release program funding to farmers in the province?

MR. MACDONELL: That is a really good question. The member I think would be aware that when we came into government, we were tied to the suite of programs under Growing Forward. That was a funding agreement between the province and the federal government that was signed by the previous government. I have to say I'm not going to knock them on the quality of the programs. The industry I think, by and large, was fairly receptive to them.

We've tried to make some tweaks in that as we negotiate a Growing Forward 2, which is the next five-year suite of programs. That has taken a bit longer than we actually wanted. Last year we signed the multilateral agreement, all ministers, in Whitehorse. So it's just only recently that I was able to put my signature on the documents for the bilateral, which was Nova Scotia's individual negotiation on programs specific for Nova Scotia.

That really has dragged this process a little further along. We really would have liked to have had this done in February so that when we get the budget passed, the program material could be ready to go, but it looks like it's going to be early June, I think, if we're lucky. We are hoping to get it done by then but that will make it later than we anticipated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: STRAIT AREA - PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, access to a family doctor is essential in rural Nova Scotia. The recent closure of Dr. Ben Boucher's office in Port Hawkesbury has left thousands of patients without a doctor and the doctors who remain are not accepting new patients. Residents are now asking what the NDP Government is doing through the Department of Health and Wellness to attract new family doctors to the Strait area. My question is, will the Minister of Health advise what efforts are underway in the Department of Health to recruit new doctors to the Strait area?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we've done over the last couple of years is try to strategically invest in primary care clinics. We have done that in the member opposite's area. We have done it in other areas that we know have been challenged with recruitment and retention of physicians. We never want to hear about a physician leaving the province or leaving a practice. We know that leaves a void,

especially in rural communities, because those practitioners have a large volume of patients.

We're going to continue to work with the district health authority to try to ensure that we can get patients access to primary care clinicians. We're going to continue to invest in primary care clinics around the province so that we can attract physicians to those areas because if you create a good working environment, where you provide an environment that's working with collaborative clinicians from different disciplines, then it is more appealing.

I hope, with other things that we are doing around training and the residency program that we have in the Valley for general practitioners, we're going to capture those medical students and get them to stay here in the province, and more importantly, practice in rural communities.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the W.B. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre in L'Ardoise, which services thousands of patients as well, is currently without a physician. Local physicians are coming in one day a week, which makes up for two days a week, and quickly their days fill up with appointments. The rest of the residents are left to wonder where they will find a family physician, especially since those existing in other communities are not taking new patients. The earlier question I asked is what specifically is the Department of Health and Wellness doing to attract physicians to rural Nova Scotia?

I don't believe I received an answer to that so allow me to ask the minister again, will the minister tell us the name of the individual or individuals in the Department of Health and Wellness who are responsible for physician recruitment for doctors in rural Nova Scotia?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to disagree with him. I was answering his question. We've done a number of things. I've talked about the residency program that is the first of its kind in the country and we have five medical students now in the Valley practising in a rural setting. We're going to have another five in July so that will be a complement of 10 every year going forward. It is our hope those individuals who are practising now in that type of environment will stay in a rural community and not just in the Valley, hopefully go to Cape Breton.

We have changed the policy of government to invest in smaller primary facilities. We're investing money in his riding to ensure that we have an environment that will attract a physician to come to that area of the province. We have a Physician Resource Plan, something the province has never had in the history of the province and that gives a snapshot of where we need to work and who we need to attract to certain parts of the province. I know there is a lot of interest around the Physician Resource Plan from our medical students at Dalhousie, which is a promising thing, so we can hopefully get some of those physicians into rural areas, especially in rural Cape Breton.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - TIM HORTONS SUBSIDY: CAPITAL HEALTH - CUT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness as well. The NDP denied Capital Health permission to end the subsidy to Tim Hortons' cafeterias on three separate occasions. Capital Health said they expected to see \$1.4 million in losses from their food services, and I will table that article from CTV Atlantic. There are some money pits and Capital Health tried three times to allow someone to take over these operations. Visitors, health care workers and patients really don't care who runs the Tim Hortons. What matters to Nova Scotians is when money is irresponsibly taken from front-line health care.

Will the minister allow Capital Health to cut their subsidy to Tim Hortons and redirect the money into front-line care for Nova Scotians?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I think what Nova Scotians care about is how you treat people, and what the member opposite is asking is that we go after the lowest-paid workers for Capital Health and get rid of them and pay them even less - we're not going to do that. He's misleading Nova Scotians because the Tim Hortons - and he knows because we provided them the information - that one Tim Hortons actually is making a profit, one is just below, so there is about a \$15,000 loss in Tim Hortons.

So Tim Hortons are not losing money. What has happened over the last number of years was that we require the cafeteria services in our hospital to provide more healthy options for Nova Scotians when they enter the health care facility. That has driven costs up and it's difficult and we're trying to work with the district health authority to bring that cost and manage that cost, so that people who visit the hospital have good choice and a healthy choice in the cafeteria service. Most importantly, we're going to treat those workers fairly and that's the most important thing. We are continuing to work in the district health authorities to try to manage their costs, and this is one of the areas we're working on with them.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, he knows from the beginning of that question that I said that the \$1.5 million in losses is from their food services, which includes as a part of it Tim Hortons. Capital Health spokesman John Gillis said the \$1.5 million they lost from Tim Hortons and the food services is coming from health care dollars, dollars that are better spent elsewhere.

The government announced \$2 million to reduce wait times for knee and hip replacement - how much earlier could we have done that and for how many more people? The NDP commissioned a \$1 million study to examine aging infrastructure at Capital Health - how could \$1.4 million have improved those facilities? The government purchased 216 patient beds for \$2 million, so how many more beds could we have had for

the \$1.4 million being wasted? Nova Scotia surgery received \$1 million from Capital Health to perform 379 day surgeries in nine months - that money could have paid for another 400.

Does the minister see the damage his government's wasteful spending is having on the health care system?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the one thing I can say is that the member opposite, when he was minister, didn't tackle any of these hard issues. When we came into government we knew that we had to try to harness the health care budget. We needed to ensure that it was sustainable going into the future; it wasn't sustainable when we took over in 2009 - costs were running away from us. We've worked hard with the district health authorities to reduce health administration costs, one of the highest in the country under the former government, to below the national average now.

Just so the member and Nova Scotians will know, the loss for the Tim Hortons was about \$12,000; we know there was a loss. We're working with them to try to make sure (Interruptions) One made a lot of money and one lost a little bit, so what we're talking about are the cafeteria services and we've provided information to the House and to Nova Scotians. It's a decision we made, yes, we made the decision to change the policy to ensure that there are healthy choices at the cafeterias in our hospital. That has increased the costs and we're trying to get a handle on that, and I think that was the proper policy to change.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, health care money needs to be used for health care services. Our comprehensive health care system is something that Nova Scotians take pride in. Taking money from health care to spend on food services is not the business our health authorities should be in. The government should re-examine their priorities - this wasteful spending in health care needs to stop.

Will the minister give permission to Capital Health to let go of the financial burden of Tim Hortons and the other food services, so they can use the money for health care services that doctors in L'Ardoise, doctors in Yarmouth, or services and other issues here in Halifax, that can be so important for the health care services in Nova Scotia?

MR. WILSON: It's interesting that he's trying to chastise us because we changed our policy to make sure that the food in the hospitals is healthier. The member and his caucus were talking about food for veterans. Every policy we change, we try to make sure that they get the best possible, most nutritious food for all people who enter our health care system. (Interruptions)

The member opposite who is yelling would remember Corpus Sanchez, Mr. Speaker - a \$1 million report that went nowhere. They did not act on it. They put it on the shelf. So one of the first things we did was get a local person - not some American company - in to look at the health care system. Dr. Ross, a respected person in our

province, did the Ross Report, and we've acted on that. We have a plan. It's called Better Care Sooner, and it didn't cost us \$1 million like the Corpus Sanchez report.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

PREM.: SYDNEY VETERANS AFFS. OFFICE - CLOSURE

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, veterans in Cape Breton are upset about the closing of the Veterans Affairs office in Sydney. This office saw 825 walk-ins in the last year alone. This closure will mean the loss of 12 local jobs and will force over 2,900 veterans who count on this service to go to the Halifax office. Many of these veterans are seniors or have disabilities and need this face-to-face service, as you know.

My question is, has the Premier called on Prime Minister Harper to stand up for veterans and rescind his government's decision to close the Veterans Affairs office in Sydney?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we have, along with the other Atlantic Premiers, over and over again called upon the federal government to understand the impact of the cuts they are making in each of our jurisdictions. We did it as a united voice to try and get the federal government to understand that there are actually two aspects to this. One is the fact that they're cutting these jobs, and the other is the fact that they are reducing the employment insurance benefits, which is actually driving people out of rural communities, in the majority.

What it's doing is, it means it's not a combination of waged employment and employment insurance benefits that allow people to build a life in rural communities.

MR. MACLELLAN: People are hopeful that the Premier will call on the Prime Minister to reverse his decision to close this office. I think I know - actually, Mr. Speaker, I know where the Island MLAs stand on this issue. I also know that the Leader of the Third Party has access to the Prime Minister, but has so far remained silent. Maybe if there's a headline, he'll be involved.

Our forces have shaped the landscape of Canadian culture. We have asked our veterans to defend our freedoms and democracy time and time again, Mr. Speaker. The least we can do is fight to maintain their local services. Over 2,900 veterans are asking us for help. Maintaining DVA services is more important than arguing over jurisdiction or who pays the bill. It's simply the right thing to do for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice or were willing to do so.

My question is, will the Premier commit to leading an all-Party call on the Prime Minister to reverse this devastating closure, and will he outline specific actions he is prepared to take?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say it's not just Island MLAs who are concerned. It would be all of the MLAs in the House, and I suggest that they would come from all Parties.

The reality is that we live in the society that we live in because of the sacrifices that were made by our veterans and by the sacrifices that are continuing to be made by those men and women who serve today and who will become our veterans.

I think we have done better than an all-Party committee. If the member opposite had the opportunity to see the press conference that I held with the other Premiers from the Atlantic Provinces, he would know that in that press conference there were Progressive Conservative Premiers, there were Liberal Premiers, there was obviously an NDP Premier - all of us united in asking the federal government to understand the impact of their job cuts and the impact of the cuts to employment insurance benefits on Atlantic Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - LUCENTIS:
SOUTHWESTERN N.S. - COVERAGE EXTEND**

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Two years ago this government caved to calls of the Opposition and public pressure to fund Lucentis. However, that was only available for individuals seeking that medicine in Halifax. I think it was a number of months later that the Department of Health and Wellness extended that coverage with one doctor in Cape Breton. (Applause)

That is something that the Liberals clap for, too, because we had been pushing you to do it for the two previous years before you did. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, why don't we have this medicine accessible in the southwestern part of the province?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you for the question because Avastin has been used for a number of ailments and one of the things is, it's just not as easy to say we'll cover the cost of Avastin. (Interruption) Lucentis - sorry, Lucentis. It was Avastin he was talking about, right?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Lucentis.

MR. WILSON: Lucentis and Avastin can be used for a similar thing, so we added Lucentis to the formulary for Cape Breton because we knew about the travel cost. I know the member opposite is concerned about the travel cost from the other end of the province, coming up from Yarmouth. One of the challenges we had when we put Lucentis onto the formulary is ensuring that we had the right clinicians trained to provide that care. There are opportunities for clinicians to have the ability to give Lucentis.

We will work with any group that can provide it because we are going to fund that anyway. Part of the challenge is making sure that people are properly trained, especially the technique, because that is an injection into the eye so there have to be some safeguards in place to make sure that that clinician has the ability to provide that, and it has to be in the appropriate setting. It just can't happen in any office around the province. You have to have the setting. You have to have the support of the district health authority to ensure that if there are any complications that you can support them.

MR. CHURCHILL: I want to assure the minister it's not just the cost of coming to Halifax and receiving that treatment. We're talking about seniors with vision impairment, so actually travelling to Halifax is not an option for a lot of these folks, and as the minister knows, there are limited transportation mechanisms for those seniors to come here. I have also been told that we do have an ophthalmologist in Yarmouth who is qualified to provide this drug and we have a regional hospital in Yarmouth as well. We do have the right things in place to make this happen; we just need political will to ensure that residents in the southwestern part of the province have access to this treatment as well. Will the minister commit today to ensuring that Nova Scotian citizens who need Lucentis in order to see will have their treatment accessible in the southwestern region of this province?

MR. WILSON: We could have the most advanced technology available in the province but we still need the manpower. We still need those specialists who are trained to do those procedures. Specialized ophthalmologists need additional training; they need to have specialized equipment; they need to ensure that they have an environment that supports them when they do procedures like what the member opposite is asking about. It's not just the fact that there's a hospital or a regional hospital there, we need to ensure that the specialists or the clinicians are there in place to provide that service, but also the equipment and all that goes along with it.

We know, as we move forward, there are going to be new procedures that come on board. Unfortunately, we can't offer them in every jurisdiction. I know that many Nova Scotians travel from Cape Breton, and many Nova Scotians travel from Yarmouth and that end of the province, and come to Halifax to the tertiary care hospital or to the IWK because that's where the specialists and the brightest clinicians are that we have working in the health care system. I wish we could have them everywhere but we don't have that system, it's not a sustainable system. I think we're trying to ensure that we have services available for those Nova Scotians. If those specialists are available in that area and they talk to us, I'm more than happy to work with them.

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

SNSMR: CONDO BDS. - VOTING POLICY

MS. DIANA WHALEN: My question today is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and this is a question relating to condominium legislation

and the need to protect condominium owners. I did provide the minister with a copy of the letters that I'll table today, simply because it's good to remind him of where the situation is, but I'd like to read from one of the letters that comes from the Waterton condominium, which is in Halifax. It's a condominium that has had many disputes with their developer since they had their first board meeting in 2011.

They have given quite a number of suggestions to the minister about changes they would like to see in the Act, but one of the ones they feel is most pressing and could be done most easily is itemized in the letter from January 16, 2013. I'm just going to read the bolded part: "We recommend that Section 15 B (1) and (2) be amended to specifically provide that the developer (declarant) gets one vote to remove directors and one vote to replace directors."

As the Act stands today it's clear that there was only one vote for a developer in removing directors, but it is unclear about whether they can then have many votes to replace the directors - so really, in essence, put their own board in again. The way they get those extra votes, where it remains unclear and isn't addressed in the Act, is they can have proxies and they can also vote for all the empty units that have yet to be sold. They can very easily outbid or outvote the existing individual unit owners in a condominium. It's a loophole and a shortcoming of our Act that it exists today. In order to replace directors you have to work very hard to get proxies and do certain things, but it could be a complete sham if the developer has more than one vote to replace them.

My question to the minister is, does the minister agree that, where the Act is silent on the number of votes that a developer gets in replacing board members, it should say one vote is given for both removing and replacing members of the board?

HON. JOHN MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I admire the tenacity of the member opposite. I think as long as I've been Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, her being a voice for condominium owners shows the impact it has, I think, for her as an MLA in her constituency - something certainly I don't run into in my own constituency. I have to say, I've learned a fair bit about this.

I met with the Condominium Owners of Nova Scotia. They didn't raise this as a particular issue. I think I've indicated in my correspondence back to the individual who wrote me that we'd be willing to look at the legislation, the Condominium Act. Actually, I think we invited him and others to sit down if they wanted to share their views.

I'm not sure if I necessarily have a position one way or the other on the exact section that the member is interested in seeing changed, but I do have an interest in fairness. If where she has indicated can do that, I'd be quite interested in going there. I'm more than interested in having a look to see what amendments might make this world better for condominium owners.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the answer the minister gave, but I just want to stress that this is an issue about protecting condominium owners, and that this particular, single issue that I picked out to raise today would be one where I think it's very clear that it's not fair - which is exactly what the minister said he would like to see, is more fairness. The registrar for condominiums has indicated that this particular change should be made, and I would like to hear the minister today indicate that this change should be made.

MR. MACDONELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have some discussion with the registrar on this, but I do not hold myself in a position. I'm not digging my heels in to say that I wouldn't be interested in making the change. If it goes to where I think the member opposite - and I know she is concerned about the fairness of this, and I have to say, in the correspondence, if the reality is what the correspondence indicates, then I certainly would have a problem with the way the world exists now in terms of this legislation.

I give her my commitment that I'd be willing to look at this, and if it's seen moving in the direction she would like to see the legislation go, I commit to her that I'd be willing to go there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: MACINTOSH CASE - PUB. PROSECUTION SERV. REPT.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Another week has passed while victims of Fenwick MacIntosh wait for immediate answers from the Public Prosecution Service about the delays that prevented this important prosecution. My question to the minister is, why didn't the minister ask the Public Prosecution Service to deliver what it already knew right away?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I want to bring an update on Fenwick MacIntosh because I did have a meeting this morning discussing a look at the overall events that occurred. This matter goes for over 30 to 40 years when you look at the total of the incidents. When I look back in the 1990s when the Public Prosecution first became aware of this matter - we're asking them to go back now that certain results came out from the federal court, to go back and examine what has occurred and to give us a report. In fairness and respect to them and their service, to do that analysis and to look at their files, to form concrete opinions and positions on what occurred and what didn't occur and to present me with the facts, will take some time.

As I say, I did have an update this morning on the file overall, and I see the complexities of it. It not only involves Public Prosecution, it involves the RCMP, it involves Passport and Immigration, and it involves the federal government and the federal court with regard to this matter. It's a matter of getting the facts straight, but I want to

assure those individuals who have been harmed in this process that I'm sensitive and I'm aware and I'm concerned from that perspective, and I will work diligently to try to bring forth their concerns and to address this in a very practical manner. But we need to get a clear picture before we go back to the federal government with what our observations are.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the victims, for them and the horrible price they've paid, they want to see this matter scrutinized. The fact that government appears to be delaying that scrutiny is troubling for them and it causes them to further mistrust government.

We all depend on the Public Prosecution Service to hold people to account; this is a case where that has not happened. So will the minister simply and respectfully tell the Public Prosecution Service who - yes, there are many people involved but from a high level perspective they know what happened, they know what went wrong - will the minister simply tell the Public Prosecution Service to tell everyone what they know today and what they have done, hopefully, to fix these things that have been happening over the years, so that these situations aren't happening right now?

MR. LANDRY: Once again, I apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, and to this House for not being clear in saying that in all due respect of the complexities of this issue, it is incumbent upon me as the Attorney General to ensure that I give people who are in positions of authority and responsibility time for them to read their documents so that when they do make a presentation to me before a decision can be made, that it's to the best of their knowledge taking into consideration all access to information that they have and then present that.

Once again I'll reiterate, it involves the police, Public Prosecution - it involves several stages and arms of the federal government. That where I see there are gaps in the system that need to be addressed, but before judgment is made, let's get the facts and we'll go forward. I want to reiterate and I will every time I give this answer, for those individuals who have been harmed, my heart goes out to you, I understand the hurt that's there, and it's our job to ensure that people have confidence in the justice system and I will continue to work diligently to try to maintain that confidence.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think this matter is overly complicated. Many people know the chronology of events that happened - there are just a few blanks that need to be filled in. I do believe this is something that the Public Prosecution Service knows right now what happened and I believe they should be coming forth with it. Asking for a report to be due when the Legislature is no longer sitting, which is what the minister has asked for, is not a great way to show transparency. Tomorrow might very well be our last day here in the Legislature. (Interruptions) Well, this is an example of an important matter that should be scrutinized in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister show that he welcomes scrutiny by calling on the Public Prosecution Service right now and indicating how important it is to have a report today, however incomplete it is, so that we can at least spend tomorrow scrutinizing it?

MR. LANDRY: Well, I'll just say to the member that I'm not going to repeat myself. I gave an answer last week in this House on that matter, I've given it today. I highly recommend that you get on the phone today, call your federal counterpart, and tell them to get on board with this as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

TIR - TRUNK 4 (RICHMOND CO.): TENDER - TIMELINE

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as part of the government's five-year road plan, under Major construction projects approved for 2012-13, it indicates "Trunk 4: from 0.2 km west of Campbell's Bridge westerly to 0.2 kilometres west of MacNab's Bridge - 6.1 kilometres."

Mr. Speaker, in the department's major construction projects for 2013-14, it also indicates Trunk 4 from 0.2 kilometres west of Campbell's Bridge, westerly to 0.2 kilometres west of MacNab's Bridge - 6.1 kilometres. Now, those might sound slightly familiar because they are identical, meaning that the work was not carried out last year, as was told to the residents of Richmond County and all other users of Route 4.

It is now May 8, 2013, we still do not have a tender issued for this work. Would the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal be kind enough to inform the residents of Richmond County and the residents of this House, when and will the tender for this work be called?

HON. MAURICE SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for the question. I think we've discussed this particular piece of highway construction several times now, in the last session and earlier in this session. Realizing the time that's left, I will indicate that the plan for that particular stretch of highway that you talk about, that has been talked about by the member, will be completed this construction season. The tender will go out in time to have that done. That, I can tell you, is a guarantee.

In terms of why it was delayed last year, because it was raised as part of the question, I think I have to indicate what happened there; last year when the tender went out, when the plan went out, the estimates that came back were significantly higher than what we had anticipated that piece of work would cost. Therefore, we went back to the drawing table to redesign that stretch so that we could have it done in compliance with the money that we thought we should be spending on it.

That delayed it last year; that was the reason it was delayed last year. Had we pushed hard last year, we could have had it out last year but I was recalling the very member's complaint that we paid late the year before and I didn't want to be in the same position where he could complain against us last year, so in fact, we didn't do it last year. We will get it done this year. Thank you.

MR. SAMSON: That's quite the spin to put on what took place, Mr. Speaker, to say the least. The fact is that this is probably one of the most dangerous sections of road in Cape Breton right now and I'm sure if you've travelled on Route 4 through Hay Cove and Red Islands, you would know that this road is clearly in disastrous condition, it's one where we're just biding time as to when there's going to be a serious accident on that section of road, because of the condition of it.

Residents were told a five-year plan, this section would be done last year. It has not been done. The minister in his answer completely failed to indicate why the tender hasn't been issued yet. He gave excuses for last year, why it hasn't been issued this year has clearly not been answered. So allow me to assist the minister, if he hasn't been able to get the tender for Route 4 ready, will he at least advise under his asphalt plan for 2013-14, it does call on the Cape Auget Road from Low Road, southerly 6.1 kilometres, would the minister be so kind as to advise when we can expect that tender to be called?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, let me try to answer the first portion of his question first. He's asking what reason there is for delay in getting that tender out. This year we have issued more tenders earlier than we have ever done before. We cannot get them all done at one time. That's not the way the process works.

I want to assure the member opposite and his constituents that the work that he's concerned about, the tenders will get issued in a timely enough fashion to have that work completed this year. I can't give him a date because I don't know the date yet, but I can tell him that they will be completed this construction season.

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

**EMO: ASPY BAY/ST. MARGARETS VILLAGE/BAY ST. LAWRENCE
- CELLPHONE SERV.**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, cellphone service in the North of Smokey area, especially in the Aspy Bay, St. Margarets Village, and Bay St. Lawrence area, is virtually non-existent. We know that in some cases of emergency the only way to access help quickly is through cellphones. The residents of the area have been attempting to have cellphone coverage for years now.

My question to the Minister responsible for EMO is, would the minister be willing to assist in every way possible to ensure that these residents get the cellphone service they deserve?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I share the same concern as the member. Being an avid cyclist and being out on the trail riding my bike, I know a few times I've tried to use the cellphone, and that it is not accessible, so it's a matter of consulting with my colleagues to see how we get that fulfilled.

We know that there are gaps in the system, and we do know that we have one of the best systems for being connected in North America, so we are happy from that perspective, but I do share some of the same sentiment from being a cyclist and riding through the Cabot Trail and seeing some gaps in the system.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, cellphone service is necessary, as well, for the many tourism businesses in the area. Visitors need to have access to their phones for various reasons, and believe it or not, its existence or non-existence can be a determinant as to whether or not a person visits.

My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, will he join with the minister responsible for EMO to ensure that cellphone service is provided to the residents of the Bay St. Lawrence area?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, a couple of things. I trust the member of the Third Party would have been in touch with his federal counterparts in Ottawa with respect to communications throughout Nova Scotia when it comes to cellphone service. I would suspect that.

I will commit to one thing for sure: I'm always - this Cabinet, this caucus is always - eager and willing to collaborate with one another and with our colleagues in a move-forward motion. Look, I'm willing to sit down with the good Justice Minister at any time, as I am with all of our colleagues here on the government side of the House.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period we had a couple of questions around the mobile mammography and the Breast Screening Program. What I want to table for members opposite - for Preston, and I know another member asked questions - was the route that the mobile unit was supposed to take. Preston is on there, and I will endeavour to ensure that I get back to the member opposite of why that is not on - wherever he looked at . . .

MR. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. It's a difference of facts. I thank the honourable minister for tabling that.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 79.

Bill No. 79 - Government Advertising Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to speak and move second reading of Bill No. 79. Or should I say, I move that it now be read a second time? Make sure that I adhere to the Clerk's request. This bill is basically a copy of what has been already adopted by the Ontario Government in 2004, where it's called the Ontario Government Advertising Act. The purpose of this bill would be to impose requirements on ads, printed matter, and additional classes of messages; require the Auditor General to review submission prior to publication; and clarifies what is partisan and rests that decision with the Auditor General. I should point out, as well, for the interest of members of the government that the New Democratic Party of British Columbia recently introduced a similar bill in their Legislature. So obviously this has piqued the interest of their counterparts in British Columbia.

So what are the main points of the bill? Mr. Speaker, number one is that departments shall submit a copy of the proposed advertisement to the Office of the Auditor General prior to publication. Number two, the Auditor General's Office will review ad material and decide whether the material meets the standards set out in the Act. Number three, the advertising must not be partisan, and it is the Auditor General's Office that will determine whether the material is deemed partisan. Number four, required standards:

- “(i) to inform the public of current or proposed Government policies, programs or services available to them,
- (ii) to inform the public of their rights and responsibilities under the law,

(iii) to encourage or discourage specific social behaviour, in the public interest,

(iv) to promote the Province or any part of the Province as a good place to live, work, invest, study or visit . . .

(b) it must include a statement that the item is paid for by the Government of the Province;

(c) it must not include the name, voice or image of a member of the Executive Council or a member of the House of Assembly;” - that may have been a bit of an issue for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism a few years ago, if I’m not mistaken, he was the main star in one of the government ads.

(d) it must not be partisan;

(e) it must not be a primary objective of the item to foster a positive impression of the governing party or a negative impression of a person or entity who is critical of the Government;”

Additional standards may be developed through regulations. As well, Mr. Speaker, this bill would require an annual report to the Speaker, by the Auditor General.

So why do we need this type of legislation? Mr. Speaker, we’ve seen previous governments, with the advent of technology, we have seen governments in the past start to undertake more and more political-type advertising. I recall when the NDP were in Opposition under the Hamm Government and the Rodney MacDonald Government, that they were highly critical of using taxpayers’ money to send out government brochures, which, clearly, we agreed at the time, fell under the category of political advertising.

Yet, no government in the history of this province has used taxpayers’ money to undertake advertising as this government has. It’s unprecedented. And Nova Scotians are asking, at a time when the government is cutting in education, at a time when Nova Scotians are struggling to pay their power bills, at a time when government is increasing user fees, saying it needs more money, Nova Scotians are asking, where are they getting the money to pay for all this advertising?

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, and you certainly hear it enough from Nova Scotians, but how often do we hear someone say, look, I watched the hockey game last night and I saw that same ad from the government on four separate occasions. That was during one hockey game. And the question asked is how much are we paying for that? Because it was the same ad four times during the same game. I had one guy point out to me, like, do they think it takes four times for us to understand the ad and that’s why repetition is necessary during one hockey game? But Nova Scotians are not buying it. And they are asking us, why does the government feel that they’ve got an open chequebook to just do all the advertising they want?

Mr. Speaker, what we have noticed as well is when the public opinion polls started turning for the government, ironically, the advertising from the government increased. Coincidence, I'm sure, but again the numbers that we have seen are startling to say the least. Today our leader led off Question Period on this very subject when he said that more than \$1.1 million has been spent by the NDP Government. I want to reiterate again, what does \$1.1 million buy you in 2013? Well it would have allowed the government to conduct an additional 110 knee replacement surgeries. It would have allowed the government to conduct an additional 91 hip-replacement surgeries.

Ironically I believe that those are good examples to give for a province that has some of the longest wait times for those types of surgeries. It would have allowed the government to hire 14 new nurses. It would have allowed them to hire four new rural doctors, which as you saw in Question Period today, we could certainly use in the Strait Area, both in Port Hawkesbury and the community of L'Ardoise and other areas. As well it would have allowed the government to pay over 2,500 maximum Pharmacare premiums for seniors who are struggling to pay high drug costs.

Mr. Speaker, it is a question of priorities. We know that there is an obligation on government to do some advertising. There is no use in having government programs if Nova Scotians aren't going to be made aware of them but there are new mediums of communication which Nova Scotians are in tune with. The new digital media is available for Nova Scotians to have access to, and more and more are following Web sites. They are following Facebook, Twitter, and they are getting their information through those mediums.

It becomes a question of, where is the line between a government trying to inform Nova Scotians of programs and the line of a government trying to use that advertising to convince Nova Scotians that they are doing a good job? I would submit to you, when you are running the same ad four times during a hockey game, it goes beyond trying to inform Nova Scotians of government programs. It is to somehow try to convince Nova Scotians by using their own money through advertising that the government somehow is doing a good thing.

This bill will not stop government advertising; that would be unreasonable. Instead, if there are any questions about the nature of the ad, any questions about how often it is running, anything along those lines, it would fall to the Auditor General to undertake a review. Now, Mr. Speaker, requesting this is not really foreign to members of this Legislature because due to the changes being made to the advertising allowed for members, prior to issuing an ad, most of us now will send it to the Speaker's Office administration to get approval before hand.

It is already being done by members of the Legislature, which begs the question if that's being done to members of the Legislature, why should the government not go through a similar process of asking the Auditor General to approve advertising that's being

done? I see no reason why. This government has shown a fondness for sending things to the Auditor General so why would they not want to send this matter to the Auditor General as well, to have his or her stamp of approval, depending on who would be the Auditor General of the day.

Madam Speaker, this is about accountability. It is about ensuring that Nova Scotia taxpayers' dollars, their precious taxpayers' dollars, are used appropriately and at the end of the day I'm quite confident that the Auditor General, or whoever else in his office, will not find that running the same ad four times during a hockey game is an appropriate use of taxpayers' money. I think the government has an opportunity to show leadership on this. I would certainly hope that this bill will be allowed to go forward. I believe we certainly showed a spirit of co-operation during this session and there is still time for this bill to make its way through this Legislature before it wraps up.

Again, I believe this is good legislation. Too often the government will accuse the Opposition of simply being critical without offering any solutions. I would suggest, in this case, this offers a positive solution, a reasonable solution, one that's being done in Ontario that has been adopted, one that has been proposed by the NDP Party in British Columbia for adoption in that province, and one which I think, if we're truly going to be stewards of taxpayers' money and assure them that their money is being used appropriately, I have no doubt that the government will want to embrace Bill No. 79 and see to its speedy passage. With that, Madam Speaker, I again move second reading of Bill No. 79.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Madam Speaker, I have some things that I will table now so I don't have to do it throughout the speech. One of the things I do want to mention, a few notes, just as I was listening to the honourable member for Richmond - one in particular around being stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. This government is the government that no longer uses March madness as a way to spend things. In fact, in one year when the Progressive Conservatives were in power, anywhere between \$350,000 and \$400,000 of unbudgeted spending (Interruptions) \$300 million to \$400 million in unbudgeted spending, and that's a record of this government contrasting the former Progressive Conservative Government.

The other thing I wanted to mention was talk about the cost of things. Yesterday we were in the House, and the Liberal Party called every single one of the bills that they introduced into this Chamber. Quick math: if you look at some of the things, it's an automatic spending of \$134 million. So if you look at the programming costs that they would introduce, it begs the question of how they would pay for it. That's the real question.

When it comes to government advertising, I think it's important for all Nova Scotians to understand exactly what Communications Nova Scotia's mandate is. I believe

it was in the 1990s that Communications Nova Scotia was created under this sort of mandate. It's to help Nova Scotians understand what their government is doing for them in their communities and where they grew up. It's our job, as a government, to ensure Nova Scotians know those sorts of things - know about the health care that's provided to them and their family, know about the opportunities when it comes to economic development, opportunities they should know about when it comes to their child's education, programs they should know about when it comes to home heating, and the list goes on.

Just for all the members' information, and also those folks watching at home, Communications Nova Scotia is a non-partisan branch of government. There are 107 full-time equivalents, and that number has not changed since 2008. (Interruption) Sorry, that's not true. There are actually 10 less staff than in 2008.

That also talks about our government's commitment to reducing the civil service over four years by 10 per cent. That is the reality of which Communications Nova Scotia - what I find ironic is that the Liberal Party talks about protocol and communications standards and all the rest of it around political advertising. These same policies and protocols that this government is using, and the previous two Progressive Conservative governments have used, are the exact same policy that was in place when the Liberals were in power. It was the Liberal Party that created that.

That's the reality, and if anybody out there is interested in finding that, it can be found on a government Web site. Maybe we should do an ad about it so that people know the policy and the procedures around it. It's under the Communications Policy/Protocol and Management Manual 300. That policy is laid out for the public record, and I would encourage all Nova Scotians to go and look at it if they have the opportunity.

The question I have around advertising and the like - one in particular is around economic development and the quite amazing opportunities that, as Nova Scotians, we have before us - that, in particular, is around the shipbuilding contract. There is a commercial airing, talking about encouraging Nova Scotians to go to a one-spot, one Web site, so that they can learn about the things their government is offering them, so that they can be part of this historic employment opportunity, this historic economic development opportunity.

I believe at the end of the commercial it says www.novascotia.ca/jobsHere. So I went to that Web site, Madam Speaker. What it does is it breaks down the sorts of programs and opportunities that Nova Scotians can find on the Web site. It talks about the Productivity Investment Program and how they can be part of it and how their businesses - so far over 400 businesses have been involved in the Productivity Investment Program.

It also talks about where people can go and learn more about how our forestry can be part of our economy. No longer will the forestry be seen as a dying industry, as I know the member for Cape Breton South has said so many times in this House.

Madam Speaker, this is the information that is being provided to Nova Scotians will do for them. So if they go to www.novascotia.ca/jobsHere, that's what they will find. They will also find the ability for young people to find careers in Nova Scotia - careers.novascotia.ca. Check out job profiles, job searches, training opportunities.

We can also ask small businesses to be able to go to the HR tool kit, Skills Online, welcoming workplaces, Madam Speaker. People can learn about the jobsHere strategy and how many of the local economic development agencies and businesses across the province have been finally asking government, with a plan for economic development called jobsHere, a plan that will grow our economy. That is exactly where Nova Scotians can go to find out our government's plan for the economy.

Another opportunity that Nova Scotians can go and find when you go to novascotia.ca/jobsHere is you can actually download the Better Business Plan that will actually reduce red tape by 20 per cent over the next three years. I believe all members in this House would recommend that.

Madam Speaker, it also talks about our workforce strategy, recognizing that we do have issues with our workforce; we do have issues with our aging population. That is the reality of where we are and there should be a plan to address that so Nova Scotians can know that when they go to novascotia.ca/jobsHere that they can go and find that their government has a plan for that. Why would that not be a good thing, Madam Speaker?

I find it ironic, though, that the member for Richmond talks about advertising during a hockey game. Well what happens if we aired the commercial at 2:00 a.m. four times in an hour? Madam Speaker, then we'd be criticized for that. I think for the honourable member to mention that, I mean I think people at home recognize that when you buy larger ads, you get a discount and that's the reality of where we're at.

I want to move now to a commercial around Better Care Sooner - novascotia.ca/bettercaresooner. When Nova Scotians go there they can understand so that they can know what their government is doing to make health care better for them and their family.

Finally a government that has taken the bull by the horns, so to speak, Madam Speaker, to address the chronic ER closures that faced the other two Parties when they were in government. Our government has been able to tackle that. We are seeing reductions in ER wait times. When you go to communities like Pugwash, or Tatamagouche, or Springhill, or Annapolis, or soon to be in Lunenburg, or soon to be in New Waterford, or in Musquodoboit Harbour, so many other communities, when you talk about that, now they can know what a CEC really is. When you go to novascotia.ca/jobsHere, you'll find out how to access health care professionals, you'll learn the appropriate use of paramedics and the 811 service, you can find out about funding for better health care results. I find it ironic because on this Web site Nova Scotians can

find the accountability report for emergency room departments, so that it can be accountable and not just sit on the minister's desk, it is right on-line. You talk about, again, more CECs, that is the work of this government.

Another example is around Kids and Learning First. I've recognized in the past number of days and weeks that we have been airing commercials that will bring forward results for people, all of them have been, but in particular around the issues of supports and resources that might be available to Nova Scotians of all ages, around mental health programs and supports that are there for them. That is exactly the type of service that we should be providing to Nova Scotians. In fact, when we talk about Kids and Learning First, Ben Levin said that we should be speaking and we should be informing through communications to Nova Scotians around what the province is doing for education.

When you go to that Web site, Nova Scotians can find all types of information around what our province is doing around early childhood development, more learning options for high school students, more information around special needs and the like. That, when you see the novascotia.ca/kidsandlearning, is what's being shared with Nova Scotians, that is the information and all we're asking them to do is go to one central point, so they know what their government is doing and what their government is providing.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: Six minutes.

MR. WHYNOTT: Six minutes, perfect.

That is exactly why our government has been providing PSAs - public service announcements - to Nova Scotians, so that they know what their government is doing. I think that Nova Scotians would expect that from their government. If we can seize opportunities for this province and have people become a part of that, I don't see anything wrong with that - this is about engaging people. For the longest time, I believe that people in this province have been disengaged around politics and their government, but this gives people the real opportunity to do that.

It was our government that created an ability for Nova Scotians to take surveys so that their voice can be heard. That, I believe, is what a responsible government would do. What I do know is that the advertising being spent by this government is down by 27 per cent of the previous government, that's what I know. That's just a fact, it's down by 27 per cent year over year.

As I stand in my place and have had the opportunity to be in this Chamber for almost four years now, I think one of the things that people recognize about me - and I've heard this before - is that I'm accessible to the public and I've heard my colleagues who are in Cabinet say that they may or may not be the most accessible minister in the Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, I'm one of these MLAs, I knock on doors, usually - unless it's not raining - usually Saturdays or Mondays. So again it's another example of how I believe, even as a government MLA, that it shows that our government is listening, that we need to seize the opportunities that are before us. When you go to either novascotia.ca/kidsandlearning, whether it's novascotia.ca/jobsHere or whether it's novascotia.ca/bettercaresooner, these are the sorts of things that people would expect from their government. I encourage all Nova Scotians to go to those Web sites to fine out new programs that we may be offering.

Another one that we should note here is the service around 211 - 211 is a service that was, I believe, championed by the United Way. They have been asking for this service. We're the first province in the country, actually, to have the full service in the whole province. There are other regions across the country that have 211 in their municipality or northern area of a certain province, but we are the first to have it province-wide.

Madam Speaker, what 211 does - and I know there are some ads around 211 - what this will do is I believe over 3,000 government services and programs will be able to be funnelled through 211, so that people will be able to have the ability to access those services. I think that is also an important thing to note, in particular around what, as government, you can provide to your citizens.

Around ads, Madam Speaker, I know I find it ironic that sometimes the Liberal Party talks about ads and the way in which political advertising may happen. I note though that we brought out an ad, I believe it was just before Christmas, around seizing the opportunity - and this was a political ad. This was an ad that was strictly paid for by our Party, so that ad was paid for by our Party. One ad that I do know is being aired right now and I quote - and I've already tabled this - it says this, and this is the ad that should matter to every day Nova Scotians and the ad is this:

"We don't know much about . . ." the Liberal Party ". . . but what we do know is that they want to rely on Hydro-Quebec for our power. Instead of an affordable, secure, made in Atlantic Canada solution." The Liberal Party ". . . opposes investments to attract and keep good jobs here, hurting families in every part of NS. And the Liberals have voted to put the HST on home heating again, again, again and again. With a record like that, is . . ." the Leader of the Liberal Party ". . . the right guy for Nova Scotia?"

Madam Speaker, my answer is no. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand here for a few moments and speak to Bill No. 79 brought forward by the Liberal Party, the Liberal caucus. I do want to thank the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper

Sackville for that spirited debate, as much as I can take exception to a number of the things that he did talk about.

There are virtues in what the Liberal caucus brought forward, some other issues that I have with it that I'll speak to in a few moments. But the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville talked about the mandates of Communications Nova Scotia. Yes, Madam Speaker, they are there to communicate with Nova Scotians, in trying to organize and try to find methods in which to reach Nova Scotians. I think what we take exception to is the purely political ways in which it is being done. The catchy slogans that are exactly the catchy slogans that are being used by the Party when it was running for election, exactly the slick kind of colourings and colour usages and actually the wording that we take exception to.

Whether or not it is an ad about Ships Start Here, which I know this government tried to take advantage of that program over a long period of time now, forgetting that it is truly a national program, one that was brought forward through a tendering process. Actually by this government trying to take advantage of that Ships Start Here program by using the Ships Start Here program, I believe they discredited the hard work of Irving shipyard and the workers there by trying to take credit. They won that on merit; they didn't win that because this government tried to take credit for it. It's really kind of funny now, and I know that the member for Lunenburg West is back there chirping away because that's really all he gets to do a lot of the time.

We see the millions of dollars that this government tried to sink in there - apparently they didn't really have to do it. We find out today exactly what that money is going for, which is to help build a parking garage. What about the training and all the things the minister has stood in this House and talked about on many occasions? We take exception to the slick advertising campaign that they've been trying to take credit for something that they really can't take credit for, which is ironic. (Interruption)

Madam Speaker, yes, I have to admit we've got to find ways in order to flow Nova Scotians into the government Web site. The government Web site is where Nova Scotians can access programs, they can try to figure out what kind of health services are out there, they can try to figure out what kind of business loans, business programs that might be out there for them, and they can actually work with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on trying to set up businesses or trying to find those kinds of things. But does it require hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising in peak times? It just doesn't say the Government of Nova Scotia wants you to be aware of these programs, it is far more exciting than that. They bring it just the step above and make it hyper-partisan, rather than just saying this is what the Government of Nova Scotia can offer to you. They have to try to find the balance between those two things.

If they're looking for suggestions for advertising, then why don't they do this? Since they are so friendly with Tim Hortons why don't they put on the cups,

NovaScotia.com or something like that, NovaScotia.ca/healthcare, that would be maybe a good opportunity to get the message out and flow them down through to the Web site? Maybe put it on power bills since they're such good friends with Nova Scotia Power and Emera, they could put it right there on the bill, NovaScotia.ca/powerbills, or whatever they want to do because it would be a good use of something that they're already paying millions and millions of dollars for as they cozy up to businesses like that.

That's enough about them because, quite honestly, I think they have it wrong. We said they have it wrong and they continue to spend tons of money on it and I think it has been unfair to the taxpayer to see that kind of political advertising going on by Communications Nova Scotia, which is, of course, there for them.

Now, the idea of having a bill that brings transparency to government advertising and deals with the question of who should pay for ads that are partisan is very timely. That is because the Liberals, themselves, have had some recent experience paying for ads - ads that have been called the first negative ads of the impending election campaign. The problem is that the Liberals were able to afford them because they borrowed money, and because they drew down \$1.2 million from their tainted trust fund in the first three years under this current Leader's leadership, and just before the money was pried from their clutching hands. The Liberals were able to pay for them because their finances still show signs of being stronger than they should be. That's because they're able to use that \$1.2 million for their operations which means that they didn't have to spend an equal amount of legitimately raised money and could save it.

Where did that trust fund money come from that the current leadership burned through? Well nobody knows, nobody could figure it out. It was never established where it came from. They said it was looked at by an auditor but the truth is there was no audit done and the source of the money hasn't been established. If, and I say if, the example that trust money was from the illegal practice of tollgating, Madam Speaker, which clearly stained the other Liberal trust funds of the era, it means that taxpayers did pay for something and that's because the idea of tollgating was to get a kickback on liquor sales.

We have a Liberal leadership that chose to draw down huge sums of money not knowing where it came from and who else would do that, Madam Speaker? Who else would look the other way? Now this is the same Liberal leadership which cannot herd its caucus of bad cats. It's going to be interesting. Let me say that again because I don't think the member for Richmond actually heard what I said. This is the same Liberal leadership which cannot herd its caucus of cats, and I think that really shows the great political cartoon that we saw just the other day. Resolution, it's going to be interesting.

I want to thank the member for Lunenburg for her resolution in the House today because they got up and we'll find on the 17th of May - I wonder, on the 17th of May how much information we're going to see that is actually pertinent to the For the Public Good Trust or the Allan J. MacEachen Institute. I mean, I like Allan J. MacEachen, I think he's a

good fella, but it's a shame that they had to go and attach the name of that honourable member to the money that came from a trust fund that has questionable proceeds. That's the same Liberal leadership that touts a team, if you can call them that, which just lately has been getting into a little bit of trouble.

Every single time there is a serious task, you can count on the Liberal leadership to make the wrong choice. The old Liberal attitude is that they are entitled to their entitlements and that attitude stains the current Liberals. That, Madam Speaker, is what happens when leadership is weak and without the relevant real-life experience necessary to lead stray cats, let alone the province. Liberals can propose whatever bills that they like, but Nova Scotians can see right through the display that has happened in the last week and they can see a pattern of non-leadership.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak in this House of Assembly about this particular bill, which really doesn't stand up because they don't have anything to offer, thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It ended up a little bit earlier than I anticipated. It's funny listening to the member for Argyle talk about lack of leadership when we have the Leader of the Third Party having \$300,000 in payments from the federal government, and then we have him leading (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Are you done? The honourable member for Dartmouth East has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, the fact is that every time a member, whether it's from the Third Party or the government makes comments like that, they insult the fact that any Nova Scotian is fit to serve in this Legislature. Any Nova Scotian, from any walk of life, is fit to serve in this Legislature and for any member to stand in this House and suggest that somebody by virtue of running a small business, being a tradesperson, being a farmer, being a fisherman, whatever, is not suited, being a mother, being a stay-at-home mother, being a student, being a social worker, shouldn't be here, like the member for Cape Breton South who was a social worker for many years, shouldn't sit in this Legislature - that's shameful. We've heard that from the government benches this session and we've heard that from the Third Party this session.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that the member for Lunenburg West wants to check with Hansard. He should read Hansard and check and see, because the only negative comment about social workers was from that Party, aimed at the member for Cape Breton South - the only one recorded in Hansard, and I challenge him to go and check that.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's not true. It was your Leader.

MR. YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, the member should check Hansard and listen to the video which I've done. The claims they made about what he said are not at all what he said, and you can hear it very - in fact, we posted the video on-line to show that. It's very clear. The fact that they tried to misrepresent that sort of thing again is the same as everything else.

That very well points to why this bill is necessary. We have a government that misrepresents the facts, including in their advertising.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The honourable member knows full well that not everything that's said in this Chamber is recorded on the Hansard. It was very much the case that in this Chamber the Leader of the Official Opposition made comments to me about my ability to be Finance Minister, as a social worker. I heard those comments. I challenged those comments. Not being recorded on the Hansard does not mean that they were not made, because they were.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you. I'll respond to that in the fact that my comment about Hansard was because the member for Lunenburg told me to check Hansard and see that. The fact is the member may wish to actually listen to the video, because in the video it's very clear what is said, and that is not at all what is said. Actually, it's why we posted the video on-line.

MADAM SPEAKER: Maybe we could speak to the bill now.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you. I appreciate that. I'd like to start by tabling a press release from the NDP in British Columbia who, like Parties of other stripes, have introduced a similar bill to what we're proposing here. As well, in Ontario, the Liberal Government there introduced a bill very similar to this, and it's working very well. In fact, it's in place in Nova Scotia. We've also consulted early on with the Auditor General on this bill and asked him to review the bill that is in place in Ontario, and he supports it.

I think it's important that Nova Scotians know and know very well what advertising is paid for by the government. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I know the days have been long. We still have work that has to be done in this House of Assembly, and I would ask all members to be respectful of those who continue to be in the Chamber working to do that work.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you again, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that. If government dollars are going to be used to fund advertising - and there are very important things that are funded by advertising. If you look and you say that flu shots are available, for example, it's important to let people know that flu shots are available. It was interesting, though, that when the people responsible for this, Communications Nova Scotia, were before Public Accounts Committee, one of the things that they were asked about is, traditionally in the advertising world you put tags on the end of Web site addresses. The Province of Nova Scotia always did that under previous governments, different ones for each ad so you can track the success of each individual ad. They've stopped doing that. They don't have any way to track the success of those ads, because they all direct to the same Web site.

They don't have any way to track the difference between on-line versus newspaper advertising, radio advertising, television - there's no way to track its success. What does that tell you? That already tells you that there is actually not very much interest in achieving success or in achieving an outcome with those ads. The interest is just in terms of a propaganda message. That's wrong. It is right to advise people about programs and services which are available to them, but nobody can stand here (Interruptions) Nobody can stand and say that a feel-good ad saying, oh, things are bad now, but they're going to get better - which was all one ad did - has some message that is beneficial or is useful or is a good use of taxpayer dollars, especially when this government has repeatedly voted to cut education funding.

Yet they spend almost \$1 million - \$783,000 - on advertising about their education cuts and trying to make people feel good about their education cuts, despite the fact that this province has the lowest per-student funding in the country - the lowest per-student funding in all of Canada, and that's what these members vote for every year. Instead, they sit there and say, no, no, the funding per student has gone up. Well, it hasn't gone up as much as the costs that the school have faced - a 34 per cent increase in electricity rates.

Madam Speaker, in my riding there were classes that started this year with over 30 kids in the class. They were over the cap and they couldn't afford to hire a teacher. The minister had to come in and give additional money.

Moreover, if you have a small school and you suddenly put 21 kids in the class and they had 23, you still have to pay for that classroom, you still have to pay for that teacher, you still have to pay for the same school bus, you still have to pay the same heating bill. So the total number of kids doesn't always matter. It's actually NDP members who said that in Opposition.

So you look and you say, well, would that \$783,000 have been better spent in the classroom? That's the real question here, but more important, and as important, is the fact

that advertising run by the government - and it doesn't matter if it's coming out of an MLA's office - although those are probably more obvious that they're run by the government - or whether it's other kinds of advertising, should include a simple message. I don't think it's a whole lot to ask, to say that, as they do in Ontario, as the NDP have proposed to do in British Columbia. Advertising should say, this ad was paid for by the Province of Nova Scotia. Is that so much to ask for? The Auditor General supports this sort of stuff.

In fact, I might add that this follows along the lines of some of the recommendations in the Auditor General's Report when he discussed advertising of MLAs during his report on MLA expenses. So I'm surprised the government would be opposed to something where he talked about being very clear on what advertisements do and who has paid for them and so forth.

All this is about is letting people know what their tax dollars are being spent on. Then the public can judge whether they feel that an ad should have been paid for by the government or not. I'm sure there are a number of members in this House, like me, who have heard from people who originally thought that the NDP paid for the ads saying things are going to get better, not the government. They didn't realize it was a government ad. They actually thought it was a politically partisan ad paid for by a political Party. So you address that by doing something like this.

Likewise, even the federal government at least puts the message at the end, saying the Government of Canada, with the stylized flag. That is a very standard approach.

Madam Speaker, my time has pretty much wound down. This is an issue where there's an opportunity to make a difference and tell Nova Scotians what their advertising dollars are actually paying for. There strikes me to be no reason to be opposed to a simple message saying what your tax dollars are good for. Listen, if the government thinks that's a wise use of taxpayers' dollars on all of those ads, then why would they oppose that anyway? They should be proud of telling Nova Scotians that they spent taxpayer dollars on that. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Official Opposition business has elapsed.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that does conclude the Official Opposition's business for today. I'll now turn it over to the Government House Leader to give us business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Okay, we'll give them the business, Madam Speaker. We will do Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 61 and 62, and we'll go into Committee of the Whole House on Bills and do whatever bills are available to us in there.

With that said, Madam Speaker, I think we will call it a day and meet here tomorrow from noon to 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.

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. We will now proceed with the adjournment debate. The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Lunenburg West:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Leader of the Official Opposition explain to Nova Scotians why the Liberal Party has misled Nova Scotians by making statements like those from the member from Dartmouth East that the New Brunswick energy market is ‘working just fine’ when the recent New Brunswick decision has blown yet another hole through the Liberal energy plan, so soon after their last misguided attempt to woo Hydro Quebec.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

LIBERAL ENERGY PLAN: MISLEADING STATEMENTS - EXPLAIN

MR. GARY RAMEY: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this very important issue. Just yesterday, this House of Assembly became aware that a critical piece of the Liberal Party's energy plan had been a monumental failure in New Brunswick. Yesterday the New Brunswick Government admitted, publicly, what they'd been reporting for almost two years - deregulation and an open energy market in their province simply have not worked.

This is not news, this has been going on for two years. And it's not just New Brunswick - and I want to make that very clear - it's not just New Brunswick that has been saying this, Madam Speaker; Ontario, Alberta, and actually the largest state in the United States, California, have all been saying the same thing - deregulation costs ratepayers, it costs taxpayers, and it's not a sustainable solution.

I look forward to using this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to explain to the Leader of the Official Opposition just why his energy scheme will not work, and I look forward to being able to provide the facts to the woefully misinformed Liberal Party in general. They have turned a blind eye to the facts for far too long, and they simply cannot ignore the truth any longer. Yesterday, the New Brunswick government repealed their failed deregulated system. They stated that, and this is a quote, "Not only does it make good business sense, but other changes we are bringing forward will help to strengthen the utility's management and board of directors, require greater transparency at the utility and allow NB Power to pay down debt and operate like a business." I'll table that for the benefit of the House.

This is something that this government has understood all along, Madam Speaker. In fact, this NDP Government was the first and only government in Canada to limit excessive private sector bonuses and salaries at electricity utilities. We have a plan to invest in local green energy that is working to bring stable and sustainable electricity rates to our province. But the Leader of the Official Opposition just isn't getting it. Despite example after example of how deregulation has failed - the ones I just cited - the Liberals have continued to press forward with their reckless plans, regardless of the consequences.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has not been able to point to one single example where this deregulation scheme has worked, because, Madam Speaker, there is none. There are no examples. The fact of the matter is that several provinces and states have been saying this for years, and they would know, they tried it and it failed. So why does the Leader of the Official Opposition want so desperately to bring to Nova Scotia a plan that has failed at every attempt in other jurisdictions?

When researching their energy plan, the Liberal Party must have found out that power rates in Ontario rose by 30 per cent within the first seven months of deregulation - 30 per cent in the first seven months. They must have learned that electricity rates in deregulated Alberta rose by 50 per cent in the winter of 2011 - and are you ready for this, Madam Speaker? - by a whopping 966 per cent, in just one week last month. And I'll table that article as well, there, for the benefit of the House too. Anyway, there it is.

Surely they know that in California deregulation led to choreographed brownouts to increase demand in rates, yet time and time again, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member from Dartmouth East have insisted that an open-market model is the way to go, and that New Brunswick's deregulation plan is the answer to Nova Scotia's electricity needs. It is important, Madam Speaker, that Nova Scotians are given the facts, and the facts are that New Brunswick has been saying since 2011 - that's a long time ago now - that their

plan is not working. They stated that “. . . the competitive market has not developed in New Brunswick as anticipated - and given what has occurred in British Columbia, Ontario and elsewhere where competitive electricity markets have also failed to thrive - there is little likelihood that it will happen.” I will also table that article.

I think there is ample evidence to show that this doesn't work. In fact, since 2004, there has not been one customer that has left the N.B. power system in favour of another supplier - not one. It simply is not viable and therefore it is also not affordable. An open market is also a very vulnerable market - electricity prices on an open market can fluctuate dramatically according to supply and demand and this is also influenced by everything from the weather, to water levels, to the price of fuel on world markets, to the time of year. This is clearly not the solution for rate stability. Open-market competition and rate stability simply do not go hand in hand, and the Liberal Party needs to stop trying to convince Nova Scotians that their plan will lower electricity rates, because it won't. It is a false promise that is unfair to the people of our province.

Nova Scotians need to know that if the Liberals had their way their energy plan would drive rates up by 30 per cent to 50 per cent, as I cited earlier. Deregulation isn't the only way that the Liberals are driving up electricity rates - the Leader of the Liberal Party has a record of voting to charge HST on home heating. He did so eight different times - I think the member for Hammonds Plains-Lower Sackville mentioned this, and let me repeat, Madam Speaker, the Liberal Leader has voted eight separate times, both in the House and in elections to charge HST on home heat and those years were, if people want to know, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2013. This is the record of the Liberal Party - the Leader of the Party even called removing the HST a bad, bad policy. Now it appears he has forgotten he made that commitment, when asked yesterday by media, so I want to remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that in the 2009 leaders debate he did, in fact, say this.

Our government doesn't believe that it's bad policy to take 10 per cent off the electricity bills of Nova Scotian families; we don't believe it's bad policy to make life more affordable for our families and seniors most in need. In fact, we know it is good policy and that's why we made sure when we formed government that one of the first things we did was remove the HST, and that is why we tabled legislation this session to ensure that a possible Liberal Government can never put the HST back on home heat. The Liberal record speaks for itself - it's one that chooses political gains over the lowest, fairest, energy rates.

We want Nova Scotians families to have affordable electricity rates, and that is why we are committed to the Maritime Link/Lower Churchill Project and the great potential it has to provide the lowest, fairest rates to Nova Scotians. The Maritime Link promises to provide price stability for 35 years - now this is a plan. The Liberals have not been able to say how their plan would provide rate stability, and now we know for sure because of what happened yesterday in New Brunswick, yet again, that it cannot.

The Maritime Link gives Nova Scotia two connections to the North American grid, and this is important because the Link will place us in the energy loop instead of being at the end of the energy line, like we would be if we relied on Hydro-Québec and other foolish suggestions of the Liberal energy plan. We cannot continue down the same paths of previous governments - they have relied on imported coal to generate electricity for far too long. It has taken an NDP Government to make sure of the change needed to secure our energy future, to protect the environment, to get the rising costs of electricity under control, and to meet our federal greenhouse gas emission targets. Madam Speaker, we now have a plan that is local, reliable, green, tax-free, and efficient. It's time the Liberal Party and its members admit that their energy plan is bad, bad public policy. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, I hope that the member for Lunenburg West goes and ensures he talks to whoever wrote those remarks for him, and makes sure they are aware that they were so factually incorrect.

First of all, let's start with the fact that yesterday what happened in New Brunswick, is the Crown Corporation - which he called deregulated incidentally - which had been divided up into multiple parts - and incidentally I had a briefing on this a couple of weeks ago - was put back together into two parts, nothing else. Their renewable to retail, or basically the same thing they have here, is still in place, and they're still moving that forward. In fact, our own Department of Energy is in a building that is a customer of power in New Brunswick, because they allow it. They would rather be a customer of power made in Nova Scotia, but the law here doesn't allow that. It's really a shame that our Department of Energy has to be in a building powered by New Brunswick power because our own laws don't allow that.

The Liberal Party, has never supported deregulation, but the NDP has. Let me quote the member for Queens. She said this in the Legislature: "When will this government commit to the promises they have made to the renewable energy industry in this province? . . . We have experts in this province who can learn from the mistakes made with deregulation in California. We need to look at Ontario, a province that is moving aggressively forward."

Ontario is a deregulated province. The member for Queens advocated for the government to move in the model of Ontario, which is, as we all know, a deregulated model - a model which we've never supported, which we are now rapidly learning the NDP supports. Of course, the Deputy Premier also spoke in favour of the same model in the same city, and I believe if we look into the record further, we'll find the member for Halifax Chebucto also talking about the same model. Let's talk about that for a second. The member for Queens went on to say, "Consumers are looking for a choice in power providers."

Madam Speaker, the member stood up and he talked about the HST. The fact is that he knows well there has only ever been one vote in this Legislature solely on the issue of the HST, and that was the other day. I think it was unanimous. The other votes the member talks about - well, there was a vote that included gutting public education and cutting universities that they tacked on the HST thing with, but I'm not going to vote to cut our public schools and cut the heart out of our universities. I'm sorry that member felt that that's what he should do. We've seen cut after cut after cut by this government.

We have seen so many things like this tied in with the bills. In the Financial Measures (2013) Bill the other day, one of the votes that he references, the member for Lunenburg West stood and he voted in favour of raising fees and making the small business tax threshold the lowest in Canada. Maybe it's the second lowest, but it's the second lowest or lowest. That's what that member voted for, and I - and no member of this caucus was going to vote to do that, to further raise taxes on the people of Nova Scotia.

Let's look at the evidence, the evidence before the board, for those who choose to read it - and I really suggest that the members read it. We had the Consumer Advocate in the Fall who said that the pension expenses of Nova Scotia Power would be less if there was competition in the market, in a regulated market. We have the International Energy Association, who have recently come out with an international non-partisan report looking at markets where competition is allowed in a regulated market, and found that in every single one of them, power has either decreased or stabilized - every one of them. It is the only model which has actually done that.

We know that in 2005 the Halifax Regional Municipality fought the previous Tory Government - they had a promise from them that they broke - was going to implement that recommendation of the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee. They signed an agreement with rural municipalities and HRM to deliver energy under the renewable-to-retail system that would provide power for HRM and provide tax revenue to rural Nova Scotia.

It was win-win. It was endorsed by the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and remains endorsed by them in the rural municipalities today. I'm sure they had their reasons for not moving forward with that at the time; I don't know what they were. They can speak to that. But the point is that this government spoke in favour of it as well, because they knew how important it was.

Madam Speaker, you knew it well, because you were on the council at the time and you voted for it. The fact is that it was unanimous, because what it was going to do was, by this point in time - here we are, almost nine years later - HRM property taxpayers would have a lower burden for electricity as part of their property tax bills as a municipal expense as a result of that. Guysborough would be having tax revenue from that source. The second renewable energy site, which is also in a rural municipality - I can't remember which

municipality the other one was in - also would have been seeing tax revenue for this period of time, new and additional tax revenue.

For the member for Lunenburg West to stand and say that's a bad idea, that there would have been property tax revenue to rural municipalities, our capital city already had an agreement in place and would have been saving money by now, that his own members spoke in favour of it at the time, and since then - in fact, until they became government they spoke in favour of it.

The member for Queens went on to say: Consumers know that if they have a choice, renewable energy in the long run will actually be a more stable price in power, in green power, than Nova Scotia Power can ever hope to provide. What's changed? The evidence before the Utility and Review Board in the Maritime Link hearing endorses this.

As the Premier and the Minister of Energy have said many times, there are 14 studies; there are absolutely 14 studies that have been filed before the board. Some of them are on technical issues about, can you actually lay a high voltage DC cable for the length and so forth, which I think most people - I haven't heard anybody say that you can't technically do that. Nova Scotians, Newfoundlanders, people in the world are smart people, we can lay that cable.

But when you take it apart and you look at the studies that just look at the issue of what is the cheapest option for Nova Scotians - since he wanted to bring that one up - there is one study out of those, one and only one, that says the Maritime Link, as the deal is currently structured, is the cheapest option. That's the government's own study. Every other study says the other options would be cheaper. They differ on how much it would be cheaper by.

They also point out the fact that - and this is something I had raised before those studies even came forward because Nalcor told me when I was in Newfoundland and Labrador - Emera has no guarantee past the 35-year mark. They have no guarantee for the extra energy on the line that all their calculations are based on getting all of. Of course, those kinds of guarantees are very important but they don't exist, so all of their theoretical models are based on getting all kinds of energy at some theoretical price that Nalcor says probably won't even be available.

That is the issue. The question is, what happens long term? Aren't we better off building a diverse renewable energy sector in Nova Scotia? Aren't we better off having the investments here, the innovation here, letting rural municipalities in Nova Scotia enjoy the tax revenue from the property taxes of these sites, rather than up in Newfoundland and Labrador? Why is that a bad thing? We talked about the struggles that rural municipalities face and one after another they come to us and they say we have an idea. In Cape Breton, Cape Breton Exploration has many proposals but one of them was to use wind power to move water uphill, store it and bring it back on demand. They showed that was actually a

cheaper option than Muskrat Falls and could deliver the same amount of energy plus deliver property tax benefits in rural Cape Breton. Why is that a bad thing?

Why is it bad that by now Guysborough could have been enjoying almost 10 years of property tax revenue from a wind farm and that taxpayers in HRM could have been paying less for power through their property tax bills? Why is it a bad thing that people might actually have to have choice? Obviously the building that the Department of Energy is in doesn't think it's a bad thing because they're buying their energy from New Brunswick because it's allowed, because they can't buy it here. Isn't there something wrong with that?

Why shouldn't people, if they want to invest in renewable projects in Nova Scotia, be able to invest in that? Nobody is saying that all of a sudden you're going to pick up the phone and be able to call Ms. Kent's Renewable Energy Farm or Mr. Younger's Renewable Energy Farm. Nobody is saying that all of a sudden that's going to happen overnight. These things take time but let's look at the evidence, let's look at the evidence that's been filed by the board and instead of making up things about what the Opposition believes in, let's have a real debate on the positions that each Party really has and really stands for and stop making them up as we go along.

All the government wants to do is stand up and say they're in favour of deregulation, they're against the HST, all these ridiculous things that are so well known that are not our position. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand this evening and speak to the resolution that stands before us. It's kind of funny, when the member for Lunenburg West started things off and tried to sort of talk about all the good things that this government is trying to do, you know when a reporter asked the NDP Leader if his plan would really lower rates - what was his answer? His answer was no, his plan doesn't do that for Nova Scotians, even though we do pay the highest power rates in all of Canada.

He hoped that someday we'll have stable rates, sort of as he continues on with that discussion and both the Liberal and NDP power plans will cost more and more, even though we're already paying the highest power rates in Canada.

Now we have a plan, too, and we feel that our plan will stop rate increases in their tracks and freeze them where they are today. Not another job will be lost in Nova Scotia; not another family will need to suffer. We'll freeze rates by buying as much renewable energy as we can at the current rate, but we'll try to use more natural gas and protect our economy and the jobs that go with it - and those two other Parties won't do it.

The Liberals and the NDP have plans that are proven to raise rates, and we're living with the NDP plan now and the Liberals are recycling an idea that already failed in other provinces, like Ontario and New Brunswick - and the Liberals really only have to look as far as next door to see that their plan won't work. New Brunswick introduced a new electricity plan on Tuesday that will make New Brunswick Power a single company again, reversing the former government's decision to break up the utility nine years ago. The reintegration is expected to save up to \$12 million each year and help ensure lower power rates.

Now, much as I take offence to what the NDP's power rate is, I can still say that the Liberal Party's energy policy is a perfect example of a bad policy, where the energy policy of the NDP that allows for no consultation or any independent review, so their ideas on energy management, I think the Liberals' ideas on management are as inexperienced as the NDP's as well - neither Party can manage a modern economy.

Under the NDP's leadership, Nova Scotia energy rates have increased 30 per cent in the last four years, from 2008 to 2012, and during that time Nova Scotia energy prices increased 61 per cent more than the national average. Madam Speaker, this is a tough issue for all Nova Scotians, and I remember not so long ago in my constituency office having to meet with a constituent who really had no way of paying her power bill and trying to find little bits of help from here, there, and everywhere and hoping that once it did get paid off, that she wouldn't have to fall into the trap once again.

This happens time and time again and I don't think it matters which MLA you are, from which constituency, I think you see the same thing - you have individuals come to you saying we can't pay our power bill.

The problem is, too, those of us who have - you know I have electricity heating my house, I'm probably paying somewhere near \$300-some-odd a month for that electricity, whether it's for heating the water or whether it's for heating the house on a continuous basis, on a plan - the bills that come to us are thousands of dollars. It's not just an apartment where you're paying maybe \$100 a month or \$150 every two months. These are thousands and thousands of dollars, and I think we owe it to our constituents to find a better way.

We sit here many times and we talk about the Maritime Link and we talk about the URB process that has been sort of squished into six months. I think really what we've asked, and both Parties have asked this, is give it a little more time. The experts who have been looking at the mountains of information that has been provided to them during that process have said there's not enough time to truly look at this information, to be able to look at it in a comprehensive manner in which to decide whether the Maritime Link is the best option for Nova Scotia or not.

The Premier stands here day after day, during Question Period, defending that decision and all we've been asking for, the Progressive Conservatives have been asking

and I think the Liberals have been asking for it too - just prove it to us. Prove it to Nova Scotians that this is the lowest option, that you've looked at everything within your realm to make power rates more affordable for Nova Scotians.

He continues to stand here and just simply say the Maritime Link is the only way for Nova Scotians to have stable rates. That is the sort of thing that I talked about earlier in my speech, the fact that he just hopes that someday we'll have stable rates. I think to him at this point stable rates mean an increase of 3 per cent every year for the next 25 years.

Nova Scotians can't pay for the bills that they're getting today, let alone having to go with an increase of 3 per cent every year for the next 25 years. I think the other challenge too is that we look at these larger energy projects that you are committing Nova Scotians to a process that is going to be a couple of generations long. Can they afford it? Can we afford it today? I think that's the difficulty that we have with the power plan that is being presented to us by the NDP. As much as the issue of whether the Liberal Party has said that they're going to deregulate or not deregulate, deregulate some of it or not all of it, well, whatever. I think the fact is that today we're having trouble with our constituents. They can't afford to pay for their power rates and we need to find a better way.

On another note, really, the energy file is one that continues to be interesting. In my constituency we have the Pubnico Point Wind Farm, 17 windmills at the end of Pubnico Point, which the Premier said the other day and it's quite true - it's not often that I agree with everything the Premier says - it does provide a stable energy source at a low rate. As that site has paid off, the capital cost of that project, the energy costs now continue to come down and it's probably one of the cheaper ways that Nova Scotians are receiving power today.

Yet not all areas are happy to receive a project like Pubnico Point. Case in point, of course, is Comeau's Hill. Probably a few months ago there was a whole community up in arms about receiving probably a 24-tower energy project. There are still some problems in the way that this government is calling on these businesses or these companies to consult with those communities. This community felt that they hadn't been consulted by the proponent and therefore created a lot of animosity among residents, animosity against neighbours and at the end, the project was not approved by government.

Yet we see COMFIT coming along and there's a little bit of consultation going on there, but we find that individuals are unable to meet with the proponents again. I think of Scotia Wind Fields and I there's another project going into that same area that we had that tremendous problem with the community. They're not getting information that they require in order to say that this is a smart project. I know it's only one tower, but that one tower that's less than a kilometre away from somebody's property, causes them concern. If you're not speaking to them it creates a problem.

These consultations are not consultations they are simply, in my estimation, a way that the company tells constituents or tells residents exactly what's going to happen and then just sort of barrels forward regardless of what the feelings are within those communities. I think that this government and all governments could do a better job of looking at these renewable projects across the province and trying to find a better way to consult or at least designate certain areas that are so far away from people's houses that it makes sense. We do need to continue to look at green energy options and green energy projects and try to find ways to construct them near our grids and communities so that we can use the electricity on a day-to-day basis. It is only when we have that mix of green energy, whether it's natural gas and hey, for the next 20 years we'll still be depending on the coal system and projects like Donkin do need to be looked at very closely.

With that, Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members for listening and I think we all can do a better job of providing energy options for Nova Scotians.

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

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:30 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1317**

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

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

Whereas Shelly Campbell is a skilled educator who takes each child's personality and background into account in her classroom instruction at Whycomomagh Education Centre; and

Whereas she has received special recognition during Education Week for her contribution to Teaching for Sustainable Future; and

Whereas Shelly spearheads many school projects such as the Celebration for Heroes, Free the Children's - We are Silent, and A Village of 100 people;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Shelly Campbell for being a teacher who truly believes in helping students become active citizens in local and global communities.

RESOLUTION NO. 1318

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Preston)

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

Whereas Terry Mumford joined the Canadian Forces with the West Nova Scotia Regiment Band in September of 1975 in Windsor, Nova Scotia, and since that time has served as a musician with the Royal Canadian Regiment Band as well as the 36 Canadian Brigade Group Band as a trombonist, drum major, director, and bassist; and

Whereas in his musical career outside the Canadian Forces, Mr. Mumford has toured Canada and the United States, was inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of fame in 2010 as a member of the Spinney Brothers, and was voted the Bass Player of the Year for the third time in October, 2012, at the Eastern Canadian Bluegrass Awards Show at the C.E.C. Theatre in Truro; and

Whereas in addition to his continued service with the 36 Canadian Brigade Group Band on trombone, bass, and vocals, as well as providing leadership, humour, and mentoring to younger members of the band, he continues to play bass, tour, and record with

the bluegrass band A New Shade of Blue, who have been playing bluegrass festivals and shows in Nova Scotia Newfoundland and Labrador, and Ontario;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House applaud Mr. Terry Mumford's commitment to musical excellence and his dedication to his art, congratulate him on his achievements, and wish him well in all his future musical endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1319

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Gary Croft from Lower Onslow, Colchester North, who started his career at Canadian Tire in Truro, on March 15th, 1976, has worked at two locations and for three different owners; and

Whereas Croft began in the sporting goods department and eventually managed the department for 16 years but has enjoyed the last few years in the tool department; and

Whereas Croft retired on May 3rd, 2013, after working for 37 years at Canadian Tire;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gary Croft on his retirement and, on behalf of his many satisfied customers, thank him for the excellent customer service he provided for 37 years, and wish him good health and the opportunity to do some looked-forward-to traveling with his wife of 33 years.

RESOLUTION NO. 1320

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Grade 11 student Lienna Hoeg from North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche is an excellent academic student, having achieved honours with distinction since Grade 7; and

Whereas Lienna is a striker for the school soccer team, a competitor in track and field, a member of the ski club and a golfer, and earned the prestigious award of Junior Athlete of the Year in 2011; and

Whereas Lienna also excels in her role in the Girls' Leadership group, showing growth and maturity and serving as an excellent role model to younger students;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lienna Hoeg for her success at academics, athletics, achieving the high goals that she has set for herself, and for being named North Colchester High School Student of the Month for March, 2013

RESOLUTION NO. 1321

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Kathleen Glasgow, a Grade 12 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, is an excellent academic student who was distinguished by placing in the top 1 per cent nationally in the Michael Smith Science Challenge; and

Whereas extracurriculars for Kathleen include playing volleyball, softball, skiing, competing in track and field, serving as a member of Student Council, the Girls' Leadership and GSA groups and the Math League, as well as co-chairing the SafeGrad and Prom committees; and

Whereas as well as having worked at several part-time jobs, community involvement for Kathleen includes volunteering at the hospital, for the Butter Trail Fun Run and the Tatamagouche Tattoo;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kathleen Glasgow for her excellent academic record, her school and community involvement, her positive approach to any undertaking, and for being named the North Colchester High School Student of the Month for April, 2013.

RESOLUTION NO. 1322

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Sean Jolly is a Grade 12 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche; and

Whereas Sean is a dedicated student who works hard to ensure he fulfills the requirements to attend the Nova Scotia Community College after graduation; and

Whereas Sean plays on the basketball, softball and soccer teams, is a member of the Student Council Executive, is involved in school committees and fundraisers, has a part-time job, plays guitar and enjoys dirt biking;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this excellent role model, Sean Jolly, a hardworking, motivated, well-respected student and the March, 2013, Student of the Month at North Colchester High School

RESOLUTION NO. 1323

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Alicia Lynds is a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche; and

Whereas Alicia is a hardworking student who is well organized, mature, full of school spirit, and who sets high expectations for herself; and

Whereas Alicia is active in sports, playing for the junior girls' soccer and basketball teams, as well as playing hockey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alicia Lynds for her work ethic, positive attitude, active participation in her classes, her extracurricular activities, and for being named the North Colchester High School Student of the Month for April, 2013.

RESOLUTION NO. 1324

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

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

Whereas Lequille, Annapolis County resident Frank Taylor has always had a passion for history, therefore it only seemed fitting that his research endeavours would be shared with others; and

Whereas Frank has written several books, *Nehemiah Merritt*, which is part of the Loyalists to Annapolis County series and *McGrath and Taylor*, just to name a few; and

Whereas after a decade of research Frank's latest book, *Ghosts of Fundy and Fatalities of the Sea*, documents the lives of the Bay of Fundy sailors who were lost at sea;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing Frank continued success in pursuing his genealogical interests, and thank him for sharing his research enabling everyone to have an appreciation of the past.

RESOLUTION NO. 1325

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

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

Whereas denHaan Greenhouses and Enterprises Ltd. of Lawrencetown, Annapolis County, a third generation, family owned and operated vegetable greenhouse business, was recently recognized by Loblaws for their excellence in innovation, food safety, and environmental stewardship; and

Whereas Luke and Jodi denHaan were awarded the prestigious Loblaw Vendor Development Partnership Award at a Local Growers meeting in Moncton, in April; and

Whereas this rural based business, in meeting the growing demands for fresh, locally grown produce has continued to expand and create jobs and economic vitality to the County of Annapolis;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Luke and Jodi on being recognized for their commitment to excellence, and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1326

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

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

Whereas coming of age is not easy at the best of times, but it can be especially difficult for youth growing up in a small rural town who are trying to come to terms with the discovery of their own sexual identity; and

Whereas first time author Ross McCoubrey struggled with this very same issue, which he eventually came to write about in *One Boy's Shadow*, a novel that combines the elements of mystery and paranormal where the protagonist Caleb Mackenzie is a 15-year-old boy who, through his mysterious and paranormal exploits, discovers who he is and what is truly important; and

Whereas McCoubrey has always been grateful for the support and acceptance he has received from his teachers, family and friends, and in response of this support he is giving the profit from the sales of his book, *One Boy's Shadow*, to the Youth Project, a resource and safe haven for lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-questioning youth to assist them on the journey of self-discovery and acceptance;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ross on his first novel, and commend him for reaching out to assist others in finding peace in their lives.

RESOLUTION NO. 1327

By: Mr. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas the 1971 Glace Bay Miners Maritime Junior Baseball Champions are being inducted into the 2013 Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame Saturday, May 25, 2013, at Centre 200, Sydney; and

Whereas the Junior Baseball Miners, known in baseball circles as the 'big red machine', finished first in 1971 league play and won the Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Maritime titles with a playoff record of 11-2, outscoring their opponents 78-47 utilizing a combination of lights- out pitching, stellar defence, big bats, and timely hitting; and

Whereas the team roster included Edison Clements, Art Shibinette, Steve Slade, Hughie Snow, Dwight Smith, Clarie Warner, Henry Boutilier Jr., Ken Jamieson, Joe Batten, Ken Graham, Ralph Hoffman, Martin Warner, Jim Hoffman, Jackie Ferguson, Charles Slade, Butch Hoffman, Greg Hines, Bruce Clark, Jim Jobe, Omar Sheppard, James Edwards, Glenn Slade, and Blaine MacAulay;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in congratulating the team members on their selection as members of the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame, and we thank them for their efforts in supporting local sport and recreation after their playing days.

RESOLUTION NO. 1328

By: Mr. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas the Cape Breton Sport Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 25, 2013, at Centre 200, to recognize teams and individuals who have made lasting contributions to the sports culture of our island; and

Whereas the 2013 Glace Bay Junior B Miners Hockey Club will receive the prestigious Allan Joseph Award for dedication and community service as their organization's operations provided benefits for local players and promoted the great sport of hockey within the local community; and

Whereas the Junior Miners franchise was recognized for its skilled roster on the ice and strong leadership at the executive level, also being awarded with executive of the year honours by the Nova Scotia Junior Hockey League;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in congratulating the Miners' Board of Directors - Sonny MacDougall, Jordan Evasuk-MacDonald, Barry Verbeski, Donna MacDougall, Rudy MacDougall, Kent Verbeski, Cecil MacQueen, Leonard MacDonald, Dave MacPherson, Andre LeBlanc, Mitch Carabin, Gary Gracie, John Cameron, Greg Mayich, Francis Kennedy, Billy Clarke, and Bobby Popwell – on their fantastic season, and we wish them continued success for the 2013-2014 hockey season and beyond.